

THE LEADER'S “REBOUND”

Discoveries From Elijah's Meltdown That Minister To Us All

I Kings 17-19



SEE ELIJAH

- ◆ Following Hard After God
- ◆ Fainting In Deep Despair
- ◆ Fervent On The Rebound

(From This)

“It is enough, now O Lord; take away my life” (I Kings 19:4)

(To This)

“Elijah took his mantle and smote the waters and they divided.” (II Kings 2:8)

THE LEADER'S "REBOUND"

Text: I Kings 19:1-4

Subject: Discoveries From Elijah's Meltdown That Speak to US ALL!

Introduction

This Message Is For You If You've Ever Had...

- ◆ To stand alone, low resources, a doubt about God's leading, to encounter fiery darts, to pick up and move, delays to your prayers, to face fierce criticism, or a season of discouragement.

Here's The Context of Elijah

1. Jeroboam was the first of 19 wicked kings to rule before Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.
2. The seven kings leading up to Elijah's appearance were Jeroboam (931-910 B.C.), Nadab (910-909 B.C.), Baasha (909-886 B.C.), Elah (886-885 B.C.), Zimri (885 B.C.), Omri (885-874 B.C.) and the worst of all, Ahab (874-853 B.C.)

"And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." (I Kings 16:33)

3. Ahab and Jezebel lived in pagan worship and built an altar and a temple for Baal in Samaria.
4. Baal was the god of rain and fertility.
5. And in the midst of the worst of times (while Ahab was ruling the northern kingdom) God raises up a man from Tishbe (located in the mountains of Gilead) named Elijah.
6. Elijah was from a poor family that lived off the land, had no polish or prestige and felt the call of God to stand before Ahab.

Question: What did God call Elijah to do?

Answer: Stand before Ahab and pronounce the judgement of God upon him ***"No dew nor rain for years."*** (I Kings 17:1)

Question: What was Elijah's next assignment? ***"Go hide yourself"*** (v. 2)

In Other Words

- ◆ Having stood before Ahab and announcing the upcoming drought, God will now teach Elijah some leadership truths for life and ministry!

Question: What does God record - for you to apply to your life (where you live and serve?)

I. In Cherith, Elijah discovers that obedience to God is rewarded with provisions from God. (I Kings 17:1-7)

Question: What did Elijah hear from God?

Answer: ***"Turn eastward and hide yourself by the Cherith brook before Jordan."*** (v. 3)

Question: What did Elijah do?

Answer: “So he went and did according to the word of the Lord.” (v.5)

Question: What were the consequences of Elijah’s obedience?

Answer: “And the ravens brought him bread and flesh every morning and evening.” (v. 6)

What a discovery here! That God **sent** as Elijah **went**!

In Other Words

- ◆ If you do what the Lord lays upon your heart to do, He will honor your obedience with Divine provisions.

Question: Didn't the brook “dry up” in Cherith?

Answer: It did (so disappointments are a part of life and ministry in the will of God!)

The Danger Is...

- ◆ To forget that God knew all about this before He ever sent you in the first place!

Never Forget This

- ◆ During the 3 1/2 years of drought, Elijah always had food and water. Why? Because...

1. He **trusted** the Lord (and had faith that the Lord would keep His word to him.)
2. He **obeyed** the Lord (and did what God told him to do.)

What
A

Promise:

“If you are willing and obedient you will eat the good of the land.” (Isaiah 1:19)

II. In Zarephath Elijah discovers that when it’s time to move from one place to another, you never have to **worry** about your next assignment! (v. 8-16)

Fact: In I Kings 17:7 we read, “The brook dried up.”

Fact: In v. 8, “Then the Word of the Lord came to Elijah.”

Fact: In v. 9, “Arise and go to Zarephath for I have commanded a widow **there** to sustain you.”

What’s The Big Deal Here?

- ◆ Zarephath was over 100 miles from Cherith and Elijah was told that a poverty stricken woman would sustain him there. Elijah would have to trust the Lord to go before him in his next assignment (because the outward circumstances were much less than ideal).

In Fact

- ◆ Six times in the account of Elijah’s life story you see this phrase, “The Word of the Lord came to Elijah.”

In Other Words Beloved

- ◆ The God who led you to where you are - is the same God who will lead you all the days of your life!

So Remember This...

- ◆ Worry is accepting responsibility that God never intended for you to carry!

What A Promise:

"In all your ways acknowledge the Lord and He will direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

Some Key Factors in Determining God's Will (For Future Assignments)

1. **Circumstances** As you take note of providential circumstances surrounding you - admitting it when what God is doing in you differs from what God is doing in the church. Romans 8:28
2. **Compulsion** When you sense the Holy Spirit speaking and leading you in a specific direction. Acts 13:2
3. **Common Sense** To the truth that God is all wise and wants to match your gifting to the need of the assignment. Acts 15:37,38
4. **Counsel** Since there is no foolish question, it is wisdom to seek the counsel of spiritual leaders that God has placed in your life. Proverbs 15:22
5. **Contentment** Paul makes it clear that if peace in your heart is absent, step back because the result of making right choices will be the peace of God. Colossians 3:15

And Remember:

- ◆ If you feel **led**, it's probably God, if you feel **pressured**, it's probably not!

And Memorize:

*"We pray for you and desire that you will be filled with **the knowledge of His Will.**"*(Colossians 1:9)

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:17)

III. On the day the widow's son dies, Elijah discovers that criticism is a normal part of spiritual leadership! (v. 17-24)

- ◆ In v. 18, *"Why have you come to Zarephath to call my sin to remembrance and slay my son?"*
- ◆ In v. 19, Elijah responds with, *"Give me your son so I can pray for him."*

I love this calm response:

- ◆ No attack and no defense - but an upward (vertical) look to God who is in charge.

Elijah Knew What God Wants You To Know:

1. That every misbehavior of another is a revelation of a deeper need and an unspoken request for prayer!
2. The only part of me that can be offended is that part of me which has not died!
3. Answer your critics with your life and not your words!

Re-

member this:

- ◆ The enemy wants you to be easily provoked and react from your flesh.
But The Lord Says

"A fool is quick tempered, but a wise person stays calm when insulted." (Proverbs 12:16 NLT)

It's No Secret That

- ◆ What life does to you depends on what life finds in you!

And Never Forget This

- ◆ If you are insecure your defense mechanisms will get the best of you when criticized (and you will lead out of insecurity instead of obedience to God).

IV. At Mt. Carmel, Elijah discovers that God is responsible to defend His own name (I Kings 18:1-40)

- ◆ In Ch. 18:24, Elijah says, *"Call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord."*
- ◆ Then the fire of the Lord fell...and when all the people saw it they said, *"The Lord He is God."* (v. 38, 39)

What A Discovery As Elijah Builds The Altar:

1. That faith in the supernatural opens the door of heaven for God to walk in and prove Himself!
2. The atmosphere of expectancy is the breeding ground for miracles!
3. If we prostrate ourselves before the Lord, we will never be prostrated before the enemy!
4. If we learn to wrestle with God in secret (Elijah was a praying man) we will never have to lower ourselves to wrestle with men in public.

Oh

What Truth To Stand On

- ◆ *"My defense is of God which saveth the upright in heart."* (Psalm 7:10)
- ◆ *"The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace."* (Exodus 14:14)
"I live by this rule, no attack and no defense." (A.W. Tozer)

V. When God told Elijah it's about to rain, Elijah discovers that God honors those who refuse to give up in prayer. (v. 41-46)

- ◆ In I Kings 18:41, Elijah says to Ahab, "Rain is on the way."
- ◆ In v. 42, Elijah goes up to Mt. Carmel to pray.
- ◆ In v. 43, Elijah sends his servant to look for rain, but the servant returns and says, "There is nothing."
- ◆ In v. 44, Elijah keeps praying and "It came to pass at the seventh time, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea." (and) "There was great rain." (v. 45)

Just Maybe...

- ◆ You have had some unfulfilled expectations!
- ◆ You are in a tough environment and meeting resistance.
- ◆ You have prayed, and prayed, and prayed, and prayed.
- ◆ You are "blaming this or blaming that" for no progress where you serve!
- ◆ You (like Elijah) are between the sixth and seventh hour of prayer!

Or Maybe

- ◆ You are here and God is waiting (and speaking to you) about praying for a breakthrough where He has placed you!
- ◆ Maybe you are inbetween the time of **planting** and the time of **picking!**
- ◆ Maybe you are allowing frustration to dictate your action (in the meantime)!
- ◆ Maybe today will be the turning point as you **re-establish the altar and closet of prayer.**

"Pray to the Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:6)

VI. When Jezebel sent word that she was going to have the prophet killed, Elijah discovers that running from your problems doesn't solve your problems. (19:1-3)

- ◆ Jezebel says, "Tomorrow you are going to be as dead as the prophets of Baal." (v. 2)
- ◆ Elijah's response? "He arose and ran for his life into the wilderness." (v. 3)

Remember

Jezebel could have sent an executioner! Why didn't she? Because Elijah's death would have unified God's people and inspired them to war against Baal even more. Jezebel's real desire was to scare the prophet out of town to prevent him from rallying the faithful!

Question: How does Elijah deal with intimidation?

Answer: The Lord had sent Elijah to Cherith, Zarephath and Carmel - but the Lord never sent him to run out into the wilderness by himself!

- ◆ Elijah travels 85 miles on foot to the southern border of Judah. (v.3)
- ◆ Elijah travels another days journey into the wilderness (v. 4)
- ◆ Elijah is filled with fear and becomes distracted from the vision God gave him.

What Is Vision?

1. Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion in us today!
2. Vision is seeing where God wants to take us!
3. Vision is the fuel that provides the energy to act!

What Does Vision Do?

1. Vision causes you to be intentional in your plans and activities.
2. Vision forces you to move from ideas to reality and action.
3. Vision creates a church culture of purpose and expectation.
4. Vision provokes you to come up with a plan and strategy to reach your community.

VII. Out in the wilderness, weary and alone, Elijah discovers that he is not superman and we all have limitations (19:4)

“And Elijah sat under a juniper tree and requested that he would die, and said, ‘O Lord, take away my life.’” (v.4)

Fact: Many of those whom God has used mightily have battled with weariness, fatigue and depression!

Fact: If you have had seasons of despair, you are not unspiritual or abnormal!

Fact: If you’ve been weary and stressed-out and you are empty and fatigued; STOP!

1. Get control of your calendar (prioritize then calendarize).
2. Get quiet and still before God (in prayer and meditation).
3. Get good books to feed your mind (with fresh ideas).
4. Get away and learn to rest (without feeling guilty)
5. Get God’s will for you (and not everybody else’s).

And Remember

- ◆ Hurry is not of the devil - it is the devil!
- ◆ The only one who can win in a rat race is a rat!
- ◆ You can’t wait two weeks to milk the cow and then run out and milk like crazy!
- ◆ Even a professional chef can starve to death while preparing food for other people!

And Remind Yourself Often

“Discouragement is a lie of the devil to blind you in the present of what God is going to do in the future.”

Remember In Ephesians 4:

- ◆ That you have not been called to do it all - but to train others so that the ministry can grow larger than what one man can dominate!

“Equip the saints for works of service.” (Ephesians 4:12)

VIII. In Beersheba under the juniper tree, Elijah discovers that who he is, is more important than what he does. (19:5-9)

“As he lay under the tree, the Lord came again the second time and touched him and said, Elijah, arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.” (v. 7)

◆ **God didn’t condemn Elijah for his meltdown!** (I Love This)

(In v. 10 Elijah Says)

- ◆ *“God, look at all I have done for You.”*
- ◆ *“God, look at how I went where You sent me.”*
- ◆ *“God, You could have done all this a different way.”*
- ◆ *“God, this ministry path has taken a terrible turn.”*

(And What does God Say?)

- ◆ *“Elijah, I’m not finished with you so listen up...go to Damascus and anoint Hazael, and anoint Nimshi, and anoint Elisha.” (v. 15-17)*

(And By The Way Elijah)

- ◆ *“I have 7,000 others (besides you) in Israel, so off with the pity party and martyr’s complex.”*

(In Other Words Elijah)

“I know you don’t have it all together, but I’m still going to use you anyway!”

1. Elijah thought that his meltdown was too much for God to overcome!
2. Elijah thought that his ministry was over and he had nothing more to offer!
3. Elijah thought that the best was behind him and that he couldn’t rebound from his cloud of depression and visionless days!

(But
Oh

What A Surprise When Elijah Discovers)

- ◆ That God is **not shaken** or vindictive when you feel like you’ve let him down! (and)
- ◆ That God has every intention to **lift** your spirit (emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually) and help you get back in the game!

(Let’s Claim His Promises)

*“But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory and the **lifter up** of my head.” (Psalm 3:3)*

*“You will obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning **shall flee away**.” (Isaiah 51:11)*

IX. In the cave at Mt. Horeb, Elijah discovers that comparing yourself with others is foolish, so be grateful for the way God has made you. (19:10)

- ◆ In v. 10, *“I am jealous for you, but the others have forsaken your covenant.”*
- ◆ In v. 4, *“Take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.”*

Question: Who said you had to be better than your ancestors?

Question: Who said you don't measure up to those you think are successful?

Question: Who said you should be comparing yourself with others anyway?

(In Other Words Leader)

- ◆ Self-consciousness is the feeling of being observed yet not approved...
- ◆ So get a grip on how God made you, your strengths and weaknesses, those next to you on the team that God has called - and find your security in these two truths:

1. ***"Those who compare themselves with others who commend themselves are not wise."*** (II Cor. 10:12)
2. ***"Those who fear the Lord are secure."*** (Proverbs 14:26)

In Other Words

- ◆ Looking at those who "seem" to be more blessed than you will cause you to feel **inferior** and **jealous!**
- ◆ Looking at those who "seem" to be less blessed than you will cause you to feel **superior** and **prideful.** (And neither one is of the Lord!!!)

Remember Saul In I Samuel 18:7

- ◆ He compared himself to David when Saul had slain thousands but David had slain ten thousands.
- ◆ And because David had better stats, Saul became jealous and angry - and David became a threat to him. (v. 8,9)

The Result?

- ◆ Saul pushed David away when his greatest asset became his greatest threat (which undercut Saul's ability to lead and build a great team).

The Root Cause? It's Revealed:

- ◆ Saul went from this: *"And Saul built an altar to the Lord, the first one he had ever built."* (I Samuel 14:35)
- ◆ To this: *"Saul went to Carmel to set up a monument to himself."* (I Samuel 15:12)

X. On his final day on earth, Elijah discovers the joy of coaching young people in Bethel, Jericho and Jordan (and here we learn the blessing of training others who will one day take our place). (II Kings 2:1-14)

Notice The Command

"Tarry here Elisha, for the Lord is sending me to Bethel, Jericho and Jordan." (v. 2-6)

Question: Why visit these three places during his final hours on earth?

Answer: Because Elijah has been training young people for ministry in these three locations (schools of the prophets or training centers for young people in Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho).

In Other Words

- ◆ For 10 years Elijah was training Elisha - and for 10 years Elisha never got used to the anointing or became familiar with God.
- ◆ For 10 years Elisha was spiritually hungry and allowed Elijah to pour into his life.
- ◆ And for 10 years, Elijah invested in someone who would follow in his steps!

“And the things which you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.” (II Timothy 2:2)

Conclusion

Question: What was Elijah’s final earthly deed?

Answer: He took off his mantle (coat) for Elisha to pick up!

Question: How did Elisha respond to the new mantle?

Answer: He took off his old mantle and *“Took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him.”* (II Kings 2:13)

Question: Why the **“tearing off”** of the old and the **“putting on”** of the new?

Answer: Because the rending of the mantle is symbolic that...

1. It is time to discard his own dependence and depend on the Lord.
2. It is time to tear off anything that could hinder his spiritual progress.
3. It is time to (not cover the old) but take off the old man and get radical with sin, habits and any questionable things.

In

Other
Words

- ◆ It’s time to separate from anything that could drain us spiritually and rob us of the power of a clear conscience!

Question: Why so important?

Answer: Because Elisha will now face the Jordan River alone and must have faith that what God has done before - God will do again!!

◆ ***“Where Is The Lord God of Elijah?”*** (v.14 is a revelation to us all)

1. That the God of the past, is the God of the present!
2. That the God of past miracles is the God of present miracles!
3. That the God who parted Jordan to make a way for Elisha, is the same God who wants to make a way for you to experience his mighty power in your location!

Amen!

Bill Kirk