

Joke: An man goes for a walk with his new dog and they come across a lake. The man finds a stick and throws it into the lake and his dog walks across the water picks up the stick and brings it back and drops it at the feet of his owner.

Astounded by what happened, yet wondering if he is losing his mind, he grabs the stick throws it back into the water and once again the dog takes off walks across the water picks up the stick and brings it back.

Again it thought he must be losing it.

To make sure that wasn't the case he decided that tomorrow he would come back to that lake with his dog and his neighbor then he would have a witness.

So, the next day he brings his neighbor with his dog same lake picks up a stick throws it into the lake the dog walks on the water fetches the stick and brings it back.

He turns to his neighbor and said, did you notice anything unusual about my dog? I did, he says well what did you notice. He said, your dog can't swim.

Elijah - Week 4

Today we wrap up our series on Elijah. And as we do that we will be looking into 1 Kings chapter 19.

We are going to talk about a time when he really felt dejected, I dare say even depressed. He just had one of the greatest victories ever on Mount Carmel, and after he saw God work in a supernatural way, he came down to a very low point in his life.

Let's pick up the story in I Kings 19, starting in verse 1.

1 Kings 19:1 (NLT): When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal.

Let me pause here a moment Ahab had just witnessed God destroy all the false prophets and let me remind you who it is we are talking about. If you remember, Ahab was an evil king. As a matter of fact, he was the nineteenth consecutive evil king, and scripture tells us he had done more evil in the eyes of God than any of those before him.

And toward the end of his reign it appears that he was just worn out and didn't really want to lead the people anymore certainly didn't want to deal with Elijah.

So, he sort of handed the leadership over to his wife, Jezebel. He goes to her and basically says, "I don't know what to do anymore."

So, Jezebel she decides to step in and take over. And Scripture tells us. . .

1 Kings 19:2 (NLT): So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them."

Elijah who just was part of a miraculous move of God hears, "I'm going to kill you. You are going to be a dead man of God by tomorrow."

And would think after everything he just witnessed, everything he saw God do, you would think he would be like, bring it on.

But the Scripture continues with these words. . .

1 Kings 19:3 (NLT): Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there.

Elijah did what? Fled for his life. Why? Because he was afraid.

Wait, I'm confused because if you think back to all that God had done in Elijah's life. And then you read what we just read, I'm thinking I don't understand how he can go from this powerful man of faith to being anxious and afraid. Fearing for his life.

And in case you missed the past few weeks let me just do a quick review of the story.

Because when you hear what God had already done, and then read Elijah's response it'll cause you to pause and go, "WAIT WHAT?"

In Week number one, we learned that the king had turned the hearts of the people away from Jehovah God to these false prophets, so God raises up this prophet, Elijah, who comes and stands down the king, and says, "It's not going to rain until I ask God to cause it to rain."

And he pronounces this drought, and it doesn't rain at all for about 3 1/2 years. During the drought God takes Elijah to a place called the Karith Ravine, where he begins to learn dependence on God, and during that season God miraculously provides for the prophet.

God sends ravens that drop off meat and bread. . .and then, he's given water by a brook all in the middle of this drought.

And then one day, scripture says, the brook dried up, and God led him out of the Karith Ravine to a place called Zarephath, where

he met a widow, and when this widow and Elijah first meet, the prophet asks her for some food, but there was problem, she had just a little bit of oil, and a little bit of flour, and it wasn't enough for her and her boy let alone this prophet.

She figured she was going to make the last meal for her and her boy. And Elijah tells her to go and get the meal ready but to feed him first because nothing would run out, and I really have to admire the faith of this widow who just says ok sounds like a plan, and sure enough once again God showed up and provided more than enough, He multiplied what she had and it never ran out.

Then, one day, the widow's son died, and for the first time ever recorded in scripture, Elijah takes this dead boy up into the upper room, prays, and God shows up once again and raises that boy from the dead.

I can only imagine Elijah looking on going, "God is good all the time, and all the time God is good."

Then, after this season of hiding, where there's been no rain, God calls Elijah to go back and confront the king, and he says, "Hey, bring your false prophets." And he calls a showdown. He says, "Go get the four hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah. Bring them up to Mount Carmel, and we are going to see who is the real God.

Is it your gods, or is it the one true God that I serve?"

And so, they built a couple of altars, put some bulls on it, and Elijah being the gentleman that he is says, you go first. So these false guys start calling out to their gods. "Hey, fire come down, send the fire."

And all the false prophets start to dance, yell, cut themselves, trying to get their gods attention and it goes on all day long, and nothing happens.

Elijah starts to mess with them a bit, poke a little fun and says, "Maybe your god is on vacation, maybe he's out for a walk, or sleeping. So, they get louder, dance a bit crazier, and still nothing.

Now it's Elijah's turn, but he doesn't dance around, get loud, or cut himself. All he does it calls out to God and God once again shows up, sends fire from heaven and answers by burning everything up. And Elijah's like, God you are a big God. We've always been so faithful.

Not too long after that he goes up to the mountain and prays, "God, send rain. God, send rain. God, send rain." Seven times he prays, and then off in the distance, he sees a cloud the size of a man's hand.

Not much of anything, but by faith, he believes there's a storm brewing, and sure enough, it is. And so, Elijah has witnessed miraculous provision, miraculous protection, a miraculous God.

Hebrews 11:1 (NLT): Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.

And over and over again, for years, he'd seen the faithfulness of God.

And then one day, a woman says, "I'm going to kill you," and he freaks out. He panics, and he runs for his life.

And with all that said, I want to talk to you about four easy ways to feel dejected or depressed.

We find this in I Kings 19, beginning with the second part of verse 3 reading through verse 5.

The Scripture's tells us this. . .

1 Kings 19:3–5 (NLT): 3 Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. 4 Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.” 5 Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, “Get up and eat!”

How do you get to get this place of feeling so depressed in four easy steps? If you are taking notes, do what Elijah did.

Number one, wear yourself out. He has been in spiritual battle after battle, and then after all he saw God do he decides it's time to run for his life.

And geographically, he couldn't have run any farther than he did. The place that he ran was the very southern tip, and then he leaves his servant, and runs another day's journey out into the desert.

He went as far as he could, and he was just exhausted. . .much like some of you. You wonder, “Why am I depressed?”

Well, you've worn yourself out. You've run from place to place, doing thing after thing, going here and there and never taking the time to regroup.

And In your attempt to be there for everyone you find yourself depressed because you are worn out.

It's just a. . . "I've got to be there for them, I've got to be strong for everybody, and I've got to be the provider."

Step number one is to wear yourself out. Step number two is to shut people out, and that's exactly what Elijah did.

He abandoned his closest friend, his servant. He said, "You stay here, and I'm going on."

And quite honestly, that's what a lot of us do when we get overwhelmed, we're like, "I'm not going to let you in. I'm not going to tell you what I'm going through. If I did, you wouldn't understand, anyway," so we wall up and we start to push people away.

We skip church because we'd rather be alone and not have to deal with other people.

And if I'm being honest, I have done that so many times as well. Maybe not the skip church part. But when I'm worn out, when I'm hurting, I have put the wall up.

I'm thinking to myself, even if I don't say it out loud I'm thinking. . . "I'm going to deal with this myself. I can get through with it. I, I, I. Besides you wouldn't even understand what I'm going through, anyway."

So, we push people away and in so doing we get depressed and feel dejected. Because we've isolated ourselves from others and sometimes God.

You want to get depressed? Wear yourself out. Shut people out.

And then number three, and this is a biggie, focus on the negative.

Which is exactly what our hero, this man of God full of faith did.

What did he say? He said this. Look at it verse 4, he said, "I've had enough. I'm no better than my ancestors."

What's funny is, nobody was asking if he was, but in his mind, that's what he thought and his self-pity started to take over.

And let me tell you what self pity does, it exaggerates. It says, "I'm never going to be any good. I'm always going to be stuck where I'm at. My life's never going to get any better. I'm never going to get into that school after this grade. I'm never going to get that promotion. I'm, never going to see my kids to come to Christ. I, I'm never."

And the truth is church it's mostly just exaggeration, and it's more importantly focusing on the negative. It's all the bad things, and none of the good things. It's all the what if's, and big buts.

You want to get depressed? Here it is, right here in scripture, you wear yourself out like many of us have. You shut others out and let no one in. You focus on the negative, and the fourth thing that you need to do, if you want to get depressed is, you need to forget about God, and what He's done. Which is exactly what so many of us do.

I mean, imagine this. All that we saw God do in the life of Elijah, all that God did in him so that He could do more through him. The supernatural protection and provision, the birds feeding him, water from a brook during a drought, raising the dead, fire from Heaven.

But then it's like he forgot every thing. Jezebel says, I'm going to kill you just like you did those prophets. And he's like, Oh, God,

And instead of remembering all the times God had showed up. All the prayers that were already answered. He begins thinking. . .You're not going to come through for me. I'm a dead man walking. I need to run for my life.

And the truth is we often times do the same thing, don't we?

I mean, I can look back at the faithfulness of God in my life. He was there. He provided. He comforted. He was my strength. He was everything I needed, but in a moment, when I am depressed, when I'm down, when I'm having one of those days, I forget the faithfulness of God.

How to get depressed in four easy steps: Wear yourself out. Shut people out. Focus on the negative, and forget God.

But let's talk about the answer, because there may be someone here and maybe you're just a little blue. Maybe you are in a place of hopelessness, maybe your struggling with depression.

But here is the good news, God cares, He's an ever present help, and He wants to speak into your circumstances. Give His perceptive in your situation.

As we continue looking at scripture, what we are going to find is God's prescription for our depression.

Elijah, he didn't feel like he had any hope. He's hiding out, wanting to die. But then God sends an angel. and I want you to notice what God does not do through this angel.

There is no sermon. There is no rebuke, there's no shame. The angel is not saying, "Oh, if you only had more faith, if you only memorized more Bible verses, the angel doesn't say quit acting like a baby. . .put on your big boy pants and get over it.

No there is no rebuke, nothing negative.

And check this out. . .This is one of my favorite scriptures

Romans 8:1 (NIV): Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

God doesn't come with a rebuke, condemnation or don't get me wrong God with convict us of things but not in a condescending condemnation manner. It's the goodness of God that draws us to repentance.

But the very first thing that the angel of the Lord says is found in the last four words of verse 5. . .

1 Kings 19:5–6 (NLT): Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" 6 He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

The very first part of the prescription for our depression, God says to eat and rest.

**Talk about Pastor Lilly and always being late for service.
Finish with what I told her.**

She had made herself so busy that she really couldn't effectively do what God had called her to do simply because she was wore out.

And there may be some of you, that the most spiritual thing you can do is not go to another meeting, not read another Bible verse, but the most spiritual thing you can do is rest.

Perhaps one of the most disobeyed commands of God in the world we live in is people don't rest. Honor God with the Sabbath, and yet, we just shake that off like it's nothing.

Now listen I know I've had some sermons not that long ago about how we are no longer under the law, and we're not. And I'm not going to revisit all that right now. But that doesn't mean that what it says isn't still good to follow. There is still some good advice to glean.

Perhaps the most spiritual thing some of you can do is rest. And I know what you are thinking, because I've thought the same thing. "But, I got to do this, and I've got to do that."

But I believe God would say to you, "It does not matter if some dishes are dirty. It doesn't matter if the house is not spotless and a little cluttered. It doesn't matter if the yard isn't mowed. It doesn't matter if a few things go undone, wearing yourself out by trying to perform or whatever doesn't make you more spiritual.

It actually doesn't give you the energy to do what God called you to do in the first place and then since you have the enemy telling you didn't do everything you set out to do you get more depressed. And I'm going to talk about that more in just a minute,

Luke 10:38–42 (NIV): As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" 41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

So, the angel of the Lord goes to, Elijah provides food, and let's him take a nap.

Let's read on. . .

1 Kings 19:7–8 (NIV): The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” 8 So he got up and ate and drank.

Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

He was strengthened by the food.

Now, what's interesting to me is that this is the same mountain, most scholars believe, where God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses.

It was as if the angel was saying, “Eat, rest, and go to church.”

Go to the place where God is. God's prescription for depression: Eat and rest, then go to the place where you will experience God.

Not avoid God's presence because your busy with something else. Not avoid God's presence because you've had a bad day.

But go to where you can experience God. Now let me say this I'm by know means suggesting that church is the only place where you can experience God. The disciples went to the streets, saw God move there, but they also went from house to house and gathered with a community of believers. And it was 120 in an upper room when tongues of fire sat upon the heads of the people gathered there.

God longs for us to have an intimate personal relationship with Him, but also doesn't want us forsaking community.

The first thing he does. He says, “Go, eat, and rest.”

The second thing is this. Number two, God replaces our lies with His truth.

And I believe this is going to speak to some of you.

God replaces our lies, the lies that we are believing, with His truth.

Look at verses 9 and 10. Scripture says this. . .

1 Kings 19:9 - (NIV): There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Now, let me just pause here and ask you a question. How many of you know that God already knew what Elijah was doing there?

God’s not out there going, “Hummm, I’m wondering. Let me just see if I can find. . .oh where oh where has Elijah gone? And what is he doing where he is at.”

God already knew that.

What God wanted Elijah to do was to voice his problem, to verbalize whatever lies he was believing, so God could correct the lies. So He asks, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

1 Kings 19:10 (NIV): He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

Look what he says. . .I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. That's true.

The Israelites have rejected your covenant. Also true.

They've also torn down your altars. True again

And they put your prophets to death with the sword. Once again true.

I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." Not all true.

I am the only one left. False. I've been doing all the work. False. I'm the only one who cares. False. I'm the only one that can get it done. False.

He owned more responsibility than was actually his. He had done what God had asked him to do, and he thought he was supposed to do everything.

There's no one who cares like me. Everybody's depending on me. I'm all alone. Nobody understands.

Well, if you read on in this story, God's actually going to say, "Well, Elijah, the reality is, truthfully, there's seven thousand other Israelites.

Seven thousand others who have not bowed down to the false gods of Baal and Asherah. There are seven thousands others still seeking Me and praying.

So, don't believe the lies. You're not the only one."

I can only imagine what God would say to so many of us today, when we believe the lies.

Oh, my marriage could never be healed. Really why not? With God, all things are possible. Replace the lie with the truth.

My kids, oh, they're never going to come back to Christ, Why? With the faith as small as a mustard seed, God can move mountains.

Oh, I got this medical report, and I've got thirty days to live. What? Are you saying that something is too hard for God?

And so many of us, we believe the lies. My life's never going to be any better. I'm going to be all alone for the rest of my life. I'm stuck in this dead end job. I've got no real ministry. I can't make a difference. My husband's never going to believe in Christ. I'm always going to feel alone.

But hear this church, God wants to take those lies and replace them with truth.

Scripture tells us that. . .

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV): We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Where are you right now? Some of you, if you would speak verbally, you might just speak a lie. "I'm always going to be depressed. It's always going to be like this. I'm never going to feel God's presence again."

Let me tell you maybe , just maybe God might take that and say, "That's actually not the whole truth. There's seven thousand ...

there are people who care about you. There are believers who are surrounding you. There's a Holy Spirit who will comfort you.

Don't believe the lies.

Listen the devil will always twist the Word to make it sound like the truth.

He will lie to you about you. And he will lie to you about God.

He's always twisted the truth look at what God did in Genesis 1. . .

Genesis 1:27 (NIV): So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

In the image of God he created them. Now look what the devil tells them in Genesis chapter 3. . .

Genesis 3:4–5 (NIV): 4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Wait didn't God say they were made in His image?

God's prescription for our depression, get some rest. Replace the lies that you are believing with the truth of God.

The third thing that God does is, God speaks in a still, small voice.

God says, Eat and rest. He replaces our lies with His truth. And then God sometimes speaks not with a booming voice but rather in just a still, small voice.

But here's the thing, you have to remember who Elijah is use to dealing with, the God who sent down fire, the God of miraculous provision, the God who raised a boy from the dead. And so, he goes to meet with God and he's probably thinking, God's going to show up in some miraculous way, some powerful way. He's going to show up in this big earthquake. God's going to send this fire, and He'll certainly be in the fire.

But watch what the Bible says. Verse 11. . .

1 Kings 19:11 (NIV): The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

A wind that shattered rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind.

Earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

1 Kings 19:12 (NIV): After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

A fire, well God's been in that before surely that most be Him. Nope.

And after the fire came a what? A gentle whisper

Sometimes, when we are at our lowest, God seems to speak the softest.

Sometimes, it's just a word. It may not be much, and it may not be loud, but it's always enough.

A gentle whisper, not the booming sign that God is capable of doing and done before, just a voice.

And here's what I take so much comfort in today, I know there are those of you that you are here, and you're hurting, and I don't find any confidence in you taking anything from my words.

Some of you because of what your going through may not of even heard my words. You may have tuned me out awhile ago,

But I know that through my words, and between my words, and behind my words, and in my words, God can speak to you.

And If you realize that it's not always the obvious big thunderous applause from heaven but sometimes just that still, small voice that says, "I'm here. I'm with you. I'll never leave you. You're not alone. I am enough." . . .The still, small voice of God comes and brings life into our situation.

Sometimes, you need to rest. At other times, you have to capture those lies and replace them with truth. There are times you just need to listen, and God may speak.

The fourth thing that God does to Elijah is this. He tells him I have something more for you to do so go. . .

To overcome discouragement, hopelessness, or your depression, God says, "Eat and rest. Replace the lies with truth." He speaks in a small voice, and then God gives us that divine assignment.

1 Kings 19:15–16 (NIV): The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.

In other words, "Go back to doing what prophets do."

And I believe the Spirit of the Lord will speak to some of you today and say, "There is something yet for you to do." You feel down. You feel blue. You feel hopeless. You feel afraid. You're unsure. You've lost your confidence. You don't see it, and God may say, "If you are still alive, you are not done!" If you are still here, it is because God has something for you to do. Go back to doing what prophets do.

And maybe your thinking that's all well and good pastor but I'm no prophet.

Well, let me ask you then, what are you? If you're a mom, go back to doing what moms do. Are you a business person? Go back to doing what a business person does. Are you a person of prayer? Go back to praying like people of God pray. Do you have the gift of serving? Go back and serve someone. Do you have the gift of giving? Go and give something. Go back and do what God called you to do, and watch as He brings life back out of you!

Go back, oh man, oh woman of God, and do what prophets do.

Check this out. God gave him someone who believed in him. One friend a younger one named Elisha.

Elijah, the man of God, and Elisha comes along, and they start doing what prophets do together.

And the younger one says, "Man, if there is anything I could have, I want twice what you have. Give me a double portion of your anointing." And what does Elijah say? Elijah says, "Well, I'll tell you what. If you are here with me whenever I leave this earth, then you can have it."

Now, think about this. What did Elijah fear most? Go back to the beginning of this story. What was he afraid of? Remember Jezebel? “I’m going to kill you and make you a dead prophet by tomorrow.”

And he runs for his life. His greatest fear of all, death, was something that he never experienced.

2 Kings 2:11–12 (NIV): 11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

He’s one of the two people in all of scripture recorded, as never, ever dying. Elijah was one and Enoch was the other.

I love that, God sent a chariot of fire from the sky, and swept him up and took him on to Glory, and he never experienced what was his greatest fear.

And the reality is, for many of you, not all, but some of you the number one thing that is consuming you right now, your greatest fear, you’re biggest “what if”, for many, you will never experience it, because God will lift you above it. Protect you from it. Be with you in it.

Others of you, if I’m being honest the reality is, in this world you will have trouble. Jesus, said it. “In this world you will have trouble, but take heart,” He said, “for I have overcome the world.”

But here’s the good news even if your greatest “what if” does come to pass, He will be with you, and He will be enough for you and walk with you through it.

I find so much comfort in seeing a man of God, like Elijah, who we learned last week was a man just like we are, on the top of the world, and then it seems in a moment on the bottom. Because, in reality, I have been there as well far too many times.

After my greatest victories, the best sermon, sometimes I go home and think, “Ohhhh, I just can’t go on,” and that’s when God says, “Rest”. That’s when God seems to speak, and that’s when God says, “Go back and do what you’re supposed to do,”

And the truth is church, He is always enough.

So, for those of you that are hurting, or you feel alone. Or you feel a lack of hope. You feel a lack of faith. If that’s you know your not alone. There are others that have or are experiencing it right now as well, but the good news is God is still there.

Let’s pray

God, I pray that just like You spoke and ministered to Elijah, that You would minister to us. I ask that for those who are overwhelmed with the burdens of this life, I pray that You would give them the courage to be obedient to rest. And that they would know that they can cast all their cares upon you because you care.

God, I pray that we would not believe all of the lies. Even now as we pray expose the lies that we are believing, and replace them with Your truth. May we take every thought captive that is not consistent with Your word, and make it obedient to Christ.

Help us to go and do what prophets do. We thank You that if we are still here, we are not done. Give us something outside of ourselves to do for Your glory and for Your name’s sake.

And God, I thank You that You are going to lift us out, that You are the lifter of our heads. I thank You that joy comes in the morning. May we fully trust in You, and find comfort in Your presence.

God, we ask that in this holy moment, that Your Spirit would speak to us exactly what we need.

I thank You for Your Spirit that leads and guides in all truth. I thank you for all we've done. Help us to honor you with all we do. In Jesus name we pray.