

## **Be Healed!**

Sermon February 4, 2018 - 1 Kings 19

It does not make sense to be a Christian. It makes no sense to obey God and His laws. It makes no sense to be humble, patient, kind, loving and gentle. Look at how many atheists are in the world. They don't pray, they are not always honest, they step on others with no mercy, and they still succeed. They fight with all kinds of dishonesty against you and me, and God is not punishing them. We obey God, and just because we try to do everything according to His will, often we get in trouble. When we are facing our enemies, God's angels are not here in that very moment to save us. God is not acting right away.

### **Do you agree with me?**

Please do NOT agree with me in these things that I just said, because they are not true. Our scripture reading will prove that it is NOT true.

But, it is TRUE that, sometimes, when we are under a lot of pressure, when we are down, when we see that the devil is using people against us and can conquer us, we have a feeling that God does not care for us. When, for a longer period of time, we are bullied and abused, and we are not experiencing God's intervention, we have a feeling that God does not care. When we are wounded and people are hurting us, we can be so down that we think that God is not doing anything to save us.

**Elijah was God's chosen prophet to declare God's words and actions.** Through him, God showed many miracles amongst the Israelites. He knew, and Israel knew, also, that Elijah was God's chosen prophet. This story is telling us that, even the prophet, who is so close to God can reach the point when he feels so tired, upset and disappointed about a situation, that he can experience high anxiety or can fall into depression.

Today, we read 1 Kings Chapter 19. This afternoon, please find the time to read 1 Kings Chapter 18, to have a better understanding why the prophet Elijah got depressed so quickly. Because of the lack of time, I will tell you here very briefly.

### **What happened here?**

In 1 Kings 18, Elijah is in a confrontation with a group of people who created for themselves an idol called Baal. This sect had 450 priests. God asked His prophet Elijah to challenge and confront them about their faith, and to prove that Baal is not a god. In a miraculous way, God showed through the prophet that He is the only God in heaven and earth, and there is NO OTHER GOD but Him. God wanted to wipe out that sect in order not to infect the whole of Israel with their false teaching. At that time, the Queen practiced the Baal cult, and since the Baal priests were all executed, the Queen ordered that, in 24 hours, the prophet Elijah has to be killed. For this, Elijah got scared and decided to run away, leaving the country.

The prophet was so tired and depressed that he was looking for some rest under a tree. Before he fell asleep, he prayed. "He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep" 1 Kings 19:4-5.

Less than 24 hours before, God showed through Elijah that He is a living and acting God. Not even 24 hours later, it seems that Elijah forgot all those things and he was running away because

his life was in danger. Under the pressure of his own present thoughts and feelings, He did not count on God's providence. Elijah was threatened by his enemies and, for this, he was so stressed out that he was ready to give up his call as a prophet. He felt he could not take more pressure. He was also concerned that God won't help him.

At this point, we have to hear two things:

1. Even today, in church congregations, there are people who put so much pressure on their minister with gossiping, over-controlling behaviour, and nosiness that they can push the minister to the edge, causing anxiety and depression. For this, **many ministers give up on their call.**
2. Elijah gave up on God, but God did not give up on His servant. God knew where he was geographically and in his mental stage. We are God's children. No matter how quickly we forget what an amazing God we have, no matter what we think about Him, and no matter how quickly we would give up on our heavenly Father, He will never give up on us. Please always remember that God did not give up on his faithful servant. **Our Father will never give up on us.** Please don't forget that, when you are weak, God is still strong. I can give up on God, but God will not give up on me.

God knows exactly where you are in a physical and spiritual way, and God wants to heal your broken spirit. He knows when you are down, He knows when you are suffering. God did not promise that He will remove your enemies right away, but He promised He will be your shield.

Please always remember what King David says in **Psalm 3:3** **“But you, O LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head”.**

**“For you bless the righteous, O LORD; you cover them with favour as with a shield.” Psalm 5:12**

**“God is my shield, who saves the upright in heart.” Psalm 7:10**

Elisa felt asleep because he was tired, disappointed and depressed. But **before he fell asleep he prayed**, talked to God about his feelings. **As he rested, his prayer was laying at the feet of our God.** He was focusing on His sleepy and tired servant. God also made plans on how to lead him forward.

When Elijah woke up, he was surprised by finding bread and water next to him. He ate and drank, and he felt asleep again.

**God is full of surprises towards those who love Him.**

We read, that an angel woke him up again, providing bread and water and God's mission plan. Elijah was told that he had to walk 40 days and nights to the mountain of Horeb, the mountain where God revealed Himself many times in the past to his servants.

**Can you admire the absolute obedient prophet?** He did not say “no” to the angel. He knew that he had only one choice: to follow God's commandment. He did not obey the Lord because he was scared or forced but because Elijah loved the Lord with his whole heart, mind and spirit.

Elijah arrived after 40 days to Horeb where he experienced a huge earthquake. He thought it was because God arrived. But Elijah was wrong. Then a huge fire came out, but God was not in that fire. Then he heard a gentle, loving, kind, and calm voice talking to him. And that was God's

voice. If we translate this word from Hebrew, we can see that God's voice was like a gentle breeze which calmed down the tired human being. Please don't expect God to reveal Himself in an argument, in gossips, in human fights, or in spiritual earthquakes. He is always like the gentle refreshing breeze which can heal, revitalize, and re-energize your whole being.

God sent His healed and re-energized prophet back into the same world from where he ran away. His responsibility was to ordain new leaders and to preach God's message, helping people to hear and obey God.

Even though Elijah did not ask God what would happen to him and if he had to be afraid of his enemies, God shared His plans with Elijah about them, saying: "Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazeel, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." 1 Kings 19:17-18

Elijah knew that he did not have to be afraid to return to his place because God would walk before him, who says:

**"Vengeance is mine, and recompense." Deuteronomy 32:35**

**"I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful punishments. Then they shall know that I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance on them." Ezekiel 25:17**

**"Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God;\* for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" Romans 12:19**

The message here is that **God's child is never alone**. You don't have to be anxious about the future, no matter what you have to face right now. Even when you might think God is not present in your struggles, God will never forget about you. God always knows where you are and He is sending His angels to you with food to serve you because you are important for God and He has His unchanging plans for you. If you might be in danger, please don't focus on troubles or trouble makers but focus on God who loves you and who walks before you as a warrior. Remember that nothing and nobody can separate you from His steadfast love.

Today, in the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ is telling us that He is here, offering us healing, forgiveness, and love. He wants to empower us to do our mission in this world without fear or anxiousness, but with joy.

**It makes sense to be a Christian.** It makes sense to obey God and His laws. It makes sense to be humble, patient, kind, loving and gentle because God cares and He heals His struggling children. God will protect His people: "Indeed the LORD will vindicate his people, have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone, neither bond nor free remaining". Deuteronomy 32:35 Amen