

For the next four weeks we are going to look at the story of an Old Testament Prophet. His name was Elijah and he was a man that walked with God and talked for God. We are going to follow that up with a look at the man who followed Elijah and carried on the mission. From these two stories I think God will hopefully stir our hearts to look at His calling in our lives a little differently.

### **Elijah the Man: The men and women in the Bible were human just like us**

He was very human contrary to what we sometimes think. We sometimes believe that the men and women of the bible were superhuman and near perfection but if you reflect on the Bible honestly you will find that some of God's chosen men and women had some serious problems.

Elijah knew depression. He was according to James 5, "Elijah was human as we are."

Elijah came onto the scene with a word from God for a society that had been weakened in its very moral fabric. He was called to challenge the King and the Queen both of whom were given to evil. The whole country of Israel appeared to have forsaken God and His ways. Elijah was there to confront this evil by the power of God.

His name was a statement that means, "Jehovah is my God." Our name ought to be a statement to the world.

Our main duty is to address society. It is not to keep religious activity going at our churches but to draw up from God's well a message that confronts our world. Elijah was a man that called God's people to repentance and to turn from their sin and wayward ways.

He was a man that wasn't blessed with political correctness. He was strong and rough in demeanor but he was a man of great faith and power. He had the unusual gift of fire! He called down fire on Mt. Carmel. He called down fire on at least 100 men. He was even carried away in a chariot of fire.

He was a man of action.

He was a man of deeds and not words.

He was a man of action and not diction

He was a man of miracles and not just maintenance.

He was the epitome of a prophet. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration he spoke with Moses and Elijah. Moses to represent the law and Elijah to represent the prophets. He was a major force.

**Elijah the Messenger: All of us have been commissioned to tell the story of Christ with our lives our lips and our loves.**

<sup>1</sup> Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, “As surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—the God before whom I stand) there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!” 1 Kings 17:1 NLT

That was it. He knew when to quit. There was nothing else to say. He introduces the phrase, “As the Lord God lives. . .” This was an unchanging word! No rain and no dew which is big but then he says unless I say so or give the word. Most of us would not or should not say something like that but God has something to say. If we said something like that they would carry us away.

How many of you believe that God has something to say to the American church? God found a man that would stand before Him. He **stood** before God and worshipped God. As he was worshipping God one day God asked him to do something for Him.

God and Elijah dialogue: I have something for you to do. Thank you God I praise you God. I have something for you to do. I praise you God. Elijah! I have something for you to do.

God said I have something for you to do. I want you to go see Ahab and tell him something for Me. Ahab was the direct opposite of Elijah. Ahab was the example of a man that was hardly a man. He was weak and cowered at the sight and words of his wife. I can imagine that Elijah was happy about seeing Ahab and in fact I can hear him say Lord, Do you want me to use my gift of fire? “I’d like to catch Ahab out in the middle of a dark alley somewhere.”

Go and tell him that I am shutting the water off permanently and telling that I will tell you when it will rain again. See you later! Don’t you just love being called and chosen by God sometimes?

Elijah just breaks in to the palace. He just walks in. It is probable that Ahab was not surrounded by strong people because he wouldn’t have attracted those kinds of people. He was no doubt wringing his hands and whimpering about something. He did that often. Remember him pouting about Naboth’s vineyard? His wife got it for him. Can you picture Elijah standing there chewing on a grasshopper, unkempt hair, gift of fire? I’m thinking that as Elijah looked at this whining sniveling, lily livered, coward and said, it’s not going to rain anymore. God told me to tell you, goodbye.

<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD said to Elijah, <sup>3</sup> “Go to the east and hide by Kerith Brook, near where it enters the Jordan River. <sup>4</sup> Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food.”

<sup>5</sup> So Elijah did as the LORD told him and camped beside Kerith Brook, east of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. <sup>7</sup> But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land.

1 Kings 17:2-7 NLT

**Elijah the Monastic: We are called to live a separated life.**

Without solitude Elijah would have been inundated with requests and even bribes. “What would it take to get the rain back on?” “Is there anything you need?” Sometimes you need to just deliver the message and walk away and not stick around to see if God is going to do anything.

We all need a brook of separation where:

God takes care of us

God feeds us.

God waters us.

Shut in with God in a secret place. There in His presence beholding His face.

There comes time when Keirth dries up. There comes a time when your little private spiritual activity or ministry dries up. Your daily activity begins to wear you down.

There are times when you have a sweet relationship with Jesus and every verse you turn to produces a tears and a connection. But every now and then the brook dries up. Some of us need a Kerith where God speaks loudly, but there are others of us that need to move on in our spiritual lives. You are going to have to move along or camp beside dusty memories and starve. God was moving Elijah around. What’s He doing in your life?

Ahab spent a lot of time looking for Elijah when he should have been looking for God. He was looking for the troublemaker instead of the trouble. He thought Elijah was the problem when he was the problem. We spent a lot of time I’m afraid looking for people that we think are causing our problems. We spent way too much time praying about the problem people when in reality we should be looking for God.

<sup>8</sup> *Then the LORD said to Elijah, <sup>9</sup> “Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you.”*

<sup>10</sup> *So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, “Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?” <sup>11</sup> As she was going to get it, he called to her, “Bring me a bite of bread, too.”*

<sup>12</sup> *But she said, “I swear by the LORD your God (the widow uses his phrase) that I don’t have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die.”*

<sup>13</sup> *But Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid! Go ahead and do just what you’ve said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what’s left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!”*

*<sup>15</sup> So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat for many days. <sup>16</sup> There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.*

*<sup>17</sup> Some time later the woman's son became sick. He grew worse and worse, and finally he died. <sup>18</sup> Then she said to Elijah, "O man of God, what have you done to me? Have you come here to point out my sins and kill my son?"*

*<sup>19</sup> But Elijah replied, "Give me your son." And he took the child's body from her arms, carried him up the stairs to the room where he was staying, and laid the body on his bed. <sup>20</sup> Then Elijah cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, why have you brought tragedy to this widow who has opened her home to me, causing her son to die?" (Ever noticed that we often tend to blame ourselves and believe what others say about us) T*

*<sup>21</sup> And he stretched himself out over the child three times and cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, please let this child's life return to him." <sup>22</sup> The LORD heard Elijah's prayer, and the life of the child returned, and he revived! <sup>23</sup> Then Elijah brought him down from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "Look!" he said. "Your son is alive!"*

*<sup>24</sup> Then the woman told Elijah, "Now I know for sure that you are a man of God, and that the LORD truly speaks through you."*

Elijah was a man. He was a messenger. He was monastic (separated)

Three mischievous boys went to the zoo one day for an outing, since they had been at school all week. They decided to visit the elephant cage, but soon enough, they were picked up by a cop for causing a commotion. The officer hauled them off to security for questioning. The supervisor in charge asked them to give their names and tell what they were doing at the elephant cage. The first boy innocently said, "My name is Gary, and I was just throwing peanuts into the elephant cage."

The second added, "My name is Larry, and all I was doing was throwing peanuts into the elephant cage."

The third boy was a little shaken up and said, "Well, my name is Peter, but my friends call me Peanuts."

Elijah must have felt like Peanuts. His friends, his own people, the people of Israel, did not side with him at all. The fact is no one made a move. So he stood there alone, saying "I'm the only prophet of GOD left in Israel." On the part of everyone else, there was indecision

He was a miracle worker.

**Elijah the Miracle Worker: God wants to do His work through people just like us.**

We see the mission but we don't see the power

We see the responsibilities but we don't see the power.

We often see the circumstances but we don't see the power.

We see the problems but we don't see the power.  
We see the need but we don't see the power.

Can you imagine Elijah trying to do what he had to do without the power of God in his life?

He faced down an ungodly king and his rebellious wife. He faced a country that had turned its back on God. He faced down death and starvation and death. He was a man and a human like we are and he couldn't do it on his own and we can't do it either. We are to respond to God's call with consistent reliance on God's power. It's God's power that will move through us. It's God's power that will move on our behalf. The gospel is the power of God. That doesn't mean just that when you preach people will get saved. It means that He will be with us every step of the way. His power will work supernaturally on our behalf to deliver us out of wherever He leads us. "Lo I am with you always it not about companionship. It's about the power of God being with you as He was with Elijah.

God told him to move on to Zarephath. That is where Jezebel is from. God was telling him to go to where all the idols are made. Go right to where they are making the idols and you will find a widow that is going to take care of you. How many of you know that sometimes God moves in mysterious ways? You and I can never figure God out because just about the time we think we know what He is going to do next He jumps the fence and does something new. HE is a Creator. You can't stereotype Him. He told him to go to enemy country. God is God all over.

God is God in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, China, Iraq, Iran and in Afghanistan.

God had been working on this widow. When God tells us to talk to someone you can be sure that God has been preparing the way for you. She was wealthy under normal circumstances. Her husband had died and now there is not water or supplies of food. Everybody was coming to the end of their resources. (including Elijah) She was gathering sticks to make the last fire, the last meal and die.

Elijah showed up looking pretty intimidating and rough. He asked for water and bread. Can you see that in the paper? Evangelist takes widow's last meal! It took faith on his part and her part. God had prepared her for someone that would come. Can you imagine what she might have said to God? I know you want me to do it God but there is a famine and a drought.

*"Bring me a bite of bread, too." <sup>12</sup> But she said, "I swear by the LORD your God (the widow uses his phrase) that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die."*

*<sup>13</sup> But Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid! Go ahead and do just what you've said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what's left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> For*

*this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!”*

The jar never got empty.  
God is the supply

*<sup>15</sup> So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her son continued to eat for many days. <sup>16</sup> There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.*

Philippians 4:19: *“And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.”*

Have you ever discovered this for yourself? God wants to work for you and in you. God longs to do in and through you what He has always done through those that throw themselves on His mercy. God is the source and He is all around you.

I don't know what this means for sure but there are men and women in this room that answered a call from God. Some of us did it decades ago and some of us answered in the last few years or so. As we live out our call. . . . God promise to supply what we need. He promises to supply the need in our families. He promises to supply the need in our churches and ministries. He does it supernaturally so that we constantly look to God. HE IS THE SUPPLY.

They set down and ate every day. In the middle of all of that this ladies son dies.

Use the verses.

When the woman's sons died she immediately blamed him for the boy's death and he in turn blamed himself for his death.

When we have trouble it is hard to understand and the first thing we tend to think is that it must be our fault. The fact is that we often forget what God has called us to and get the focus on ourselves. Sometimes we listen to the words of others and it is so devastating.

He prayed three times. Sometimes it takes more than one prayer. He prayed through. He didn't give up after the first prayer. Keep on praying.

Three and a half years he waited on God. We don't always know God's timing. Elijah was a patient prophet. “After many days. . .the word of the Lord came.” God has called everyone of us to something. He has called us to confront a community. He has called us to confront a church and even our country.

## SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

We do not have a happy report to give. We have not been able to find a suitable candidate for this church, though we have one promising prospect. Thank you for your suggestions. We have followed up on each one with interviews or by calling at least three references. The following is our confidential report.

ADAM: Racial ancestry could not be confirmed. Good man but has problems with his wife. One reference told us how he and his wife enjoyed walking nude in the woods, until God finally made them put clothes back on.

NOAH: Had Former pastorate of 120 years with no converts. Prone to unrealistic building projects. Great animal lover, but the last neighborhood received a flood of complaints right as he was leaving town.

JOSEPH: A big thinker, but a braggart; believes in dream interpreting and has a prison record over accusations of a rape of his bosses wife. Good with budgets and managing resources, however.

MOSES: A modest and meek man, but poor communicator; even stutters at times. Sometimes blows his stack and acts rashly in business meetings. Some say he left an earlier church over a murder charge. Often claims to get direct quotes from God. Too much over the top for most folks. History says he was a basket case from the beginning.

DEBORAH: One word --- Female.

DAVID: The most promising leader of all until we discovered the affair he had with his neighbor's wife. Besides, he can't control his own household... so how could we respect him.

SOLOMON: Great preacher, but he too, has had serious women problems. Independently wealthy, so the church could pay him less and he can make up the difference.

ELIJAH: Prone to depression; collapses under pressure. Besides, no one has seen him in a long time. Doesn't blend well with other religious leads, either.

HOSEA: A tender and loving pastor, but our people could never handle his wife's occupation.

JONAH: Told us he was swallowed up by a great fish. He said the fish later spit him out on the shore near here three days later. We hung up.

AMOS: Too much of a country hick. Backward and unpolished. With some seminary training, he might have promise; but he has a hang-up against wealthy people.

JOHN: Says he is a Baptist, but doesn't dress like one. May be too Pentecostal. Tends to lift both

hands in the air to worship when he gets excited. You know we limit to one hand. Sleeps in the outdoors, has a weird diet, and provokes denominational leaders.

PETER: Too blue collar. Has a bad temper, even said to have cursed on occasions. He's a loose cannon.

PAUL: Powerful CEO type and fascinating preacher. However, he's short on tact, unforgiving with young ministers, harsh, and has been known to preach all night. Very offensive to women when he starts his "submission" stuff. And besides, he has a rap sheet a mile long in numerous cities.

TIMOTHY: Too young and inexperienced.

JESUS: Has had popular times occasionally, but once when his church grew overnight to 5000, he managed to offend them all with too hard a message; eventually his church dwindled down to twelve people... then finally to eleven, and even the faithful finally left his team. Critics report he seldom stays in one place very long, is easily distracted by poor, sick, and needy people, so doesn't focus on ministry. Disappeared for forty days one time to go camping and everyone thought he had left the ministry. Spends too much time in meditation, needs to attend more of the organizational meetings without making a spectacle of himself and displaying his temper. And, of course, he is single, which disqualifies him automatically. Oh... and he hangs around with sinners most of the time. Rumor has it he got crossed up with the government at one point, and they buried him with accusations. He's not a quitter, however, and keeps popping up here and there. His followers are too radical at times for society, and that seems headed for a showdown somewhere in the future. Besides, he's Jewish.

Summary:

We intend to keep looking until we find the perfect pastor for our congregation.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Search Committee.