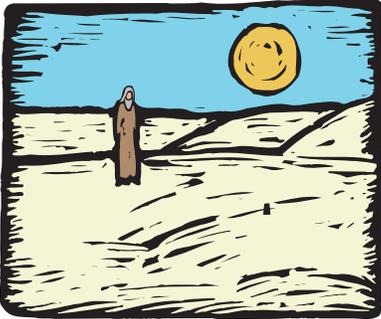




Elijah Runs Away

1 Kings 19



For a time, Elijah was focused on the amazing power of the Lord. Then his focus shifted to the threats around Him. Gently, God reminded Elijah that He is all-powerful, and He is trustworthy. God is with us even when we stop trusting in Him. He is a God of new beginnings.

Day #1: Hard Heart

Today you'll need a rock, a soft towel, and a small glass of water. Pick up the rock. How would you describe it? The first word that comes to mind is "hard." Now place the rock in a sink and try to pour some water on the rock. What happens? Can the rock soak up the water? No, the water rolls right off of the hard surface. Now try to pour some water onto your soft, dry towel. What happened? Did the towel soak up the water? The soft towel was ready to absorb the water.

Listen to Queen Jezebel's reaction to what God did on Mount Carmel, and try to decide if her heart was more like your rock or your towel.

On top of Mount Carmel, God sent fire to burn up the soaking wet sacrifice and the altar on which it was placed. God proved to everyone in Israel that He was the one true, living God. All the people watching fell to their knees and shouted praises to God.

Jezebel was not on Mount Carmel to witness what God did, but her husband, King Ahab, told her everything that happened. He told her that Baal could do nothing, but God sent a mighty blast of fire. The truth was clear: Baal was a worthless false God, but Elijah's God was all-powerful.

+ *So Jezebel sent a message to Elijah. She said, "You can be sure that I will kill you, just as I killed the other prophets. I'll do it by this time tomorrow." - 1 Kings 19:2a*

Jezebel refused to believe the truth! She had spent so many years believing in her made-up gods that she would not admit they were false. Her heart had become as hard as stone, and she would not accept the truth about God.

***** Be careful to form your beliefs around God's word, not on your own thoughts or anyone else's. Pray for a soft heart that always accepts God's truth.

Day #2: Refocus

For over three years, God had protected and provided for Elijah during the drought. God used Elijah to perform amazing miracles, including raising a boy from the dead and sending fire to the altar. Yet, when Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah, Elijah had a very surprising reaction.

+ *Elijah was afraid. So he ran for his life. - 1 Kings 19:2a*

Elijah doubted that God would protect him this time. Elijah was focused on the evil Jezebel instead of on the all-powerful God. This is like looking at a beautiful rose bush and seeing only the thorns!

Elijah ran as far as his legs could carry him. He traveled 100 miles away from Jezebel. He fled out of fear, not because God had instructed him to run. Elijah should have realized that no problem was too big for God - not even Queen Jezebel.

At times, many of us are guilty of doing what Elijah did. Even though God has taken away our sin, given us new life, and continues to pour out His blessings on us, when something goes wrong, that one thing is all we can see. During times of trouble, we need to fix our minds on Jesus!

***** Ask your mom or dad to let you look through the lens of a camera, or through binoculars. See how you can choose to focus on any one thing in the viewfinder. In order to live a life without fear, you must always choose to focus your thoughts on God who is bigger than any problem you will ever face.

They stand firm because they trust in the Lord. Their hearts are secure. They aren't afraid. - Psalm 112:7b-8a

Day #3: Can't Hide from God

Do you like to play, "Hide and Go Seek"? What if you played with someone who ALWAYS knew where you were? It wouldn't make for a very fun game, but in truth, God ALWAYS knows where you are. There is NOWHERE that you can go where God does not see you.

When Elijah ran away from Jezebel, he certainly did not run away from the Lord. Elijah wandered deep into the desert. Sad and discouraged, Elijah told God

Day #3 continued:

that he had had enough. He sat beneath a tree and fell asleep.

Suddenly, an angel touched Elijah. God had sent an angel to prepare a much-needed meal for Elijah. The angel woke Elijah and gave him fresh bread and water. The angel took care of Elijah and, it would seem, he told Elijah where to go next.

Even though Elijah wasn't where he should have been, God took care of him and urged him to move forward. God is with us even when we fail. He is the God of new beginnings. We can never go to a place that is out of His loving reach.



Suppose I were to rise with the sun in the east and then cross over to the west where it sinks into the ocean. Your hand would always be there to guide me. Your right hand would still be holding me close. - Psalm 139:9-10



The next time you play "Hide and Go Seek," remember that God always knows where you are. He wants to comfort and encourage you to depend on Him.

Day #4: A Gentle Plea

Elijah walked for 40 days and nights until he came to Mount. Horeb. This was the same place where God had appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-2). Here, the Lord asked, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" This was God's way of making Elijah think about why he had run away. Gently, God was giving Elijah the opportunity to confess his mistrust, and turn from his sin. But Elijah did not repent. Instead, he gave a list of excuses.



The Lord said, "Go out. Stand on the mountain in front of Me. I am going to pass by."

As the Lord approached, a very powerful wind tore the mountains apart. It broke up the rocks. But the Lord wasn't in the wind.

After the wind there was an earthquake. But the Lord wasn't in the earthquake.

After the earthquake a fire came. But the Lord wasn't in the fire. - 1 Kings 19:11-12

God displayed His power right in front of Elijah to give Elijah the opportunity to set his focus back on God. It was as if God was saying, "If I can split a mountain and cause an earthquake at my whim, do you really need to worry about what one woman can do to you?"

Then, God's gentle voice whispered once again, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" But, sadly, Elijah did not

Day #4 continued:

set his focus back on God. He repeated his excuses. He did not turn from his sin. His heart had become hard, very much like Jezebel, or the unfaithful Israelites. Without a humble and repentant heart, Elijah's time of being used by God would end very soon.

Just a few weeks before, God was using Elijah in a mighty way. But now Elijah's heart was hard and unchanging. We must abide with the Lord, remaining with Him daily so our hearts do not grow hard.



God is patient and gentle, wanting every person to turn from their sin and follow Him (2 Peter 3:9). He is also just, and cannot use people who will not turn from their sin. When God speaks to you about your sin, turn from it right away. He may speak to you through His word, through the Holy Spirit, or through other believers in your life.

Day #5: Call of Elisha

[Mom or Dad: you'll need a scarf or a towel today.]

In Bible times, prophets wore a special coat made of animal fur or fine fabric (Matthew 3:4). This coat was called a "mantle." Elijah wore a mantle. **Mom or Dad: place the scarf or a towel on your own shoulders.**

After Elijah would not repent on the mountain of Horeb, God told Elijah to anoint another man, Elisha (ee-LY-shuh), to become the prophet who would take Elijah's place.



Elijah left and found Elisha plowing a field with a pair of oxen. There were eleven other men in front of him, and each one was also plowing with a pair of oxen. Elijah went over and put his own coat on Elisha. Elisha stopped plowing and ran after him. - 1 Kings 19:19-20a CEV

Mom or Dad: Transfer the scarf or towel from yourself to one of your children. Elijah placed his prophet's coat on Elisha as a symbol that he was being called by God to be the next great prophet.

Elisha was honored to go with Elijah. Elisha kissed his parents good-bye, and then he destroyed his farming equipment. He had been called to be God's servant, and for him, there was no turning back. Elisha became Elijah's assistant. By spending time with Elijah, Elisha would learn more about becoming a prophet.



If you are a follower of Jesus, you, too, are called to His service. Let the "mantle" on your shoulders be a reminder that you are called to tell the good news of Jesus wherever you go. Just like Elisha, there should be nothing that you would not give up in order to obey God's call.