

Elijah & Limping: Seeing 20/20

Our theme for the year is Seeing 20/20. That means seeing things through God's eyes. No matter where we're at in life we need His perspective of things. How should we view our spiritual life during these strange times? Is everything on pause? Has God called "times out" in your fight against Satan? You know, it's strange for so many who find more time on their hands. Though many are still working full time hours and going into work, still so many are at home passing the time by. Feels like not much is going on. But, the reality is that whether we're busy or not, Satan is always at war with us. In fact, he can even take advantage of us while we're down. Yes, he's the kind that will kick you while you're down. In fact, today we're going to discuss Elijah when he stood against King Ahab and the prophets of Baal, yet one of the greatest battles he faced isn't one you expect - it occurred when he was alone in a cave asking to die. Yes, a spiritual battle is always present and we must stay alert as soldiers of Christ. So, let's rewind during a time of no rain and famine, when God's people were turning away from Him.

- Though a little over a handful of chapters in the Old Testament mention him, Elijah played a significant role to God's people.
- Elijah comes out of nowhere in ch. **17**. No introduction and no history/family.
- He enters during the reign of an evil king - Ahab. Ahab was more evil than any king before him. He erected an altar for Baal and made an Asherah.
- The Lord shut the heavens up for three and a half years it did not rain (**1 Kings 18:1, 45; James 5:17**).
- Today our focus is on **1 Kings 18:20-40**. At this point Elijah meets Ahab in the 3rd year of no rain. Ahab calls him the "troubler of Israel", but Elijah makes it clear the only trouble to Israel is Ahab and his disobedience to God's word by following after Baal.
- Elijah tells him to gather Israel to Mount Carmel along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah for a final showdown.
- Read **1 Kings 18:20-21**
 - Limping in the sense "to waiver between choices, conceived of as limping". **You think about a man limping. He rocks from one side to the other. Here and there.**
 - This is a person who won't make a commitment. They won't deal with problem at hand - they live their lives as if they don't exist. Here's the thing -

Baal may not have been real, but there was a real problem. Have you ever done that? Are you doing that now? Does ignoring our sin make it vanish?

- **And why would a Jew go back and forth between God and Baal?** There were some fleshly benefits that came with Baal worship.
 - When God was telling His people to flee from perverse sexual sin, child sacrifices, mediums, fortune tellers, their fashion, etc. do you think they were always making that up? No, God warned them not to behave and practice the evil of other nations. They were a promiscuous people. A wild people. They liked to party.
 - Baal could fill the fleshly desire and God the spiritual (if you're in to that kind of thing).
 - Now, before we mock at such an idea, it's probably good that we all agree we can relate. We've all fallen short in order to please the flesh. Not once. Not twice. Let's just say we've done it a few times in many ways.
- Their reaction to Elijah's statement proved the point: **they said nothing**. That's right - they didn't want to commit to anything.
 - **Joshua** called for a dramatic, dogmatic decision. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord! We like it in theory, but it comes at a high price.
 - **Jesus** says it costs family. Or a family business. Or a place to sleep. Or an eye or hand if need be. Jesus says it comes with a cross.
- It's a careful balance, because in life we are to be humble and live at peace as long as it depends on us. Time should also teach us to be careful about being dogmatic. Humility, a love for God's will and not our own, is required. It seems that even in at my young age of 36 I find myself trying to be more careful about drawing hard lines where God has not. However, we need to remember that God does call us to draw lines in the sand in many areas of life.
 - How sweet it is for God to see His children walking by faith.
 - How sweet the picture of Jesus telling Satan, "No" while in the wilderness.
 - Imagine having a wife shut down the advances of a man not her husband.
 - Imagine the pride of a mother when she hears her children act with integrity.
 - So, is there something you're limping between?
 - Pornography? We say love of money and I wonder how many people who actually have a love for money, realize or would say they have it? How about this - love of comfort over God? Love not being bothered with spiritual things? Of love of flexibility with it comes to life decisions. This decision will give me more comfort, flexibility, happiness, etc. Less

serving others. Less time with God or focus on Him, but I'm not deserting Him. I've got a little of this - a little of that.

- Is one foot in God's kingdom and the other in Satan's?
- What are you willing to say, "No" to today? Where has Satan got in?
- **OR will we say nothing?** It was very fitting that they said nothing, wasn't it?

- Read **1 Kings 18:22-29**

- I'm not gonna beat a dead horse. I'll be to the point. Serving ourselves and false gods doesn't work out. They don't deliver you, because ultimately, you're crying to the mess you've made. You're crying to yourself to deliver you out of the pit. You can't do deliver yourself. You only make a mess of your life.
- Sometimes a hard rebuke is needed. I wouldn't talk to someone like Elijah did, but that's also because I've never been in a situation like his. I'm not going to judge his delivery. Bottom line: enough was enough and they needed to deal with the absurdity of the situation. He's not real and not gonna answer you!

- Read **1 Kings 18:20-22**

- Elijah knew God was real. He knew He would answer. He knew He would provide.
- Elijah knew a God who fed him East of the Jordan. Fed him by way of ravens.
- Elijah saw how God provided for this woman and her son in Zarephath along with himself.
- Elijah saw how God used him to bring life back into her son who had died.
- YOU know this God. It doesn't matter how things look - there's always a battle and God is present - ready to help.
- So, what will it be? Next week I'd like to discuss what we should do if we've found ourselves limping between God and this world. It's good to acknowledge the problem, but how do we get out of the pit? But I'll leave you with this.
- Remember how the Hebrew writer charged brethren who were "drifting away" (2:1) to "Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed." **Hebrews 12:12-13.**
 - Let's first make the commitment to turn to the Lord for strength. Let Him bring strength back to us so we're ready to serve and walk a straight and steady path. Be ready to be healed!