

FROM LIMPING TO RUNNING

Last week we looked at the spiritual showdown at Mount Carmel. Elijah challenged Israel - stop straddling the fence. Quit limping between two opinions. God calls for extreme decisions to be made when we turn away from him. So, perhaps that's you. Maybe you've been straddling the fence, but you're ready to strengthen your feet and run to the Lord! But, where do we go from here? I pray this brings some guidance when helping others or perhaps getting out of a pit yourself. God bless you.

Read 1 Kings 19:1-8

- In this passage we find Elijah fleeing for his life. He's anxious and depressed. He's asking to die.
- To be clear: this isn't about Elijah being lost in darkness and needing to return to the Lord. However, I find that what happens in the following passages are great tools for those seeking to return to the Lord, but feel overwhelmed and lost.
- The first order of business is to remember the goodness of the Lord. See how He provided for Elijah, yet again?
 - I think about how the Lord provided for me even when I had turned away from Him. He's proven over and over again how good He is.

Read 1 Kings 19:9-14

- I'm not sure what the wind, earthquake and fire was all about. It does remind me how great God is and how He is more powerful than any problem or threat I'm being faced. It reminds me how He how, even though He's so great, He answers in a whisper with gentleness.
- The second order of business is relaying our thankfulness and needs to the Lord through prayer.
 - We need to have some honest, heart to heart discussions with the Lord. I'm thinking about the full armored saint in [Ephesians 6](#). He's got his helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness, sword - the word of God, a shield of faith, belt of truth and shoes - the gospel of peace. But, what is this completely equipped soldier of God doing? The text says he's "[praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.](#)" In my mind he's taking a knee. Sword in the ground. Bowing his head in prayer to the Father above. What good does armor do if you go into battle without talking to God first.
- God talks back. Did you know that? Go to His word and listen to Him.
 - Every word of encouragement is there. He is patient. Slow to anger. Abounding in steadfast love. He remembers you are dust. He's there to help. So, He guides

you. His word is powerful, but if you've not been in it lately you've probably forgotten.

- Many times we're given answers to our problems, but we don't like what we're told. God's word is rich. I don't know if this will hit you like it did me, but allow me to read a beautiful passage to a people who had returned from captivity and needed to turn their lives back to God. **Zechariah 8:1-13**. What a good and gentle Father.

Read 1 Kings 19:15-18

- We need to get back to work, but not for ourselves.
 - Listen, being alone in a cave isn't helping anyone. Getting wrapped up in our own desires didn't work out for us, so it's time to help others.
- We, those not struggling, need to get to work as well.
 - **Jude 22-23**, *"And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh."*
 - **Galatians 6:1-2**, *"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."*
- I think about Jesus' willingness to help. What a blessing to have a personal invitation to follow Jesus, because that meant you had Him by your side. Think its easier to follow God with Jesus by your side? Is it easier to follow Jesus with your brother/sister at your side?
 - **Matthew 5:38-42**, *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."*
 - Simply put: if I can turn my cheek to the evil and walk an extra mile with someone forcing me - how much more should I help by brother/sister in need?
 - We like, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!". But, you cannot love the Lord and hate your brother. Maybe today we should fill in this blank, "As for me and my family, we will do _____ for my brother!"
 - What are we willing to do? It's not enough to tell someone to get their life in order without helping them. That's not how we learned Christ.

- We read about the saints of old selling their possessions in order to help their brethren. Extreme is what that feels like. Should we say that couldn't be done? We read about Jesus leaving His heavenly abode and stooped down to wash His disciples feet. Extreme! So, that can't happen anymore? Tell me it doesn't, but don't tell me it can't or shouldn't.
- Jesus says come and follow Me. That's extreme. But, He was with them while also using it to His will. You make yourself available to someone else. Commit to them, but remember it's a two way street. Listen, at my point in life, I have a wife and 4 kids. There's something I decided long ago - my family comes first. Many a preacher has lost his kiddos because he spent so much time and focus on the spiritual family that he innocently (lets give each other the benefit of doubt) neglected his own. So, I'm not going to commit all my evenings to brethren. Sorry, I've said it. However, you're free to have dinner with us anytime you want. Feel free to stay afterwards and we can talk. It doesn't mean if something extreme was going on I wouldn't drop what I'm doing (because I will), but you get the point? We need to be available for each other.
 - We need to think about this before making long-term commitments, jobs, etc. This may seem extreme, but is the body worth it? Are people worth it? Is it only to be on the shoulders of a few? How valuable were we to the Lord? Did we put Jesus out for a bit? There are great benefits that come from helping one another. We grow in love for each other.

The Challenge

- I read that Elijah spent 40 days and nights on Horeb, the mount of God. Reminds you of how Moses fled to this place after his brethren turned on him. Reminds you how Jesus had to spend his 40 days and nights in the wilderness. Listen, we all have to spend some time in the wilderness to work some things out. Let's do a 40 day challenge.
 - Listen, there are more than likely bad habits you have created, because even though living in sin doesn't work out long-term, it does deliver short-term. This is why it's so hard to break habits. So, you've got to hang in there and trust the process. God's way is so more fulfilling, but more importantly, He is our Father in whom we trust. We follow His way because we love Him and He loves us.
 - So, for the next 40 days - put prayer, study and seeking for help into action. Reach out to someone who will help and hold you accountable. Find your "Burden-Bearer" and commit. We need someone to check in with and have several discussions. Someone who will push us on towards God along while we're strengthening our personal relationship with God. **Zechariah 8:20-23.**