

# Elijah Was a Man - Part 2

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of true manhood and spirituality through the life and character of Elijah, highlighting the necessity of standing firm in faith amidst societal challenges.*

**Duration:** 26:12

**Scripture:** James 5:17

**Topics:** "Elijah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Elijah from the Bible. He highlights how God used various circumstances to humble Elijah and teach him reliance on God alone. The preacher emphasizes the importance of the cross and how it requires individuals to let go of their pride and surrender everything to God. He also mentions the significance of the resurrection and the glory that follows the cross. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to embrace humility and trust in God's plan.

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## Transcript

And without our having collaborated on the matter, the quote from Elijah, Mr. McAfee from Elijah, and now I want to speak from the story and life of Elijah. Perhaps God had his hand in this, we trust so. In the book of James, the last chapter being the 5th, verses 17 and 18, Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain.

And it rained not on the earth but a space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven and the earth brought forth her fruit. Now, doing no violence to the text at all, I went to the word man here, and my sermon subject then would be, Elijah was a man.

Now the reason that I have chosen, one of the reasons, to speak to you this morning, is that this is the first, or the beginning, of a conference or convention to the advanced spiritual life. We are hoping to be able to get Christians who have been through an impasse for no mud remembers how many years, to break out of that impasse and to move out to a better, more fruitful, more victorious life than they have ever known before. Now, I have been preaching this long before the convention was ever established here, and I believe in it with all my heart, but I noticed one weakness in the deeper life of my friends, and in myself too, of course, and all of us as I travel about.

And I want to try, if I can, to set up a red lantern and say, watch this, let's not fall into this trap. I'll tell you what I'm talking about. I have noticed that as soon as Brethren seek to be filled with the Spirit, to walk in

the Spirit, to live the Christ-centered order, they tend to get feminine.

And I might even go so far as to say effeminate. I believe that effeminacy and spirituality are synonymous. Elijah was a man.

That the power of God in a man will not make him any less a man, or a woman any less a woman. The Holy Ghost never violates our humanhood, only destroys our sin. But what we are as human beings, we are to remain only we are to be set aglow as the bush in which the fire dwells.

Now, I do not believe that spirituality and timorousness is not Siamese twins anyway. And I do not believe that the mincing, cautious, pusillanimous for the deeper life is a deeper life at all. It is simply a retreat from reality.

We're running from the world, and yet I have my brethren of this persuasion who become effeminate, or at least feminine. And so we have an arrogance over us while we're trying to be strong. I don't believe in this.

I want to talk to you about a man who certainly knew what it was in the spirit, though he was an Old Testament character. It was Elijah. And he was a man.

Now, I made him the kind of fellow he was. And I would guess that the opening verses of chapter 17 of 1st Elijah is introduced into the scene, onto the scene, would give us a tip-off as to what made Elijah the man Elijah. I stand before God.

I believe that Elijah was the man he was because of the one before. He was a man who stood before God. He was a man of like passion, surely, but he was a man who saw God.

Elijah had found the ultimate reality. You can spell that in capital letters if you want to. The ultimate which the whole world yearns but constantly misses because of sin.

Elijah had found the absolute. Now, let anybody who wants to say that man's an absolutist, and I'll smile. I've smiled off worse ones than that.

An absolutist is somebody that believes that this is not all relative. Not everything is relative. That there's somewhere a peaceful center from to which we move and out from which we move and back to which we move.

And that is the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The absolute beyond the relative. He had found the holy in the midst of the infinite.

He had found the infinite in the midst of the finite. He had found the perfect in the midst of the imperfect and the eternal. Elijah had found all this, and it was all condensed into that term so dear to him, so dear to Old Testamenters, and so dear to the church, the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the creator of the heaven and the earth, the author of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So what Elijah found that made him the man he was was not a philosophy. You see, a philosophy is simply a superior. And if you have that viewpoint today, you may get bumped off of it tomorrow.

If you have suddenly burst into a wonderful spiritual philosophy, I would not congratulate you, because the probabilities are somebody else will come along a little more persuasive and will persuade you. What Elijah found was not a religion, as religions are a damn dozen. What he found was not a key of life, but

God.

And Elijah had this motto. I've given him this motto along with Abraham, and a lot of you agree with me this was it. I think it was, I believe the Bible teaches that it is only God matters after all.

Only God matters, and that's the way that Elijah was a man. He had an encounter with God. He met God.

He got past these doctrines to his theology to the Lord God of Abraham that had made him. And so this spiritual encounter of his was tested. It's a great breakdown in modern Christianity that persons take their religion secondhand, and they never have a true religion, so they can't relate their religion to life.

And their Christianity is a lovely symbol, it's no living reality. I find that there's an awful lot of religion that isn't real. You know, the science of semantics has this, and I'll read merely.

It doesn't teach me anything, it just helps me to illustrate something I already know. But they have what they call first an object. Then from that object or referent there comes an idea.

And then to express that idea and the other point of the triangle, there's the word that springs from the idea, and the idea that springs from the object. But you knock the object away, and you can still have ideas and words. And it's the same in religion.

There must be an object, and that object is God. And from the triangle of God there comes the idea. That's our theology.

And then there is the idea, that's the witness we give to the world. But I find that in a great many places, among a lot of people who are even seeking after the victorious life, they have the idea and they have the word, but they don't have the object. That result is, of course, the thing is simply visionary, airy and insubstantial, like a painting of the nymph or fairy.

A painting hangs in one of the institutes of the America called The Dance of the Nymph. The artist spent months painting that beautiful. Those nymphs are dancing around there in the moonlight in shimmering garments, the essence of all grace and quintessence of all.

What's a nymph? There's no such thing. There's no such thing. You can start at the Milky Way and go to the depths of the earth and take the wings of the morning and sail the sea and you won't find a nymph anywhere.

There isn't any such a thing. It was born out of some fellow's head once, and yet here he painted a picture of it. So it's a beautiful thing, and it's worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, and yet there's no such thing as a nymph.

And around among religious people I find a lot of nymphs. Pictures of nymphs, but no nymphs. Just pictures of nymphs.

I don't believe in that. I think there ought to be a hard object that we ought to meet with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Anything we believe and anything that we witness to must grow out of the overwhelming experience of meeting God in Christ Jesus.

And then there will be our religion will not go one way and our lives another, but our religion and our lives will go together, and our ideas will follow the object, and our witness will follow the psychologically normal

as well as theologically normal. And I'm sure that men can be men and women can be women, and to have that looking over your shoulder, cautious, apologetic attitude that so many deeper life people have, and so might be caught doing something that wasn't saintly, or saying something that the hierarchy of the spiritual reality didn't belong with. Sense of humor atrophies and dies and dries up and blows away, and they say they begin to be stuffed shirts and cowls upon the audience.

They're not as holy as all that, and they're not hypocrites either. They're just caught in an ugly net. Elijah was a man, don't forget that brother, and he was a man who knew God and walked with God and could reach up and then lock them tight.

And when he went away, he went away in a whirl of fire and wind. God took him to heaven. I don't know where he is.

Everything about prophecy says he's coming back with Moses to witness the last days. I hope they're right, because it would just be sort of in character for a laughter, a long absence from the earth. Stand up and say, here I am.

As I was saying, I stand before God. Well, now Elijah was one man against the world. I ask you to notice it here.

One man against the world. He was out of accord with all everything around about him. Not because he was mean, not because he was contrary, but because he stood before God in an hour standing before God.

He was God's man in a godless age. He was a witness from heaven to earth. He was a witness witnessing to bad men.

He was a man who stood before God and lived the indwelt life as in his time back there. And the result was, of course, he was out of joint with the people around about him. You know, there's a word that I thoroughly don't like.

The word adjust. Adjust. We take our poor little kids to school when they're five years old and start adjusting them.

All the parents in them say, I don't think that little Johnny is getting adjusted. Well, little Johnny has any brains he won't. But they're always wanting to get us adjusted to everybody.

Adjusted to whom? Well, adjusted to everybody else. How did they get that way? For them to get adjusted. But adjusted to what? Nobody knows what.

And Elijah was maladjusted. He wasn't adjusted to the world. Elijah into a class and saying, now, Brother Elijah, we want to start with adjustment.

We'd like to get you adjusted to Jezebel, and we want to get you adjusted to the Baalites. We want to get you adjusted to the way things are done. Elijah would have stood up and said, I stand before God as a man.

Elijah is a man. He was out of accord with all the nation. There was that weak and wicked King Ahab.

I don't even like to talk. I find it difficult to talk about him without feeling contempt. And I wrote something one time, said a Christian shouldn't feel contempt.

And so I shouldn't. And I don't like to talk about Ahab. He's such a poor little mouse of a fellow.

And then he had that overbearing, iniquitous, idolatrous Queen Jezebel. And she ran the religion. She was the head of the ecumenical council of the Baalites.

She had four hundred prophets of Baal to do her bidding and eat out of her hand. And of course, Elijah was out of, I was out of accord with Ahab. That was them.

He was, he stood up straight and everybody else was crooked. And everybody said, look at that fellow. What's wrong with him? All is wrong with him.

He was straight up like a palm tree. And Elijah stood out and stood against because he was a straight man in the crooked generation. It's always so.

And then there's the religion of the day. Nowadays they've got the softest, most pusillanimous attitude toward religion. If you stand up and point out errors or dare to stand up and say, I don't agree, they say you're a hate monger.

You're a hate monger if you, unless all of the weaklings, the time servers and, and all the, the timid preachers, they're all alike. You know, they're each afraid of the other. And this, Elijah was against this.

He was against it. And of course, it cost him something. Back in the days when Adonais was standing for the Trinity against Erasmus, stood for, for the Unitarianism.

That is the doctrine that God is one, is not three persons and Christ was not God. So in Adonais, I suppose he came in, whispered it, thought that he would knock Adonais flat. And he said, Adonais, the world's against you.

Back and said, all right, then Adonais is against the world. That's the kind of man Elijah was. He was for God.

He wasn't against people. He was for God. And if people, then he was against people.

And you will find my brother that the deeper life, the spirit-filled life, the victorious life, whatever we want to call this, just simply make you a soft, inoffensive pussy of a fellow. But there's something in this, there's an element of, and you know, the cross is always against things. The cross never was for anything since the world began.

The cross is out there not to condemn. You go to the cross and say, now, wait a minute. There's no use to be rough about this.

Couldn't we have a meeting of minds, common denominator, where we could get together? And the cross says, get up here and die or leave me alone. I'm not here to compromise and confer. I'm here to kill.

I'm here to destroy my pride to the cross, my pride, my ego. And I say, now just a minute, cross, I don't feel that you should be tough about this. I'm a pretty good fellow.

I'm an American. I'm a white man. And I'm, I'm all this kind of stuff.

And the cross says, I don't care your color, die or get away. And I got to take my white skin to the cross and let it die. And I got to take my, my, anything I have, my pride, any, any little gifts, everything, has to go out there and die.

The cross is against it. After the cross comes the resurrection and the glory. But before the glory, there must be, there must be the cross.

And Elijah knew that about the cross long before the cross was erected there on the hill outside. He knew that man is bad and the society is bad and rotten clear through. He knew that human nature is bad and in us dwells no good thing.

And so Elijah stumbled in his day of the man who is against. Well, then you've got to be for, but you're, you're against only because you're for. And of your againstness is that you're for God while you're being against the things that are against God.

Well, cost this man everything. It was not simply an hour a week at church, you know, not an occasional donation made and then have, uh, but it was a deep, he was forced by the moral conditions of the day and his own godly testimony in life. He had to take a deep and serious attitude of, of violent descent to his contemporaries, from his contemporaries, since it was radical, grave, and even treasonable, because he was unquestionably guilty of treason.

Israel, because Israel was wicked all the way through, they were at the low point morally and Elijah stood for God. First he was out of joint with him and he couldn't go along with him. And the king of Israel found him there and said, Art thou he the trouble of Israel? He didn't run for it, he never troubled Israel.

I stand before God. Thou, you and your house, you trouble Israel by your sin. Well, what I'm trying to say in this, by this little chunk of biography here is that the victorious Christian life isn't simply there that you pin on and say, well, now I'm a little superior.

It isn't an advanced course you take in pietistic religion, simply an overtone of mysticism put down upon your good theology. It will require of you to stand, require of you to stand for God among his enemies. It will require you to stand up for the things you believe and do it with wrath and humility, but do it boldly.

Elijah was a man and he was a man that if they could have caught him, of course, that he had a, he had a commission to rebuke and to stand against. And of course, he was a lonely man. I asked two or three times, called the saint must walk alone.

I won't preach it here, it isn't quite in accord with what we're trying to do, but that the saintlier a man gets, the lonelier he gets. And he can be lonely, surrounded by gabbling, chuckling Christians, not having the remotest idea of what it's all about. They're busy Christians, but they don't know what he is doing or saying.

They have no conception. They're all dashing about with notebooks and Bibles and don't know what it's all about. And the man who sees in the hour of power blindness will be a lonely man.

You can go back to Enoch who walked with God and was not for God, took him and come cleared down to the latest man who walked far, far country, some missionary alone, and you will find that loneliness and godliness usually go together. I'm too socially inclined, and I'm, I tend to absorb my religious experience from other people. And I can't stand, never get very big.

You have to, if it's a pumpkin vine or a grape barber or some little plant, you have to put up flowers, a lot of flowers, always, always stumbling over flowers around the house. And you put sticks up for the weak little vines to run up. But the old lady come and prop them, they stand alone.

And the saint of God, who's indwelt with the spirit and who's found himself and found his God in the midst of all, he'll stand there alone. And sometimes he'll have to be awfully alone. Loneliness.

Don't let it bother you, my brother. Come back. You know, they said Wesley dwelt with God and came down sometimes to talk to the people.

So come back to the people. They're here for you to help and bless and pray for, but they'll help you unless first you have been with God and you're not likely to help them unless you have been with God. And Elijah learned that secret.

The lonely man and the great power of the man lay not in what he said so much as what he did to do to him. God had to humbly almost humiliate him. I wouldn't say that God humiliates us, but then it was borderline humiliation.

He came a time when he had to accept the humble position of going to a well. Well, he first, God said, get thee to the brook Tirth and drink water from the brook. And I will send ravens with meat to feed thee.

And a great stalwart man dressed in rough garments, out of the woods, out of the mountains of Tishbe, and used to sitting around inactive by a brook, drinking water and having birds feed him. That was a humbling thing. And then God said, now go drink of the brook.

And after a little while, his prayers began to get answered and the brook began to dry up. And he had preached, there'll be no rain, but he forgot if there's no rain, there'll be no brook. And here he sat beside the brook and the brook began to get dry.

And the last morning, when he looked down, there was no desert there, working around in the dry sand. He must have looked up and said, oh God, how come you sent me here to preach and you sent me here to preach? Instead of the rivers, the brook has even dried up. A lot of times they put the economic squeeze on a man.

The old carnal deacons and elders and all the rest of the crowd, they put the economic squeeze on. And the church goes down financially. The brook's drying up.

Elijah, don't let it worry you, because God has a widow for you. A widow woman will feed thee. Now that was humility, still worse.

Here was a man that never to ask anything from anybody except God. Now he said, go to the widow woman. Here she was.

He said, give me something to eat. And she said, I've got nothing to eat, only one little cake and just one meal and that's to die. He said, well, give it to me.

And that was a horribly humbling thing. I remember years ago when I was a younger preacher, it was a dear saint of God. And the same time she'd seen me, she'd give me 50 cents.

I never found out why it was. It was always 50 cents. But 50 cents was worth, oh, two or three dollars.

And I rather was humbled about it, but I took it. That woman scrubbed and did that kind of work. And she'd always give me 50 cents when I was a young preacher and didn't rub against each other.

It was kind of humiliating, but it did me good. And I think this did Elijah good, too. A widow woman, he said, will feed you.

You see, he was a man and he stood before God, but even Elijah had to be killed. And so the Lord slipped by working in his heart to humble him, to break him down and to throw him over on God alone, take away the thing in which he was so proud of. And the brook dried up and God blessed the widow woman, but it must have hurt Elijah to have to take the last crust of it.

So there stands Elijah. There's that man, a hero to all generations. There he stands.

I find that some devotion and all that sort of thing tend to get a little weak, you know, and soft and tend to get the feeling that to be able to walk about with my head over on one side piously. And I read about Elijah and I hear God say, Elijah was a man. Then I straighten up and say, thank God.

You can be a man of God. You can be a spirit-filled man. You can be a victorious man and still be a man.

And Elijah was. You are looking for spiritual life. You want to break out of the impasse, I say, in which you find yourself.

You want to become a better Christian. Take as a sample some pious-looking fellow that wouldn't know a joke from a jukebox and that has no salt, no courage, and nothing, no raciness in his disposition. Stop doing so many things that he's standing dead still.

Don't take that as your sample, brothers and sisters. Don't do it. That's not the deeper life.

That's something purely tall. The men of the Bible were living men, colorful men, men of warmth, men of punch, men of, and say something, were somebody. And Elijah was one of that kind of men.

Well, he's a strength. I said that I go back to Elijah sometimes just to know how the other half lives, you know, and escape this effeminate Christianity that passes through the deep. Elijah was a man in the strength, I say, to the moral lives of millions.

And he was dear to God. He was dear to God before God. He obeyed God.

There are two phrases in the story of Elijah. One was, the Lord heard the voice of Elijah. Why did Elijah, the other one answers it, Elijah heard the voice of the Lord? If you want to go on with God, you learn to hear.

And by hearing, I don't merely mean that there are wavelengths falling on your eardrums. I mean hear in the scriptures to carry out. And because Elijah carried out the word of the Lord, even when regardless of what it meant to him, God was there every time he prayed.

So Elijah heard the voice of the Lord, and the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and here was God. And Elijah, as any man with so many things wrong with him, and so many things he had that he shouldn't have had and shouldn't have had that he had, we'd have written him off and drawn a bladder to demount and said, he won't do. But God said, yes, he'll do.

He's a man. He's a man who isn't afraid of people, and he's a man who loves me, and he's a man who isn't afraid. Except once he ran a little, but he got over that.

He's about to have a nervous breakdown, I think. I excuse it on those grounds. But finally, what he thought of Elijah when he took him away to heaven in the chariot.

Elijah blessed God for a man like Elijah. Who would have Elijah's mantle? Well, I'll tell you, no coward needs apply. None of these timorous fellows who think timorousness and holiness are synonymous.

You don't need to apply because you couldn't do it. God couldn't say about you, you're a man, and stop and wonder. But he knew what Elijah was.

Elijah was a man, a man of God, a man of like passion, but a man who lived so close that he could touch the ceiling of heaven by reaching up. A rough old fellow that he was. He was a man of God.

He was a sample of what spirit-filled Christians ought to be, long before the word Christian was ever heard. God bless you, and let us try to be alike this man, as he was like his Lord. Amen.

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