

Elijah's Desire to Die

by Chuck Smith

Elijah's desire to die is a reminder that fear and faith are mutually exclusive, and that God's provision and communication with us are often in unexpected ways.

Duration: 25:04

Scripture: Exodus 20:3, 1 Kings 19:1

Topics: "Elijah"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the story of Elijah and his desire to die. After defeating the prophets of Baal and experiencing a great victory, Elijah becomes discouraged and asks God to take his life. God responds by sending an angel to provide food and rest for Elijah, showing His care and provision. Pastor Chuck emphasizes that God doesn't confine Himself to one particular method or way of working in our lives, but He meets us where we are and provides for us in different ways. The sermon encourages listeners to trust in God's provision and to allow His Spirit to fill and satisfy their souls.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole
Here was Elijah with a contest with these prophets of Baal and Asherah, standing up against them, brave, challenging them, you know, the whole scene. And now here's Jezebel saying, tomorrow at this time, man, I'm gonna have your head. And he gets frightened.

He starts to run. And he ran south, through the land of Israel, through the land of Judah, all the way to the southern end of Judah, to Beersheba. When he saw that, he arose, went for his life, came to Beersheba, which belongs to the tribe of Judah, and there he left his servant.

But he himself continued to run for another day on into the Negev, the journey into the wilderness, and he came and sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die. And he said, It's enough, O Lord, take away my life, for I'm no better than my father's. Got it? I don't want to live anymore, you know.

It's interesting how that fear often transmits into despair and despondency. We give in to fear. He gave in to fear.

The threat of Jezebel. And as a result, the lack of faith. You see, fear and faith are mutually exclusive.

If you have real faith in God, you're not going to fear. Fear is a sign of a lack of faith in God. And so he desires to die.

He's discouraged. He probably had felt that the victory of God on Mount Carmel would not only convince Ahab, but would also convince his wife Jezebel. He figured when Ahab told Jezebel how the fire came down, consumed the sacrifice, the altar, licked up the water, that surely Jezebel would also become a believer in Jehovah and be converted.

But such was not the case. She vows vengeance against the prophet of God. And discouraged that the revival that he was hoping for really didn't take place.

There was an emotional experience among the people, but not really a heart-changing experience. So many times we can have emotional experiences, but they can be shallow. They're not necessarily a deep experience with God.

If you have a deep experience with God, it's going to affect your heart, the volitional area of your life. And so he is here requesting to die. And he lay down and went to sleep under the juniper tree.

And an angel touched him and said unto him, arise and eat. And he looked and there was a cake that was baked on the coals and a cruise of water at his head. And he did eat and drink and laid down again.

We remember how that Jesus called his disciples to come and eat at the Sea of Galilee. And when they came to the shore, there were fish on a bed of coals. Here the Lord is inviting, the angel of the Lord is inviting Elijah to his table that he had prepared, the bread that was baked on these coals.

God has interesting ways, ways of providing for his people, ways of which we are not familiar. One of our problems is as we look at a situation and as we try to analyze and figure out the answers to the problems. As we have thought, well, if God will just do this and this, then my problems can be solved.

We then are prone to pray that God will follow our instructions. The way we've figured out and worked out the solutions. God so often times has a much simpler answer.

And God's ways are not our ways. His ways are beyond our finding out. And God has resources that we know nothing about.

And God isn't confined to one particular way. And this is the problem of denominationalism. They usually say this is the way that God works.

And they've got God in this little rut. And thus we develop the denomination over the way God worked in our lives. You take the way Jesus treated the lepers or treated the blind people.

In the healing of the blind, he didn't follow a certain pattern. To some he just spoke the word of faith. To others he laid his fingers upon their eyes.

And to some he made mud out of his spit. Rubbed it in their eyes and told them to go wash. You have actually cause for three denominations.

He touched me, he didn't touch me, he put mud in my eye. This is the way God worked in my life. But God doesn't confine himself to one particular method or to one particular way.

And with Elijah he provided for him in different ways. At the brook Cherith with the ravens. In Zarephath with the barrel of meal and the crews of oil that did not waste away.

And now an angel of the Lord, making cakes, the crews of water. He ate and then he laid down again. And so the angel of the Lord came unto him the second time and touched him.

He was probably pretty tired. You'd figure that it's probably a little over a hundred miles from Jezreel to Beersheba. And then he kept going another day's journey.

He was really moving and no doubt really tired. He ate and went right back to sleep. And so the angel came the second time.

I don't think he medially, I think he let the poor prophet sleep for a while. And he touched him and he said, arise and eat because the journey is too great for you. And so he arose and did eat and drink and he went in the strength of that meat for 40 days and 40 nights unto Horeb, the Mount of God.

Potent, powerful stuff. It was able to sustain him for 40 days and 40 nights. Down to Mount Horeb, the Mount of God.

The place where God gave unto Moses the law. The area of the plains there in the Sinai Peninsula. And he came to a cave and he lodged there.

And behold, the word of the Lord came to him and said unto him, What are you doing here, Elijah? Here is a prophet of God on the run. Fearing Jezebel, his fear takes him clear on down to the borders of Egypt almost. Sinai Peninsula to Mount Horeb and hiding in a cave.

I mean there's no way they're going to find this guy. He's come through miles and miles of trackless desert through the Negev. And on into the Sinai.

There in the cave, God said, What are you doing here? And Elijah answered the Lord. I've been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts. For the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant.

They've thrown down your altars. They have slain your prophets with a sword. And I, even I only am left.

And they seek my life to take it away. I mean, how bad can things be? God has only one prophet left, according to Elijah. And he's hiding in a cave on Horeb.

And they're out to get him. Now it is true that the people broke the covenant of God. That covenant incidentally was made down here on Horeb.

It was there that God gave to Moses the two tables of stone. Upon which were written, Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make any graven images to bow down to them and to worship them.

For I, the Lord God, am a jealous God. And as God established the Mosaic covenant, God said, If you will keep my commandments and the statutes that I have given unto thee, Then I will be your God and you will be my people. But Elijah is saying, Lord, they have forsaken your covenant.

Which they did. They have slain your prophets, which they did. They were searching for Elijah.

All that he said was true indeed. But that wasn't the answer to the question. God didn't say, why are you here, Elijah? God said, what are you doing here, Elijah? And so the Lord said, go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord.

And behold, Jehovah passed by in a great and strong wind, Rent or tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before Jehovah. Standing there, this powerful, powerful wind, Breaking rocks in pieces, loosing them, no doubt, from the ledges. And they're crashing down.

And this awesome display of the powers of nature in the wind. But it said, Jehovah was not in the wind. And after the wind there was an earthquake.

But Jehovah was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire. But Jehovah was not in the fire.

And after the fire, a still small voice. There are times when God has been in the shaking. There have been times when God was in the wind.

Times when God was in the fire. In fact, the Bible says our God is a consuming fire. But there is phenomena of which God is not in it.

There is shaking many times when God isn't in it. There is fire at times in which God is not in it. A false fire.

I believe that most generally when God speaks to us, He speaks to us with a still small voice. I think that if a person is truly spiritually sensitive, He will hear and be tuned in to hear the still small voice. If a person has a violent kind of a shaking, powerful emotional experiences, it does not necessarily follow that that person is a deep spiritual person or is having deep spiritual experiences.

It could be that he is so spiritually dull that that's the only way God can get his attention. People are usually prone to think of those services where there's just a lot of shouting and shaking as being powerfully spiritual. Not necessarily so.

It could be that they are just so spiritually dull in their senses to the voice of God and to the things of God that that's the only way God can communicate to them. Not a sign of deeper spiritual achievements. How many times God has spoken to me with that still small voice and I didn't listen.

And so He had to use the hammer. It wasn't a sign that I was more spiritual really if I had listened to the still small voice I wouldn't have had to gone through the fire. Oh that I would be obedient to the still small voice so that God wouldn't have to put me into the refining fire.

But I would listen. When the still small voice came, Elijah heard it and he wrapped his face in his mantle and he went out and stood at the entering of the cave. And it came to pass as he stood there the Lord asked him again, Elijah what are you doing here? Again Elijah evidently did not understand the question and he answered in the same way telling God why he was there.

And he said I've been very jealous for Jehovah God of hosts because the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant. They've thrown down your altars. They've slain your prophets with the sword and I even I only am left and they seek my life to take it away.

And Jehovah said unto him go return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus and when you come anoint Hazeal to be the king over Syria. Now what the Lord is in essence saying to Jeremiah, Jeremiah you're doing nothing man and there's a job to be done. Now get back to work.

And that's often the greatest therapy for a person who is discouraged and feels defeated. God says get back to work. He wants to quit.

He wants to die. He wants the Lord to kill him. God says get back to work Elijah.

There's a job to be done. Now get on up to Damascus. The interesting thing when he ran he ran the opposite direction from which God had his work.

When you get scared and run you're often running in the opposite direction from which God wants you to go. And so he had to retrace his steps. Go all the way back.

Go north from Jezreel to Damascus and there Hazael was anointed as the king over Syria. And then you're to anoint Jehu to be king over Israel and Elisha the son of Shaphat you shall anoint to be the prophet in your place. And it shall come to pass that him that escapes the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay and him that escapes the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

And then God adds a little footnote. And I have left for me seven thousand in Israel all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal and every mouth which has not kissed him. You say you're alone.

Hey you're not. I've got seven thousand still in Israel who haven't bowed to Baal. God's faithful remnant.

And you will find that this is always true through the history of mankind. God has always reserved a faithful remnant. Those that would be faithful to God in the midst of apostasy.

God always has his faithful remnant. We are living in the midst of apostasy here in the United States and I pray God that we will be the faithful remnant. That we will not bow our knees to Baal or to Ashtoreth or to Molech or to Mammon to the gods that are worshipped here in the United States.

The gods of power, prosperity, the gods of pleasure. The gods of the human intellect. And when God counts those who have not bowed their knee to Baal to Ashtoreth, may God be able to count us as his faithful remnant.

That chorus, I have decided to follow Jesus. The one verse, though none go with me, still I will follow. May we make that kind of a commitment to the Lord.

Lord, I will be faithful. I will serve you. I will not bow my knee to the gods of this age, the gods of this world.

I will be faithful unto you. God had his faithful remnant. And so he departed from there and he found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, and this is our introduction.

We're going to find out an awful lot about Elisha as we move into 2 Kings. He is an exciting fellow. I personally sort of, well, I like him sort of more than I do Elijah.

He was a guy that really wanted all that God had. When Elijah said, what do you want? You know, he said, give me a double portion of the spirit that is on you. I mean, he's a guy that goes for it.

I like people that go for it. You know, all that God has. I want, you know, I want everything that God has for me.

We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study through the book of 1 Kings in our next lesson, as we continue with The Call of Elisha. And we do hope you'll make plans to join us. But right now, I'd like to

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And be sure to include the call letters of this station with your correspondence. And now, on behalf of The Word for Today, we'd like to thank all of you who share in supporting this ministry with your prayers and financial support. And be sure to join us again next time as Pastor Chuck Smith continues his verse-by-verse study through the book of 1 Kings.

That's right here on the next edition of The Word for Today. [■ Music ■] And now, once again, here's Pastor Chuck Smith. May we now be doers of the Word and not hearers only, because that's self-deception.

You've got to put it into practice for it to have any value in your life. Let the Spirit of God now minister to you its truth as he brings to your remembrance those things that we have studied, and he enriches you in your walk and in your faith and in your life in Christ. May the Lord be with you and bless you.

Give you a good week. In Jesus' name. [■ Music ■] Do you want to know a great story about gang members, drug addicts, mental patients, society's rejects, and how God turned their lives around to use them mightily? It's all right here in the book Harvest.

Join Pastor Chuck Smith as he tells the story of how God transformed the lives of ten men to reach the world. Read the testimonies of Greg Laurie, Raul Reese, Mike McIntosh, John Corson, Skip Heitzik, and others, and see for yourself that if God can use these guys to spread the gospel worldwide, then God can use you too. To read a sneak preview of the book online, visit thewordfortoday.org or call The Word for Today at 800-272-WORD.

I want to encourage you to check it out. This just might be the book to change the life of a loved one or even you. Visit thewordfortoday.org This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today in Costa Mesa, California.

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