

# Message 03

by George Verwer

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*The sermon encourages prayer for nations experiencing spiritual breakthroughs while emphasizing the importance of faith and action in the church's mission globally.*

**Duration:** 1:01:33

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Gods Grace", "Power Of Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares personal experiences of facing pressure, problems, and fear in his life. He talks about the attacks on his ship, the loss of friends, and the constant struggles he has faced. Despite these challenges, he emphasizes the importance of learning from the mistakes of biblical figures like Elijah and relying on God's grace and forgiveness. The speaker also highlights the power of prayer and the gift of sleep in handling pressure and fear.

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## Transcript

I'd like to again just pray for some of the nations, and this time we're going to shift gears and we're just going to pray for some of the places where unusual breakthroughs are taking place. Often we pray for tough, hard situations like last night, and we don't always hear of that much happening, at least right away, so I'd like us to pray for some of the nations where phenomenal things are happening. One of those places you may not realize is Algeria, which perhaps years ago would have been in my top 10, but today thousands upon thousands of Kabir Berber Muslims have surrendered to Jesus.

They are not Arabs, they don't like Arabs, they're a minority group, but they are Muslim, and it's one of the great, unusual breakthroughs in the Muslim world. So we're going to pray for Algeria and other similar situations, which of course wherever people are coming to Christ, the needs are also very great, see them disciplined, see indigenous leadership raised up, that's one of our primary goals and all that we do around the world. Churches around the globe have problems just like our churches have problems.

This idea that the church is so much better and so much more revived in other countries is mythology, friends. The greater difference would be between one church in Korea and another church in Korea, live dynamic churches and then lukewarm mediocre traditional formal churches and worse, or between different churches in our own country. It's not a national thing, so that you know all the churches in Brazil are revived and all churches in America are dead.

It's just not that way. America is still the nation. In the top ten, in terms, in top five, in terms of potential for global missions, people, finance, dynamic local churches, we're going to look at that passage later on another day in Acts 13 where we talk about that.

So let's pray for some of these other nations realizing we have similar things that are happening in our own country. Let's pray. Father, we do pray right now for Algeria.

I thank you for my friend Yosef in Haiti and what you're doing through them in Algeria and thousands and thousands of Muslims have come to know you and I think of some that are now through television getting into strange doctrines. Think of some of the tensions as we're trying to disciple leaders and Lord Jesus, I just cry out to you for Algeria and we do praise you Lord for this breakthrough in southern Sudan that after years with up to two million people dead, that peace has come to southern Sudan. We long for that to happen in the Darfur area as well, but we thank you for that breakthrough in southern Sudan and for the unbelievable church growth in the midst of that war where hundreds of thousands of Sudanese, mainly from pagan background, have come to know you.

Lord, we're excited about the future of Sudan despite the complexity and the difficulties there and then Lord Jesus, we would thank you for what you're doing in China. We thank you that probably there's 60 or 70 million believers in China that they're wanting to send out a hundred thousand tent maker missionaries through the whole Silk Road back to Jerusalem. We thank you for the way you've used that book, Heavenly Man, and we pray as this nation is still suffering in many ways and there's tens of millions that have not yet heard the gospel.

We thank you for what you have done in China and then Lord, we thank you for what you've been doing in Nepal. I thank you for the privilege of living there back in the late 60s. We're a few thousand believers.

We thank you now there are several hundred thousand believers in Nepal with a church growing at a very rapid rate and so we reach out in thanksgiving to that land. And then Lord Jesus, we would thank you for what you're doing in India. Again, a land of over a billion people where many many are unreached, but we thank you for this new response among the Dalit people, the untouchables.

As we hear of tens of thousands of these people coming to faith, I think of OM teams that have birthed or helped birth over 1,000 new churches just in the past couple of years. Many other groups have similar testimonies. We thank you for what you're doing in India.

And Lord, we thank you for a new day in South Africa with all the suffering and pain and HIV and AIDS. We think of this phenomenal transformation movement where 20 or 30,000 gathered are wanting to influence their nation, wanting to turn back the AIDS epidemic. We thank you that somehow the breakdown of apartheid did not lead to thousands of deaths.

People are living relatively peacefully together despite horrendous crime rates. We thank you for the rapid church growth in South Africa. We thank you for the way they're sending out missionaries.

Lord, what can we say about these other countries throughout all of Africa, south of the Sahara, where so many millions in the past years have come to know you? Lord Jesus, we pray for a higher quality of church life. We pray for more discipleship in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo that's gone through so much suffering. And we give thanks for rapid church growth in Nigeria and in Ghana and in most of these countries of West Africa.

And then, Lord, we give you thanks for what you've done in Brazil, where now 20 percent approximately of the people in the nation profess faith. We thank you for thousands of Brazilian missionaries that are going or planning to go. We think of similar breakthroughs in some of the other Latin American countries, and we give you the praise.

And Lord, even as we think of south of the border, the phenomenal church growth in Mexico, we thank you, Lord. There are now a couple million believers in Mexico who love you and are beginning to send out missionaries to other countries. Lord, we thank you for what you've done in our own country.

Continued what the secular people call religious revival. Perhaps we're hesitant to use that term, but Lord, things really have changed. There's a much higher percentage of people that really claim to be Bible-believing people.

With all the complexity of that, we pray for our own country and give thanks for what you have done, as in other prayer sessions, we will pray for greater things to happen. We look to you, Lord. So many other breakthroughs across the world.

It's not time to mention them now. We lay them at your feet. Lord Jesus.

Amen. Amen. And all of God's people said, Amen.

The Lord is good. We live in one of those countries where it's hard to even give things away. So I've been having a little trouble giving away some books completely free of charge.

Some of you have wondered, well, what would I do with this book about HIV and AIDS? You might want to send it to someone. A lot more teenagers, because they're jumping and having sex in America, outside of marriage, more than ever before in the history of our nation. And every time someone jumps in bed with someone, my voice will clear up after a while, they risk getting a venereal disease or HIV.

And the ignorance, the ignorance of young people in our country is phenomenal. They don't believe this can happen to them. Some of them don't care.

This is not, as some Americans thought for a while, only a homosexual thing. This is rapidly spreading in heterosexual relationships. Globally, it's mainly heterosexual.

Of course, drug needles, that's a big thing in Russia. So when young people get into drugs, this is a risk. I would encourage you to take a couple copies of this book, and you'll find that the Holy Spirit will lead you how to use them.

I think of a book by Randy Alcorn, Why Pro-Life. I believe the Lord wants you to take one of those. I don't have so many of those.

We have a book that we want to give free of charge to young people. We may send all of our remaining copies up to the ranch and give them out there. But if you want one, before we send them up, pick it up this morning.

It's a gift. Each day we'll be giving away different books. Norm Lewis is a friend of mine for about 46 years, a mighty man of God in Latin America, Argentina, and just last year went to be with Jesus.

So you're not going to meet Norm until you get to heaven. He was about 84. And pray for his widow, Annabeth.

I'm in touch with over 150 widows. I've got the George Verwer Holy Ghost Intercessors Widow League. It seems every week I have a new widow.

A woman just called me this morning indirectly that her husband, a close friend of mine in Florida, may die this week. My uncle, he was an atheist. He died last week, leaving behind his wife.

We ought to be concerned for widows. And if you're a widow and you're not getting much correspondence or free books or phone calls, you send me or give me your name and address and your phone. I'll bother you the rest of your life.

But meanwhile, you may want to pick up Norm Lewis's book, Priority One, as a gift. So take a look at the books, the CDs, the cassettes. It's a lot less crowded than yesterday morning.

Roy's a really flexible, negotiable guy. We sold three of these global jackets last night, boom, just like that. And so these are exciting moments back there at the book table.

And I just praise God for the power of the printed page. I wrote a book about Christian literature called Literature Evangelism. It sells so slow we don't even often have it on our book table.

It might even be out of print. But if you'd like my book on Literature Evangelism, send me an email and I'd be happy to send that to you. Turn with me now to First Kings chapter 18 for this morning's Bible study.

Another one of the great motivating chapters in my life. Again, since these chapters have motivated me and challenged me, I have spoke on them quite a few times around the globe. But I don't think most of you have heard me speak on First Kings 18.

The first sermon I ever heard based on this passage was by Peter Marshall, who died very young, leaving behind Catherine Marshall. Peter Marshall was very involved in the United States government, was the chaplain of the Senate. And I heard his message on a phonograph record.

So that's a long... Remember those things? They go around. Do you know there's a revival of phonograph records going on among the younger generation? People are buying them again. I don't know what they do with them.

But it's interesting how history goes around, often in circles. And I heard him preach on this passage. If God be God, follow him.

But if Baal, then follow him and go to hell. Peter Marshall, 50 years ago. Let's pick up the story in First Kings chapter 18, verse 20.

Let the word of God speak to your heart. So Ahab sent word throughout all of Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, how long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him.

But if Baal, he is God, follow him. If I remember right, Peter Marshall just paraphrased that a little bit. If the Lord is God, follow him.

But if Baal is God, follow him. But the people said nothing. Then Elijah said to them, I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left.

Now it's important, if you mark your Bible, and marking my Bible, revolutionized Bible study in my life, it's important to notice that little sentence, because we're going to get back to that right at the end of our study this morning. I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left. True or false? You can answer later on.

But Baal has 450 prophets. Get two bowls for us. Let them choose one for themselves and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood, but not set fire to it.

I will prepare the other bowl and put it on the wood, but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your God, and I will call on the name of the Lord. And the God who answers by fire, he is God.

Then all the people said, what you say is good. Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, choose one of the bowls and prepare it first. Since there are so many of you, call on the name of your God, but do not light the fire.

So they took the bowl, given them, and they prepared it. Then they called on the name of the, the name of Baal from morning till noon. Oh, Baal, answer us.

They shouted, but there was no response. No one answered. They danced around the altar that they had made.

At noon, Elijah began to taunt them. Shout louder, he said. Surely he's God.

Small g. Perhaps he's indeed thought, or busy, or traveling. Talk about a little humor. Maybe he's sleeping.

Must be awakened. So they shouted louder. They slashed themselves.

People, by the way, worshiping false gods still do that today. Even Roman Catholics, and I'm not saying there's no Roman Catholic believers, but some Catholics still slash their bodies in worship experiences. They slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, till the blood flowed.

Midday passed. They continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice, but there was no response. No one answered.

No one paid attention. Then Elijah said to all the people, come here to me. They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins.

Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, Your name shall be Israel. With the stones, he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it, large enough to hold two shades of seed. He arranged the wood.

He cut the bowl in pieces, laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, fill four large jars with water. Pour the water.

Pour it on, an offering on the wood. Not really the best way to build a fire, is it? Pouring all this water on top of the wood. Do it again, he said.

They did it again. Do it a third time, he ordered. They did it a third time.

The water ran down across the altar and filled the trench. At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed, O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel. I am your servant and have done all these things at your command.

Answer me, O Lord, answer me. So these people will know that you, you, O Lord, are God. You are turning their hearts back again.

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice. The wood and the stones and the soil licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, the Lord, he is God.

The Lord, he is God. Then Elijah commanded them, seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away.

What an amazing story. Is there anything to learn from this for us? In 2005, many of the Lord's people today don't read the Old Testament. The heartbeat of liberalism and liberal theology is that the Old Testament is filled with mythology.

The Noah and the ark, the flood, all kinds of things they claim are mythology. They probably claim this is mythology. Fire didn't really come down from heaven.

I mean, give me a break. Somebody was there with some kind of pyrotechnics. And I accept this as God's Word.

And I believe as Elijah prayed, the fire came down. I believe also that this is not something that God just does every day. We have many, we have many pictures in the Old Testament of things that literally happen that are a foreshadow of spiritual experiences in the New Testament.

And so what happened on the day of Pentecost? Cloven tongues of fire. Acts 2, we won't turn to it. Cloven tongues of fire came over those who were gathered at the day of Pentecost.

Some people want to repeat exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost. And one or two things that happened that day, they're claiming this is happening now. But as I've talked, some of those people are my friends, as I've talked to them, I said, look, have you seen the cloven tongues of fire? Come on one of your special Pentecost meetings.

Never heard anyone say they saw the cloven tongues of fire. I remember when I first went into Russia, I referred to that fiasco, I think, briefly last night. In the early days of our movement, when I was at Moody and went to Mexico, our vision was very narrow.

Closed countries, communist countries, Muslim countries. It's quite amazing that that was our vision from the beginning. That usually in most modern mission groups evolves to get to those things later on.

After you work in your own country or you work in Australia and the Philippines and Kenya and Brazil, those places where the church is strong and they're always inviting short-term teams to come and build a house or help them out. But from the birth of our movement, our vision was closed countries, Muslim countries and communist countries. And I challenged Dale Roton to go to the Muslim world and I felt I should go to the communist world.

And so I was studying Russian. I was living in Spain. I had learned Spanish.

I was studying advanced Spanish. I was teaching English in exchange for free Spanish and Russian in Ramsey's Institute in Madrid. And then the next summer of 61, I had a printing press hidden in the dashboard of the car.

I had scriptures in the cornflakes boxes. I launched out on my great Bible smuggling expedition into Russia. How many of you ever heard of Brother Andrew, God's smuggler? He's so successful in that work.

I'm known as Brother George, God's bungler, the guy who tried and failed. Praise God, failure can be the backdoor to success. In fact, Erwin Lutzer of Moody Church, he wrote a book with that title.

It's a great book. Failure, the backdoor to success. I haven't actually read it.

I just was stimulated by the cover. And by the way, some of you that can't read much, just, you know, just look at the covers. Some of the covers are so challenging.

I think of that book I took a look at not long ago. You can't walk on water if you don't get out of the boat. You know why many of God's chosen frozen are not accomplishing much for the kingdom? They don't want to get out of the boat.

They don't want to take any steps of faith. They don't want to take any risks. After a few days in Ukraine, in the Soviet Union, due to my own stupidity, I was arrested by the Soviet police.

They had a roadblock for me and they thought I was an American spy. They were going to give me all expenses paid vacation in Siberia. This is major newspaper publicity in Russia at that time.

After two more days of interrogation, somehow they decided I was a religious fanatic. Imagine that. I didn't even have my global jacket on then.

They led me back to Austria with a submachine gun. And there I went for a day of prayer broken before God, thinking about this fiasco. And God met me in my brokenness and gave me the name Operation Mobilization.

Changed the vision to incorporate the church in Western Europe. Let the church in Western Europe mobilize and send people out to the ends of the earth. Before that, our work was known as Send the Light STL.

We still have that name on a literature arm, a particular literature arm that became a separate company, which is growing like Topsy. But from that moment on, after I shared this with some leaders in Spain and they agreed that was in a weekend of prayer and fasting operation, mobilization was born. The next summer, 200 joined us.

The next summer, 2000 joined us. And since then, 125,000 have joined OM and reached probably a billion people with the word of God across the world. Our God, the God of Elijah, still answers by fire, but it's more often spiritual fire.

In fact, I remember vaguely when I was a Bible college student, picking up this expression, they'd refer to somebody who was out in the streets witnessing and in the prayer meetings and giving out literature. They would say, do you remember that expression? Whoa, he's on fire for Christ. I remember before I went into Yugoslavia, I got arrested in Yugoslavia before I got arrested in Russia, you know, just for preparation.

That was somebody else's fault that time. But I remember meeting two women with the Christian Literature Crusade. What a great movement they are with Christian bookshops around the world.

Their headquarters there in Fort Washington a couple of years ago, I had the privilege of speaking to all of their staff. Founded by a close friend who's in heaven, Ken Adams. I commend you the great work of Christian Literature Crusade.

But I met the Ferenczak sisters there working on the Austrian border. I was just still a young Christian. They were older ladies, single ladies.

And they taught me that Salvation Army song. I've been singing it off and on ever since. I wrote it in one of my old Bibles that I don't have with me at this conference.

Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire. It's fire we want, it's fire we need, send the fire. And I believe it's our privilege to experience the fire of God.

In fact, in the book of Hebrews, it says our God is a consuming fire. I believe that speaks of spiritual reality. I believe it speaks of zeal.

I believe it speaks of seeing sin consumed in our lives as we bring it to the cross and it comes under the blood of Jesus Christ. And so you and I can pray the same prayer as Elijah. Oh God, send the fire, but a very different context.

One thing that I find very interesting in this passage, there are many things, but it's his command as he tells them before he prays that they should rebuild the altar. Verse 30, Elijah said to all the people, come here to me. They came to him and he repaired the altar of the Lord.

Sometimes before God can meet us in a more powerful way, we have to repair the altar. We have to get some things sorted out, maybe in our family situation, maybe on the job. What a difficult thing it is to be out in the secular world on the job in these days, where the decrease of ethics and standards that even once among non-Christians were considered acceptable standards today.

There's lying, there's compromise, there's tax evasion, there's pressure on workers, Christians to do things that are against their ethical standards. And I believe it's as tough often to be in the marketplace as it is for those of us who go out to plant churches in the middle of the Muslim world. We are in this together.

And those that release funds through their work, through their business, they are a vital part. We'll speak about this again later in the week, of all that's going on in terms of building the kingdom globally. And I felt in my own heart, sometimes before I could pray, I had to apologize to my wife for some unkind word.

Our family altar in our home at times has certainly been in a bit of a shambles, in the rush of praying with other people, serving the Lord, neglecting to pray together. It was actually easier when we had children living at home, because we wanted to have the word and prayer for the children. But when we became those empty nesters, we found that our prayer life together was dwindling.

What a challenge, as we pray for great things to take place, great breakthroughs to make sure we're rebuilding the altar with the right spiritual stones, right where we are. By the way, I'd encourage you to write some of these things down, as it says in 2 Timothy chapter 2, we give these things to you that you may share them with others, or maybe you could pick up a cassette tape and pass that on to someone

who's not able to be here. I think of this man I spoke to yesterday.

He was so brokenhearted, as God was speaking to him yesterday, and he had to go back to work. He's gone, but maybe he can get this on cassette tape. One year from now, for any anything you share back to me, that you wrote down or you learned from these sessions together, for every idea you share with me one year from now, you get a free book.

Maximum of 50 books. So you may want to write. You don't have to necessarily do it this morning if you're not prepared, but we're here seriously looking into the Word of God.

We want to esteem the Word of God. We want to esteem the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and I believe if we can write some things down and maybe share them with others, it can be a blessing. I think of so many people today in nursing homes.

I visit nursing homes. Some of them never even get out of these nursing homes. What a blessing to visit such people and share even a little bit of what God has given to you during what we hope will be a spiritual feast.

And so the fire came down. I was sharing with you how in some churches I feel people are infatuated with the spectacular. They're always wanting some great blessing.

They're always wanting to see things in which you can measure what's happening. People coming forward, or people experiencing the fullness of God's Spirit, or people making a commitment to go into missions. And I, of course, am not against that.

But one of the reasons I've run the race these 50 years is I've learned how to bring God into the heart of the ordinary. And those of us who are Christian leaders, we are also just ordinary people. And a lot of our life is ordinary things that can get very, very boring.

And we discover that our God, who answers by fire, is also the God who put His Holy Spirit in us. And so there is a permanent flame in every believer. There's a permanent flame when you wake up in the morning and you don't feel well.

At my age, for some reason, I've talked to my doctor about it. I seem to have to wake up two or three times in the night. I'm not really interested in that, journeying to the toilet two or three times.

I dream all the time. My dreams get interrupted. Then I have to try to get back to where I left off on the dream.

And sometimes it doesn't happen that I start dreaming something else. And I never even get the end of the story. But I praise Jesus.

I praise Jesus that He can meet me in the routine and in the ordinary. He can meet me in weakness. He can meet me in weakness because He dwells within me.

Have you ever been in the meetings where they're praying for the Holy Spirit to come down? I don't like to criticize people for vocabulary. They mean well. Oh God, come among us.

I don't criticize it, but we need to be aware of the Scriptures. We are temples of the Holy Spirit. Let me be really honest.

I don't understand it. How the Holy Spirit could live in me? My wife is having trouble just living with me. So Holy Spirit living in me.

Praise be to the living God. Now you would think that Elijah, having had this great experience with God, and God does meet us in special ways. He's met me many times in special ways.

Giving me that name Operation Mobilization in the top of the tree after that Russian fiasco. He met me in a cave outside of Belfast once. But God doesn't always work that way.

And that is not necessarily the total answer to victorious, persevering Christian living. Just look what happened to Elijah. Go to chapter 19.

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done. There's always someone out there talking, right? How he had killed all the prophets with a sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah.

Now some of the Christians I know, they don't like Hillary Clinton. Let me tell you, Hillary Clinton, she couldn't put a candle to Jezebel. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah and said, may the gods deal with me.

May the gods deal with me, but it ever so severely. If by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them. In other words, Jezebel is out to kill Elijah.

Now this great man has had this great experience with God. He, of course, is going to be thundering out in courage to handle the situation, right? Wrong. Read the next verse.

Elijah was afraid. Oh, one more hero down the drain. What kind of guy is this? Elijah was afraid.

He ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree and he sat down under it and prayed that he might die.

I've had enough, Lord. Have you ever prayed that? Be honest. Maybe not those exact words.

I've had enough. I have. I've had enough.

Take my life. I don't think I got to that stage. Take my life.

I'm no better than my ancestors. Then he laid down under the tree and fell asleep. Brothers and sisters, one of the most powerful messages in the whole of the Old Testament is here for us this morning.

This passage has helped change my life. This passage has taught me more about God and about grace and about forgiveness. This passage has helped me face my weaknesses, my fears, my struggles and my failures.

And it's helped me to believe that God could still use me despite my battles. Ten years of intensive fear of airplane, shaking when I got on planes. For ten years, I could not shake that, though I kept flying.

God took it from me 20 years ago. So flying off to Korea, a decision I just made a few hours ago today, is ten times easier than it was during that period in my life. So I'm glad that it records this in verse 3. Elijah was afraid.

Don't be intimidated, brothers and sisters. Those listening to these cassettes, don't be intimidated by your weaknesses, by your fears. Learn.

Learn how to handle them God's way. Learn through Elijah's mistake. Learn through how God worked in Elijah.

So let's go back and see what God has done. Verse 5. We're in chapter 19. He lay down under the tree and he fell asleep.

This is amazing. I don't know if you're able to do this. If you are, that's a plus.

Most of my life, 46 years of directing this movement, I lived under pressure. Almost every day, there were problems, pressures, things going wrong, people being killed. We had terrorists attack our ship.

Nobody even paid any attention. Fourteen years ago, they attacked our ship in the Philippines. Two 19-year-old teenagers were killed.

Thirty or forty others wounded. I don't have time to talk about friends that were murdered. My friend David shot dead on the doorstep in Istanbul.

Another man kidnapped in Afghanistan, never seen again. Bonnie Witherell, three years ago, murdered on the doorstep of the clinic in Beirut. When we got into operating two ships and things sometimes went wrong and they got in storms, we eventually lost one of our ships there in the Beagle Channel off the southern part of South America, way down here in Lagos 1. Praise God, we had 17 years.

We only paid \$170,000 for the ship. So there it is, down there, sitting on a rock in the Beagle Channel. Pressure, pressure, pressure.

And God gave me the gift, under extreme pressure, not just to pray. That was always my first line of attack. God gave me the gift to sleep.

In the middle of the day, I'd just crawl under the blankets and sleep. And I'd wake up better able to handle that pressure. That's not everyone's tactic.

But Elijah, in the midst of this fear and this pressure, going in a day's journey, he fell down and he slipped. And then look what happened. All at once, an angel touched him and said, get up and eat.

Now again, this is so interesting. Because you think at this point, God is going to touch him and rebuke him. God is going to chase him.

God's going to speak to him, hey, this is wrong, you fearful little termite. Look what I just did on Mount Carmel, and now you're here under this tree. What kind of spirituality is that? But instead, what does God do? All at once, an angel touched him and said, get up and eat.

This is such a hell for me. Because in my early Christian days, I thought that food was just basically fuel for evangelistic efforts. And we gave people in the early days of OM, the most boring, tasteless, difficult diet that ever had been fed to young missionaries, perhaps in the history of missions.

We got so extreme in saving money that my friend Dale Roton went out and cut some grass and we tried to make a cereal out of grass because we thought that would be cheap. And we'd save money on the

rapid increased price breakfast cereal. And it took a while for the ministry of Dr. Francis Schaeffer and some other more balanced people for me to understand that the psychological aspect of eating is part of God's program for us to look forward to a nice meal, to provide a variety of food.

It's not wrong. Look at the provision, the variety of food, the Indian, the Chinese, the Thai, the Vietnamese. I eat most of it.

My stomach is one of the most well-adjusted stomachs on the planet, even though it's incredibly small, doesn't take much at one time. God is concerned about our physical health. Sometimes our problem is not spiritual, it's physical.

We're not taking care of ourselves. We're not getting enough sleep. We're not getting exercise.

We're torn apart by worry. And so we see this picture of God's concern for the human factor, God's concern for the human side of us. If you want a title for this message, you could call it Divine Factor, Human Factor.

The fire comes down, God meets them. The human factor, struggling with fear, maybe depression, God ministers through giving some food and some rest. The angel touched him and said, get up and eat.

He looked around and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank. And look at this.

Look at this. He ate and drank and he laid down again. You ever met people that are into the second blessing? Here it is.

He went back to bed again. Again, I would have thought in my human way of thinking, this is the time to go for it. Get up and go for Jezebel.

But you see, he was in a process. Spirituality doesn't happen overnight. Have you ever got impatient with your spiritual growth? Join the club.

Here I am, an old man. I'm saying to God the other day, why aren't I more Christlike? I'm not even sure what that is now at my age as I look at myself. The only way you can understand the challenge of becoming Christlike is to understand the divine factor and the human factor.

That no matter how filled we are with the Holy Spirit of God, we are incredibly human. Our marriage was almost torn apart because of unrealistic expectation. Did you get that one? I bet you wrote that down.

Unrealistic expectation. She marries a man of prayer. She marries a man of God.

She marries a guy that's already brought dozens of people to Christ. That's preaching. It's birthing a new mission that was esteemed as a leader.

It created unrealistic expectation. In the case of my wife, she was wise enough and humble enough and godly enough to handle that. Other women would have walked out the door.

We'd have one more divorce on the mission field. This is a picture of the divine factor. Yes, we want miracles.

We want breakthroughs. We want to see people help. We want to see people healed.

But it doesn't always happen that way. And so Elijah goes back to sleep again. Verse 7, the angel of the Lord came back a second time.

There's a second blessing. Touched him and said, get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you. As you look at whatever years are ahead of you, have you ever said, the journey looks too much for me? The whole grandchildren thing, the whole children thing.

Do all of you have all of your children there? They're all going on for Jesus. You know, I'd love to meet you. Most of the people I meet, they don't have, if they have three or more, they don't have all their children going on for Jesus.

Some do. Hallelujah. I always rejoice in that.

I've only got one out of my three. They were all baptized. They all seem to come to Christ.

My second son and then my daughter after him, living in England, very few Christian friends. Complicated church situation. They got discouraged.

They walked away from their faith. Not easy that God met us through that because we knew his word. We knew that these things can happen to God's people.

We don't end up heaping blame on ourselves, getting ourselves discouraged or confused because if Satan can get us into that kind of paralysis, then we're not going to help them or anyone else. Meanwhile, because we've been able to keep our walk with Jesus, we have a great relationship with our daughter who has two sons. My wife is with her, was with her yesterday, and she's sort of on a pilgrimage.

And we know the last chapter in our family book is not yet written. You think of Franklin Graham when he backslid, got away from God, and then what God did, now leading the Billy Graham organization. So Elijah got the second blessing.

He got some more food. He finally got up because the journey was long. Verse 8, so he got up and he ate and he drank, strengthened by the food.

He traveled 40 days and 40 nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and he spent the night. I've had this, the cave experience.

It's a tremendous place to be with God. The word of the Lord came to him. Isn't it wonderful when the word of the Lord comes to us? Can God speak to our hearts? Sometimes you find extreme people, if you mention God bringing a word to your heart, they think you're saying, I'm adding to the Bible.

This is nonsense. You're not adding to the Bible. The Bible, the canon is finished.

But God's Spirit, Jesus, the same yesterday, today, forevermore. He can guide us. He can lead us.

He guided me to that day of prayer. He guided me to make this decision to spend this week here. He guided me this morning to make a tough decision to fly to Korea in a few weeks and give two major Sundays, 10 days in that nation where the pressure, the moment I arrived, it all goes up as they have such high esteem of Christian leaders.

And I, of course, have ministered there many, many times. God leads us. God speaks to us.

When God speaks to us, we often need to make sure it's not anything contradictory to the word of God. Like some guy in London, he had a prophecy that he had the wrong wife. And then he was to marry this other wife, which was more in style with his new theology.

If he checks out that word from the Lord with the scriptures, he's going to see that that was not a word from the Lord. That was a result of too much coffee or something else. So Elijah goes into this cave.

Then the word of the Lord comes to him. Verse 10, he replied, I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, put your prophets to death with a sword.

Listen to these words from Elijah. Remember the sentence in the beginning of the reading? I'm the only one left. Remember that? I am the only one left.

Here it is again. This is an example of a man of God with a psychological, spiritual, and emotional quirk. A cuckoo idea, a false idea.

And that happens, doesn't it? Do you have any? Would you be willing for God to deal with some little quirk in your own thinking about this or about that, even during this time together? Because I believe all of us have erroneous zones. We have areas of false thinking. It may be about ourself.

It may be about someone else. It may be about a particular person or missionary or nation. So this comes out.

And it's as if God is allowing all this to happen, to bring Elijah into a more realistic walk with himself. I'm the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me. Whoa! Verse 11, the Lord said, Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountain apart, shattered it. And this passage, we're just going to take a few more minutes. This passage is so powerful.

The wind tore the mountain apart, the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. Now, here comes the big experience again. Here comes the fire.

Here comes what a lot of people are praying for. It didn't happen. After the wind, there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

And look at verse 12. And after the earthquake came a fire. The Lord was not in the fire.

God works in different ways in different times. In our lives, the fire came down. God was in it.

The fire came down. God was not in it. What an amazing study.

And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak around his face, and he went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, What are you doing here, Elijah? He replied, I've been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty.

The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, put your prophets to death with a sword. I'm the only one left. There it goes again.

It's getting a little repetitious, isn't it? You're beginning to catch it. Those of you who are awake, I'm hoping all of you. I'm the only one left.

Now they're trying to kill me. And the Lord said to him, The Lord said to him, Go back the way you came and go to the desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Eziel king over Aram, and also anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha.

This is what this preparation is for. The handing over of the mantle, the anointing of Elisha, son of Shaphat from Abel, Mahola to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazeiel.

And Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve, listen, I reserve 7,000 in Israel, all whose knees have not bound down to Baal, and whose mouths have not kissed him. He was not the only one.

And we today who love the Lord Jesus, here in New England or wherever you are, or in your own situation, seldom are you the only one faithful to the Lord. The only one holding on to the end. God has many, many more people.

And to convert this to modern day brothers and sisters, the church is bigger than we think. Whether it's America or Korea, whether it's China, whether it's Turkey, whether it's Sudan, the church is bigger than we think. And we need to somehow embrace the wide range of ways that God is working.

And we need to realize that his grace is sufficient. His strength is made perfect in weakness. That will be one of my other passages.

It's coming at us in these days. I get so encouraged through this. That God can minister to me when I got wrong ideas, wrong ideas.

And this week you're going to hear more about some of my wrong ideas and how God has had to change me than probably any audience I've spoken to, certainly even within our own organization. Because we're stretched out all over the world and you can be sure I don't have the opportunity to speak 12 hours to the organization that I'm involved in or even the leaders, especially now that I'm no longer the leader. I get an occasional opportunity.

I can hope and pray they might listen to a few cassettes or CDs or look into my website [georgeferber.com](http://georgeferber.com) or pick up some of my MP3s on their iPod. There certainly are lots of ways to communicate in the year 2005. And so I just thank God, the divine factor, the human factor.

Yes, God answers prayer. People are healed. People are saved.

Funds come in. But then there are the times of dryness and difficulty and discouragement and struggle and fear. We sometimes wonder if we can go one more day.

When I lived on the ship, I learned a little bit of survival at sea. I learned how to row that big lifeboat while the oar was almost seemingly as heavy as I was. And during that time of living on the ship, I shifted gears from always preaching about discipleship to also preaching about survivalship.

And God gave me a strategy for survival, part of which I'm sharing with you this week, part of which is in that book, *No Turning Back*. And it's because I developed that balance of discipleship and survivalship to know there are days when we make great gains and there are other days when we get into a spiritual

foxhole. Harry Truman, my mother's favorite president, developed a mental foxhole and he got into that foxhole when he was under pressure there in Washington.

And he was able to come out and make the decisions he needed to make as the president of the United States. Not an easy one when he removed MacArthur from being general out there in Korea. Some of us really old people remember how upset we got by that.

I developed mental foxholes. I go for walks. I get away.

I listen to music. I enjoy a favorite meal, Mexican or Indian. I have popcorn at 10.30 at night and I make it for my wife.

I mean, even though she's a Dr. Atkin, she breaks her rules and eats popcorn. And I've discovered that you can be a long-distance runner for God if you will learn how to combine that divine factor and that human factor. If you'll see what God did here in Elijah, in all of his weakness, his fear, God met him, God sorted out his false idea and then used him to anoint Elijah and take the kingdom forward.

Hallelujah. God bless you. Let us pray.

Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this powerful passage tucked away there in Kings in the Old Testament. We thank you that it's so relevant to those of us living in 2005, faced with so many obstacles and challenges and discouragements.

And Lord, you can meet us. You can meet us here in this special place during this week. And we're asking this in the name of Jesus.

Amen. God bless you. Pick up some books and have a great day.

See you tonight. Amen.

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