

# Elijah

by John Hunter

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*The sermon on Elijah highlights his role as a prophet who stood against idolatry, emphasizing the importance of preparation, obedience, and God's provision in ministry.*

**Duration:** 35:00

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 17:1

**Topics:** "Elijah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of private prayer and seeking God's guidance before speaking for Him in public. He uses the example of Elijah, who prayed earnestly for God's judgment upon the land and people. The speaker encourages young men to read their Bibles, know their own God, and stay where God has placed them before going where He would send them. He also reminds the audience that life is like a book with chapters, and sometimes God calls us to step away from the spotlight and spend time alone with Him. The sermon concludes with a call for consecrated young men who are willing to sacrifice everything to serve God and bring His touch to human lives.

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## Transcript

1 Kings chapter 17 at verse 1 please. And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, as the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be June or rain these years but according to my word. The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

It shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord. For he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook. It came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land, and the word of the Lord came unto him. The Lord will bless the reading from the Sacred Writings.

There were dark days in Israel. Ahab, the son of Omri, had ascended the throne. An evil man, he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings that went before him.

Added to his many sins, he took as his wife Jezebel, the Zidonian princess, and there came into being a union that was sinister and desperately evil. Jezebel introduced idolatry into the northern kingdom, as later her daughter introduced idolatry into the eastern kingdom. Down went the altar of God, and up went the altars to Baal.

Out went the prophets of God, hounded, persecuted, and put to death. And there stood in their place the false prophets of the groves. In such a situation, God, in his sovereignty, looked round for a man, a man who would stand for God, a man who would call the people back to the original law of God in all its primitive excellence and purity.

And wonder of all wonders, his eye rested upon a man called Elijah, who lived across the Jordan yonder in the fastnesses of Gilead, a man whom God was prepared to use, a man who ultimately would stand in the breach, call the nation back to God. He would protest in the name of God. Brethren and sisters, Elijah was the first Protestant.

Good for you and I to remember that God passed by other men to take up a man that was unknown, unrecognized, unheralded, and unsung. A young man, but in the eye of God, just the man suited to meet the need. It will be good for us on occasions to remind ourselves of the sovereignty of God, that God can use who he likes, when he likes, and how he likes, and no man can say him nay.

He does not always use what we would call accredited, brethren, in order to bring the message of God in all its power, in all its force, in all its freshness, and in all its living excellence to the people of God. And so it was that one day, this young man is reading his Bible. He's reading from the ancient scroll in what we would call Deuteronomy chapter 11.

His eye fell on words like these, Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived. And ye turn aside and serve other gods and worship them. And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you.

And ye shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit. And the young man looked, paid attention, and dropped to his knees. Now we're coming into a very sacred part of a servant's life.

For every servant has that which is private, ere he speaks for God in public. And there is no servant will ever accomplish anything for God, if he never knows what it is that after reading his Bible, he drops to his knees. James centuries later tells us, Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain.

And it rained not for a period of three years and six months. So down on his knees he prays for the judgment of God upon the land and upon the people. Terrible thing, isn't it? Good job he was away up there with no one to influence him, no one to take counsel with.

But after all, brethren, if God gives you a message, no matter what it may be, if it's the message of God, there's no need to take counsel. Good job he didn't. They would have stopped him.

They would have said, listen, Elijah, think of all the suffering. If the heavens are as brass and there's no rain, think of the famine and the drought. Think of the wives and the women and the families and the children.

Oh yes, they would have stopped him. There are people like that, you know, they don't know what's good for God's people. Rather that the altars of Baal remain up and the altar of Jehovah down.

Rather that the cancer of departure continue than the cruel surgeon take the knife. Rather give us smooth words and fair speeches than tell us the truth that God might be glorified and his people blessed. So yonder, away up the hill country, God prepares his man unknown to everyone else.

And who knows today sitting in this audience that God might have his eye upon some of you young men, preparing you for a day that lies still in the future, preparing you to speak for God, to act for God, to live for God. But remember, you'll need to prepare yourself in private. Listen to me, please.

There's no shortcut to this. I want to tell you folks what I told you on the last visit. I want to tell you that this is a lonely place.

God knows it's lonely. Like Elijah, many a time we get a message we would rather not deliver. But you must go when God sends you.

You must speak in the name of God when he demands it. It's a lonely place to stand between God and others. Every great man of God was prepared in secret.

Moses had 40 years in the backside of the desert ere he stood before the burning bush to be commissioned. Elijah was in the fastnesses of Gilead ere he stood before Ahab. John the Baptist was in the deserts, plural, until the day of his showing unto Israel.

Saul of Tarsus was yonder in Arabia ere he went out to preach. And listen, don't miss it. The Son of God, the greatest preacher and servant of all time, spent 30 years in private for three in public.

Have you got it? The ratio of the service of Christ, the ratio of private to public, was 10 to 1. And that's where our weakness lies. We want the spotlight without the sacrifice. And you'll never do anything for God unless you're prepared to prepare yourself for God.

I'll tell you more. Will you take it from me today? You read nothing of Moses in the backside of the desert, of Elijah up there, of John the Baptist in the deserts, of Paul in Arabia, and of Christ for 30 years. You never read a thing about these men.

Why? Because if we had been told what God did with them, we'd have said, that's the curriculum. You go through that and you'll be a servant. But you see, every servant's different.

And the school of God is different for every one of us. That's why in your New Testament there are no such thing as Bible schools. That's why in the New Testament there's no such thing as going to universities to prepare for divine service.

God prepares his men in his own school. They're all different. And they'll all turn out to be men of God.

I want you young men to take it home. It's a tragedy today that young men from assemblies should turn to Christendom's way of doing things and think if you're put through a course for three years you're fit to serve God. Learn the right way and the Bible's way and you'll do something for God.

So it was. But it was a message of judgment. See, I wonder how Elijah felt as he made for Ahab's court.

Eh? When the day came when God said, listen Elijah, what I've told you, tell Ahab. Oh no God, no. Go and tell Ahab.

But Lord, it may cost me my life. Go! I'll tell you how he felt. He felt the same as Moses felt when he went with a message of judgment to Pharaoh.

Moses went realizing, like Elijah, it could cost him his life. Elijah felt the same as the Baptist when he went to face Herod to tell him he couldn't have his brother's wife. And it cost the Baptist his life.

Now I want to say to you, if you're not prepared to stand in God's name and without fear or favor deliver the message of God, no matter the cost price, you're not worthy to be up here. You'll need to be prepared to do what God tells you. Whether the brethren are pleased or not or whether it squares with accepted practice or not.

That's right. You've got to go when God tells you and say what God tells you. Listen.

There's a wreck lying off the Atlantic coast. The lifeboat was called out. As the crew gathered, the captain stood in front of them.

Suddenly, the youngest member, white-faced, stepped forward. Addressing the captain, he said, Sir, the wind's offshore and the tide's running out. If we go out today, we'll never get back.

The captain looked at him and his eyes swept the crew. Gentlemen, we've got to go. We needn't come back.

We needn't come back. We are needing men today, young men, consecrated to God that will sacrifice everything to serve God. Listen, the Lord's coming.

You've been hearing about it. Isn't that right? Is not Vancouver and the West, British Columbia and Canada, crying out for men of God who'll bring the touch of the eternal to human lives, who'll stand in God's name and in the power of the Spirit of God and speak for God and live for God and serve God unto the very uttermost of their strength? Where are they today? Will there be young men today in this building that in the sanctuary of their souls will say, this to me is the voice of God today, from henceforth I'll prepare myself? It'll mean sacrifice. It will mean that you'll need to be prepared to lower your sights.

It may mean you'll need to be prepared to do with a thousand dollars a year less and do something for God. For if Christ comes soon, it'll be too late. It'll be too late.

Remember this, there won't be any rewards at the judgment seat for being a successful executive only. There won't be any rewards at the judgment seat for being a big businessman only. There won't be rewards at the judgment seat for getting to the top of your career only and you've sacrificed your spiritual life and the devil's got you on your knees.

Listen to me. In days to come, may God call your attention to the day that the wee Scotsman student in God's name pleaded for sacrifice, blood red, and give your lives to Christ. We'll turn Vancouver and the West upside down if we can get you to the altar today and put your life on it.

So he makes his way. I don't know how he got the audience. There's a lot of detail not given.

All I know is this, that he stood and here's his message. As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be June or rain these years but according to my word. Have you got it brethren? The message, 25 words, 17 in the Hebrew.

Have you got it? Are you listening? 25 words, not 25 minutes. Now some of you would hardly get up here for 25 minutes. Not right, not long enough for you.

25 words. Out it came, Elijah. His name is a combination of two titles of Jehovah, El and Jah.

His name means my God is Jehovah. As the Lord God of Israel liveth, your God might be Baal but my God is Jehovah. Look around you, you might think God is dead but I tell you God lives.

As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand. Isn't that wonderful? Have you got it? He says, I stand before him, before God. But just a minute, he's standing in the presence of Ahab.

Ah, you never thought a person could be in two places at the one time. Every true servant of God stands in two places at the one time. He's standing in the presence of Ahab but he's standing in the presence of God.

This man is on equality with Gabriel. When Gabriel gave his message in act, in Luke 1, he says, I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God. Do you remember Nehemiah? I prayed to the God of heaven and I said to the king, every true servant stands in the sanctuary of God.

God's man, God's messenger, God's servant, God's preacher. But he's standing before men to deliver the message in God's name. Listen to it.

As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be June or rain these years but according to my word. Oh, that's authoritative, eh? It's his word because he's delivering it in the name of God. That's why Paul talks about my gospel.

It's part of the man, it's in him. You can't separate the man and his message. Oh, they'll tell you you're only following a man.

If you're following a man, you're following a man because he comes from the presence of God with the word of God, the message of God and the power of God. You can't separate a man and his message. He's the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message.

He declares it in the name of God. He stands consciously before the sapphire throne as he delivers with all the authority that God gives him the message of God. That's what we're needing.

We're needing authoritative preaching. God has sent us to say it. You can understand.

There's Ahab and there's Jezebel and here's a man saying there'll not be June or rain these years unless I say it. Who does he think he is? Maybe that's what you're saying about the preacher. Who does he think he is? I'll tell you a servant of God and a minister of Jesus Christ that claims today and not alone in my claim that I come from the presence of God to you with the message that God gave me for you.

Verse two and three. The word of the Lord came unto him saying, get thee hence, turn thee eastward and hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan. Thou shalt drink of the brook.

I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. Ah, this is interesting. Now listen carefully and I'll break it up for you.

Get thee hence, separation. Turn thee eastward, direction. Hide thyself, seclusion.

By the brook Cherith, location. Thou shalt drink of the brook, refreshment. I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there, provision.

Have you got it? Get thee hence, separation. Turn thee eastward, direction. Hide thyself, seclusion.

By the brook Cherith, location. Thou shalt drink of the brook, refreshment. I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there, provision.

In other words, God steps in and says, away you go Elijah. Now I don't know how he got out the court. That's only incidental to the business.

The thing is this, that this servant must be under the command of the word of the Lord. Verse 3, verse 2, the word of the Lord came unto him saying, later on when the brook dries up, verse 8, the word of the Lord came unto him saying, he's a man that's governed, controlled by the brook. I want to say this to you young men.

Now listen to me. You'll never serve God rightly if you don't know your Bible. You can't say, thus saith the word of the Lord.

You can't draw attention to the book if you don't know it. This is not a place for novices. Is that clear? Now come again.

Get thee hence, separation. You see God can't trust us too long in the limelight. Oh yes.

So therefore God takes his man and puts him into seclusion, into a hiding place. That's right. Now I can't speak for these preaching men.

And I'm second to none in my admiration of each of them. I don't know, but I don't know the detail of how they go about their business. I would like to say this.

I have learned this. I have learned to go to God for my messages. I have learned to depend upon God to deliver them.

And when it's all over, I go back to God again and to the sanctuary and go over the message with him. I found that good discipline. Hide thyself.

Every servant of God is a man that's hidden. Oh yes. Now I know you miss it a great deal.

You take Moses, great servant of God. Listen, brethren. Moses was the man that was hidden.

He was hidden three months in his father's house. He was hidden in the ark at the side of the Nile. He was hidden for 40 years in the backside of the desert.

He was hidden for 40 days and nights on the mount. He was hidden in the cleft of the rock. And lastly, God hid him when he buried him.

Every man of God has a hidden life. You only see him in public. Get the heads.

Turn eastward. Oh, that's interesting. My, that speaks volumes.

Listen now carefully. Turn eastward. He didn't say turn northward.

He didn't say, Elijah, turn northward for you'll need to face the bitter cold winds of persecution and affliction. No, no, he didn't say, Elijah, turn northward. He didn't say, Elijah, turn southward.

He didn't say, Elijah, get the southern call to the balmy breezes of popularity. Oh no. He didn't say, Elijah, turn westward where the sun is setting your little life's over for good.

Oh no. He says, Elijah, get the hands. Turn eastward.

Turn toward the dawn of a new day. Turn toward the chapter of another experience. Listen, Elijah.

This is only the first chapter in a great book. And now that it's over, turn eastward and wait the dawn of a new day. Brethren and sisters, life's like that.

It's like a book full of chapters. A chapter opens and then it'll close. Then it will open again and then it will close.

It's like that. And when you do something for God, then God says, come aside for a while. Brethren, you can be too busy.

And God would take you away from the spotlight. Is he doing that? Hide thyself by the brook. Listen, I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

Oh, that's great. Listen again. I, I, the person of God, I have commanded the authority of God.

I have commanded the ravens, the messengers of God. I have commanded the ravens to feed thee, to feed the provision of God. I have commanded the ravens to feed thee, the man of God.

I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there, the place of God. And so it was that God took him away down to Cherith, to the brook. Do you know that at this time Ahab was scouring the land for him? Do you remember that when Elijah came out to meet Ahab again and he met Obadiah? And Obadiah said, listen, Ahab's scouring the earth for you.

And every nation that he goes to, he demands that they place themselves an oath that you're not there. Ah, listen, Ahab will never find them. When God hides a man, there's no power in earth and hell or find them.

He's as safe as God can make him. That's right. I want to tell you, please, I know it's hackneyed, but God knows it's time it was being shouted from the housetops.

You're immortal until your work is done. You keep yourself in the center of the will of God and you'll be here as long as God wants you. And no power, no power on earth or hell can touch you.

You're invulnerable as long as the hand of God's on you. Ah, but it's interesting, isn't it? Says God, I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. How strange.

Do you brethren find that? Do you find it's the most unlikely sources that sustain you? I have commanded the ravens. That's all. So he went and did according to the word of the Lord.

He went and did what he was told. He dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan, twice over so that he won't miss the place. And it says the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening.

Here he is in seclusion. Now listen to me. You'll need to learn this.

That if you're going to serve God, it's not all glamour. That's why there's so many coming back from the mission field. It's not all glamour.

You might think it's a great thing to be up here. There's a lot more to the service of God than this. And you don't know, as you sit there, the background of many a man that stands up here.

Yonder at the brook, he says, I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. Twice a day they flew over. Now ravens, you'll hear their voracious cry for food.

Normally they would swallow flesh. And God controlled their appetites and disciplined the ravens that they brought it right to where Elijah was. Isn't that amazing? The nation of Israel are disobedient.

The ravens are obedient. Creation will do what God says and you won't. The ox knoweth its owner and the ass its master's crib, but my people doth not know.

The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed time. The turtle and the crane and the swallow knoweth the time of their coming, but my people doth not know. The great fish will swallow a disobedient Jonah, but the same fish at the command of God will obediently vomit a mountain dry land.

And when the Christ of God will enter Jerusalem, an unbroken cult will be peaceful under the control of the Christ. I want you to notice, please, how he was fair. The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening.

Now this is remarkable. You see, if God had used humans to do it twice a day, they would have been noted. Everybody would say, ah, there's somebody over there.

But nobody would ever be suspicious of ravens flying over twice a day. Tell you more. Listen to this.

He was better fed than Israel in the wilderness. Isn't that right? Israel got bread in the morning and flesh in the evening. Isn't that right? Man in the morning and quails at night.

But this man got bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening. Better fed than Israel. Who brought it over? Look at them.

Ravens, black coated waiters, waiting on the man of God. Again, bread and flesh in the morning, bread and flesh in the evening, two course dinner every day. Two course dinner twice a day.

Bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening. And God sustained them. And then the brook began to dry up.

You see, brethren, there are circumstances that are only temporary. And you'll ever need to be watching for the moment when God is bringing to an end that situation. And you'll need to be prepared for fresh

movement, fresh revelation.

You know, it was a very humbling thing for him to leave home with a message from God, God's man, God's message, deliver it and then be banished to a brook. He probably was there maybe for a year or two. Very humbling, isn't it? Depending on ravens to feed him.

Mind you, they'll come regularly. Every day he would look up morning and evening at a certain place where the sun was in the heavens and glance toward and see the ravens flying over. But the brook began to dry up.

The word of the Lord came to him. Ah, this is the difficult thing, just to wait till God tells you when to move. Isn't that right? Flesh is restless.

You want to do things in a hurry. But God's not in a hurry. There came a day when he said to them, listen, arise, away you go.

Go into Zidon. I have commanded a widow woman to sustain me. Oh no, Lord, just a minute.

I have commanded a widow woman. Now can you see this? Oh, it's very humbling. You see, to go to Zidon, it outraged his religious instincts, for that's where Jezebel came from.

It outraged his manly instincts. A widow woman is to be dependent on. Not just a widow, but a widow woman to emphasize her dependence on God.

It's outraging his national instincts. Go into Gentile country and I'll look after you there. Brethren, I want to tell you something.

It's a very humbling thing to serve God. God will keep you humble. And yet you know it's true that all God's great men were very humble men.

You see, it doesn't necessarily mean because a man has a great gift that he's proud. Now I'll need to sit down now. Let me say this to you.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says, I am the least of the apostles. Do you believe that? Now be honest. Do you believe that of all the apostles, Paul was the least of them? No, you see, I don't believe it.

Good. Paul believed it. Ephesians 3, unto me whom less than the least of all saints is this grace giver.

Less than the least of every saint. There you are, he takes them and he puts them all down. Right to the least and the lowest.

Then he draws a thick line and underneath it writes Paul. Do you believe that Paul was less than the least of the saints? No, you see, I don't. Paul believed that.

One day God sent a message to King Saul by the hand of Samuel. Do you know what it was? Listen to this. The message was this, Saul, when thou wast little in thine own eyes, I could use you, but not now.

Saul, you're too big for me to use. That's it. Do you know that the name of Paul means little? Now you'll disagree with me, I know you will, and please don't come to me at the close of the meeting, please.

And you'll tell me I've no right to say it, and you're probably right. I want to say this. I believe that there are men today who have cancelled themselves out of the service of God because of pride.

Oh, they're still preaching, but God's not using them. Brethren, we'll need to humble ourselves in the presence of God. We're strutting about like paragons as if there's nobody like us, and wisdom will die with us.

God can do without any of us. There are none of us, but what are dispensable. I want to say to you today, listen, in God's name, if you're going to be anything for God, get down and keep down, and God will lift you up.

Says Paul, by the grace of God I am what I am. What he was, God made him, and what you are and what you yet will be will only be because God has made you. Listen, read your own Bible, get to know your own God, stay where God has put you, and then go where God would send you.

Have you got that? Young men, read your own Bible, get to know your own God, stay where God has put you, and then go where God would send you. Remember this, and live every day in the light of it. Remember this, you've only one life.

Till soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. Thank you.

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