

Don't Trust Your Feelings

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[0 : 00] Before we get to chapter 19, there's some history, some background that's pretty essential to the story and to understanding what we're going to get to in chapter 19.

And so most of tonight, or at least a portion of it, is going to be telling Elijah's story and relating some things to our Christian life along the way. And then at the end, kind of recap this as an outline and really drive home a thought and a message for you tonight.

So if you're in 1 Kings 16, we'll be there and start reading here toward the end of that chapter in just a moment. We're going to learn some important information about the prophet Elijah from the very, just from these first few verses here that have to do with the king of the land and the condition of that land and the time that he is called of God to minister in that land.

So 1 Kings 16, find verse 30. The man Ahab now takes the throne in Samaria. And in verse 28 is when he reigns. He begins his reign.

And verse 30 says, And Ahab the son of Amri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him.

[1 : 26] And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove. And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, more than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

If you're familiar with this mention of Jeroboam, the sins of Jeroboam, that goes back a couple chapters to your left. And it's when he placed these two golden calves in the land.

And he said, I'm afraid I don't want you going down to Judah to worship at the temple in Jerusalem. Rather, I'm going to present you with something you could worship. And I want to keep you all up here where my kingdom is.

Since the split took place under Rehoboam, Jeroboam took the northern ten tribes. So he just institutes some full-on abomination in the land of Israel.

And if that were a light thing, then Ahab took it farther, far farther, in bringing in not just these worshipping of these calves that this man made, and making of the lightest people, chiefs, or priests in the high place and all that.

[2 : 36] But he went outside the land and found a god, and brought that god, brought a woman in, and she taught him all of these things, filthiness, and then erects a house for that god in his reign, his realm, and then puts an altar for that god, and makes a grove for this god Baal, and worships him.

And it's just nobody to this day has ever gone that far away from the Lord and the true God that brought them out of Egypt into this land. Nobody's gone that far.

This king is horrible. And now Elijah is a prophet of God. We know Elijah like he is the man. Like he gets referenced pretty hard in this Bible to being a strong character and figure in your Bible.

He's a prophet of God that has, this word doesn't do it justice, but has the unpleasant calling of ministering for God during the reign of Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

They are very hostile toward him. And it's just a tough time for a man to be called of God, to preach the word of God, and to try to stir up the people of God to serve the Lord, when it's not just that the needle has gone one direction, but it's just taken a hardcore dive far from the Lord.

[4 : 02] So in the chapter, the next chapter, when we are introduced to Elijah, chapter 17 and verse 1, Elijah is called of God to go confront this king.

Verse 1 says, And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, saith unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but

according to my word.

And plainly saying, it is not going to rain anymore until I say so, because I stand before the true God, and you're going to learn this lesson. And so he confronts the king, and if living amongst such wickedness of the land was not enough, it's about to get far worse, specifically for this man, for this prophet, Elijah, trying to serve God.

Verse 2 says, The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook, Cherith, which is before the brook. So now he's got to go hide. He presents this message to the king, and now he's got to turn tail, and run, and hide for his life.

And he goes into hiding. Ahab puts on an exhaustive search to find him. Not right away, but when the rain doesn't fall, and the rain doesn't fall, and the rain doesn't fall, he starts to understand this is real, and that guy has got to be dealt with.

[5 : 26] And so he goes and searches for that problem. He's the one he wants. Look at chapter 18. Flip to the next chapter. Ahab puts on an exhaustive search to find Elijah.

Likely, he wants him dead. In verse number, we're picking this up kind of in the middle of another conversation, but you get the information in verse 10. As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my Lord, speaking of Ahab, hath not sent to seek thee.

This is a man named Obadiah that's talking to Elijah. There is no nation or kingdom whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee. And when they said he's not here, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not.

Like, he's not playing games. If I find out he's here, I'm coming after that whole nation. Like, he is hot for Elijah. And no doubt he wants to put him to death.

In the meantime, his wife Jezebel has got her own campaign trying to exterminate all the prophets of the Lord that are in Israel in the land where they have reign over.

[6 : 40] Look at chapter 18 and look a little further in verse 13. The same conversation. Obadiah is telling Elijah, was it not told by Lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord?

How I hid a hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave and fed them with bread. What? Well, she's trying to kill them all. And now there's fifty in this cave and fifty in that cave hiding out, trying to stay alive and escape the wrath of Ahab and Jezebel.

She's trying to purge the land of all the prophets. But we're focusing in on Elijah for the evening tonight. He's living off the grid. He is being pursued to the furthest extent.

Tensions are high. There's no rain in the land. And there's a major famine. Look at chapter 18 and verse number 2. Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab and there was a sore famine in Samaria.

And so the famine in the land for this amount of years, it's three plus years. A famine cripples, if not collapses, the nation's economy and the well-being of the people and of the crops, of the cattle, of the children.

[8 : 00] It's all just going downhill. And you can understand now, Ahab puts the blame on Elijah because he came and told him, there's not going to be any rain until I say so. And so Ahab wants him dead.

And yet we study this. You can look back on your own in chapter 17. You'll see that God sustains the preacher with ravens by a brook. And when that brook dries up, then he sends him to Zarephath where a widow woman is going to take care of him.

And he sustains him there. And so he keeps his hand on his man. And finally then, we're in chapter 18 where God sends Elijah back to Ahab. And he sends him back with the promise of rain.

It's in verse number 1 of chapter 18. It came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.

So Elijah shows up. He goes to meet him. When he meets with Ahab, Ahab, this king, accuses Elijah and says, It's your fault that the land is in the case that it's in.

[9 : 08] All the trouble around us which has been devastating. And he says, It's your fault. And then Elijah responds and says, No, this is not my fault at all.

It's your fault, king. And he talks about this in chapter, look at verse 17. It came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou in thy father's house and that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and has followed Balaam.

And Elijah's outraged that he is accused of all that has befallen the land. And he's insistent upon proving his innocence so he challenges the king to a showdown upon Mount Carmel.

That's in the following verses, 19, 20, 21. And he gathers together the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the grove and there's a total of 850 of them.

And he challenges them to this showdown to prove whether Ahab's god Baal is the true god that Israel should be serving and following or whether the Lord God Jehovah is the true god that Israel should be following and serving.

[10:17] But understand this, there is much confusion in Israel. Not so much in Judah, but in the land of Israel, it's generations that have been introduced to idolatry.

And it's not just been the sins of Jeroboam with the golden cast, but it's on top of that, this reign of Ahab and this Baal and building a house to him. And so there's much confusion.

And there's many, many hundreds of prophets of iniquity and of idolatry. So it's established firmly in the land. It's not just like they know their history, they know where they came from.

That's not been taught very clear for a long time. And so it's time once and for all to establish who the true god is. That's Elijah's intention.

So he takes them on the mount and if you remember the passage going through the rest of chapter 18, they build the altar, they do all their dancing and they're all their cutting themselves and nothing happens and he mocks them and nothing happens and on and on.

[11:20] And finally, Elijah has his turn and the Lord answers. And the Lord burns up the altar and then he takes after those 850 false prophets and kills them.

Verse number 40, Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape.

And they took them. Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slew them there.

And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up, eat and drink for there is the sound of abundance of rain.

And so, what a victory here. Rain is coming.

By verse 45, it is pouring down rain. Elijah prevailed. Elijah got a great victory.

The score has finally been settled of who the true god is. It seems like the biggest win for Elijah in all of his years of ministry in serving the Lord.

[12:23] And so, what a relief this is going to be. The rain has come back to the land. The prophets of Baal have been killed and exterminated. The Lord has shown himself undeniably to be the true God.

What a victory. And now, what liberty this man Elijah is going to experience as he ministers for Jehovah going forward.

He can now walk openly and triumphantly and confident in Israel with his head high knowing that he's the true God or the true prophet of the undisputed God of Israel.

Right? Wrong. Wrong. And so now, we come to chapter 19. All of that to set the stage to understand what we're experiencing, what we're reading, what we're going to study in chapter 19.

Follow with me in verses 1 through 4, beginning of 4. And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

[13:29] Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah saying, So let the gods do to me and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow, about this time.

And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there, but he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. Elijah, you think you're going to have some relief from all of this?

All of this hardship and all of this idol worship, you think it's going to be exterminated, put away from you? You think you're going to have some victory? No. And now look at him. He's running for his life again.

He's right back in hiding. At this point is where the wear and tear of the ministry is going to show up in Elijah.

the strain, the famine, the running, the hiding, the fear. It's just all coming to a head in chapter 19 and it overcomes him.

[14:37] And he starts to show signs of weakness and says something in verse 4. Continue reading. In verse 4, he came and sat down under a juniper tree and he requested for himself that he might die and said, it is enough.

I've had enough. This is how he feels. I'm trying to put all of this on the plate so you get this and understand. When he makes that comment, he means it.

He's been through a lot and it's, when it looked like it could get better, it didn't. According to Jezebel, he's got 24 hours to live. He's a dead man walking once again.

All of that victory, what was that all about? What was it for? Because he doesn't even, it's just a, it's a memory already because right now my life's on the line and he finally just gets to a place alone with God and says, I'm done.

I can't do this anymore. It is enough. Oh Lord, take away my life. That's his request. And to relate this feeling, this is how he feels.

[15 : 55] To relate this to you and I, I think at times we can feel that. Maybe not running for your life, maybe not having the government after you, wanting to kill you and maybe not the threats that deep, but you can still feel that frustration and that overwhelming feeling inside of you where you're just like, enough!

I can't take any more of this. It doesn't happen like this every day or every week, but it comes. And they say, when it rains, it pours and waves can come upon you and you can just sit there like Elijah and say to God, I can't take this.

I've had enough. There can be times where you've felt great experiences of victories and of doing something for God and maybe where you see that living for the Lord is the right way and you get to see somebody saved or because of your testimony, somebody in your family comes to church and they get saved and they're walking with Christ and it's just like, what a blessing, God!

You're so good! Only all in that feeling to have the rug just ripped right out from underneath you. Because something just, boom, just hits you the next day. And then that joy that you felt is gone because in front of you is strain and pressure and fear and you're weak and you're tired and the Christian life is just not easy anymore.

I think you probably have felt some of that along the way. For Elijah, he said, enough! I don't want to do this anymore. I think I'm going to get a break from all of this and it's just more bad news.

[17 : 39] And so when he felt this way, God did something for him. In verse 5, he lay and slept under a juniper tree. Then, behold, then an angel touched him and said unto him, arise and eat.

And he looked and behold, there was a cake baking on the coals and a cruise of water at his head. And he did eat and drink and laid him down again. He didn't fetch that water.

He didn't bake that cake. God did that for him. And he filled him. And he laid down again. The angel of the Lord, in verse 7, he came again the second time and touched him and said, arise and eat because the journey is too great for thee.

And he arose and did eat and drink and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God. When God's servant felt that low and felt like, I've had enough, I can't take any more, I'm done, God strengthened him.

God showed up while he's alone with no strength and he did something for him and then sent him on his way. He went on a journey that he didn't have the strength to make on his own.

[19 : 02] And so the Lord had to do something there. This thought kind of ties in the last Wednesday when we looked at that prayer for strength because God gives strength to the weary and power to the faint.

And he knows the feelings of our infirmities and all of it. But by the way, though Elijah in the moment felt that he couldn't go on and that it was enough, it turns out, with God's help, he can't go on.

It turns out he just needed the Lord to feed him a little bit, to get something in his system and then 40 days and 40 nights, he went a long, long, long way, superhuman, what he ended up doing when the Lord showed up.

And to add to this, before we go on, the way Elijah felt was I can't take any more, it's enough. Turns out, no, you could take some more.

God never gives us more than we can bear. Never. He's better than that. And he'll never make us bear it alone either. And so to Elijah, it feels like he can't go on.

[20 : 06] Turns out he can go on. He just needed some strength from the Lord. And the Lord, in faithfulness and in tenderness, gave it to him. Arise, he says.

He speaks to him when he's weary and asleep. Arise. And he lifts him up and feeds him and gives him some sustenance. So next we find that Elijah is in a cave.

Look at verse 9 and 10. He came thither unto a cave and lodged there. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him. And he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I've been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts.

For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I, only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.

He says the same thing again in verse 14, like word for word, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts. They have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and on and on.

[21 : 12] Elijah declares he's jealous, like he should be. He despises how Israel has turned to idolatry and forsaken the Lord. And he claims that he's the only one standing for what's right.

This is what he believes. This is what he sees with his eyes. He's been in hiding. He's heard of mass murders of the prophets of Jezebel, or by Jezebel.

He believes, he's telling, testifying to God that I'm the only one left. I, even I, only am left. The man believes it, that he's the only one that escaped.

You know what he feels? He feels alone. He's been dealing with this all on his own. Nobody, none of the other preachers that are supposedly out there, nobody came to comfort him, and to pass those weary days with him.

Nobody's encouraging him in the Lord. There's no letters, there's no texts, there's no emails, there's nobody. He's the lone ranger with no backup, with no army, with no followers, with nothing.

[22 : 28] This is how he feels. If you could put yourself in his shoes and see life through his eyes, this is what he believes. This is how he feels. And I think, to relate to this feeling, I know it's not always this bad.

But there surely are times when you go through some things that nobody else can understand.

Nobody can get into your head and get into your heart and feel those feelings that you feel.

Nobody is, they can pray for you, they can say kind words to you, but what it feels like is you can't feel what's inside of me, this turmoil, what's going on.

You don't have the anxiety in your body like I do. You don't have the thoughts going through your head that are paralyzing you and painful to feel. And you can think that way if you believe you're all alone and that there's nobody else out there.

When God's servant felt that he was all alone, God revealed to him, no you're not. You've never been all alone, Elijah. Later on in verse 18 when the Lord finishes up speaking to him, verse 18 he said, Yet I have left 7,000 in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

[23 : 57] 7,000, Elijah. You think you're the last one standing? He's wrong. But it felt like it to him.

The life he lived, the chaos, the running, the fear, the death threats, it felt like he was the last one.

And all that, and hearing that knowledge that he's not the only one, there's 7,000 out there, that didn't change the experience that he has being alone and running for his life, but it surely can change his perspective on that experience.

Meaning this, it's helpful to know that although you have to deal with unpleasant things in life and trials and testing and just things falling out from underneath you, although that takes place, it's helpful to know that you're not the only one dealing with these things.

First of all, the Lord Jesus Christ can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Why? Because he felt them too. Because he went through it too.

He's been there. And so the Bible says he can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He's been betrayed. He's been left alone. He's been whipped and beaten and forsaken and lied about.

[25 : 18] Just a whole gamut. He's dealt with it. Yet without sin. And so the Lord Jesus Christ is somebody that's been there and he said, I'll never leave you nor forsake you.

And so while you do feel alone, you know in your heart from the word of God you have the Lord Jesus Christ there. But then there's more. The Bible says, there hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.

And so while you feel like this is a unique thing and you're the only one suffering, the truth are, is across this land and world there are brothers and sisters today and yesterday in the past that have dealt with the same or similar circumstances and some far worse.

And those brothers and sisters have not bowed the knee to Baal. They haven't kissed him either. They stood for God and they wouldn't bow. They keep witnessing to their co-workers even when they get mocked.

They keep telling their family that Jesus Christ is the Savior and they need Him even when they get shunned. They keep reading their Bibles. They keep praying for God to help them to be faithful and stay strong.

[26 : 31] They keep walking with God. And so while you might feel like you're all alone, the truth is you're not and you never have been.

It's a big difference when you know that you're not alone. That's one of the reasons God instituted a local church. To get you together. To get you to come around as often as we get together with your brothers and sisters and to be strengthened by them.

To have relationships with them. To be edified. To lift it up. To be helped. Be prayed for. Somebody has stayed. The Bible says bear ye one another's burdens. That's not what the world's looking to do.

We have a command of Christ to do that so we do that. You feel like you're alone. You're not. God gave you a network. You have God.

You have a savior in the Lord Jesus Christ that will never leave you and you have a family of believers that are willing and ready to care and will at the drop of a hat try to lift you up and bear your burdens.

[27 : 37] And so while you might feel like this is dealing with this all by myself, it's not true at all. Finally, there's another thing the prophet felt. He felt that this, that his head was on the chopping block.

Why? Well, in chapter 19 and in verse 2 Jezebel sent a messenger unto him with a threat that she's gonna kill him in 24 hours.

He's not gonna see the next sunrise. Like he's dead. I'm coming to kill you. And he believed it. And so the way he felt was Jezebel's after me.

I have to stay in hiding. I'm the last one and I'm the next one. And so he sits down and says, God, why don't you just end it right here?

There's no escape in this one. I'm a dead man. Well, Elijah, you're wrong. You're very wrong.

[28 : 40] God was not going to allow anything to happen to his prophet. But the way he felt based on the report he heard, based on what he's seen with his eyes, the life, what's in front, what's going on in the land that he lives in where his feet are touching the soil, how he felt is afraid.

Others are dead. And although he felt like it was over for him too, God saw it differently. And so God sent him to do something.

In verse 15, he sends him to go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus. And he tells him to anoint Jehu to be king over Israel.

He tells him to, I'll back up a little bit, to anoint a new king over Assyria, Hazael, in verse 15. But then in 16, Jehu, there's going to be another king over Israel.

You know what Elijah thinks? I'm a dead man. He thinks Ahab has got the upper hand. The Lord's like, son, you're going to go anoint the next king.

[29 : 49] There's another king about to take the throne. You're going to see this. This is not how it's going to end for you. Jehu, go anoint him and then anoint Elisha to be prophet in thy room.

And so he goes to do these things. The chapter closes with his interaction with Elisha. How he felt was that he's a dead man and that it's over.

But the Lord had something for him to do. Elisha couldn't see, Elijah could not see past his feelings. He couldn't see past what's in front of him, his surroundings.

He was called to minister in a tough time and it got to him. And in chapter 19, he's slipping. He felt that he couldn't go on and so he needed strength and God strengthened him.

He felt that he was all alone but he was wrong and so God straightened him out. He changed his thinking. He showed him, no, you're not, you've never been alone. He felt that it was all over but it wasn't and so God sent him on to do more for him.

[31 : 01] His ministry wasn't over. As a matter of fact, he spent, he's got several years remaining in the ministry training Elisha and he's got, I think, like almost 10 years left until he gets caught up to heaven.

He never experienced death. He was dead wrong about that but it sure felt like it was happening and so all of this to bring it to the point and to the message tonight, don't trust your feelings.

They might be authentic to you. They are a natural response to real life events and situations that are in your life to deal with but don't allow your feelings to take place of what you know is true from the word of God.

Emotions from trials can lead you away from trusting the Lord and your feelings will deceive you. They will cloud your thinking.

Your heart will get overcome with emotion and fear and sorrow and it will cloud your thinking and it will steal your trust and you will replace your faith in God with fear of the situation.

[32 : 20] Don't trust your feelings. they are going to hold you back and they are going to mess with your mind. If you are like Elijah and your feelings say, I am done.

I am done with this. I can't do anymore. The word of God says, I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me. I can go on.

When your feelings say, I am all alone. we have already discussed how the Lord Jesus Christ said, that is not true. I will never leave you. And on top of that, there is probably a brother or sister that God has specially made and put in your life to help bear your burdens with you.

If your feelings tell you this is the end, you can't see beyond it. There is no way around this. There is no way out. The psalmist said, In God have I put my trust.

I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. It's not over until God determines it's over because the Lord God holds your life in his hands.

[33 : 27] You need to trust him with your life, with your days, with these experiences. So the message tonight, church, is don't trust your feelings. Trust the word of God.

Find a verse of scripture that helps you and memorize that verse and hold on to it and don't ever let it go. Train yourself. This is serious. Train yourself when you hear bad news to go straight to the Lord, to take that straight to God.

He already knows about it and he careth for you. And so when something hits and if it hits hard, train yourself to go straight to God, to seek some promise or truth from his word, and then do not let go of it.

Your feelings will mess with your mind, but the word of God is truth. It will keep your heart and in your mind through Christ Jesus. So I hope that helps you.

Elijah is a great man, but he's a man. And when the pressure gets so much on him, he caved, he slipped, he was ready to quit.

[34 : 39] Don't you be that man. Learn how to take a stand. Learn from that example. It's written for your learning, so learn from it and get the word of God in you to help you to stand.

Father, please bless as we leave. May these words and this message and this story strengthen us and convince us that we need to take everything straight to you and to lay it at your throne of grace and obtain mercy and grace to help in time in need.

Lord, the times of need are there in our lives. They're there today. They'll be there tomorrow. So God, train us to come to the throne quickly. Train us to learn to trust you, to learn to walk by faith and not to believe our deceitful heart and our emotions and our feelings.

Help us to trust you more. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right, that's it tonight. Thanks for being here. Going to be ice cream out there. If you want to hang around, please do. Let's enjoy some time there.

We'll take off and God see you on Saturday night, men. Amen. Amen.