

What Do'est Thou Here Elijah

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[0 : 00] Welcome to our service this evening, a special welcome to any who may be visiting with us. We come to worship God, we pray that he would bless to us his word.

We can begin by singing from Psalm 103. Psalm 103, we're singing from the mythical version of the Psalms, from the beginning down to verse 7.

Psalm 103, we're singing from Psalm 103.

Psalm 103.

And sing these verses, 1 through to 7, Psalm 103. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

[1 : 52] And all that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless.

Bless, O my soul, the Lord. O thou my soul, bless God the Lord.

And all that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless.

All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. All that he is, be still in the death of whose holy name is, be still in the death of Our night. All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. And bless. All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and misses. I am please. For all that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. All that in me know those you do not join me in the death of His holy name, to magnify and bless.

All that in me is, be still in the death of his holy name, to the death of his holy name, to magnify and bless. Whereas as grace to magnify and me is the death of his holy name. The■■ of the death of his holy name and bless. covert and tear the death of his holy name, to öl■■■■. Most gracious name for Him.

[3 : 12] Who like His Jesus fallen things.

Doth heal and give relief. Who does redeem Thy life as though to death is not or down.

Who knew with loving kindness does. And gender may be strong.

Who with abundance of good things.

Doth satisfy Thy might. So that in us the eagles age.

[4 : 38] Renew it is by it. God righteous judgment.

Take it. For all oppressed ones. His wisdom, Moses.

He is at. Midnight. God righteous. God righteous.

God righteous. God righteous. God righteous. God righteous. God righteous. Let us join together in prayer. Let's pray. Lord of God as we come before you.

We give thanks that we can call upon your name. God righteous. And that we can understand what was in the mind of the psalmist when he composed these words.

[5 : 50] God righteous. That he had a desire to magnify the name of his God. And that it was not only his heartfelt desire but the desire of his very soul to praise and elevate God in the whole man body and spirit.

So that his worship would be complete worship. That the eyes of his head and the eyes of his heart would be unified in seeking the face of God.

That the mouth of his body, the mouth of his soul should be open not just to praise the God of heaven but to partake of the feast that was set before him on the table of the gospel.

Even though the gospel was only in shadow and in type. It was still the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The fullness of the fullness of the reality of that gospel. That the love before us. That the love before us. And we desire to have the same insatiable appetite for the truth of God.

[7 : 30] And the sustenance it provides for us. For our daily living here in this world. We pray for your blessing upon us as we gather that we would be united as one in the desire to be a worshipping people.

We may be small in number comparatively so. But we know that we are unified with the saints of God the world over.

That we have a unity within. The saints who are all one in Christ Jesus. And that encapsulates time and eternity.

The saints who have crossed over the Jordan of death. Who have physically entered into the long sleep of the grave.

And yet who have spiritually ascended to glory. Awaiting the reunification of body and spirit at the resurrection.

[8 : 43] And we join with them. We believe that they will have a better understanding of what that means than we do here.

For our mind is so taken up with the things of this world. But we know that those who are in Christ are in Christ perpetually.

It is not something that changes. Even death itself cannot separate his people from him. They are united to him even in death.

And we know that in the grave they still remain united to him. And that is a mystery that the understanding of the intellect of man wrestles with and refutes of.

And that is a mystery that the truth of God. And that is a mystery that the truth of God declares these things to us. Christ's saving as on a Christian ■■■■■■■■ to quite about the need.

[9 : 49] ■u 1. Not only be willing to receive your word as you have minted. To provide for our creature needs here in this world.

but also needs us, the saints of God, those who are yet to be numbered amongst that body of believing people, we pray that you would add to that number, by virtue of your grace and the operation of your spirit, quickening, enlivening, taking from death to life, taking from the pit and fixing our feet upon the rock, putting a new song in our mouth to magnify the God who is able to deliver us from death.

Remember those of our number who are in need this evening, we pray especially for the grieving and the sorrowful, whatever they are found. And we pray for those who are unwell and who need to be reminded of the ability that you as God have to be the physician of body and soul.

You are a great physician. And while all our bodies will ultimately enter into decrepitude and the waning of the faculties that mark us out for what we are, the day will come when there will be a restoration of all these things that sin has marred in the experience of this world, that there will be not only a new heaven and a new earth, but in dwelleth righteousness, but that your people in particular will be found like him who saved them from their sins.

They will be like him in ways that they could not possibly envisage. And we pray for your own word to enlighten our minds and the knowledge of him, that we may appreciate that for what it is.

[12 : 02] So visit us in mercy, remembering all according to need, be they at home or hospital, cared for in homes for the elderly, those who are confined to beds from which they will not rise, found in the hospice, we pray for them and all who care for them.

We seek your blessing upon the word that is preached and proclaimed and read within the hearing of many today, whether it is in person or through the media, whatever it may be, even those who may sit down with tape ministries and CDs, listening to sermons that were preached perhaps decades ago, and that privilege is ours that there are those who, though they may be dead, they still they speak.

May the words of their mouth be blessed even now. So continue to watch over us as our people. Remember our nation, our king, his family, those who govern in his name in the various parliaments.

We are required to pray for them, and we do, and ask that those who are foolish amongst them would be turned from their foolishness.

Those who are foolish, would they be upheld by your own mighty arms. Sustain them in the struggles that they must endure as a believing people amidst of a people who are in the grip of the darkness of sin.

[13 : 44] Remember the nations of the earth and all who form part of it. The world over, we know that there are calamities and crises of very differing sorts.

We know that there are wars, rumors of wars, there are famines, there are natural disasters of all hues. We pray for all who are caught up in these things, that you may sanctify it to us all, that our eye may be beyond the present to the eternal God, who is God over all.

Even in the darkest hour, you still radiate with your light. Help us to see light in your light. Watch over us for giving us.

In Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen. We'll continue to sing to God's praise. As we're singing verses from Psalm 39.

Psalm 39, we'll sing the first six stanzas. From the beginning of the psalm I said, I will look to my waist, lest with my tongue I sin.

[14 : 54] In sight of wicked men, my mouth with bridle I'll keep in. With silence I as dumb became. I did myself restrain from speaking good, but then the more increased was my pain.

My heart within me watched hot. While I'm using was the fire did burn, and from my tongue these words I did let pass.

Mine end and measure of my days, O Lord, unto me show. What is the same that I that by my frailty well may know? Lo, thou my days and hand-breadth maids, mine age is in thine eye, as nothing, sure each man at best is holy vanity.

Sure each man walks in a vain shore, they vex themselves in thine. He heaps up wealth and does not know to whom it shall pertain.

Let us sing these verses. Psalm 39, from the beginning I said, I will look to my waist, lest with my tongue I sin. I said I will protect my waist, lest with my tongue I sin.

- [16 : 28] In sight of wicked men, my mouth with pride I'll keep in.
 With silence I hasten became, I did myself restrain, from speaking good, but then the more increase, it was my pain.
 my heart within me was it hot.
 And while I missing was, the fire did burn, the fire did burn, and from my tongue these words I did let pass.
 mine end, mine end, and mission of my days, O Lord, and take me show what is the same that I thereby my frailty well may know.
- [18 : 46] know thou my days, and on bread may, mine ages in thine eye, as nothing should each man manifest this holy vanity.
 should each man walk in a wind shore, they vex themselves in vain, he heaps of wealth, and doth not know, to whom it shall pertain.
 I'm going to hear God's word as we have it in the Old Testament Scriptures. The first book of Kings, and chapter 19.
 1 Kings, chapter 19. And we can read the whole of the chapter. First book of Kings.
 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.
- [20 : 45] 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, and came and sat down under a juniper tree. And he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough.
 Now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my father. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him and said unto him, Arise and eat.
 And he looked, and behold, there was a cake, bacon on the coals, and a cruise of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.
- [21 : 55] And the angel of the Lord came again a 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.
 And he came thither into 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 have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts. For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword.
 And I, even I, only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away. And he said, Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord.
 And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord.
- [23 : 06] But the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind, an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire.
 But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he rocked his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave.

And behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts.

Because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword. And I, even I only, am left.

And they seek my life to take it away. And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.

[24 : 10] And when thou comest, anoint as a man to be king over Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi shall thou assign to be king over Israel.

And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel, Mechola, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass that him that escapeth the sword of Asael shall Jehu slay.

And him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed down unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

So he departed then and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. And he with the twelfth.

And Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow thee.

[25 : 21] And he said unto him, Go back again, for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him and took a yoke of oxen and slew them and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen and gave unto the people and they did eat.

Then he arose and went after Elijah and ministered unto him. Amen. And may the Lord have his blessing to the reading of his word and to his name be the praise.

We're going to continue singing to God's praise. This time singing verses from Psalm 104. Psalm 104.

Again we're singing the first six stanzas of the psalm. From the beginning, Bless God my soul, O Lord my God, Thou art exceeding great.

With honour and with majesty thou clothed art in state. With light as with a robe, thyself thou coverest above, and likened to our curtain though the heavens stretchest out.

[26 : 42] Who of his chambers doth the beams within the waters lay? Who doth the clouds his chariots make on wings of wind make way?

Who flaming fire his ministers his angels' spirits doth make? Who earth's foundations did lay that it should never shake? Thou didst doth cover with the deep as with a garment spread.

The waters stood above the hills when thou the word but said. But at the voice of thy rebuke they fled and would not stay. They at thy thunder's dreadful voice did hasten fast away.

And so on. We can sing these verses. Psalm 104, 1-7 R. Number 10 .

R. I R. PAGE 3 B. R. R. R.

[27 : 47] R. R. R. R. R. R. R. R. R. R.

R. R. And with majesty, Thy clothed art in state.

With light as with the rope I sail, Thy calvary starlight.

And like unto a cart, The heavens stretch astight.

Who off his chambers Shove the beams Within the waters lay.

[29 : 03] Who doth the clouds It's shiny of me On wings of wind make way.

Who flaming fire Is ministered Is injustice And of me.

Who else foundation Who stood late That it should never shake.

The dead The dead Did cover With the deep As with the garments Spread The water The water Shrewed up Up The hills When Thou Thou Wart But said But at the voice Of thy Rebuke They fled And would not stay Theyzogen They have did his tempest away.

I'd like us to turn to the passage that we were reading together, the Old Testament Scriptures, the first book of Kings, chapter 19.

[31 : 22] And we can read again. These words we have in verse 9. And 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? Then again in verse 13, It was so when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave.

And behold, there came a voice unto him and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? Particularly these words, the question that is asked of the prophet, What doest thou here, Elijah?

The repetition of the question itself seems to mean something.

I think the repetition requires us to understand that the significance of the question had to be brought home to Elijah.

[32 : 45] I'm not really sure why there's a repetition of the answer, because you would expect the question having been asked and the response having been given.

And then the experience that followed, and the question asked again, that the response would have changed accordingly.

But it doesn't. And I'm not really very sure why that is the case. The person of Elijah, the name is probably familiar to most of you.

He's a prophet of the Old Testament. He's mentioned in the New Testament as a prophet of significance. And yet, he actually appears quite without warning.

In the beginning of chapter 17, we read, 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 dew nor rain these seers, but according to my word.

[34 : 12] And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, and so on. There's no preamble. There's no warning.

There's no hint of who he was before God's claim upon his life was made known to him. It's just one of these occasions that brings more mystery into the way God works.

But the word that comes to him, and the way he responds to it, tells us that he was indeed a prophet, and that he understood himself to be a prophet, that God had called him to deliver his word to that generation.

And it was not an easy task that God gave to him. Because if you read back into the history of the people at that time, the nation was full of of apostasy, and at the very highest spheres of power, there were all manner of hideous behaviours recorded for us.

And they were clearly a miscreant nation, not interested in God or serving or following God in any meaningful way.

[35 : 44] And the prophet was called to speak into that situation. I think we find it so easy to forget, to remember rather, and we do forget, that if God is calling a person, I think we mentioned it just in passing, Thursday evening, when the call of God came to Isaiah, we imagine that if God calls a servant to serve him and to minister in his name, that it is bound to be successful, that it is bound to be followed with blessing, that it is bound to be a source of delight in God's eyes.

But sometimes God calls his servants to labour in spheres of activity that are far from productive spiritually.

And in many respects, that is the kind of calling that Elijah had to respond to. But he did respond to it, and in verse 10 we read that he is diligent in following his calling.

And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I, only am left and they seek my life to take it away.

He clearly there he believes himself to have suffered because of his isolation.

[37 : 32] But he records for us the fact that he is, as God said, fulfilling his calling and doing what God has called him to. And again, in the New Testament, in the epistle of James, James identifies the prophet as someone whose ministry, whose calling, whose faith, is to be remembered.

This is what James says, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Now that quotation from James is in a context where James, we mentioned in the morning how James is a very practical Christian, and he's always emphasizing what Christian people ought to do, and what Christian people ought not to do.

There's a great emphasis, emphasis on God's word, and the way that it functions within the life of the believer, teaching, and encouraging, and building up the church of God, and building up the people of God, and doing so in as positive a way as possible.

But here he highlights the example of faith, and the prayerfulness of Elijah, and the fruitfulness of that prayer.

[39 : 30] but alongside it he puts the fact that Elijah, although he is a prophet, although he is called by God to be ministering in his name in very challenging circumstances, he says Elijah was someone who was of like passions, subject to like passions as we are.

And that word from the apostle reminds us of something that is true of Elijah, and of every other child of God, that we need to remember that we are but creatures of the dust, that we are human beings with the feelings that our humanity displays from time to time.

Sometimes we do right, sometimes we do wrong, sometimes we strive for achievement, and sometimes we fail miserably in our striving.

And that is what is portrayed for us here in this passage, I think. Elijah, we are reminded in this passage of all the failings and the weaknesses that mark his character, which are alongside the characteristics that are portrayed in his obedience and in the success that is markedly his by God's grace.

And I want us just to think very simply on the way that Elijah is presented to us here.

[41 : 25] Because I think that when we look at the scripture and when we look at the people that the scripture highlight for us, we very often are guilty of ignoring all that is said about them.

we may focus on the truth as it seems suitable to ourselves and our needs at the time. And we may overlook the things that we must take on board concerning these people that God has chosen to be vessels for honour for himself.

When we think of the Apostle Peter, there are many good things that we can say about the Apostle Peter, that marked him out as a faithful servant of God who went on to do great things in God's name.

But we cannot overlook the fact that at a very critical point in the life of the Lord that he failed him miserably. We can't overlook the fact that when it comes to the servant of God who, if we look at his whole history, who did many things, mighty things in God's name, and yet at the same time, for no apparent reason, he does not sustain that ministry that he has to the same degree or with the same success.

you have to ask the question, why is it possible for this man of God, called by God, obedient to God's call, responsive to God's word, hearing God speak to him, confronting these prophets of Baal, confronting the king of Israel, Ahab, face to face fearlessly, confronting Jezebel, and doing so regardless of the consequences to himself.

[43 : 44] How could he do all these things? And then we read of him very shortly after that, simply because he heard a message from Jezebel that his life was in jeopardy, that he chooses to turn and to flee.

It hardly makes sense, does it? 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. Is it not inconsistent? Is it not something that defies explanation how in this one person you could have these two clear responses that seem to be the responses of two different people?

How can he one moment be powerful and God-fearing and drawing upon heaven to sustain him in a ministry that no other could fulfill, and at the same time within almost a breath, be driven away just because of the threat of one person?

Well, let's try and understand what is happening, if we can understand it, if we can explain it, by looking at this question that is asked and ask some questions of our own.

[45 : 22] We see that Elijah is asked a simple question, what doest thou hear Elijah? What doest thou hear Elijah?

It seems to be a very innocuous question, does it not? What kind of response is expected?

Well, first of all, if we ask the question, where is the hear of Elijah? Where is the hear of Elijah?

Well, geographically, we are told that he has gone to Horeb, the mount of God. That's where he goes.

He goes to the mount of God in Horeb. And we are told in verse 13 that he is on the mount of God at Horeb in a cave.

[46 : 29] Well, it seems from what is written there that he is in that cave in that place. But how did he come to be at Horeb in this cave?

And we are told, and we alluded to it, that the reason he is there, or how he came to be there, is he had taken flight from Jezebel.

Which, on the face of it, seems terribly weak on his part. Do you remember the passage that we read from the Apostle James?

It shows us that such was his relationship to God that he was equipped with phenomenal faith.

He could call upon God. He didn't have the power to do so, but God had power and he could pray to God and God was able to shut up the windows of heaven so that it did not rain.

[47 : 39] James identifies Elijah as the one who was the significant factor in that happening. Elijah prayed, the heavens were shut, that there was no rain for several years.

And the same Elijah, when he prayed to God, he prayed that God would open the heavens and the heavens opened and there was rain. And not only that, in the encounter that he had with the prophets of Baal, he called down fire from heaven.

He couldn't do that, but he could call upon God and God had the power and fire came down and the sacrifice that the Baal worshippers saw to offer was nullified.

God but Elijah answered by fire or God did or Elijah's God did. So when we read that it seems that what we're discovering about this person is entirely contradictory to past experience.

but more importantly I think he is here. What doest thou here?

[49 : 10] And it seems that God is saying to him, you are here but I didn't send you here. You are here in this place that bears my name.

You are in this cave under my eye. but I didn't send you here. And if you read carefully through the account that we have of this prophet of God who responded in faith to God's calling upon his life almost without equivocation.

He listened to the voice of God. He heard the voice of God. He did what the voice of God told him to do. You read this.

He went when the word of God came to to Carmel. He went when the word of God came to him to the brooch Jereth.

He went when the word of God came to him to the widow in Saraphath. Every time God spoke he heard and he did what God told him to do.

[50 : 25] it was as if it was impossible for him not to hear God and yet he did not hear God tell him to go to this place.

He did not hear God tell him to take flight from Jezebel although it might well be something that he should have done. but then again when you examine that and the thought processes that he would inevitably have to go through you know we read that he wanted to die.

He wanted God to take him away. He wanted his life to end. well if that was the case he could easily have stayed where he was could he not?

He could easily have remained where he was because Jezebel was intent on his destruction and all he had to do was stay where he was and he would have had what he wanted but he didn't.

So why are we confronted with this irrational behaviour? Why are we confronted with a person who at one moment seems to be so powerful and so equipped to do God's bidding and then the next moment he is weak and insecure and fearful and ready to run at the drop of a hat?

[52 : 10] What doest thou hear Elijah? Now the question is fitted to Elijah's circumstances and that's what we need to discover.

Elijah is confronted with a question that makes him try and resolve for himself the true reason for him being where he was.

Have you ever experienced that? Have you ever had God probe into your life so that you actually have to think almost aloud and to answer the questions that God is confronting you with?

Why am I here? Why am I in this place spiritually? Why am I so far removed from where I once was?

Why am I in my thinking so shallow with regard to God unlike what I was before when God was everything to me?

[53 : 32] when God seemed to intrude into every waking moment and even in my sleeping moments God was there before me and now I can't find him I can't recognize him so God is rightfully asking the question why are you here?

Why are you in this place? Why are you the way you are today as opposed to the way you were maybe a short time before this when I expected great things of you when you were doing great things for me but it may be that some people will have to ask these questions for themselves and they may have to deal with some harsh realities in so far as the relationship with God is concerned the truth can sometimes be hard to bear but it has to be acknowledged the apostle James means us to understand that Elijah was a mere mortal he means us to understand

I don't think that we can get away from it I know that there are many Christians and they like their saints to be on a pedestal they don't want their saints to have anything at all wrong with them they can't have any cracks in their armour they can't have anything that is going on in their life that cannot be held up to scrutiny otherwise otherwise well you know it shows the weakness of the faith but it doesn't really it doesn't when we try and understand what was true about Elijah's journey we don't need to be we don't need to have the depths of insight of of counselors or or psychoanalysts imagine just now what it would be like for somebody to have this euphoric experience of defeating the greatest enemy that existed in

Israel the spiritual enmity that was in the land and the prophets of Baal at the heart of it and they were destroyed they were confronted head on and their power was proved to be false just think of what it would be like for somebody to be at the heart of that you can't imagine that a person would be immune to having a sense of power and a sense of overwhelming satisfaction that that is what happened and yet there is clearly evidence in the way that the angel of God was sent to minister to Elijah that he was exhausted physically that he was exhausted spiritually that it took a lot out of him doing what he did some people don't think it should affect the people that God has appointed for that you know sometimes

I think it's quite amazing if you read biographies of renowned Christian ministers I think it's absolutely without equal the amount of energy they expended in preaching the gospel preaching the gospel every day of the week several times a day and doing it constantly regularly and they were doing it without without any of the of the facilities that we have today they didn't have vast libraries they didn't have computers they didn't have the ability to go to Google or whatever they prayed they earnestly prepared their sermons and preached their sermons and took a lot out of them many of them died before they were very old but

[58 : 51] I think it has to be remembered that many of them did so with great equipment from the Lord that God equipped them to serve at the level that they were able to serve in a generation to which they were called to minister to without which they could not have possibly fulfilled to the degree that they did their calling you read a biography of Spurgeon you read a biography of Whitefield you read a biography of many of these renowned preachers that had fruitful ministry and they were almost inexhaustible people but the fact is and we overlook it that very often they were exhausted very often they worked to the very point at which their bodies gave up

Spurgeon often had to go away to the continent to get some of his strength back many of them had to do that because they were driving themselves into the ground physically incapable of carrying on to the degree that they did and we don't remember that we don't take note of it we remember their sermons we read their sermons we remember of their successes we remember all the things that were positive and that were highlighted but we failed to take on board that they were human physically human dependent upon God for the blessing that God gave to them and Elijah is no different and if you examine his life you'll discover that there were many things that he was disappointed with that he was afraid of that he was full of self pity and even at this point you have to admit that he was suicidal we need to understand that because if our saints are anything other than saintly because of

God's work in their lives then they're unreal and they're not helpful to you or to me because they're not the way God made them but God made them mighty in his power that's the thing one of the professors we had in college Hugh Cartwright he was there for a year of my time there teaching history but he speaks of Elijah and he says of Elijah that he had at this point become so preoccupied with the dark and depressing situation he was in his own helplessness helplessness where was he helpless well I've just said he defeated the prophets of Baal all 800 of them or how many there were 700 and 350 or 450 but 800 in total all of these men all of these servants of

Baal and their servants destroyed having accomplished that what happened Jezebel almost rose up out of the ashes and challenged her it's as if you're saying well you've done all that and after having done all this there she comes again ready for more it's as if you're saying to yourself well what can I do what can I do I've done what I could God has done what he could and there she is rising up again and have to deal with this and you're liable to do that humanly speaking your thoughts can go down that road they might not be accurate they might not be truthful they might not be even relevant but your thinking can be skewed by events that are outside your control and your imagines can become the darkest imaginings possible you know very early on in my ministry

I could not for the life of me understand why every Sunday evening after preaching I felt deflated felt deflated couldn't understand it even when I thought I preached a reasonable sermon I would come home and I would sit down and then the brain would begin to work if it was able to work and it was an incessant wrestling with all kinds of thoughts and you know I had a difficult time until I realised listening to other ministers of the gospel that so many of them have the same griefs and the same struggles some of them even have gone to the point of writing a letter of resignation there and then because they feel they're not called to this work and this work is not for them and this work will never be accomplished at their hand you can't understand that how easily it is that a person can be submerged under sorrows and griefs for no explanation other than that there is one that is instrumental in doing all he can to undermine the best of works but what what we need to remember and what

[65 : 13] Elijah was being challenged to remember was this what doest thou hear Elijah what does God do he teaches him he asks the question and he exposes him to the fact that the Lord is working read these words again the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and break in pieces the rock before the Lord the Lord was not in the wind the Lord was not in the earthquake the Lord was not in the fire he was teaching Elijah you may imagine with your puny mind that you know how God is going to work that you know when God is going to work that you know the way that God is going to work in the lives of those in whom he is working but you've got it wrong this is how it will be not as you imagine the extension of God's kingdom depends on

God not man his ways not our ways his ways always succeed as one of the divine says we must not confuse our cause with his or our methods with his what does he say to Elijah before he finishes with him well you see what he says it shall come to pass that him that escapeth the sword of has had but the whole lot there has to be understood this is what's going to happen all of these things will happen I the sovereign God am responsible for this work not you these events will take place not because you're involved in it but because I'm involved in it this is what you will do but you will do it because I am telling you to do it you shall announce

Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel you shall appoint Elisha the son of Shaphat to be a prophet in your place you follow what he's saying to Elijah he's teaching him a lesson that he needs to learn the world does not depend upon Elijah the salvation of the world does not depend on Elijah he has his part to play and play it he must but it is God's work and God will do it he's not telling Elijah so rightly bye do what I tell you the way I tell you God's kingdom is made up of all kinds of men and women who are called to serve God to the best of their ability with the gifts that

God has endowed them with use them serve him well with the gifts that God has given you to serve him don't get ahead of yourself and think well I could be better and do more if I was like so and so or if I had the gifts of some other passion that's not the way God works Elijah was God's servant Elijah was someone of like passions such as Arush in many respects he had more failings than we have maybe but God was still able to use him just as equal just as much as he is able to use you whoever you are in whatever way that you are willing to be used by him don't run from God don't hide from God because wherever you are God will find you and if you are in the path of disobedience

God will always confront you with the same question that he asked Elijah what doest thou here what are you doing here what are you doing for me here why are you not doing what you should be doing for me rather than hiding away and may God encourage us to think well about where we are in the amazing work that is his here in this world let us pray oh lord oh god we give thanks that your word is something that always brings us to the place where we need to learn and learn more about your ways which are often beyond our ability to appreciate we pray that you would open the eyes of our understanding and that we would yield ourselves to the voice that calls us and to service whatever it may be forgive our sins in Jesus name amen the closing psalm is psalm 138 psalm 138 we're going to sing the first two verses and then the last two verses first two verses of psalm 138 and the last two verses thee will

[71 : 16] I praise with all my heart I will sing praise to thee before the gods and worship well toward thy sanctuary I'll praise thy name even for thy truth and kindness of thy love for thou thy word has magnified all thy great name above though I in midst of trouble walk I life from thee shall have against my foe's wrath I'll stretch thine hand thy right hand shall me save surely that which concerneth me the Lord will perfect make Lord still thy mercy lasts do not thy own hands works forsake first two verses the last two verses of psalm 138 thee will I praise with all my heart be well I praise with all my heart

I will sing praise to thee terug I'll praise thy name for thy truth, the kindness of thy love.

For thy thy word has magnified all thy great name above.

Though I in which the trouble walk, thy life from thee shall have.

Yes, my full froth, thou stretch thy hand.

[74 : 07] Thy right hand shall be saved.

Surely that which consert me, the Lord will perfect me.

Lord, still thy mercy, the Lord will not forsake.

Amen.