

What are you doing here?

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[0:00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

And I'd like to ask you a question before we read this passage of Scripture. How many of you have ever been in a spiritual, emotional funk? If you have, raise your hand.

You ever wonder what God thinks about you when you do that? You ever wonder if God's aggravated at you and wants to fuss at you and say, you just need to get right, fix that, and want to kick your back?

Have you ever wondered? This is a great chapter. I honestly believe this chapter will encourage you and excite you to see what a sweet and wonderful God you serve.

Read with me, if you would, 1 Kings chapter 19 and verse 9. The Bible says, 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 are you doing here, Elijah?

[1:13] What dost thou here, Elijah? Let's bow our heads forward in prayer. Father, I pray tonight that you would encourage church members, Sunday school teachers, moms and dads, missionaries, givers, prayers, goers, that might be dealing with stuff in their life that might make them tired and make them anxious.

God, I pray you'd encourage them and help them and to see what a wonderful God you are and to honor you and love you and praise you. And I'll give you thanks for all you do in Jesus' name.

Amen. You know where you are in the Bible. You're in 1 Kings chapter 19. We have just seen 1 Kings chapter 18. Elijah has been in a confrontation with 450 prophets of Baal.

He has defeated them. He has destroyed them. And he is victorious and invincible. But a nasty woman makes him run in chapter 19.

The lady Jezebel sends word to him and says, You will be dead, just like the prophets within 24 hours.

[2:29] And this story is about how great God is and how he's going to get the victory and the glory even when a discouraged and depressed servant is all whiny.

You are more like Elijah than you think. And the Bible is going to tell you that tonight before it's over. So I want you to go with me through the story. The first thing is that God didn't send him here.

God says in the verse, What are you doing here, Elijah? And God didn't send him here. Before this and all of Elijah's story, we see God directing Elijah's life.

In 1 Kings chapter 17 and verse 3, the Bible said, Get thee hence, turn thee eastward, hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. So God said, Elijah, I've got a place I want you to go.

Let me tell you where to go. Let me tell you what you're going to do there. And God sent him on the way. It was God that sent him to the widow. In 1 Kings chapter 17 and verse 9, the brook starts drying up.

[3 : 35] God sends him to see the widow. God said to him again, Arise and get thee. And he tells him where to go. It was God that even sent him to speak to Ahab. Look at 1 Kings chapter 18 and verse 1.

It came to pass, after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year saying, Go, show yourself unto Ahab, and I'll send rain on the earth. So Elijah's a guy who is God-directed.

God is showing him where to go and showing him what to do until you get to chapter 19. Look at 1 Kings chapter 19 and verse 3.

And he fears for his life. It is fear that directs his life. Jezebel is going to kill him. She's threatening him. He's running for his life.

Look at 1 Kings chapter 19 and verse 3. And when he saw that, he arose and went for his life and came to Beersheba, which belonged to Judah, and he left his servant there.

[4 : 36] So this guy who was so strong and so mighty that by himself could stand and face down 450 prophets, see God work, see a great miracle happen, see fire called down out of heaven, see the rocks burned up, see the altar offering burned up, see God do all that kind of stuff, is now so discouraged and so scared, he's on the run.

It's fear. You know that fear is not of God. If you know that, say amen. Write some verses down so you'll remember them. Go with me to 1 John chapter 4 and verse 18.

Fear is a sign you're not trusting the love of God. In 1 John 4, 18, there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment.

Fear has torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. I don't know about you, but you can get scared. And if a woman said she's going to kill me and it wasn't Betty, I'd get scared.

I'm pretty used to it when Betty says it, but if it was a woman, it wasn't my wife that said that, I might be afraid. But it's not God who gives us a spirit of fear.

[5 : 48] Look at what the Bible says in 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 7. Look at the verse up here. It says, For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind.

I want you to remember that Satan is the one that wants you to live in fear and doubt. God never wanted you to live in fear and doubt. Could you get an amen right there?

God does not want that. Satan wants you to consider the circumstances instead of the conviction that God is going to take care of you. Satan is the one that wants you to focus on problems and not the promises that God has given you.

So in the story, we find a very discouraged man. Go to 1 Kings chapter 19 and verse 4. Mr. Elijah, the great man of God, is extremely, super discouraged.

The Bible said he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and he came and he sat down under a juniper tree, and he requested for himself that he might die.

[6 : 50] And he said, It's enough. Oh Lord, take away my life. I am not better than my father's. He had gone with his servant when he ran.

Then he got to a certain place, and he leaves his servant, and he goes on by himself another day's journey. Was he doing that so that they found a servant? The servant wouldn't know where he was, but he kind of abandons the servant.

He's all by himself. He is alone, and he wants to die. He's asking God to kill him. Has anybody ever been there before? I have been there. I have wanted to die.

I have asked God to die. I wonder what God thinks about that. I wonder if you've ever been so messed up, you wonder, Is God mad at me? Maybe tonight you're wondering, Where am I with God?

Because I am in these problems. I hope you'll hang on and watch this story. He thinks that he's done enough, and his life should be over. He believes he's failed like his father's to have victory over Baal.

[7 : 49] He's not better than his father's. You see, when he stood up to the prophets of Baal, and he killed 450 of them, he really wanted complete victory.

He wanted Baal wiped out. He wanted to have God get all the glory, but when it was over, the queen said, Jezebel said, I'm still going to kill you, and he realizes, I didn't get the job done.

I'm no better than my mama. No better than my daddy. They didn't get it done. Nobody else has gotten it done. I can't get it done. Most of us probably realize sometimes we're not doing so good.

Now watch what it says in James 5, verse 17. Did you know that Elijah and us are a lot more alike than you think?

I really wish you'd open your Bible to this verse. In James 5, verse 17, the Bible says, Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are.

[8 : 50] He was a man subject to like passions as we are. And God answered his prayer, and God used him. Now I want you to notice what it says.

He allowed his emotions to get the best of him. See, notice the word. He was subject to his, he was subject.

Look at what the verse says. Subject to like passions as we are. Even this guy, this great man of God, he gets discouraged. This great man of God, I mean, one of the most wonderful men you could ever think of, he's feeling the same thing.

God still used him greatly, even though he was a lot like us. You're sitting around the room thinking, man, if I could be like Elijah. And God says, yeah, well you are.

You're thinking to yourself, you're thinking to yourself, I wish I wasn't so controlled by my emotions. And God said, yeah, that's what Elijah said. But he was subject to like passions as you are, but God still used him.

[9 : 54] Look at his discouragement in the story. Much of his discouragement comes from several things that are very obvious in the text. One, pride. That's where mine comes from.

He thought, I'm going to do better than my father's. All the other prophets that went before me, they've tried to defeat Baal and they haven't done so. But watch this. I'm going to take out 450 of them.

I'm going to call fire down from heaven. And it's going to be over. And buddy, I'm going down as the guy that wiped out Baal. But when it's all done, he's like, yep, that didn't work. Ain't no better than the rest of them.

I thought I was going to make my mark and I didn't. Self-pity. He knew he failed. He felt like he failed. He was comparing himself. 2 Corinthians 10 and verse 12.

We dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves to some that commend themselves. They measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves among themselves.

[10 : 52] They're not wise. And so he's doing the same things we do. I want you to get the stage set. I want you to understand where we are. Elijah is running for his life.

Elijah is scared. Elijah wants to die. And God says, what you doing here, buddy? What are you doing here? How did you get where you are?

Did God direct you to this point in your life? You know, you might just be in a mess and you might need God to be stepping in and you might, you know, you're running out of nature.

You're like, how did I get here? Did you get there on your own? Was it your rebellion and your failure? Did God just bring you to this point? Did you allow your life to be controlled by your emotions to get you to this place?

Are you dealing with doubt and discouragement and depression? Are you ready to see how God deals with his children in these situations? Now stop the story.

[11:58] Me, if I'm God, I'm going to tan his fanny. I'm going to say, my goodness, boy, we just took out 450 prophets of Baal. I just answered your prayer. It was only like 50 words long.

Those other guys cut themselves all day long, blood spurting out of their bodies. You prayed, I answered, what are you whining about? If I was God, I just love this. You know what a wonderful God you have.

Thank God he ain't like one of us. I've had my kids come in and whining and crying. I'm like, oh, hush, good night. You got better than everybody in the world. You know, no mercy, but look at, look at your Bible. Look at your Bible.

First Kings chapter 19 and verse 5. Write this down somewhere. God is sweet and tender with his servant. God is sweet and tender with his servant.

When Elijah's hurting, God touched him. When Elijah's hurting, God touched him. First Kings chapter 19 and verse 5. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him and said unto him, arise and eat.

[13:06] Look at verse 7. So you know what angel it is. This is a particular angel. Verse 7. And the angel of the Lord, that's Jesus, came again, the second time, and he touched him.

And he said, get up, buddy. Get you something to eat. You got a big, long journey in front of you. The angel of the Lord, Jesus himself, a Christophany coming, and he comes in tenderness to meet the needs of a hurting servant.

There he is, curled up in the fetal position just about, under a juniper tree, wanting to die. I think he needs his backside kicked, and God says, hey, wake up, buddy.

Here's some food. Wake up, buddy. Get you something to eat. Get you a little rest. Look at that. He touched him. He touched him. He doesn't come condemning in any sense of the word.

He reminds the man of God indirectly in the verse of how he is always taking care of him. Look at 1 Kings 19, 6. He says, here's a cake baked on the coals and a cruise of water and he ate.

[14:21] You remember the cake, don't you? Just a little while back, there was a widow woman. The widow woman didn't have enough to eat. She's going to make one little bitty piece of bread she's going to eat.

She's going to die. He said, Elijah, go see her and tell her. They make a cake and they eat a long time. She was only getting a couple of sticks, going to cook it.

God had met his need by the brook. God had met his need through the widow. God had provided for all three of them. Elijah believed God when he talked to the widow. Why didn't he believe him now?

I've been there. Haven't you? Big time victories. And all of a sudden just scared and running. He fed Elijah and he gave him rest.

He fed Elijah and he gave him rest in the story. Matthew chapter 11 and verse 28. Jesus said, Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest.

[15:20] That's not what, that's not what the world thinks Jesus does to us. But you look what he does. He says, Come on, I'll take care of you. I'll meet your needs.

I'll give you rest. He said in verse 29, Take my yoke on you and learn of me. A yoke is a symbol of servants and work. And he said, I'm meek and lowly and you'll find rest under your souls.

Because my burden, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Notice that God never asked Elijah to be better than his fathers. He never even asked him to.

God is patient with his servant. He never got rid of him even though he was depressed and discouraged. And I got a question for you tonight. Have you enjoyed the sweetness of the Lord?

Betty and I, I was pastoring the first church that we started when I was a very old man of 23. I'd go into a town and by ourselves.

[16 : 23] I knocked on doors every day. Did everything I could to get people saved and in church. And I'd gotten the church up and growing. We were probably running 125, 150. A lot of them were bus kids.

The church had gotten in financial trouble. I gave up my salary. I gave up my salary and I turned, I just told the church, you don't have to pay me. I didn't have a job. Betty didn't have a job. And I said, I'm going to ask God to meet our needs by prayer and we'll just trust the Lord.

And I was in my office one day. And I was up in the upstairs and I had my little air conditioner run and had a couch there and fear just swarmed over me. And I was like, God, I have made the biggest mistake of my life.

I don't know what I'm doing here. And I got on my knees and I started praying and I know you don't understand this nor believe this, but I could have promised you he was in the room and he put his arm around me and he said, going to be all right, buddy.

Going to be all right. That's what's going on here. That's what's going on here. What a wonderful. Wonderful. Savior. What a wonderful Lord.

[17 : 25] Are you hurting right now? Are you tired and wondering if God's angry with you? Consider how good God was to his man. Realize that he understands you and knows you and knows where you are right now.

He is not angry. If anything, he lovingly invites you to come to him so he can give you rest. 1 Kings 19. 10. God's servants are often too self-focused.

God's servants are often too self-focused. Verse 19. Chapter 19, verse 10. And he said, see God said, what are you doing here? Now, this is Elijah's chance to talk to God and tell him what's going on.

And here's Elijah's answer. I have been very jealous for the Lord, God of hosts, for the children of Israel. You know, I've been good. They've been bad. I have been good.

They have forsaken the covenant. They've thrown down your altars. They've slain your prophets with a sword. And I, me, I only am left. They want to kill me.

[18 : 33] Take away my life. He pretty well hung up on himself. Amen. He could have been Austin Gardner who wrote that one there. He could have been Austin Gardner who wrote that one there. Elijah tells God he's been working his heart out.

I've been jealous. God, I've been busting it for you. He tells God that his people have failed him and he's the only one doing right. He says, God, it's all a failure.

So just kill me and end all of it. I'm the only one you got left anyway. Take me out of the game. The game's over. Just end it. Remember, this is not the truth.

And Elijah knows it in his heart. You remember a guy named Obadiah back in chapter 18? You remember him? And Obadiah had 100 guys hiding in two caves.

Been feeding them with bread and water. 450 prophets of Baal had just been killed. Not all of God's prophets were dead. Obviously, Elijah's just too self-focused.

[19:34] Elijah's hung up on Elijah. You ever get in that mode? Thinking that you are the only one that's trying to do right?

Comparing yourself to others and thinking you're the only one working so hard to please God and others have all gone to the devil? Bless God. Ain't but one good guy that goes to vision and that's me.

Say amen. You get so tired of it all that you figure dying's the best thing for all involved? That's where Elijah is. Now somewhere in here, I'm waiting on God to just slap him a new one, buddy.

I'm waiting on God to give it to him. But instead of that, in 1 Kings chapter 19 and verse 11, God shows his power. God shows his power. He said, Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord.

And behold, the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind tore the mountains, rent the mountains and break in pieces, broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord.

[20:36] but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake but the Lord was not in the earthquake. You see, the story was never about Elijah.

And that's basically what God's saying here. Like, look here, buddy. I've sent fire down and I burned the rocks up. I burned the water. I burned the rocks. I burned the whole thing up. I am big.

Stand up there. He's run for 40 days. He's hiding in a cave and he says, Stand up there and watch this. And God, the Lord, passed by.

God passed by. You see, he said, Elijah, I'm bigger than all creation. I am bigger than all creation. He controls the wind, the earthquakes, and the fire.

He has proven that to Elijah before and he reminds him of it once again. He had controlled nature to feed Elijah. You do remember a wild bird bringing him food.

[21:35] You do believe, you remember, a stream taking him water. You do remember elements replenishing themselves to keep oil in the lamps and meal in the thing.

You remember all of that. He controlled nature. He controlled nature to send fire from heaven. God wants Elijah to quit being self-focused and get focused on God again.

Notice that once again the Lord's showing himself to Elijah. It's God passing by in the elements of nature. Look at it. And behold, the Lord, the God of heaven of all creation passed by.

Elijah was hiding in a cave while God placed Moses there to show him to Moses. Elijah was hiding. You remember the story of Moses? He said, God, I want to know you. And God said, let me put you in it.

He picked him up and stuck him in a little cave and said, I'll walk by you and check out my hinder parts. You can't look at me. But Elijah's hiding in a cave. God spoke in a still, small voice.

[22:40] It's the God of all creation toning it down for a little old man with a bad attitude. I don't think I'd have toned it down.

I think I'd have just yelled and given him one good kick. But God said, let me touch you, son. Now let me talk to you. Let me talk to you. God spoke gently.

If he'd have spoken in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, it might be he'd appeared angry. He'd appear angry. Earthquake, fire, rocks breaking, and God says, Elijah, buddy.

And he spoke to him. What a God. What a God. Are you in need of a God encounter? Do you get so focused on yourself that you need God to speak to you right now?

Do you realize that when he speaks it will probably be the same still, small voice? We'd all like the winds to break the rocks and we'd like fire and we'd like all that stuff, but it was a still, small voice.

- [23 : 46] Are you not amazed that this great God of all creation would take the time to whisper into his servant's life and into your life? He's talking to you right now through his word and through his Holy Spirit.

Will you respond? I'll just be honest with you. I believe tonight, right now, some of you are discouraged and beat and whipped and wounded and weary and I think he's inside going, that was for you tonight.

I just want you to know I love you. You've been thinking everybody's looking down on you. I'm not. I think maybe if you think about this as a message from God to you, it might help you. First Kings 19, 13.

God comes back and he asks him again, what you doing here? Now, he asks him once. Look at it, if you would, First Kings 19, 13. And it was so when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entering of the cave.

And behold, there came a voice unto him and said, what are you doing here, Elijah? Elijah, same question. Again, same tone.

- [24 : 55] But oh, Elijah, he's still self-focused. So he gives the same answer back. You didn't hear me the first time, I'm going to tell you what I said the first time. Look at him.

Verse 14. I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts. The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, slain thy prophets, and I'm the only one you've got left.

But it's like he's not even listening. He didn't hear a word God had to say. That's kind of like our prayer lives, isn't it? We're so busy yelling at God and God's sweet talking and we're not listening.

I wonder how many times we act like we're out in la-la land when God's speaking to us. He's repeating the exact same thing he said before. What attitude will God take with such a hard head?

I mean, it's one thing to be dumb once. It's another thing to be dumb twice in the same chapter. Fool me once, shame on me.

- [25 : 55] Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Hey, looks like maybe God's going to say something. No. Look at 1 Kings 19, 15. And the Lord said to him, hey, go return on your way to the wilderness and when you come anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

Instead of getting rid of him, instead of ending him and putting him out of his misery, God says, good job for you.

Now right now in this story, I don't understand that. I mean, you would think God would say, I'll find somebody else with a better attitude. I don't need, I don't need a visioneer from the Vision Baptist Church with such a bad attitude when I try to talk to him, I'll find somebody else to use.

But that's not what he does. He says, Elijah, go on back, buddy. Go on back. Go return on your way and go find Hazael and make him king over Syria.

So he's sending him to equip the next generation. Look at 1 Kings 19, 16. And Jehu, that's the other guy I want you to put, he's the son of Nimshi.

- [27 : 06] You anoint him to be king over Israel. And then you get Elisha, the son of Sapheth, and you anoint him to take your job. He's to appoint two kings and one prophet.

God wants him to prepare Elisha to take his job. So instead of giving up on him, pushing him to the side, letting him die, letting him quit, letting him run, God just listened to him.

God is going to tell him, things ain't as bad as you think they are. But God just let him talk. That's the sweetest thing in the world. God just let him whine. And then God says this, and buddy, you didn't get the job done, but I'm going to let the people you get to pick get the job done.

You didn't get it done. I'm going to let you get the guys. They put them in job and they didn't get the job done. Look at it. First Kings 19.17. Look what it says. And it shall come to pass that him that escapes the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay, and him that escapes the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

[28:20] You know what he said? He said, now you know, you didn't get them all or Jezebel wouldn't have you on the run. But you just get on back and do what I want you to do. You appoint these two kings and this one prophet.

And let me tell you what's going to happen. They want to take care of business. You might not have got it all done, but the first king, he's going to take out a whole bunch of my bad guys. And the ones he don't take care of, I got another king going to take care of the rest of the bad guys.

And the ones these two kings don't get, oh, my man of God is going to take care of the rest of them. Just go on back, buddy. I got it all under control. I am God. And I got it all under control. And then he said, now by the way, Elijah, before we leave this story, it ain't so bad.

I'm still in charge. I'm still God. I still got things under control. Look, if you would, in 1 Kings 19, 18, he said, Elijah, so you know the story, I have left 7,000 in Israel who have not bowed unto Baal and whose mouths have not kissed that idol.

Elijah, I'm not talking about Obadiah and the hundred he had. I'm telling you, I got 7,000. You do understand a little bit about the Bible numbers and 7,000. It's kind of like a figurative number. Seven, a number, complete, thousand, a whole bunch of them.

[29:33] You're like, man, I got people everywhere. I ain't losing. I am in charge. I ain't losing. I got it under control. You might think it's failed, but I got it under control.

He sends Elijah back into the ministry, but lets him know that he's been doing fine all along. God's been doing fine all along. God's people do get discouraged and let their emotions defeat them.

God's people do get discouraged and let their emotions defeat them. That happens when we do the same things Elijah did. Can I just remind you of what might mess us up? Number one, we focus on ourselves.

When I am so focused on me that I'm not focused on God and I'm not focused on the ministry he has, I'm probably going to get discouraged. When we compare ourselves among ourselves, we're setting ourselves up to get discouraged and depressed and defeated.

When we think that we have failed, you see, it's really not about me failing or you failing. We can trust God to take care of stuff. Amen. God's in charge.

[30:43] God's going to take care of it. We get tired emotionally, physically, and spiritually. And in the story, even after big victories, you're not promised you won't get discouraged.

The fact is sometimes when you enjoy great victories, you can almost expect when you're on the top of the mountain, a valley's coming because you're on the top of a mountain. And right after a mountain, there's a cliff.

There's a drop off. That's how you get a mountain. Steep on both sides. But remember how sweet and tender and kind God is and has been.

He's not abusing you. He's loving you. He's not angry with you. Elijah, buddy, you're running your big mouth.

You're saying you're the only one I got. And you're saying you're not as good as your daddy's. And you're saying you wish you was dead. Elijah. Son. Not one fussy word.

[31 : 45] In this whole chapter, not one word from God. He doesn't even respond. He just lets Elijah spout his mouth off and just keeps loving him.

God's still small voice is probably speaking to you right now. You need to get God and promise focused and not self and problem focused.

It is very unlikely that God is through with you. And when he's through with you, he'll take you home. Go get busy.

Prepare the next generation. Equip others to do the job. Maybe you won't get it done, but you can help others get ready to get it done. Learn from this story. God is winning and he will win.

So learn to praise him and glorify him. I'm going to stop and just tell you, this chapter blessed me to no end. I have been on the top of the mountains.

[32 : 49] I have seen God do massive things. I have plunged to the pit with despair and discouragement and depression. I have wanted to die a hundred thousand times.

I've wondered why God doesn't take me out of the equation. I've wondered. And I think this chapter answers that God's like, whoa, I love you, buddy.

Let me touch you. Let me touch you. The angel of the Lord came to him. He didn't kick him. He touched him. He touched him.

He touched him. He said, get you something to eat. Get you some sleep. But God, I'm the only one. God said, let me show you my power. I'm not going to yell at you.

I just want to talk to you in a sweet, small voice. I believe God's probably doing that with you. You're the biggest giver in the church. You're the biggest prayer, the biggest worker, the best soul winner.

[33 : 48] You think you're the only one doing right. In your family, people are doing right. You think you're all alone. Sometimes you wonder why you even do all you do. I hope tonight he's touching you.

I hope tonight he's telling you, I love you. He is telling you that. Read the story. Won't you tonight thank him for being so sweet to you.

Won't you come to him tonight and say, sorry, I've been thinking of you as a hard and mean taskmaster. I don't see a bit of that in this whole chapter. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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Thanks. Thank you.