

There is nothing like a friend to help us in discouraging times:

"You don't know what good you do just by coming to church on Sunday morning. You don't know what good you do just by carrying a Bible under your arm. You don't know what good you do just by smiling at a neighbor and inviting him to the house of the Lord. You don't know what good you do in those humble and sweet and precious ministries, just serving God and living for Him. Somebody will take courage because of you." A. W. Criswell

What do we do with this passage that shows the very brief time in Elijah's life that stands in stark contrast to his victorious, obedient life of walking with God?

Wrap up:

Do we ever get involved in stinking thinking?

We sometimes tend to look only at the negative rather than seeing things clearly.

- What we can't do rather than what we can do.
- What we don't know rather than what we do know.
- What hasn't happened rather than what has happened.
- Who didn't respond rather than who did respond.
- Your favorite negative thought here...

In the Bible we read accounts of people with incredible faith, wonderful miracles, and staggering courage. Yet at the same time we read about some of these same people falling into sinful behavior or having times of grave doubt. The Bible is a balanced book. It tells the truth about people. *Elijah was a man just like us.* James 5:17

Series: Biblical Gen. Ed.

Title: Elijah

Topic: Stinking thinking

Background:

Chapters 17-18:

- Elijah proclaims a drought, is told by God to hang out in a specific place, is fed by ravens.
- He was then told to go to Zarephath. He stays with a widow and son with a jar of oil and a handful of flour that does not run out.
- Son dies and Elijah revives him.
- He is then told to go to Ahab and does the big scene on Mt. Carmel with 450 prophets of Baal/400 prophets of Asherah. Has the big showdown where he calls on God to send fire down to burn his altar that was soaked with water. He executed all the prophets of Baal.
- Obediah was in charge of Ahab's palace.
- The drought lasted 3 ½ years...and we pick up the story just as the drought ends.

We know Elijah as a courageous miracle-worker who had deep faith, incredible courage, and a powerful prayer life. A reading of 2 Kings 2:2 and 1 Kings 17 & 18 shows Elijah to be a strong, determined, confident man of God. James 5:17 says *Elijah was a man just like us.* What we are about to read makes this ring truer than ever.

1 Kings 19:1-18: Right after a "_____ " experience:

Possible causes of discouragement:

A _____ threat. Jezebel had killed prophets before and wouldn't hesitate to do it again. The situation looked bad. Discouragement often happens for valid reasons.

Emotional and physical _____. Elijah had just gone through a very intense period. The Mt. Carmel experience plus the 20-mile run.



Unrealistic _____. Elijah may have had unrealistic expectations. It is certainly possible that Elijah thought that after this great contest on Mt. Carmel the people of Israel and also Ahab and Jezebel were going to return to the Lord.

Loss of _____. Elijah loses focus and starts to feel like a martyr. He wants to die.

Elijah fled from Jezreel, went about 125 miles south to Beersheba, left his servant there and went a day's journey into the wilderness. From recent lessons we know Abraham had dug wells at Beersheba...and yet we find Elijah maybe went away from wells...

Verses 5b-10: An angel helps, and God checks on him:

"Here is a prophet who, according to his own words, is a failure. He is a man who seems to feel that his significance to God is somehow dependent upon his success in ministry as a prophet. The angel's presence is, in and of itself, instructive and corrective. Did God care for Elijah, at the time of his greatest failure? God provided Elijah with bread and water before, for three-and-a-half years. He was given "day old" bread by unclean ravens, and then a very basic bread by the widow of Zarephath. This provision came when Elijah was obedient and successful. But now, in his greatest moment of defeat, he is fed hot-baked bread and water, served by none other than the Angel of the Lord. Did God care for Elijah, even when he failed?" Def.

Medicine for discouragement:

_____. The first thing the Lord did was let Elijah get some sleep. Twice Elijah was awakened so that the Angel of the Lord could give him something to eat and then he was allowed to go back to sleep. Elijah was run down. He needed time to rest, and the Lord provided it for him. This was not the time for discussion. It was the time for rest.

Verses 11-14: God roars and then God _____:

The reality in Elijah's thinking:

Elijah finds a cave in Horeb, and God asks him twice what he's doing there. He tells the Lord twice that the state of the people of Israel is terrible - idolatry running rampant and prophets being killed. He said that he alone was left of the faithful. Elijah was trapped in stinking thinking.....

Actual reality:

Although many people had forsaken the Lord, Elijah's take on the situation was not entirely true. Obadiah had just told Elijah a few days before that he had saved 100 prophets of God from being killed - hiding them in caves. After the showdown with the 450 prophets of Baal, the people all: *...fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."* (1Kgs. 18:39)

God wants to minister the truth to Elijah, to speak to him. God lets him know that he is not the only one left.

More medicine for discouragement:

_____. After the renewal through sleep and food, the next thing God did was help Elijah refocus by a series of events that ends in a whisper that got his attention.

For Elijah and us:

Sometimes in life we have to be _____ and _____ that He is God.

Verses 15-18: God sends Elijah back to _____:

To help get Elijah to refocus, what did God do? Verses 15-18:

- Sent Elijah back into ministry.
- Assured him that he was not the only one left.

God redistributed the _____. The last thing God did to help Elijah is to give him a helper. He told him to begin training a successor. Elijah was to find Elisha.