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Elijah

Week 3: September 1-7

1 Kings 18-19

Sunday, September 1

Sunday’s message available online.

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Monday, September 2

**Before you begin**, read 1 Kings 18: 20-24 with Psalm 119:1-8

**Key Passage** 1 Kings 18:21 “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word.

**For Thought:** What comes to mind when you think about compromise? What is the definition of compromise?

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Most of us probably make compromises daily. In a positive vein, they can be helpful and can be evidence of a fruitful Christian life. Compromise is absolutely essential to marriage or certain job situations. There are also times when compromise is not good. God is the only righteous one; He is holy and His word is the only absolute truth. He has graciously given us His Word, which not only speaks to who He is, but offers us, His children, protection from deviating from His commands. Compromise, in the sense of violating what he has clearly commanded, has serious consequences and in some cases, will bring death. It is vital that we see and respond appropriately to the temptation to deviate from God’s Word.

**Apply**: Read 1 Kings 18:21 again. Think of compromises today that Christians have to navigate.

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Have you ever had to take a stand that was not a popular one? If so, what did it cost you or what do you think it might cost you in the future?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A compromise is sometimes so subtle it may be difficult to identify, other times, we know it is a hill we must choose to die on. The Israelites in our passage refused to choose loyalty to the Lord over Baal, but instead wished to have a little of both. This is still happening today when those who profess Christ, condone behavior and beliefs that scripture has clearly denounced. Abortion, homosexuality, as well as other sexual sin is so politically correct, Christians may feel they are being mean-spirited or unloving to speak out on these issues. In order to avoid compromise, it is critically important to be in God’s word daily, to be mindful of what you consume daily regarding the media and making worship with other believers a priority every week. This is where spiritual depth and maturity come. Our Bible knowledge and the understanding of why we believe what we believe, will help us avoid these pitfalls of compromise. Being uncompromising today can be uncomfortable; it may not be popular. It can be a lonely road. But we are called, as believers, to be obviously different, a peculiar people in the way that we love and the places we stand. Remember that when we are called to dig our feet in and draw a line in the sand, we do not do so alone. Jesus Christ the righteous stands with us.

**Praying God’s Word:** Forgive me oh God, when I have given in to peer pressure and outside influence of the world. According to your great compassion, forgive my sin! (Ps. 51:1) You are the one I have sinned against, and I feel the weight of my sin.(Ps. 51:3-4) As I wait in the reading of your Word, will you renew my strength? (Is. 40:31) The more I know your Word, the more I will walk in a manner worthy of Christ. I commit to walk in your ways, oh Father. (Psalm 119:3).

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**Tuesday, September 3**

**Before you begin**: read 1 Kings 18:25-40, 19:1-2, Ez. 36:26

**Key Passage**:1 Kings 18:37 “Answer me, Lord, answer me so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

**For Thought**: What is the definition of rebellion? What is a good word to describe the *opposite* of rebellion? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Jezebel’s prophets had been called to account and found wanting. Their pitiful attempt to rouse their false gods would be laughable were it not so tragic. At times, Baal worship would require child sacrifice as well as other offensive and disturbing rituals. It is incredible that the Israelites, God’s chosen people, would capitulate to Jezebel and her worship of Baal, but it has well been said, “if you reject the truth, you will believe any lie.” With a benign king in Ahab, they eagerly followed the dynamic Jezebel. A dysfunctional family that led to dysfunction in the nation. She was grossly rebellious toward God and would face the consequences in time, but that day on Mt. Carmel was about God reaching out to his people. The amazing show of the power of God was effective in turning their hearts back toward Him.

God’s plan was that the family be the training ground for people to develop spiritually. God set the family up to function as a unit, with each one having a role. A husband who is walking in Christ earnestly shows, teaches, and leads his family to Christ. The wife submits herself to her own husband, in the same way that she submits to Christ. Parents have the primary role of teaching their children about submission to authority so that they are ready to submit to Christ. Children who are not required to obey their parents, will find little desire to obey Christ. Rebellion in the home will be played out in every other area of their lives. When any of those roles become unbalanced there will be disorder like we see in the lives of Jezebel and Ahab. Church members support their pastor, they fellowship and do life together while glorifying God and enjoying Him. Rebellion in the church among members and leaders will lead to division and disruption and ultimately failure to bring glory to God. He still desires to turn our hearts back to Him.

**Apply**: What types of things happen when a society experiences rebellion against authority today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Are you aware of a rebellious spirit in any areas of your life? Take a moment to identify any ways you have rebelled against God’s authority. Confess that to Him. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rebelling and opposing authority begins in the heart. A rebellious person wants to delight in their flesh; they get comfortable with their sin, and they freely, sometimes passionately, reject God’s word and commands. This is the beauty of our life in Christ. God told Ezekiel, “ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (Ez. 11:19) This is the defining moment, when a heart surrenders to His will and is changed in a way that only God can. This regeneration inside begins a gracious and beautiful sanctification process, whereby the Holy Spirit begins to change our rebellious hearts into obedient ones. The Christian will become more aware of their sin and their rebellion towards God will grieve them. Want to become a follower of Christ who passionately seeks things that Christ loves and resists the things He hates?

**Praying God’s Word:** Great are you, Lord and you deserve to be greatly praised! (Ps. 96:4) Thank you for your mercies that are new every morning and your great faithfulness to us.(Lamentations 3:2) Father I pray that today you would work in my heart to conform me to the image of Your Son.(Romans 8:29) Show me my sin, so that I may walk in a manner worthy of Your trust. (1 Thess. 2:12) Write out your prayer.

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Wednesday, September 4

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A person pouring rocks into a pile of rocks

Description automatically generated

“…and the water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water” 1 Kings 18:35

**Thursday, September 5**

**Before you Begin:** Read 1 Kings 21:25-26 and 1 Peter 1:13-16

**Key Passage:** “No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the LORD’s sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel. His worst outrage was worshiping idols just as the Amorites had done- the people whom the LORD had driven out from the land ahead of the Israelites.” 1 Kings 21: 25-26 NLT

**For Thought**: What is the definition of passive?

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Ahab was a weak man both in his home and his nation. He sometimes allowed his wife to exhibit control over kingdom affairs, a role which she had neither God’s heart nor his power to perform. It wasn’t that she had no skills or training, it was much more insidious than that. She was wicked. Ahab was complicit in her sin by allowing her to promote her evil agenda, while the kingdom watched and worse as they embraced her heathen practices. There is no indication that Ahab ever attempted to stop or correct her behavior. Looking back to the beginning in Genesis 3, Adam’s failure to correct or deter his wife brought sin into the world and judgment on him as well. As Eve ate the forbidden fruit he stood by as Satanswiftly became the head of their home.

There are times when being passive is good, but there is a difference between passivity and cowardice. Choosing to not interject, or act in a situation to foster unity, or spare someone’s feelings is a kind and gracious form of restraint. As Christians, we often are called to restrain the flesh in order to promote the Spirit. We submit to God’s will and let Him change our hearts willingly, but not passively. Indeed, it takes great effort to stay the flesh’s bent toward sin. We identify with Christ through the spirit, and we do not stand idly by while Satan wreaks havoc with our family, our friends, our neighbors or our co-workers. We engage. We make disciples who can engage as well. In the post-Christian society we face today, we cannot afford to be stagnant, in a constant passive state of mind. Nor should we “go along to get along,” not when it comes to eternal futures and with so many lives at stake. We must initiate, act, speak, and undertake all for the sake of the call of God in Christ Jesus.

**Apply**: Read 1 Peter 1:13 again followed by looking at a cross reference for this passage in 1 Kings 18:41-46.  In thinking about Ahab’s lack of action throughout this portion of his life, how does it compare to Elijah in this passage?

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The Lord promised rain in the midst of a drought and gave Elijah instructions. Elijah had God’s assurance that the rain would come and moved without waiting. He defeated the prophets of Baal with bravery and determination; he then humbled himself before the Lord in ceaseless prayer for the rain to come. At the slightest hint of a rain cloud, he immediately told Ahab that leaving ahead of the rain might be a good idea. Then he ran ahead ofAhab who was traveling in his chariot! He was intentional in response to God’s calls to action. The Christian life is not passive.  It is a life of action that requires that we learn, trust, obey, resist temptation, repent, worship….. Like Elijah, we must not sit idle, in fact we must change and grow continually. Christians will not resemble the world (the corrupt system that is at odds with God), and we will not applaud or celebrate sin, because we understand that this kind of friendship with the world will make us enemies of God.

**Praying God’s Word:** “ Father thank you for helping me walk by faith and not by sight.(2 Cor 5:7) I am sorry for the times I have been passive and have remained still and quiet when I knew action was necessary. Fill me with Your Spirit and renew a steadfast spirit within me.(Ps. 51:10) Help me to stand in the hard places, to obey you rather than man.(Acts 5:29). Work in me both to desire and to work for Your good pleasure.(Phil 2:13). Help me to be above reproach in a crooked and perverse generation, to be a light in the world. (Phil 2:15)

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Friday, September 6

**Before you begin:** Read 1 Kings 18:20-40 with Proverbs 3:5-6

**Focal Passage:** “At the usual time for the offering and evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, ‘O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. O Lord, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God and that you brought them back to yourself.’” 1 Kings 18:36-37

**For thought:** What is the definition of reliance?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

God had been preparing Elijah for this miraculous event, the ravens feeding him by the brook, the widow’s oil refilling itself, the dead son of the widow raised to life. His faith in God had grown over time and now in a mighty show of God’s power, he would face off against all the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The people had endured the drought due to their sin and idolatry without repenting. God had a plan to draw Israel back to Himself, and Elijah would be the mouthpiece. The course was laid, the prophets of Baal were assembled, the wood was soaked, and it was time to see if the false gods would send fire. Hours of begging and wailing to Baal brought no response. Under these conditions, no one in the crowd would have expected fire to fall on the place. It would also be obvious to the Israelites that Baal was no substitute for the living God. Elijah prayed a very public prayer and fire came down until even the moisture in the trench dried up. The Israelites would have remembered the stories of God bringing fire from heaven. Sometimes for judgement, sometimes for deliverance, but fire would remind them of His power and authority over everything, even the forces of nature. The sight of the fire moved the Israelites to acknowledge who God was; Elijah then lead them in their first real act of obedience. He directed them to apprehend the prophets of Baal for execution.

This would be another important lesson for the watching Israelites. Those who oppose the living God will reap the consequences. No half-hearted devotion will do--not for them, not for us. To “trust in the Lord with all your heart” expresses that trust goes beyond intellectual acknowledgement of the Lord; that it is a profound reliance on Him. Holding back any part of your heart or life is unbelief. It has been said that “Jesus is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all,” and it is in those hidden things of the heart that Satan gets opportunity. For the Christian that secret sin, that private fear, that stronghold will be a weight around the neck spiritually. Every time you pray “I want to see You work, Lord, I want to see Your power,” He says, “What about that?” To “lean not on your own understanding” is to rid yourself of obvious sin, so that you can understand His will for you. Then resolve that it will be His way, always.

**Apply:** Read Proverbs 3:5-6 again. Do you want to be free of your sin? Ask Him to forgive you and to strengthen your resolve.

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How much and how often do you rely on Him? How often do you simply think of His presence and sovereignty? Do you know Him? If you do, you trust Him. What other things do you typically rely on or try to find security in? Repent of that now; commit yourself to Him fully.

**Praying God’s Word:** Father, where else can I go? You alone have the words of life.(John 6:68) Search me, oh God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts.(Ps. 139:23) I am so tired of my sin, Father and I so want to know you, to know Your will. Forgive me now for the sake of Your Son. Thank you for hearing me, even now. Take my life and use me, Lord.

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Saturday, September 7

**Before you begin** read 1 Kings 19:3-9 with 2 Corinthians 5:4-10

**Focal passage: “**Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.” 2 Cor. 5:9

**For thought:** What do you think failed faith would look like?

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No matter what your personality, there may come a time of depression, where you struggle to keep going, to maintain any hope of a positive outcome. Both Elijah and Paul had heard God speak, had followed Him in hard places and had some powerful victories under their belts. Yet, they had two very different responses to threatening situations. Both speak of going to be with the Lord in these passages, but for very different reasons. Paul approached His threatening situation with an eternal perspective that allowed for the possibility that God might want Him to stay on the earth, to continue to fight. He admitted he could hardly wait to see the Lord, but he acknowledged that God had the right to say when it was time for departure from this life. Elijah had a defeated and selfish perspective. Things were bad, and he was more focused on God alleviating his suffering than on God’s will for the rest of his life.  
For the Christian, there are powerful forces at work to bring you through, but they are not tangible--you can’t touch them or see them. The only tangible part of our Father we have is His Word, the Bible. We can hold it close to our chest, we can remember His promises, and we can hear the Words of songs that proclaim His truth. Those things are tangible, they can help us feel His closeness. When we open it up, that is when the power of God begins to pour down on us. This Book, unlike any other Hebrews 4:12 tells us, is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. This is not psychology or philosophy; this is the breath of God. How does this 2000-year-old writing help your depression? By

getting your focus on the proper things, by dispelling the lies of Satan and by assuring you of God’s goodness and of His deliverance and care. That may sound too good to be true, but while it sounds simple, it is not easy. Every journey begins with one step in the direction you want to go, and so it is with emotional bondage. Depression, irrational fear, anxiety, obsession, and strongholds of every kind have their origin in failed faith, or the failure to continue to believe that God is truly good. Elijah and Paul had very real enemies that were threatening their well-being, even their very lives. These were enemies over which they had no control. In each of the strongholds listed above, however, the enemy is within. Satan has power, but he has limits. The God we serve has set those limits for our good. Satan cannot take a Christian anywhere that they are not willing to go. He can orchestrate circumstances to some degree, he can whisper lies to discourage and alarm us, but where those things take us is up to us. If you can get no peace, first, get a daily Bible devotional guide and open it up first thing every morning. Pray and ask God to heal your stronghold and to strengthen your faith. God’s Word has this power. Second, find the most mature Christian you know, and confide in them. Ask for Godly counsel and prayer. Third, start singing. Find songs that speak of the attributes of God, not of you or your feelings. Even if it is through clinched teeth or quivering lips, you sing! Lastly, confess in your prayer every day, multiple times a day if necessary, that God is absolutely good, that He is absolutely right, and that you choose to absolutely trust Him. State it as truth and fact until your feelings come into line. If you will not do these things, then seek professional, Biblical counseling. Either way, God will meet you at the point that you turn to Him. Take the first step, today. Tell Him your heart.

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