**Elijah Committed ° Courageous ° Common Week 3**

As we’ve looked at Elijah so far, we’ve zoomed in on the importance of two things. First off, we recognized that he was a man with a nature just like ours – there was nothing supernatural in his DNA; but there was, however a power behind his words and deeds and that power stemmed from living a life that honored God and from **PRAYER**. James 5:16-18.

Last week we saw Elijah respond to a command from God that required him to **TRUST** God with the unknown. In the face of danger, Elijah fled to the brook Cherith where God used a babbling brook and ravens to provide for a difficult season in Elijah’s life. In our message, we likened this experience to a spiritual boot camp. Elijah entered as Elijah the Tishbite, but when God was done with him, he was going to be Elijah the man of God (17:24)

That brings us to week 3 and it piggybacks on last week’s theme of TRUST. As the Lord teaches Elijah to trust Him, Elijah is moved to a place of action. When Elijah acts upon what the Lord tells him to do, we call that OBEDIENCE. Consider the song “Trust and Obey,” it’s a natural sequence (that oftentimes doesn’t come so naturally.)

“Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,

But our toil He doth richly repay;

Not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross,

But is blessed if we trust and obey.”

Trust and Obey; John H. Sammis, 1887

**Think back for a moment as far as you can remember into childhood. Do you ever remember a time when you considered a command that a parent or guardian gave you and then chose not to obey? Were there consequences involved?**

As I deal with our 3 year old, Elijah, it’s a daily struggle that I see. Obedience is SO AGAINST our nature. Elijah has a will of his own. I have a will. Mandy has a will. When all those wills collide, there is potential for happiness and blessing, or there is potential for chaos to ensue. Our Elijah is learning daily, much like you and I did, that obedience is tough but its best (ok, maybe right now he’s actually just learning that it’s tough…the best part will come later).

If you resonate with the remark that obedience is tough, think about the events surrounding Elijah’s obedience in 1 Kings 17:8-16. God was calling him to leave Cherith, which had been established as his home and trek 85+ miles into the heart of enemy territory only to find that his provision is supposed to come from a widow who is poorer than poor. How many of us would have considered that option and instead of choosing obedience, opted for the spanking? \*Joel raises hand\*

But pair that knowledge with Elijah’s previous experience. Remember that God took him to Cherith to teach him about His provision. God was faithful in that and therefore Elijah can move forward with confidence that God would provide again, even though the situation looked dire. Consider these principles of application: *Isaiah 55:8f, “God’s ways are not our ways.”*

We might also remember 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, *“but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God.”*

What do those verses tell us? They tell us that God most certainly isn’t limited by the things in this life that we believe make sense. Consider Joshua chapter 2 and the use of Rahab the prostitute. How about Judges chapter 7, when God tells Gideon to keep whittling down his army until it consists of only 300 men? Did God’s methods make sense? Not really. Did God’s provision prevail in these situations and in countless others? Of course! **Why then do we have such a hard time when it comes to obedience?**

If you’ve ever wondered how important obedience is to the heart of God, look at 1 Samuel 15. King Saul received instruction from the Lord and instead of listening, and doing as the Lord had commanded, he decided to lean on his own wisdom and understanding. When the Prophet Samuel saw what Saul had done, he said *"Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in* ***obeying*** *the voice of the LORD? Behold, to* ***obey*** *is better than sacrifice, And to* ***heed*** *than the fat of rams.”* As a result of Saul’s disobedience, God removes his hand of blessing from his life and promises to remove his line from the throne of Israel. As we saw in our study on the life of David, God makes good on those promises.

Francis Chan gave a wonderful illustration of how we handle obedience to God’s word in this day and age and he used his relationship with his daughter as an example. He said “what if I told my daughter to go clean her room and then she came back downstairs two hours later and excitedly told me “I *thought* about what you said…in fact, I even *memorized* it…in Greek! In a couple hours, my friends are going to come over and we’re going to *talk* about it.” How absurd would that be if she went through all those steps but NEVER CLEANED HER ROOM?” Do you see what he’s saying? How often do we find ourselves doing the same thing in response to God’s word? We study it, we talk about it, we may even memorize it, but we never actually obey it!

What do Elijah’s early experiences in Cherith and Zarephath teach us? They teach us that sometimes God’s methods are very different than ours; in fact, sometimes that seem downright silly. But they are always right and they are always on time. Folks, God has never and will never fail any of us. He is faithful and trustworthy and those attributes alone should lead us to obedience.

**What are you facing in your life right now that needs God’s supply? Are you trusting/resting in Him for those needs to be met?**

**Have you considered that before God meets your need, or that in meeting your need, He wants to use you to meet the need of someone else?**

**Have you experienced the blessing of living in obedience to God?**

**Memory Verse:** *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.* 1 Samuel 15:22b