**Elijah**

**Committed ° Courageous ° Common**

 **Week 7**

Text: 1 Kings 19:7-18

We picked up this week seeing God providing once again for Elijah’s physical needs. Bread, water and rest. Not only do we see God’s supernatural provision, but we see that it miraculously sustains Elijah for his forty day trek to Mt Horeb (Mt. Sinai). God’s mighty provision continues to amaze.

It was mentioned on Sunday that perhaps Mt. Sinai was the place of meeting between God and Elijah because it was sort of a “back to your roots” place among the Israelites and especially the prophets. The law had been given to Moses at Sinai and it was the law which was the basis for the ministry of the prophets. Once he makes it to the mountain, Elijah finds for himself a cave and settles in. Perhaps this was even the cave that Moses stood in when God let His glory pass by.

Then the word of God comes to Elijah and asks what he’s doing there – it’s in the answer to this question that we see the condition of Elijah’s heart. Has food and rest done anything to change his attitude? He said, ***"I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."*** In other words, NO – his attitude has not changed and the short answer he should have given God was “I’m scared of Jezebel.” Once again we see Elijah in a much different light. In this text he looks much less like the “prophet of fire” we’ve come to know and much more like the Nation of Israel that he had been so zealous in bringing revival to.

Our tagline for this series, as you can see at the top of this sheet is “Committed, Courageous, Common.” All of a sudden he’s looking much less committed and courageous and much more common. I keep hearing comments from people during our study on David and now on Elijah that they are encouraged when they see these “heroes of the Scriptures” going through struggles and ups and downs similar to our own. There is another prophet that has a similar struggle to Elijah in that he battled severely with discouragement and depression even to the point of wishing he’d never been born – Jeremiah.

Jeremiah became discouraged in his ministry as we see in Jer. 15:10, but a few verses later we are given insight from God as to why his life and ministry had become as they had.

***10 Woe to me, my mother, that you have borne me, as a man of strife and a man of contention to all the land! I have not lent, nor have men lent money to me, yet everyone curses me.***

Jeremiah wished he was dead and felt that everyone hated him. He didn’t understand why he didn’t sense God’s help in his life. He didn’t understand why his life was so miserable.

***19 The LORD replied, “If you return to me, I will restore you so you can continue to serve me. If you speak words that are worthy, you will be my spokesman. You are to influence them; do not let them influence you! 20 They will fight against you like an attacking army, but I will make you as secure as a fortified wall. They will not conquer you, for I will protect and deliver you. I, the LORD, have spoken! 21 Yes, I will certainly keep you safe from these wicked men. I will rescue you from their cruel hands.”***

God told Jeremiah that he needed to “return to me”. Did you ever realize that Jeremiah had departed in the first place? His depression had led him to the place where he had stepped out of that place of trusting the Lord.

Warren Wiersbe writes: “*Is it unusual for chosen servants of God to become discouraged and endanger their own ministries? No, because every servant of God is human and subject to the weaknesses of human nature. Moses became discouraged and wanted to die (Num. 11:10–15); Joshua was ready to quit and leave the Promised Land (Josh. 7:6–11); …and Jonah became so angry he refused to help the very people he came to save! (Jonah 4) God doesn’t want us to ignore our feelings, because that would make us less than human, but He does want us to trust Him to change our feelings and start walking by faith.”*

Ministry is hard, isn’t it? If you notice a pattern among the prophets of God not being liked, it’s because they were always the ones who were calling out sin and confronting people to repent and turn back to the Lord God. 1 Kings 22:5-9 gives us a very candid picture of the life of a prophet of God. I almost chuckle when I read verse 8. I can hear the king saying “yes, there is a prophet of the LORD we can inquire of, but I HATE THAT GUY…He never has anything but bad news for me.”

Elijah is obviously still reeling from Jezebel’s death threat and his expectations not being met and it has caused a rift between him and the LORD. He and Jeremiah found themselves in very similar places emotionally, but notice the word that God gave to Jeremiah - ***The LORD replied, “If you return to me, I will restore you so you can continue to serve me.*** Notice there that God doesn’t say “if you return to me, I’ll return to you.” Why doesn’t the text read that way? Because God never went anywhere! Jeremiah is the one who departed. But God is faithful and promises restoration. While we don’t have the same details given regarding Elijah’s time at Mt. Horeb, I have no doubt that God was working on restoring Elijah for future ministry.

Whether in life’s circumstances or in ministry, we must be on guard against those who despise our mission. As we seek to live holy lives and encourage others to do the same, we can count on attacks and accusations coming our way. It is in these moments that we can reflect back on the lives of Elijah, Jeremiah, Micaiah, Peter, Paul, and countless other men and women of faith and see how God brought them through their situations. In addition to the testimony of God’s faithfulness in their lives, consider the truth Jesus lays out for us in John 16:32-33.

Memory verse – John 16:33b “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."