

The Potter's Christian Life Center

SERMON NOTES
with Pastor Greg Formey



When Your Plans Don't Work

1 Kings 19:1-18

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Sometimes when our best laid plans don't work out, we can fall into periods of disappointment and discouragement, as the prophet Elijah did. Through a dynamic process with God, he came to a healthy understanding that He could not put God in a box. Neither will we limit the way God helps us to achieve were the goals, if we can learn from Elijah's experiences.

A POWERFUL MOVE OF GOD

1 Kings 19 gives the powerful account of a confrontation between Elijah and hundreds of false prophets in the presence of the people of Israel. He had become fed up with the fact that the nation had strayed away from God. With the leading of the Lord, He challenged the leaders of the idol worshippers to a contest on Mount Carmel.

After a single-handed, spectacular victory over hundreds of opponents, He likely got the impression that the whole nation would turn back to God.

He is no different from us. In fact, the Scriptures say that he was a man of like passions as us. After great success in some area of our lives, we expect the world, the flesh, and the devil to bow their knees in submission to us.

A PITIFUL DEPRESSION

He had a rude awakening when he found that the king's wife, Jezebel, was not impressed.

1 Kings 19:1-3

¹When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ²So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them." ³Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there.

This was so shocking to him that he ran away despondent and hid near a brook, wanting to die. What happens when you pray and things just don't work out? You have seen him work before in amazing ways, but now, somehow it seems that God is absent and his enemies are gloating and mocking you.

Elijah's doubts and disappointment had reached its lowest point.

- * He was still suffering from emotional distress
- * He was weary with nights and days of travel
- * He was faint with the sun's heat
- * He was exhausted because of hunger

He was so down that he prayed that God would take his life.

I am not better than my fathers - "I am a mere weak man, no better nor stronger than they who have gone before me, no more able to revolutionize the world than they."

A PROFOUND LIFE LESSON

The Lord proceeds to teach Elijah a few lessons that would be life changing:

* Take care of your physical needs

1 Kings 19:5-7

⁵Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" ⁶He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."

⁸So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God.

Courson says, "Mount Horeb - or Mount Sinai - is the place where Moses saw the burning bush. It is the place the Law of the Lord was given. It is the place where the sky thundered and the earth shook. It was the place where things happened.

Elijah had gotten his strength back, but he was now looking for something spectacular; a powerful message from God accompanied by a supernatural sign.

* Understand that God always has options

1 Kings 19:10

Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

Self-pity is in essence a disagreement with God. If I feel sorry for myself, I am actually saying, "God, although Your Word says You are love, I don't buy it. Although Your Word says You are good, I don't believe it. Although Your Word says You are light, I don't see it. Although the Word says You are my Father, I cannot relate to it."

The Lord interrupted his pity party:

¹⁸Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!"

You are not the only person that God can use. It should be an honor that He chooses to use you.

* Understand that God shows up in several ways

1 Kings 19:11-12

¹¹"Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.

God does not have to move the way we want Him to; He is sovereign. He has His own plan and His own methods. We become disappointed when He does not do things our way.

Elisabeth Elliot - "God is God. Because he is God, He is worthy of my trust and obedience. I will find rest nowhere but in His holy will that is unspeakably beyond my largest notions of what He is up to."