



Sermon, Sunday May 16, 2021, “The Lord speaks to Elijah”

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 19:9-18 ⁹ At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰ He answered, “I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” ¹¹ He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁴ He answered, “I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. ¹⁷ Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. ¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

Introduction: Elijah Flees to Sinai

Today's text shows how the Lord's grace restores us. The prophet Elijah confronted 450 Baal prophets and triumphed on Mount Carmel. And it rains on Israel, which had been without rain for three years and six months. We can see Elijah's faith and courage through these events. However, faith and courage are not shown in Elijah's actions in today's passage. This is because Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, said she would kill Elijah. Upon hearing this news, Elijah flees to Sinai. After that he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. And He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. **“It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers.”(1 Kings 19:4)**

Elijah decided to die. Until then, as a prophet, he had been doing his best according to the Lord's will. However, the Israelites did not change. So he was weary. And Elijah felt lonely. Elijah thought there were no people to do the Lord's work with him. Also, Elijah listened to Jezebel's threat rather than relying on faith in the Lord. So Elijah decided to die and came down into the wilderness. Elijah would die if someone does not help him.

By the way, where did Elijah's courage and faith go? Elijah was able to do the Lord's work until now because the Lord was with him and gave him strength. However, Elijah could not do it because he tried to do the things of the Lord on his own. Nevertheless, the Lord treats Elijah with grace. The Lord restores him from despair and gives him a new mission. I hope we will gain the strength and courage to overcome the difficulties of life through today's message. How does the Lord restore Elijah in despair?



Body: The Lord appears to Elijah.

1) The Lord helps Elijah at the most appropriate time.

Let's look at 1 Kings 19:5. "He lay down and slept under a broom tree; and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, 'Arise and eat.'" The Lord intervened in the emergency situation of Elijah, who would face death if he was delayed any longer. The Lord knew how well Elijah kept the Lord's will until then, and He knew why he was discouraged and decided to die. So, at the most appropriate time, He comes to Elijah and helps him.

The image of the Lord helping Elijah appears the same in our lives. The Lord knows the most appropriate time of our lives to help us. We think and pray that it would be nice to receive help now, but the Lord knows our thoughts, hearts, and circumstances better than we do. So, He intervenes at the time that is most appropriate for us to achieve good. Through these acts He helps us achieve good with humility and without arrogance.

We should be able to gain confidence in and comfort from the love of the Lord who examines our lives in detail through the appearance of the Lord in his visit to Elijah. In this way, the Lord comes to us at the most appropriate time, works for good, and restores Elijah's health from a weak physical state.

2) The Lord restores Elijah's body.

Let's look at 1 Kings 19:6. "There was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water." The Lord provided food for Elijah's physical recovery. And the Lord made him strong again. This is to give power to Elijah to walk for 40 days to Mount Sinai. And there, the Lord teaches Elijah and wants to give him courage and a new mission.

We experience a lot of difficulties in our lives. We face problems with money, health, children, and relationships. But we should not be discouraged because the Lord knows our needs better than anyone else. The Lord clearly meets our needs when He feels that our needs must be met. Therefore, we must not doubt the Lord's goodness for our life and we need faith to speak to the Lord of our needs and wants.

The Lord came to Elijah, intervened at the most appropriate time, saved Elijah's life, and strengthened his body through food and water. But this is not the only reason the Lord came to Elijah.

3) The Lord teaches Elijah.

The Lord wants to teach Elijah and give him courage. Let's look at 1 Kings 19:11-12. The Lord said, **"Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord and behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; " (v.11) "And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice." (v.12)**

Wind, earthquake, and fire symbolize the mighty power and presence of the Lord. Elijah was convinced that the Lord was with him through this. However, the Word says that the Lord was not there even after phenomena such as wind, earthquake, and fire. What does this mean?

In our life of faith, we sometimes try to confirm the Lord's presence through signs. Many who were called to be prophets in the Old Testament were convinced of the Lord's presence through signs. Likewise, we want to confirm the Lord's presence through answers to our prayers.



However, even without signs or immediate answers to our prayers, we must have confidence and faith that the Lord is with us. The Lord is teaching Elijah what true faith is. Faith is absolutely relying on and trusting in the Lord even if the results do not come true as we wished.

After the phenomena of wind, earthquake, and fire, Elijah hears the sound of a gentle whisper of the Lord. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak. And he pays attention to voice of the Lord. **Hebrews 11:1** says, "**Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**" We should be able to listen to a gentle whisper of the Lord instead of looking for visible signs and results.

4) The Lord gives to Elijah courage and a new mission.

The Lord said to Elijah, "**What are you doing here?**" (1 Kings 19:13). Elijah replied again, "**I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.**" (1 Kings 19:14)

Then the Lord told him, "**Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.**" (1 Kings 19:15-16)

The Lord gives new mission to Elijah. And the LORD said to him, "**Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.**" (1 Kings 19:18)

Elijah thought that he was the only one remaining to do the will of the Lord. But the Lord's thoughts go beyond Elijah. Elijah was not alone. There were 7,000 others left in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him.

Let's remember! We are not doing the Lord's work alone. The Lord is still doing His work through so many called people. The Lord works together with us to achieve good. So we need to be more humble and courageous to be able to do the things we are given.

Conclusion: Where is the Lord?

Now let's summarize today's sermon. We seek the Lord in suffering. However, there are many times when we feel that the Lord is silent in our suffering. There are always situations that are difficult for us to accept, such as personal suffering, neighboring difficulties, war, poverty, and tragic death from sickness. And it is often thought in the midst of deep suffering that there is no Lord among us.

Elijah asked the Lord that he might die and says so under a broom tree as follows, "**It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am no better than my fathers.**" He said that because the pain in his life was so great. But in fact, we may not be able to fully understand people in such a situation. What we should not forget is that the Lord is listening to even our painful confession.

Therefore, we hope that we are able to hear the gentle whisper of the Lord to us without despair in any situation. We may be able to give up on ourselves, but the Lord never gives up on us. We pray that the Lord's grace will be with us.

