

HE STILL MOVES STONES ~ WEEK 2 ~ FEAR ~ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Do you have any “phobias?” What about severe concerns about legitimate bad things that could happen?

2) READ:

... The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.~ James 5:16b-18

In what ways was Elijah “a man with a nature like ours?”

What else did Elijah accomplish and what is James’ main point in sharing this with us?

3) Elijah learns Jezebel has ordered his murder and he runs away but soon collapses in the wilderness. He prayed the following.

READ: *... It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.” ~ 1 Kings 19:4b*

What emotions is Elijah expressing here (there are several)? Have you ever been able to relate to these feelings? How did you recover from it?

4) Elijah then travels 40 days to reach a cave on Mount Horeb. Why do you think Elijah chose to go there as opposed to other choices?

God asked Elijah why he had come to the cave on Mount Horeb. He asked “What are you doing here Elijah?” What is implied by God’s question? Did God really not know why Elijah was there?

5) Elijah responded to God.

READ: *[Elijah] 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.” ~ 1 Kings 19:10*

What emotions is Elijah expressing here (there are several)? Is Elijah suffering from an irrational phobia here or are his fears about being killed a legitimate concern? Is there anything inaccurate about his perspective in this answer? If you had been in Elijah’s same situation do you think you would have been afraid?

6) God then responds to these statements of Elijah in a very unusual way.

READ:

The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord. Look, the Lord is ready to pass by.” A very powerful wind went before the Lord, digging into the mountain and causing landslides, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the windstorm there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake, there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire, there was a soft whisper. When Elijah heard it, he covered his

face with his robe and went out and stood at the entrance to the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ~ 1 Kings 19:11-13

What point is God making to Elijah through this interaction? How can you recognize the "soft whisper" or the "still, small voice" of God when you hear it?

7) God asks Elijah the exact same question again and Elijah answers verbatim exactly the same as the first time.

READ:

Then 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." ~ 1 Kings 19:14

Do you think God was expecting to hear a different answer from Elijah after the windstorm, earthquake, fire, and soft whisper? Why or why not? Elijah's answer is exactly the same words but do you think his tone or mindset had changed at all at this point? Has he learned anything? Is he changed at all by this experience? Why or why not?

8) **READ:**

The Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him." ~ 1 Kings 19:15-18

God doesn't directly address Elijah's fears or try to verbally convince him to feel otherwise. He just gives Elijah new marching orders. Does this surprise you? How does this response by God address Elijah's reasons for what drove him to this cave? What is God saying without saying it?

9) **READ:**

So [Elijah] departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat... ~ 1 Kings 19:19a

Elijah doesn't say another word. He just obeys God and goes back to work. All in all, what is recorded in 1 Kings 19 is a very short interaction between God and Elijah. God asks what Elijah is doing there. Elijah answers with his frustration, exhaustion and fear. God simply responds with the wind, earthquake, fire, soft whisper and asks Elijah again the same question. "What are you doing here" Elijah answers the question with the exact same words he used the first time. God responds by telling Elijah to return where he came from and to keep doing what God had called him to do. Elijah does it.

Do you think anything changed in Elijah due to this experience? Is he still concerned that Jezebel will kill him? Is he still paralyzed by that fear? What has changed for him? What lesson is there in this story for us when we encounter fear?

10) READ:

The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. ~ Deuteronomy 31:8

... Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous . ~ Joshua 1:5b-6a

Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. ~ Isaiah 41:10

... He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" ~ Hebrews 13:5b-6

What do these promises of God mean to you? Do you think Elijah, whose human nature was the same as ours was able to take these promises to heart?

11) When Elijah's protege Elisha was faced with an overwhelming force threatening to kill him he encouraged his servant with these words:

READ:

So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." ~ 2 Kings 6:16

Do you believe that this is true for you as well? Why or why not? When you feel threatened, under attack, or fearful, do these words encourage you?