

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Kings 18

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 Kings – and now we are coming to probably my favorite chapter in all of 1 Kings

The battle of the Gods at Mt Carmel.

Actually – it wasn't even a battle.

Let's pray...

[1Ki 18:1-46 NKJV] 1 And it came to pass [after] many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth." 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and [there was] a severe famine in Samaria.

From our studies the last couple of weeks – as we have been looking at the life of Elijah –

One of the things that we notice is how he responds to the Lord's commands –

He does them

Go stand before Ahab and Jezebel and announce the drought I am bringing to the land because of their rebellion –

And Elijah does

Elijah – Go hide by the brook – I will make provisions for you

And Elijah did just that

Go to Zarephath – and Elijah does.

And we have seen how Elijah's faith has been stretched during these places that the Lord has directed him to.

The Lord was constantly speaking to Elijah – letting him know exactly where to go and what to say.

The Lord didn't leave it up to Elijah to figure it out on his own.

And the reason I bring this up is because we might read this portion of scripture and say, my life would be a lot easier if the Lord spoke to me in the way that He spoke to Elijah.

But – the thing we miss out is that it was Elijah who had to discern God's voice, it was Elijah who walked in obedience to God's voice.

God continues to guide us – through His word, through answered prayer, through circumstances that occur in our life –

We have His directions.

Our problem is that sometimes we lose sight of His voice

We allow certain circumstances in our lives to cloud the voice out.

And sometimes we lose sight of His voice because of our own willful disobedience.

The truth is – if we are not going to want to obey the things that He is telling us – He can either keep silent or He can keep telling us and we simply refuse to walk in obedience.

This is a struggle for all of us

But the Lord wants us to be servants who can hear – and He will enable us to here.

[Jhn 10:27-28 NKJV] 27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

After three years – God is ready to end the drought that has been on the land –

But before He ends it – Elijah has to present himself before Ahab.

Elijah is going to need greater boldness before King Ahab than he did at the beginning

of ch 17

Because now – Ahab has seen and felt the affect that the drought brought upon the land.

So the risk is greater for Elijah

And one of the things we have to grasp is that if we want to see the Lord work powerfully, then we have to be willing to go wherever He is sending us.

Places that will take us out of our comfort zone.

It doesn't have to be across the globe

It could be as simple as you or I knowing that the Lord is wanting us to talk that family member that He has placed in our heart or the neighbor – but we are fearful of what they might say to us, we are fearful that we will be rejected, we are fearful that they might not talk to us anymore.

[Phi 3:7-8 NKJV] 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

This was Paul's heart –

He truly wanted to be a servant of the Lord

And what he says here in his letter is –

It doesn't matter what I feel

It doesn't matter what I am worried about

It doesn't matter the things that are important to me

I am willing to lay those things down for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of knowing Jesus, for the sake of being used by Him.

We see the same heart in Elijah, Peter, John – many in the early church

They were willing to forsake themselves in order to see the things of the kingdom of God advanced. – just like Paul did.

And if we are willing to do this – God will meet us there – He will give us the strength and equip us for where He wants to take us

And it doesn't mean we are not going to be afraid

It doesn't mean we are not going to face risk.

But He promises to meet us where we are at.

3 And Ahab had called Obadiah, who [was] in charge of [his] house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly.

So – here in verse 3 – we are introduced to a guy by the name of Obadiah.

His name means servant of Yahweh.

And there are 13 different Obadiah's in The OT

I don't believe that he is the same Obadiah as the minor prophet – just because of the time difference between Elijah's work in the Northern Kingdom and Obadiah's work was in the Southern Kingdom during the times of Jeremiah – those came later on.

All we know here is that this Obadiah was a believer who worked for King Ahab –

He served God boldly – even in the face of evil.

Elijah was bold before Ahab – but then God told him to hide –

Obadiah was there the entire time.

He lived there – he had to interact with Ahab everyday

God placed Obadiah there for a special purpose.

Much in the same way that God put Moses with Pharaoh or Joseph with Potiphar and later with Pharaoh.

4 For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.)

Don't lose sight of what Obadiah is doing here

Remember, earlier I said that Elijah was bold in taking a risk for the Lord – wherever God is sending him – he is there.

Obadiah was hiding these servants of the Lord from Jezebel -

He is protecting them and providing for them at the cost of his own life.

And notice what he provided for them

He fed them with bread and water – in the midst of a drought.

Church – God will always provide.

He will always provide.

5 And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." 6 So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

Ahab is doing here what man tends to do –

He is trying to solve the problem he is facing through his own efforts.

He is trying to solve the problem by any other means than the right way.

Because the right way would have been to repent from idol worship – to turn to God.

Remember - The drought was the result of his non- repentance.

It was the result of his willful rebellion against the Lord.

They were foraging – looking for solutions instead of seeking and yielding to the one who has the solution.

We can look at our country – how do we get out of the mess we are in.

One side says they have solutions / the other side says they have solutions.

Let's do this, let's do that

We are foraging - instead of seeking the One solution which is repentance.

My only problem with Obadiah here is that he goes with Ahab and forages – instead of telling Ahab that he needed to repent.

We are not told why Obadiah didn't tell Ahab – maybe he was weary. He was tired of saying the same thing over and over again – to no avail.

And I think that sometimes we can grow weary of sharing the gospel with someone or a biblical essential truth – and we come to the point where we say, "I am done telling them – they are never going to come around – they are not going to listen"

But the truth is – we don't know if they will come around.

We don't know if the Holy Spirit is convicting them as we share with them

So we are not to give into the idea that they will not listen.

Maybe it was fear –

Maybe he got caught up in looking for solutions – he got caught up in the drought – and in doing so – he lost sight of what he was called to do.

He got distracted – even when he may have thought he was doing something good.

We need to remember why we are here

We need to remember who we are representing

We are here to do the will of our Father and to share Jesus.

7 Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "[Is] that you, my lord Elijah?" 8 And he answered him, "[It is] I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah [is here].' " 9 So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? 10 "[As] the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, '[He is] not [here],' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. 11 "And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah [is here]" '! 12 "And it shall come to pass, [as soon as] I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my

youth. 13 "Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14 "And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah [is here]." ' He will kill me!"

I think in these 8 verses – we find out why Obadiah was out there foraging with Ahab

We find out why Obadiah did not tell Ahab to repent.

Because Obadiah was afraid of Ahab.

He is telling Elijah – I know how this works Elijah.

The moment I tell Ahab where you are – God is going to hide you and I then I am going to show up with Ahab and you are not going to be there – and Ahab is going to kill me.

You see Obadiah was someone who did bold things unto to the Lord

But he was also fearful – he was also very human.

And I think it is important for us to grasp that godly men and women can sometimes be controlled by fear.

Godly men and women can take a bold stand one minute and fail to do so in another circumstance.

Which by the way – is something we are going to see the prophet Elijah do over the next few weeks.

Godly men and women are not perfect.

There will be times when we lack boldness.

And we tend to beat ourselves up –

But we need to remember why Jesus died for us on the cross.

He did what He did because He knows our frail nature

He knows that sometimes our humanity will overwhelm us – it shouldn't but it does.

He dies on the cross – to make up for our weakness, to cover our sins, to cover those moments where we lack boldness, when we come up short.

It is ok to rest in the righteousness that He has brought through His grace into our life.

And that is something we should be thankful for every day.

Obadiah had fear –

Notice how says over and over again – he will kill me.

Those words are words that may have been true – but those words are also an indication that Obadiah had not already considered himself dead.

Paul had already counted himself dead –

Turn to Phil 1

[Phi 1:19-21 NKJV] 19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.

Paul is not saying he wants to die

He wasn't eager to be a martyr

He understood that in order boldly serve the Lord – to not let fear control him –

The secret was – not hold onto his physical life.

Paul echoes the same thing in -

[Rom 14:7-8 NKJV] 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

When I gave my life to Jesus – I died with Him – that is what Paul is saying.

15 Then Elijah said, "[As] the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today." 16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Ahab is going to kill me

Ahab is going to kill me

Did Ahab kill Obadiah? No

And that is something that is true with fear –

We worry because we think something is going to happen and it never does.

17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "[Is that] you, O troubler of Israel?" 18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house [have], in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals.

Ahab was easily the worst, most ungodly king that Israel ever had. Yet he did not hesitate to blame the godly prophet Elijah for the problems of Israel.

But notice Elijah's respond – this is where we see his boldness.

Ahab – I am not the problem – you are the problem.

He is the classic example of someone who points fingers at other people rather than accept the responsibility for their own behavior.

He is the one who brought the worship of Baal to the nation –

Yet – he blames Elijah.

19 "Now therefore, send [and] gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

So Elijah's goes from being bold to taking it up a notch.

He is now issuing a challenge to Ahab

Boldness begets boldness

Because as we step out by faith, the Lord meets us there and He makes us bold

The boldness that I am speaking of – is not a boldness that we can manufacture ourselves.

We can try to be bold – a fleshy boldness that can come from us - but that is not going to produce anything.

But yielding to the Lord – that is going to produce a boldness that is going to produce good fruit.

20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

So Ahab – accepts the challenge

21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD [is] God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

Elijah is telling the people to stop being lukewarm – to pick a side.

Follow God or follow Baal –

But notice – the people don't respond,

And the reason they don't respond is because they really don't want to make the choice.

They still wanted to be connected to God and at the same time – worship Baal.

They had no sense of conviction

Their hearts had become hard

22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets [are] four hundred and fifty men.

In verse 22 –

Elijah is making the statement in boldness.

Look at how many they got – 450 against 1

But later on – this statement is going to be a flaw and a weakness in his life.

Because later – he is going to be whining

He is going to be using this statement – not in boldness but in whininess – when he is pursued by Jezebel

I am all alone, there is no one left except me.

What am I going to do.

Again, human nature.

23 "Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay [it] on the wood, but put no fire [under it]; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay [it] on the wood, but put no fire [under it]. 24 "Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

In the challenge – Elijah gives all the advantage to the prophets of Baal –

They were already at an advantage with the number of prophets –

But -

They also get to pick first on the bulls that they were going to use and the bulls that Elijah was going to use.

It was on a mountain – the very place Baal was worshipped and thought to live.

And we will see that there were other advantages that were given to the prophets of Baal –

And we will see the challenge next week.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

