

A Bipolar Prophet

1 Kings 19:1-18

1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." 3 And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" 5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." 8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." NKJV

Last week we left Elijah on Mt Carmel as the fire fell from heaven and burnt up the sacrifice after only a moment prayer. This the 400 prophets of Baal could not do after all praying for hours and hours.

For that failure to show that Baal was real and could answer prayers the 400 prophets had paid with their lives.

It seem like the nation had awakened to the spiritual truth that the LORD was truly God and Baal was but a fraud. With that new spiritual light the people had taken the 400 prophets of Baal and put them all to death.

What a great victory Elijah had brought to Israel. Maybe things were going to change. Now there seemed to be hope. Elijah prayed and the LORD sent the long anticipated rain. The 3 ½ year drought was now finished. And Elijah had been used by God to do it.

Then he had out run Ahab and his chariot back to Jezreel to top everything off. What a day for Elijah and the LORD. What a great victory. Elijah was no doubt riding high. Nothing like this had ever been done before. And it seemed that now the people would turn back to the LORD.

Things would be different now. All of Elijah's long years of faithfulness would pay off. A better day had arrived. No one could doubt now that the LORD was God and not these idols that the people had been worshiping.

That is where our text picks up this morning. And boy of boy was Elijah in for a awakening of his own. For Jezebel is evil through and through and no form of fire from heaven will change her. She

is totally devoted to her pagan ways and will not humble herself before the Lord.

- I. And then along came Jezebel
 - A. Elijah was on cloud nine. Everything was going to change. No one could deny what had happened.
 - B. Ahab reports to Jezebel the things he had experienced that day.
 - C. Jezebel is not impressed.
 - D. She sends a message to Elijah.
- II. Elijah, the fearless, runs away from Jezebel.
 - A. That is the problem with riding high emotionally.
 - 1. You cannot maintain that level of excitement or success.
 - 2. I have never seen someone, with the exception of Red Skelton, that was so positively emotionally charged than Robin Williams.
 - 3. We are like blown up balloons, when you let them go they buzz around the room like a miniature rocket.
 - 4. But they soon run out of air and down they go and are no good until someone energizes them again.
 - B. It is hard for us to understand Elijah at this point.
 - 1. He seems to have had such victories that day that a woman, though she be the queen, would have little effect on his emotional state.
 - 2. But Elijah is human. Have you noticed that we humans have flaws.
 - 3. I think Elijah was all keyed up since God told him to go meet Ahab and now he is just out of steam.
 - 4. What ever the reason, he runs away in fear.
 - C. Her runs to Beersheba
 - 1. This is often considered the southern most town in Judah.
 - 2. So he ran out of Israel proper.
 - 3. And now he has almost run out of the nation all together.
 - D. He leaves his servant at Beersheba and goes another day's journey into the southern wilderness.
 - 1. There under a broom tree or juniper tree he begs for God to kill him.
- III. Life as Elijah sees it under the broom tree.

- A. He has failed.
 - 1. Not that he had failed but God had failed.
 - 2. All that he did made no difference.
 - 3. Things had not turned out the way he had envisioned.
 - B. Things will never change.
 - 1. The people were wicked and it seemed that would continue.
 - 2. They will not listen, or repent or turn back to God.
 - 3. And regretfully he was right.
 - 4. But change was not his responsibility.
 - 5. He was just to do what God told him.
 - 6. God was responsible for the results.
 - C. There is no use in trying any longer.
 - 1. This is how people feel when they take too much on themselves.
 - 2. God still knew what the true condition was and He was not throwing in the towel.
 - 3. God is in it for the long term.
 - 4. Jezebel's rejection of the LORD was no surprise to God.
 - D. He is no better than his fathers who have died.
 - E. Therefore why can't he just die and put all this misery behind him.
- IV. The Lord's provisions
- A. God does not abandon Elijah in his weakness.
 - B. God sends an angel to strengthen and feed him.
 - C. So Elijah gets what his body needs most, food and sleep.
- V. What are you doing here Elijah?
- A. God is telling Elijah that he had no need for fear.
 - 1. Had not God feed Elijah for the last 3 ½ years?
 - 2. Had not God given him victory over the 400 prophets of Baal?
 - 3. Hadn't He protected him so far from the murderous Jezebel?
 - B. Had God told him that this would be the end of his mission?

1. God was not done, so Elijah was not done.
 2. The number of pastors that resign and drop out of the ministry each year is unreal.
 3. But they cannot accept rejection and disappointment.
 4. The road becomes more difficult then they could ever imagine.
 5. But last I checked, God had not hung up his gloves yet.
- C. The intimation of the question is that Elijah was supposed to be somewhere else.
1. Have you ever felt God was asking you that question.
 2. Maybe you were somewhere you knew God would not be pleased with.
 3. Maybe you were in a situation that you knew God would never lead you there.
 4. Maybe it was something you were sure that God would not approve of.
 5. God has a plan for your life.
 6. He is not done with you, I know, you are still alive aren't you?
 7. Ask God where He wants you, submit to that in your heart and then God will show you what he wants.
 8. I hope God hasn't found you under the juniper tree, all curled up in a ball waiting to die.
 9. Next week we will see that God gave Elijah some very specific things to do.
 10. And I am sure that God has some very specific things for you as well.
 11. You just need to get moving and God will steer you in the right direction.
 12. Because you cannot steer a parked car.