

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 8

A Still Small Voice

A Still Small Voice

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To teach the students that when our faith wavers, God lovingly reminds us that all we need is found in Him.

Key Verses

1 Kings 19:4-18—Main Teaching Passage

Psalm 46

Psalm 145:8-9

Memory Verse - Psalm 103:10, 14

"He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities... For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Luke 11:9

Have you ever been let down by someone? Maybe you were told your family was going on a vacation that got canceled last minute, or someone made you a promise they failed to keep.

When our expectations aren't met we are often left feeling angry, sad, let down, or depressed. Today, we will see that Elijah had some unmet expectations, and his faith wavered because of it. But God revealed Himself to Elijah and graciously gave him just what he needed to get back on track, as He does with us.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Elijah is on the run from Queen Jezebel, who has threatened to kill him like he did the prophets of Baal. The first time Elijah had spoken to the king, the LORD had him retreat to a brook in the wilderness. This time it seems like the only thing leading him is fear, not God's direction. He stops under a tree in the wilderness to rest and the Angel of the LORD wakes him twice to give him food and water. Those two meals from the LORD strengthened him to journey for 40 days until he got to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God, where he took refuge in a cave.

The LORD met him there and asked, "*What are you doing here, Elijah?*" Elijah didn't answer the question, but complained that even though he was faithfully serving the LORD the people of Israel continued to forsake God. He believed that he was the only one left who followed God.

God responded to Elijah by calling him out of the cave. The LORD passed by and a great wind tore at the mountain, followed by an earthquake, which was then followed by a fire. But the LORD was in none of these. Finally, after the fire, a still small voice. God then repeated the question, "*What are you doing here, Elijah?*" And Elijah repeated his answer. This time, God told him to go anoint three people: Hazael as king over Syria, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as Elijah's successor. Then God told Elijah he was not as alone as he thought. There were 7,000 people who remained faithful to God who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

LOOK

Elijah went from boldly calling on the LORD at Mt. Carmel to hiding in fear in the wilderness. From praying for rain from heaven to praying that the LORD would let him die. Remember, Elijah wasn't perfect. He made mistakes. Today we are reminded that many of the mighty men and women of God in the Bible went through periods of failure and hardship, and God had these things written down so that we could learn from them.

Elijah was discouraged and disappointed. Maybe you knew what that's like. After the great show of God's power on Mt. Carmel, he had hoped that the entire nation, or at least Ahab and Jezebel would turn back to the LORD. But we are reminded that great miracles don't produce great faith. This was true when Jesus walked the earth. It was those who had ears to hear what He said that had their lives transformed and their faith strengthened. We also see that Elijah was depressed and lonely. He felt burned out, like he had nothing left to give, and he truly believed that he followed the LORD.

God's reaction to Elijah's distress shows us how loving and patient God is. Elijah was running scared, and God allowed him to rest. The angel of the LORD (how Jesus is referred to in the Old Testament) came and gave Elijah miraculous food and water that gave him strength for his 40

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

day journey to Mt. Horeb. When Elijah finally arrived, God didn't rebuke him, or scold him, or punish him for not having enough faith. God asked him a question and let Elijah share how he was feeling. God wants us to share with Him what is in our hearts. It's important to talk to God. Even when our attitudes are bad! But it's also important to let God respond.

God gives Elijah exactly what he needed: Himself. God revealed His power in the wind, earthquake, and fire, but He revealed Himself in a still small voice. This is how God often works today. It is not great displays of God's power that turns hearts to God. It is God's Word. And until we put ourselves in a position to let God's Word speak to us, our lives will always be in danger of fear, depression, hopelessness, and all of the other terrible things that live outside of fellowship with God.

But when we turn to him, when we stop complaining, stop blaming, get silent and listen to God speak, God gives us just what we need, which is often a reminder of who He is and the right perspective. God hadn't gotten smaller, hadn't gotten farther away, and He wasn't less powerful than before, but all of those things can feel true when we let fear into our lives. God's remedy is His Word and His work. God tells Elijah to get back and get busy. God had work for him to do. And there is work for us to do! The enemy would love to paralyze us with fear or discouragement, but God would remind you that He is with you and that many are still serving Him. Open God's Word and let Him give you what you need to continue on.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Psalm 103:10, 14

Pray: Thank God for His patience and His mercy toward us. Thank Him for giving us what we need when we stray from Him, and ask Him to give you ears to hear His voice.

Parent Question: How did God respond to Elijah's unbelief?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Kings 19:4-18 by David Guzik

2. ([1Ki 19:4](#)) Elijah's depression.

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!"

a. **He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness:** *Beyond* the distant city of Beersheba, Elijah secluded himself even more.

b. **And he prayed that he might die:** This mighty man of prayer – mighty enough to make the rain and the dew stop for three and a half years, and then mighty enough to make it start again at his prayer – now **he prayed that he might die**.

i. Thankfully, this was a prayer *not answered* for Elijah. In fact, *Elijah was one of the few men in the Bible to never die!* We can imagine that as he was caught up into heaven, he smiled and thought of this prayer – and the blessed *no* that answered his prayer. To receive a *no* answer from God can be better than receiving a *yes* answer.

c. **It is enough:** We sense that Elijah meant, "I can't do this anymore, Lord." The work was stressful, exhausting, and seemed to accomplish nothing. The great work on Mount Carmel did not result in a lasting national revival or return to the Lord.

i. Perhaps Elijah had especially hoped that the events on Mount Carmel would turn around Ahab and Jezebel and the leadership of Israel in general. If so, Elijah forgot that people reject God *despite* the evidence, not *because* of the evidence.

ii. "Elijah said, 'It is enough,' yet it was not enough even for his own enjoyment, for the Lord had more blessings in store for him... It was so with Elijah, for he was to have that wonderful revelation of God on Mount Horeb. He had more to enjoy, and the later life of Elijah appears to have been one of calm communion with his God; he seems never to have had another fainting fit, but to the end his sun shone brightly without a cloud. So it was not enough; how could he know that it was? It is God alone who knows when we have done enough, and en-

joyed enough; but we do not know.” (Spurgeon)

d. **Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!** When Elijah examined the apparent failure of his work, he instinctively set the blame on his own unworthiness. It was because he was a sinner as the rest of his ancestors that the work seemed to fail.

B. God’s ministry to the despairing Elijah.

1. ([1Ki 19:5-8](#)) God ministers to the physical needs of Elijah.

Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise *and* eat.” 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. 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.” 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.

a. **As he lay and slept under a broom tree:** This was the mercy of God extended to Elijah. Physically speaking, he needed rest and replenishment. God gave him rest **under a broom tree**, and provided miraculous food for the replenishment.

i. God first ministered to Elijah’s physical needs. This is not always His order, but physical needs are important. Sometimes the most *spiritual* thing a person can do is get enough rest and replenishment.

ii. “And how many are there at this day that sit under Elias’s juniper, willing and wishing to lay down that heavy burden imposed upon them by the Almighty!” (Trapp)

b. **So he ate and drank, and lay down again:** Elijah received this rest and replenishment repeatedly from the Lord. One quick nap and one quick meal wasn’t enough.

i. “Before entering into that communion with him which was for the correction of his false attitude of fear, He commanded him to eat, thus ministering to his physical weakness.” (Morgan)

ii. “The spirit needs to be fed, and the body needs feeding also. Do not forget these matters; it may seem to some people that I ought not to mention such small things as food and rest, but these may be the very first elements in really helping a poor depressed servant of God.” (Spurgeon)

iii. “It was very gracious for God to deal this with his servant. We might have expected rebuke or remonstrance, chiding or chastisement; but we would hardly have expected such loving, gentle treatment as this.” (Meyer)

c. **Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you:** God set Elijah on a 200 mile, 40 day trip to Mount **Horeb**, also known as Mount Sinai. This shows that God did not demand an *immediate* recovery from Elijah. He allowed the prophet time to recover from his spiritual depression.

i. "Elijah's forty-day journey is not without significance. Indeed, a straight trip from Beesheba would require little more than a quarter of that time. Therefore the period is designedly symbolic. As the children of Israel had a notable spiritual failure and so were to wander forty years in the wilderness, so a defeated Elijah was to spend forty days in the desert." (Patterson and Austel)

2. ([1Ki 19:9-10](#)) God allows Elijah to vent his frustrations.

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?" 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."

a. **He went into a cave:** Literally, the Hebrew is definite describing *the cave*. "*The cave* may well have been the specific 'cliff of the rock' where God appeared to Moses (av, [Exodus 33:22](#)) rather than the 'cave-region' generally." (Wiseman)

i. "Perhaps no spot on earth is more associated with the manifested presence of God than that sacred mount." (Meyer)

b. **What are you doing here, Elijah?** God knew the answer to this question, but it was good for Elijah to speak to the Lord freely and to unburden his heart.

i. "God has ways of teaching all of us in our bones and in our flesh, but he specially knows how to do this with those upon whom he puts any honor in his service. You must not marvel, if God should be pleased to bless you to the conversion of souls, that he should also make you sometimes smart." (Spurgeon)

c. **I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts:** Elijah protested to God, "I have faithfully served You and now look at the danger I am in." To Elijah – and many servants of God since – it seemed unfair that a faithful servant of God should be made to suffer.

d. **I alone am left:** This was not *accurate*, but it reflected how Elijah felt. Even back at the confrontation at Mount Carmel Elijah said *I alone am left a prophet of the Lord* ([1 Kings 18:22](#)). Discouraging times make God's servants feel more isolated and alone than they are.

e. **I alone am left; and they seek to take my life:** Strangely, the reasons Elijah provided were

actually important reasons for him to remain alive. If he really was the last prophet or believer alive, should not he seek to live as long as possible? If the enemies of God like Jezebel wanted him dead, should he not seek to defeat her wicked will? Elijah here powerfully showed the *unreasonable nature* of unbelief and fear.

3. ([1Ki 19:11-12](#)) God reveals Himself to Elijah.

Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the 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; and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

a. **Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord:** God knew what the depressed and discouraged Elijah needed. He needed a *personal encounter with God*. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with Elijah’s *theology*, but at the time there was something lacking in his experience.

b. **Behold, the Lord passed by:** God brought His presence before Elijah, but first to show *where He was not*. The Lord was **not in the wind**, He was **not in the earthquake**, He was **not in the fire**. Like many others, Elijah probably only looked for God in dramatic manifestations. Certainly, God sometimes appears in such ways but He often appears in less dramatic surroundings.

i. “This same lesson has to be learned over and over by us all: let us repeat it, ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.’ It is to be lamented that the most of professors obstinately cling to the fatal error of looking for displays of power of one kind or another. I hear that a certain church is seeking for a very clever man: she thinks that God is in the wind... That still small voice will be hushed and silent, while the boastings of your wisdom resound like a howling wind or a thunder unaccompanied by rain.” (Spurgeon)

c. **After the fire a still small voice:** This final phenomenon was a marked contrast to the previous manifestations. God actually met Elijah in the quiet whisper of a voice instead of the earth-shaking phenomenon that had gone before.

i. Wiseman called the **still small voice** a *gentle whisper*.

ii. “And now the thunder ceased, and the lightning was gone, and the earth was still, and the wind was hushed, and there was a dead calm, and out of the midst of the still air there came what the Hebrew calls ‘a voice of gentle silence,’ as if silence had become audible. There is nothing more terrible than an awful stillness after a dread uproar.” (Spurgeon)

iii. Elijah perhaps thought that the dramatic display of power at Mount Carmel would turn the nation around. Or perhaps he thought that the radical display of God's judgment against the priests of Baal following the vindication at Mount Carmel would change the hearts of the nation. Neither of these worked. This example is important for Christian ministers today, especially preachers. It shows that *displays of power* and *preaching God's anger* don't necessarily change hearts. Instead, the **still small voice** of God speaking to the human heart is actually more powerful than outward displays of power or displays of God's judgment.

iv. "Because the success of Carmel melted like the morning mist, he thought that his career had been a failure all along, and that he had brought no one to reverence Jehovah; but he was reading with the eyes of unbelief, and his imagination was leading him rather than the facts of the case. Here are seven thousand people scattered up and down the country to whom God has blessed Elijah's testimony. If he had not blessed his big things as he had desired, yet his little things had prospered greatly. It was Elijah's daily conduct rather than his miracles which had impressed these seven thousand and led them to hold fast their integrity." (Spurgeon)

4. ([1Ki 19:13-15](#)) After this ministry, God gives Elijah work to do.

So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; because 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." Then the Lord said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

a. **He wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave:** Immediately, Elijah sensed that God was present in the *still small voice* in a way that He was not in the previous, more dramatic phenomenon. Because he sensed the special presence of God, Elijah immediately humbled himself when he **wrapped his face in his mantle**.

i. "Through horror and dread of God's presence, being sensible that he was neither worthy nor able to endure the sight of God with open face." (Poole)

ii. "He first wrapped his mantle about his face — he became subdued and awe-stricken — full of reverence. Oh! it is a great thing when a sinner is willing to wrap his face when he is confounded, and say, 'I cannot defend my course; I am guilty.' We know that if at our judgment-seat a man pleads guilty, he is punished; but at the judgment-seat of the gospel whoever pleads guilty is forgiven. Wrap your face." (Spurgeon)

b. **What are you doing here, Elijah?** God asked Elijah the same question – and received the same response – as in [1 Kings 19:9-10](#). There was something helpful for Elijah in this question and answer process.

c. **Go, return on your way... anoint Hazael as king over Syria:** God gave Elijah *something to do*. He needed a task to focus on so he could avoid excessive introspection. He needed to stop looking at himself and his own (admittedly difficult) circumstances. He needed to get on with what God wanted him to do.

i. “Then the Lord did what perhaps was best of all for Elijah, *he gave him some more work to do*. He sent him off about his Master’s business again; and I warrant you that, when Elijah went back over that road, it was with a very different step from that which brought him down to Beersheba. He had come along terrified and distressed; but now he goes back with the majesty that belongs to the Tishbite, he is afraid of no Jezebel now.” (Spurgeon)

5. ([1Ki 19:16-18](#)) Further assurance to Elijah.

“Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be *that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.*”

a. **You shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel:** God had more work for Elijah to do. He would also demonstrate God’s choice of **Jehu** to be the king to succeed the corrupt Ahab and his wife Jezebel.

b. **Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place:** God gave something else to the discouraged and depressed prophet, beyond work to do. He also gave him *a friend* and a *successor*.

i. Elijah needed a *friend*; the core of his complaint before God was that he was alone. God let him know that there was a man ready to learn from the great prophet and be his disciple and companion.

ii. Elijah also needed *hope*, and since Elisha would be raised up as a successor to Elijah’s prophetic office, Elijah then knew that his work would continue even after his death.

c. **It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill:** This was another source of encouragement to Elijah. With this promise he knew that ultimately justice would be done, and God would not allow the institutionalized persecution and promotion of idolatry to go unpunished.

d. **Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal:** This was a final encouragement to Elijah. He repeatedly bemoaned that he was alone among the true followers of God ([1 Kings 18:22](#); [19:10](#); and [19:14](#)). This both assured Elijah that he was not alone and that his work as a prophet had indeed been fruitful.

i. This showed Elijah that his *quiet ministry* over the years actually bore more fruit than the *spectacular ministry* at Mount Carmel. “Yet, all the while that vile idolatry was spreading in Israel, the worship of the true God was being retained by seven thousand faithful souls, though Elijah did not know that there was even one beside himself. How were they won to Jehovah? Certainly not by Elijah’s impressive demonstration on the top of Carmel, for they were loyal to the Lord before that... The still small voice had been doing for Israel what Elijah could not do.” (Spurgeon)