

Abide in Me

John 15:4

*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



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The Week of October 15, 2023

Unrivaled

God of My Despair

1 Kings 18:41-19:1-8

Elijah is coming off a powerful victory over the prophets of Baal. He experiences another spiritual milestone as he prays for rain (i.e. seven times) and the skies open. Then, in a display of God-infused strength, he runs ahead of Ahab's chariot to Jezreel. But when Jezebel hears how he routed Baal's prophets, she threatens his life. Elijah cowers in fear and flees south. At the lowest point of his life he finds shade under a desert shrub. In his despair he says to God, "It is enough ... take away my life." However, God has a recovery plan for Elijah that includes leaving Israel altogether as he is brought to a special place.

OBSERVATION (*What does the passage say?*)

Before your GG gathers, read through the passage at least twice and perform the following prompts:

- Double underline all the phrases that stand out to you. In the margin briefly note why.
- Circle in one color all the main characters in this passage.
- Circle with another color all the places mentioned in this passage.

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." 42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. 43 And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times. 44 And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" 45 And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. 46 And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." 3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came 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 asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

Discussion Starter: Have you ever been in a position where you had spent all your energy only to find that you had to conquer one more hard thing? What is that like?

INTERPRETATION (*What does the passage mean?*)

1. After defeating Baal’s servants, Elijah hears the sound of rain (v. 41). What does this phrase imply?

2. Discuss the fact that Elijah prayed:
 - Describe his posture as he prayed.

 - Why did he pray for what God had already promised?

 - On Carmel, God answered Elijah’s prayer immediately. Why not now? What is the meaning behind him asking for the same request seven times?

3. What did Elijah think would happen after the events on Carmel and the people’s response that the Lord is God?

4. When Elijah is threatened by Jezebel, he despaired even of life itself. Why did he react this way? What do you think of Elijah’s request to “take my life”?

5. Elijah fled. The angel of the Lord meets Elijah in the wilderness but doesn’t give him the answer he is seeking. He gives him enough food to sustain him on the next leg of his journey.
 - Why draw out this encounter for 40 days? (The number 40 is significant in the Bible). Can you think of anyone else who endured a 40-day trial?

 - What is significant about Elijah eating, drinking and sleeping before he met with God?

 - Where is God leading Elijah and why?

APPLICATION *(How does the passage apply to our lives?)*

1. What can we learn about the way Elijah prayed for rain? What do you need to pray for in this way?

2. What disappointments or fears do you have right now that make you want to run and hide or even give up?

3. For three years Elijah had not made a move without hearing from the Lord, but now he flees from Jezebel's threat. Why is it unwise to make life-altering decisions when in distress? What part does the voice of the Lord have in your decisions?

4. From watching the news, reading the paper, and scrolling social media we are inundated with information. Our minds and bodies become over-stimulated. Elijah needed to rest his body and be restored. How are you restoring yourself during our troubled times?

5. In what ways can you relate to Elijah when he says, "I have had enough"? Have you ever told the Lord "I have had enough"? Can you talk about it?

6. What would you say are your basic needs that also benefit your physical and mental health? Do these areas matter to God? How do they affect your relationship with God?

7. Why did Elijah need to travel for 40 days before he met with God? What is your balance between doing things with people and being alone with God?
 - What happens when we don't have time "inward and alone" with God?

8. What are you thinking about as you complete this study?

Close your time in prayer.

Think about who you will invite to church next Sunday.

Sermon Notes: *God of My Despair*

1 Kings 18:41-19:1-8

Lined area for writing notes, consisting of 27 horizontal lines.