

When the Journey is too Great

I Kings 19: 1-8

We have come to a difficult season in the life of Elijah, the prophet. He stepped on the scene in [Chp.17](#) with a word that God would withhold the rain and a great drought would come. In the previous chapter, he won the great victory on Mt. Carmel and through his intercessory prayer, God had ended the drought. But, as we see in the beginning verses of [Chp.19](#), circumstances of life can quickly change. We no longer see a valiant servant of the Lord, but a man fearing for his very life. He has come off the mountain of victory and found himself in the valley of despair.

No doubt we can all relate to Elijah in our spiritual journey as well. We have enjoyed the mountain tops of God's grace and abundance and we have endured the valleys of doubt and despair as well. God has done great things among us in recent days, but if we aren't careful, we too will find ourselves in much the same situation as Elijah.

As I read this passage of Scripture, I was touched by the statement the angel made to Elijah, [Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee](#). We are all on a journey through life and many times that journey is too great for us as well. I want to take a few moments and look in on this difficult season in Elijah's life as we consider the thought: [When the Journey is too Great](#). There are [lessons](#) that we all need to learn and apply to our lives as we navigate this journey of life.

I. The Diagnosis of Despair (1-3) – Here we find the elements involved in the despair that Elijah faced. These are often prevalent in our lives as well.

A. A Distorted Focus (1-2) – It is apparent that Elijah has lost his focus for the Lord and the mighty things God had done through his obedience. His life had been nothing but ordinary up to this point. Once he revealed the coming drought, God had sent him down by the brook Cherith, where the ravens fed him morning and evening. When the brook dried up, God sent him to the widow woman of Zarephath to sustain him. He had just prayed down fire from heaven, defeating the prophets of Baal, and glorifying the Lord. His prayer had brought about the end of the great drought. Elijah was on a spiritual high, but he quickly lost his focus. He forgot about the awesome power of the God he served and focused on the threats and accusations of Jezebel.

- We might tend to be critical, but we too have found ourselves in the same situation. God has shown Himself mighty in our midst, performing miracles among us, and yet we tend to lose our focus and doubt His ability.

- How many times has God failed us in the past? How many times has He met our need when it seemed all hope was lost? We tend to look at the circumstance rather than the Lord. We focus on the storm rather than the One who can walk upon our storms.

B. A Distracting Fear (2) – God supplied Elijah’s need when it seemed there was no way. He had delivered him time and again, even allowing him to triumph over 450 prophets of Baal, but he isn’t focused on that. Elijah has forgotten all that God had done and his heart is gripped with fear because of the threats of Jezebel. He has allowed his fear to consume his life.

- Many of us face the battle with fear. We allow our fears to distract us from being effective in service for the Lord. I know that we are in tough economic times, but we are serving One who can make meal last in a barrel and oil in the cruse. We tend to fear physical ailments, but we serve One who has the power to heal and even raise the dead. We worry and fret over the condition of our nation and society and fail to realize that God is sovereign and in control. We worry about His ability to save others, but forget that He transformed the life of a demonic among the tombs. [Rom.8:31 – If God be for us, who can be against us?](#) [1 Jn.4:4 – Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.](#) We must learn to trust God even when we are afraid.

C. A Desperate Flight (3) – When things got bad Elijah fled. Keep in mind, this is the same man that stood alone before the multitude on Carmel, but now he has fled for his life. He has left the place God had placed him and he is seeking shelter among the world.

- [He came to Beersheba... and left his servant there.](#) He distanced himself from those who could’ve helped encourage him in this time of difficulty.
- This seems hard for us to grasp, but we have been guilty of the same. When troubles come we often take flight. We think we can distance ourselves from our troubles. Running from problems will never solve them.
- Many times folks will abandon the house of God and the people of faith to seek refuge in the world. In our seasons of difficulty, we need to find our place in the house of God. The world has nothing to offer except more misery!

II. The Depths of Despair (4) – Elijah’s situation continued to worsen. That is what we can expect when we get away from the Lord and loose our focus.

A. His Position – We find that [he went a day's journey into the wilderness](#). He is continually getting farther from the Lord. This great man of God found himself alone in a barren wasteland. There is no mention of prayer, fellowship, or meditation on the things of God. He has given in to defeat and has wandered from the peace and tranquility of God.

- Many in our day have found themselves in a similar situation. They have wandered farther and farther away from the Lord. Before they even realize it, they are in a wilderness without any thought for the Lord. They have abandoned their prayer life, no longer reading their Bible, and no longer enjoying any fellowship with the Lord or His people. This is a dreadful place for the believer the find himself.

B. His Peril – [He requested for himself that he might die](#). This is coming from a man whom God had used mightily. He had experienced the power of God like few others have. Elijah has resigned to defeat and simply wants to die. He feels as if his life has been of little value and he would rather it end than to face the difficulties at hand.

- Our situation may not have reached that point, but we too have had those times when we simply wanted it all to end. We feel as if we have lived our lives in vain and there is nothing else to accomplish or look forward to. We are ready to throw in the towel and walk away from the work God has called us to perform. Some may not have desired to die physically, but spiritually they need a divine resuscitation.

C. His Pity (4c) – [and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers](#). Elijah had set himself up for a fall. Apparently he had grown confident in his own ability. God has used him and performed great miracles through him, but it was God's power working through a mortal vessel. It appears that Elijah is beginning to realize that he is no better than those who have gone before him. He too was subject to the pressures and trials of life.

- It seems as if he is having himself a pity party. Satan may have perched on his shoulder and accused him of being a failure, such a mighty man of God now reduced to one who is fearful, running, and alone in the wilderness.

- Have we not all had those pity parties? Have we not all questioned why God would allow us to face such difficulty? We are no better than the others. Trouble and trials are simply a part of life. It is during the fire that we are refined and become more like our blessed Lord. Sometimes we have to go through difficulty to be reminded of our need for the Lord. All that we have accomplished and all we ever hope to be is in the Lord. We are not promised a life of ease all the way to glory.

III. The Devotion in Despair (5-8) – Things were desperate, but all hope was not lost. Even in his moment of greatest need, God was there. He had not been forsaken or abandoned of God. Notice how God ministered to him.

A. The Lord was Mindful (5) – He had fled for his life and found himself in the wilderness, but He was not alone. God knew where he was and He knew where to find him. As Elijah slept there in his despair, God sent an angel to minister to Elijah. He came to him in his hour of need.

- Isn't it good to know we serve One who is mindful of us? We may be in the wilderness of life, feeling as if we are all alone and hopeless, but God knows where we are and He knows how to find us as well. God knows where you are in the journey. He knows what you need. There have been times when I was in despair and the Lord met me and encouraged me to press on.

B. The Lord was Merciful (5-7) – In these verses we find the tender mercies of our Lord. Notice:

1. His Patience – God doesn't come to Elijah with words of rebuke. He doesn't say, "Well this is a fine mess that that you gotten yourself into. I suppose since you got into this predicament, then you can get yourself out of it. I would have thought you were a bigger man than this." No, God tenderly sends an angel to meet the needs of Elijah. He is patient with one whose faith has grown weak and walked away from his calling.

- I rejoice that we serve One who is patient with us. How many times have we failed and come short? How many times have we abandoned the will of God for our lives? How many times have we made that trip to the wilderness? And yet, He is patient and kind with us. Rather than a stinging rebuke, He lovingly restores us and encourages us to go on.

2. His Provision – Twice in these verses, God provides a meal for Elijah in the wilderness. Just as He had done in the drought, God is still providing for him. The Lord was faithful even when Elijah wasn't.

- The same is true in our lives. God continually meets our needs. He is able and willing to prepare a table for us in the presence of our enemies. Even when we are unfaithful and undeserving, God is faithful. I'm glad that His provision for me doesn't rest upon my actions. He has never failed me and I have no fear He ever will. He may not show up when our how I hoped He would, but He is always right on time.

C. The Lord was Mighty (8) – [And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.](#) The Lord knew the journey was too great for Elijah. He knew he would never make it in himself. God provided a meal for him that carried him forty days. That is simply a miracle of God. Elijah couldn't make it in himself, but through the power of God, he could.

- I don't know what you are facing today, but I'm glad the Lord does. Whatever it is, the journey is too great in ourselves. The only hope we have is through the power of the Lord. You will never make it trying to survive on what this world can give, but if you will humble yourself before the Lord and allow Him to provide for you, you can endure the difficulties ahead. He is our only hope for this journey.

Conclusion: I wonder if you can relate to Elijah this morning. Has life thrown you a curve that you can't handle? Is your spiritual life a mess? Have you found yourself in the wilderness away from God? If so, He stands ready to meet your need. Why not come and find the strength you need to press on.

Maybe you are here and you have never trusted Christ as your Savior. You don't know about the tender mercies and the goodness of God. Jesus died for you and He wants to save you if you will only come to Him. Why not come as the Lord leads?