

Series: Walking by Faith # 3
The Confidence of Elijah
1 Kings 17: 1-7

Following several chapters dealing with the chronicles of the kings of Judah and Israel, we are abruptly introduced to a man named Elijah. There is no background information leading up to his ministry; he just steps on the scene and begins a work for the Lord.

As you read and study the life of Elijah, it quickly becomes apparent that he was a man who walked by faith. He performed many miracles and was forced to rely on God often for daily provision and protection. Such a life is without question lived by faith.

As we walk with the Lord, in an increasingly difficult day, we too realize the necessity for a life lived by faith. While our dependence on the Lord may not appear as desperate as Elijah's, we are just as dependent on the Lord to meet our daily needs, and secure our eternity with Him. There is much we can glean from the initial record of the great prophet's life. I want to discuss the [stages](#) of Elijah's encounter as we consider: [The Confidence of Elijah](#).

I. The Demeanor of Elijah (1) – [And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.](#) This reveals the demeanor and character of Elijah. Consider:

A. His Introduction (1) – We are introduced to this Tishbite, from the land of Gilead, named Elijah. Often in the Old Testament, names were very significant. This is no exception. Elijah's name means "Jehovah is God." That doesn't seem to be surprising since he was born into the nation of Israel, the chosen people of God. However, it is very significant at this moment in their history. Following the reign of Solomon, the kingdom was divided, and both Judah and Israel had strayed from the Lord. Israel seemed to be influenced more by the nations around them, seeking their gods and living according to the lusts of the flesh. God had raised up a man who would proclaim Him as the true and living God.

- As we live in the midst of a culture that is increasingly intolerant of our faith and the Lord, there is a great need for those who are willing to identify with, and proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ. Like Elijah of old, this will require a walk of faith.

B. His Ministry (1) – The first mention we have of Elijah, he is found standing before Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab had married the daughter of a neighboring king and followed her example in

worshiping Baal. As king of Israel, Ahab had influenced many of the Israelites to worship Baal also. He was leading the people away from the Lord, and God had sent Elijah to confront Ahab about his sin. Elijah needed great faith to confront the king of Israel regarding his sin.

- You will have to agree that America has become an idolatrous nation. There isn't a multitude of temples set up to worship false gods, but idol worship is prevalent in our day. Many are worshiping the gods of pleasure and self-indulgence. Such worship and desire is championed by the elite and influential. Public policy seems to be dictated from Hollywood. We need those with the courage to stand for truth and proclaim the Gospel of Christ in our day!

C. His Prophecy (1b) – *And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.* Elijah shared a simple message, yet it was pointed and profound. He declared that God would withhold rain from the land according to the prayers Elijah had prayed. He offered this word of warning and went on his way. Ahab likely dismissed it at that moment, but he would eventually recognize Elijah and hate him for the power he possessed through the Lord.

- The world is uninterested in the Gospel message. Most will dismiss it outright, but we must be faithful to proclaim the good news and continue to live for the Lord, even if those around us refuse. We must bear witness of His grace before those who remain separated in sin.

II. The Directive for Elijah (3-4) – Following the confrontation with Ahab, Elijah received direction from the Lord. Consider:

A. The Instruction (3) – *Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.* Elijah is instructed to turn toward the east and hide by the brook Cherith. The Lord knew Elijah would soon become a wanted man, hated by Ahab, and He gave instruction that would protect and preserve Elijah in this time of great adversity. God gave specific instructions about a specific place. There is where He intended for Elijah to go; it was there He would provide and care for him.

- The Lord knows our difficulties and struggles as well. He has a place of rest and provision prepared for us, even in the midst of turmoil. Like Elijah, we must listen to the word of the Lord and follow His direction. Many fail to receive the provision God offers because they are unwilling to respond to His will for their lives.

B. The Separation (3) – It is interesting that God told Elijah to hide himself by the brook in Cherith. The name Cherith means “to cut off.” This would be a place of isolation for Elijah. He was instructed to hide by the brook. No doubt he would be lonely at times, but this place of isolation was essential for his survival. He had to follow the Lord and walk by faith. During this time of isolation, I am sure the Lord spoke to Elijah and prepared Him for the ministry ahead.

- Most of us don't like being isolated and alone. I certainly wouldn't enjoy that for an extended period of time, but we must not be unwilling to hide away with the Lord at times. We need to find that place of quiet solitude, where we can shut out the noise and distractions of life in order to hear from the Lord. There is great benefit in being cut off from the world and its cares at times so we can spend time with the Lord. As the Lord leads you to such a place, guard it and cherish that time of solitude with the Lord. He is likely seeking to prepare you for a work that He is leading you toward.

C. The Provision (4) – *And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.* This would not be a trip of luxury and ease. God revealed that Elijah would drink from the brook and the ravens would bring his meals each day. Although it may not have been what he was accustomed to eating, the Lord would provide for him in the midst of a wilderness while he was hiding from persecution.

- There is a great principle here regarding our walk by faith: where God leads, He always provides. We have nothing to fear while walking with the Lord. If He can direct the ravens to sustain Elijah, He is surely able to meet our needs and sustain us as we walk with Him. In a world of uncertainty, we can rest in the sovereign provision of our Lord. He purchased us with His precious blood, as He died on the cross for our sin. He will not abandon or forsake us in the way.

III. The Dependence of Elijah (5-6) – Here we discover the dependence of Elijah upon the Lord. He was unable to provide for himself, but God made a way for him. Consider:

A. His Submission (5a) – *So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD.* Initially Ahab likely dismissed the prophecy of Elijah, but as the rains ceased and drought gripped the land, his hatred for Elijah increased. The Lord would use this time of isolation to protect Elijah and prepare him for the coming ministry. He would have missed God's plan for his life if he had failed to respond to the Lord's word and submit to His sovereign will.

- That statement is very simple, and yet it is greatly needed in our day. We desperately need those who will go and do according to the word of the Lord. We need those who will surrender their lives to the Lord and submit to His sovereign will.

B. His Dedication (5b) – *So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.* We don't know how long Elijah stayed by the brook, but he remained committed to the will of the Lord. He went and dwelt by the brook, remaining there until the Lord provided additional instruction.

- Are you willing follow the direction of the Lord and dwell there until He offers additional instruction? Most of the time we can handle it for a short period of time, but eventually we begin to desire change. We must be willing to follow the Lord and remain where He has placed us until He calls for us to move to another location or area of service. It isn't always easy, but it's always best!

C. His Appropriation (6) – *And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.* God was faithful to meet Elijah's needs without fail. Every morning and evening, the ravens brought bread and flesh for him to eat. He didn't have to worry; God was faithful. However, Elijah did have to continue to live by faith. He received enough each morning to sustain him until the evening and enough in the evening to carry him through until morning. There was never an over-abundance, but God was faithful.

- We enjoy reading of this great miracle, but it creates apprehension when we face a similar situation. We usually desire comfort and ease. We are often not satisfied with provision for this moment, we want to know that this evening and tomorrow are provided for as well. It is difficult at times, but we must walk by faith, trusting the Lord to continually supply. He gave Himself for us on the cross; surely He would not forsake us in the midst of the journey!

IV. The Discovery of Elijah (7) – *And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.* Things went well for a while, but even in obedience to the Lord, uncertainty came. The text reveals:

A. An Apparent Problem (7) –Elijah is there by the brook, living in obedience to God, and the brook dried up. His only source of water is now gone. No doubt he was fearful and discouraged, but God already had a plan. He did not intend for Elijah to remain by the brook. This was a place of protection and preparation, but eventually he would have to move forward for the Lord. What appeared to be a disaster would prove to be a blessing!

B. An Answered Prayer (7) – [And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.](#) We don't know how Elijah reacted to the brook drying up, but one thing is certain – God heard and answered his prayer. He had prayed the Lord would withhold the rain, and God honored his request. Whether Elijah realized it at this moment or not, his faith was growing and he was maturing in the Lord. He would need faith in prayer as he stood before the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

Conclusion: There is no doubt that Elijah was forced to walk by faith. As he dwelt by the brook, God proved Himself faithful and strengthened Elijah's faith. You may be dwelling in a place of isolation today and are uncertain of how this will unfold. There is no reason for fear. The Lord knows where you are in the journey. He may have led you there to strengthen your faith and prepare you for the future. Seek Him for the needs you have. If you are unsaved, the Lord died for your sin and endured the judgment of God on your behalf. He stands ready to provide salvation if you will respond in repentance and faith. Come to Jesus today!