

Sermon Series: “Becoming God’s Humble Hero: Elijah”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN —
7/22/2007

Title: “Boot Camp at Cherith”

Text: 1 Kings 17: 1-7

Intro: *Ills.: Be Careful What You Wish For*

Theme: We all want to find our value in being useful. God, however, finds our value in that we are his child and his purpose is being played out in us. When we come to realize and accept that, we will find His value in our life.

God’s un-politically-correct assignments (Print verses 1-5)

- Accepting and acknowledging that you are God’s representative, not his negotiator (vs. 1)
 1. Elijah acknowledges the “living God” for whom he had both love and respect
 2. When God calls you to represent him, reflect on whom you serve and why (*the God...whom I serve who lives.*)
- Trusting in God’s unorthodox plan and provision (vs. 2-5)
 1. Elijah stated God’s intent without watering it down out of fear or doubt
 - a. Do you trust God at his word in your marriage, job, child raising, being his church to say it and live it?
 - b. *"So you shall observe to do just as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left. Deut. 5:32*
 2. God gave Elijah a **faith moment** in terms of how he would provide — humanly impossible supernatural promises
 - a. **Ills.: Ignored answer to prayers**
 - b. *And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philip. 4:19*

Learning some lessons from our “Cherith experiences”

- *The God who gives can also choose to take away.*
 1. *The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away! May the name of the Lord be praised." Job 1: 21*
 2. Can we bless when in the mystery of Lord’s plan he removes something cherished/vital (spouse/child/job/ministry)
 3. **Ills.: God’s loving kick**
- *Our dried up personal resources can be the direct result of our own prayers.*
 1. *Elijah was human like us. Yet, when he prayed that it wouldn't rain, no rain fell on the ground for three-and-a-half years. James 5: 17*
 2. Elijah wasn’t surprised by what he saw in answer to his prayers—but how often we are!
 3. *But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. James 1:6-7*
- *Submission is as much about being hidden as it is about being useful.*
 1. Impatience with God’s timing in our shaping leads to foolish/destructive choices; while patience can lead to life
 2. *For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. Psalm 27:5*
 3. **Ills.: FB Meyer quote: Hidden and Useful**
- *The Father’s directing will for us also includes provision.*
 1. Raven where not exactly “chef’s choice,” yet God provided all that Elijah needed to survive for the days to follow
 2. God’s plan for us is not just to survive but that he might effectively use us later on and keep us connected to Him
 3. *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Rom 8: 32*
- *We are to trust God one day at a time. (Print vs. 6)*

1. *"Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or gather the harvest into barns. Yet, your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they?...But first, be concerned about his kingdom and what has his approval. Then all these things will be provided for you. "So don't ever worry about tomorrow. After all, tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matt 6: 26, 33-34*

2. Like Elijah, God never tells us what the next step is until we, by faith in him, have taken the first step

3. *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1*

· *A drying brook is often a sign of God's pleasure, not His disappointment. (Print vs. 7)*

1. Elijah had done nothing to bring about God's judgment; yet, God did not want him to stay at Cherith forever

2. Often God's honing/disciplining of faith appears as punishment; but we forget what it means to live under grace

3. *Think about Jesus, who endured opposition from sinners, so that you don't become tired and give up. You struggle against sin, but your struggles haven't killed you. You have forgotten the encouraging words that God speaks to you as his children: "My child, pay attention when the Lord disciplines you. Don't give up when he corrects you. The Lord disciplines everyone he loves. He severely disciplines everyone he accepts as his child." Heb. 12: 3-6*

Be Careful What You Wish For

A recruit in Navy boot camp got on the wrong side of our company commander and was ordered to do push-ups. As he neared triple digits, an airliner flew overhead. "I bet you wish you were on that plane, don't cha?" sneered the CC. "No, sir," said the unlucky recruit. "Why wouldn't you want to be on that plane?" "Because," the recruit grunted between push-ups, "that plane's landing. I want to be on one that's leaving." — **Joke contributed by Gene Damron**

Ignored Answer to Prayer

A businessman was late for an important meeting and couldn't find a parking space. As he frantically circled the block, the man got so desperate that he decided to pray. Looking up toward heaven, he said, "Lord, take pity on me. If you find me a parking space, I'll go to church every Sunday for the rest of my life, and not only that, I'll give up drinking." Miraculously, a parking space appeared. The guy looked up again and said, "Never mind. I found one." **Submitted by John Beukema, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania**

God's Loving Kick

A Norfolk-Southern train was rolling down the rails of Indiana at 24 miles per hour. Suddenly the conductor, Robert Mohr, spotted an object on the tracks roughly a city block away. Initially the engineer, Rod Lindley, thought it was a dog on the tracks. Then Mohr screamed, "That's a baby!" The baby was 19-month-old Emily Marshall, who had wandered away from home while her mother planted flowers in her yard. Lindley hit the brakes. Mohr bolted out the door and raced along a ledge to the front of the engine. He realized there was no time to jump ahead of the train and grab the baby. So he ran down a set of steps, squatted at the bottom of the grill, and hung on. As the train drew close to Emily, she rolled off the rail onto the roadbed, but she was still in danger of being hit by the train. So Mohr stretched out his leg and pushed her out of harm's way. Mohr then jumped off the train, picked up the little girl, and cradled her in his arms. Little Emily ended up with just a cut on her head and a swollen lip. Sometimes, like this train conductor, God must kick us in order to save us.

Charles Kimball

Hidden and Useful

F.B. Meyer saw in Elijah's time at Cherith "the great value of hidden life. . .Every saintly soul that would wield great power with people must win it in some hidden Cherith. WE cannot give out unless we have previously taken in." We don't like to be hidden though, do we? We often interpret it as being set aside, useless. But there is value in that hidden time. Even though we aren't on "active duty," God is still actively shaping our characters and preparing us for the next step in His plan." **F.B. Meyer, *Great Men of the Bible* (London, England: Marshall Pickering, 1990), p. 344**

1 Kings 17:1-7

Elijah, who was from Tishbe but had settled in Gilead, said to Ahab, "I solemnly swear, as the Lord God of Israel whom I serve lives, there will be no dew or rain during the next few years unless I say so." ²Then the Lord spoke his word to Elijah: ³"Leave here, turn east, and hide beside the Cherith River, which is east of the Jordan River. ⁴You can drink from the stream, and I've commanded ravens to feed you there." ⁵Elijah left and did what the word of the Lord had told him. He went to live by the Cherith River, which is east of the Jordan River. ⁶Ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening. And he drank from the stream. ⁷But after some time the stream dried up because no rain had fallen in the land. [GW]