

1 Kings 19:9-18

February 12, 2023



SCRIPTURE

⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹¹ The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴ He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹⁵ The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷ Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸ Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

COMMENTARY

19:9. God, who had spoken to Moses and Israel at Horeb centuries before, spoke to Elijah. He asked Elijah what he was doing at Horeb. While we might think God spoke to Elijah in a stern, accusing manner, He probably did not. God knew what Elijah had been



through. Out of His great compassion, God encouraged Elijah to tell Him exactly what he was thinking. Of course, God knew.

19:10. Elijah held nothing back. He told the Lord he had been very zealous for Him. By contrast, the Israelites had rejected God's covenant, destroyed altars dedicated to the worship of God, and killed God's prophets. Elijah thought he alone remained of all God's prophets, and Jezebel had turned her full attention to killing him too. As Elijah reflected on his ministry, he could see nothing but a great investment of time and commitment for God that had produced little results.

19:11-13. God first reveals His presence to Elijah in His greatness and power, but He did not speak from that position. The Lord instead spoke to Elijah in a soft whisper, showing Himself to be a God who communicates via a still, small voice as well as powerful displays.

19:15-16. God's commands first pointed to judgment. Elijah was to anoint Hazael as king over Aram, Jehu as king of Israel, and Elisha as his own successor. God was still controlling events.

19:17. This command indicated the extent of God's judgment—death at the hands of Hazael, death at the hands of Jehu, and death even at the hands of Elisha through His pronouncements of judgment.

19:18. The second part of God's response gave hope. God still had 7,000 people through whom He could work in the future

MAIN POINT

To walk with God is to hear and obey God's voice.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What comes to mind when you think of hearing the voice of God?

What do you do to help you hear the voice of God in your life?

We are bombarded daily with advice, tips, and life hacks, but we probably don't act on most of them. And often one piece of advice contradicts the next one. We are constantly learning to listen to the right voices. But just because we hear the right voice doesn't mean the words make a difference; we must act on what we hear. We will hear no greater word than what God says to us, but we must learn to act on what He says. In



1Kings 19, Elijah did just that. We see in his life that to walk with God, we must obey His voice.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 KINGS 19:9-14.

Why do you think God asked Elijah, “What are you doing here?”(v. 13)

Elijah collapsed into an almost hysterical pessimism about what he took to be the failure of God’s purposes. Elijah hoped the victory at Mount Carmel would end Baal worship in Israel, but it didn’t. In fact, Elijah’s great victory didn’t end in earthly affirmation at all—he was alone, and people were hunting him down to kill him. In verses 5-8, after Elijah ate and rested, he returned to the place where the covenant had been given, Mount Horeb, or Sinai. There, Elijah would have his personal faith renewed by God’s presence.

Look again at verses 10-14. God asked Elijah essentially the same question twice, but what do you think might have been different about Elijah’s responses?

Could God have spoken to Elijah in the wind, earthquake, and fire? Why do you think He didn’t? What is significant about the fact that the Lord could not be found in the earthquake or in the fire but in a “soft whisper” (v. 12)?

What does the Lord’s response to Elijah reveal about His nature?

God first revealed His presence to Elijah in His greatness and power, but God did not speak from that position (see vv. 11-13). The Lord instead spoke to Elijah in a soft whisper, showing Himself to be a God who communicates via a still, small voice as well as powerful displays.

How does God’s whisper in chapter 19 contrast with His powerful display against the Baals in chapter 18?

Why do you think Elijah needed to hear through a whisper rather than signs and wonders in this circumstance?

When have you had a hard time hearing from God? What do you think causes that?

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO 1 KINGS 19:15-18.



How do you think Elijah felt as he heard God's voice assigning him a task? How would that experience have reassured Elijah?

What important lesson do you think Elijah learned about how God speaks to people? What have you learned?

God's words to Elijah reminded him of his call to serve as God's prophet, and they also reminded him of God's sovereign control over the events of Elijah's life. The second part of God's response gave hope. God still had seven thousand people through whom He could work in the future.

In today's passage, God confronted Elijah and reminded him of the truth of God's sovereign control over His world. How has God spoken in your life and confronted you with that truth in a difficult season?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is a situation where you'd like God to show up in a big way? Is it possible He wants you to hear Him in a gentle whisper instead? How might this change the way you are listening for Him?

What habit could you cultivate to be more attuned to hearing God's voice?

How can our group seek to not only cultivate the habit of listening for God's voice but also showing obedience to what He says?

How has God already shown Himself to you in the grandest gesture of all? Why is that enough? How do you need to respond to the grand gesture of Jesus going to the cross to die for your sins?

PRAYER

Ask God to give you discernment in hearing His voice over all the other voices clamoring for your attention. Ask God for boldness and willing ears to listen and follow Him wholeheartedly.

