

10. Made Over.

Bloodlines – Series

Ps. Waweru Njemga – 12th November 2017

Sermon Notes



QOD: The holidays are here, so travel is bound to be happening. What do you normally enjoy the most, the journey or getting to your destination? Why?

Today we will talk about “Elijah”. As we’ve ended the Simama experience, I think it’s important to put into context why we encourage you to get on the discipleship journey. Because our God is a god of both. **The journey and the destiny** for each of us.

I Kings, chapter 17

Let me give you the context of the time period that we are studying. When Elijah was alive, the Northern Kingdom had experienced some nineteen consecutive evil kings, spanning about a two hundred year time period. Now, let me just let this sink in for a minute. Imagine, if you will, not just nineteen ineffective leaders, but imagine nineteen consecutive evil leaders. This was a time in which Elijah lived. In fact, there was a very evil king named Ahab, who was married to a wicked woman named Jezebel, some say the wicked woman who had ever lived. And under their reign, the Bible says that Ahab did more evil in the eyes of God than any of those before him. Now, during these times of idolatry, when these evil kings would turn peoples’ hearts away from the **God of Abraham**, Isaac, and Jacob, they would turn them to the false gods, the god of **Baal and the god of Asherah**, and people would often sacrifice their children to these false gods. They would go into the temples and engage in sexual activities with prostitutes and call it worship, and things that are even too gross to describe. And scripture says under Ahab’s reign, he was more evil than anyone before him. So, this is a very dark, dark time of corruption. We’re talking about major scandals, tremendous idol worship, and God said, “Enough is enough!” Interestingly, though, God didn’t raise up an army to take a stand against the evil king. **Instead, God does what God often does, and that is, He raised up one person to take a stand, one man.**

And I would argue that in today’s world, God may want to do something very similar where you live. God may raise up one teenage girl to take a stand in her class against all others for sexual purity. God may raise up a young business leader to take a stand for integrity in a business that’s lacking integrity. God may raise up one person to go into politics to take a stand for that which is true. **God often raises up one person to make a big difference.**

So today, to make a foundational understanding of who Elijah is, I want to call this talk “The make over,” So, let’s start with an understanding of what does the name Elijah mean? What does the name Elijah mean? Very literally, the name alone means “the Lord is Jehovah. My God is Jehovah. The Lord is my God.” And so immediately, when God raises up this prophet to stand down the king, by his very name alone, he’s making the testimony, **“The Lord God is the one true God.”**

My God is Jehovah, and he stands down the king, who had turned so many against the one true God. Let’s pick up the story. The first time we see Elijah in all of scripture, verse 1 of I Kings, chapter 17. At the very beginning of this story, we don’t have hardly any background on the prophet. We simply know him as where he’s from. That’s how he is identified. Verse 1, “Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead,” he’s identified with where he’s from. That will change soon. “He said to King Ahab, ‘As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve,’ “and you can see he’s going straight toward these false gods. “The Lord who lives, whom I serve,” he says, “there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.” Now, if this was a movie, the music would just go, “boom!” because what just said was one of the most strategic, prophetic judgments against the land that you could imagine. He said, **“For the next months and years, no rain and no dew.”**

Now, to put that into context, we have a lot of people talking today about we are in a global economic slowdown, okay? This would have been an economic shutdown. In this agriculturally driven economy, no rain shut everything down. In our world, it would mean you can’t get fuel, the banks are not releasing any money. You won’t have electricity at your home. Life as you know it just ended. There will be people starving to death. Unemployment will reach fifty, sixty, and seventy, eighty percent. People are going to be dying all over the place, and so this man of God stands down this evil king and says, “No more rain.”

It takes Tremendous faith to do so. The battle is on. The man of God stands strong. Let's see him fight." But instead, God does something that is a little bit different. He takes Elijah into a season of hiding. God goes and takes Elijah away, **so He can do so much more in him.** Why? Because there's so much more God wants to do through him. And we are going to watch as God shapes this man in a very deep season of preparation, almost as if God's saying, **"There's so much more I need to do in you, because there's so much more I want to do through you."**

Some of you might identify with the seasons God is taking him through as he remakes him.

- a. **A Season of isolated pain,** where he is very alone. He's got no one else to call out to, and he's, he's hurting very, very privately in a season of hiding. Verses 2 and 3, we pick this up. Verse 1, he says, "No more rain." Verse 2, "Then," immediately after that, the Bible says, "The word of the LORD came to Elijah: 'Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of Jordan.' Now, this word in the Hebrew, Kerith, means "cut off," or it means "cut down." It means to be cut off from the source, to be cut off from the blessings, or very literally, it means to cut down like you would chop down a tree. And you could almost sense what God is, is saying here. It's as if God is going to say, "I'm going to take you through a season of breaking. I'm going to cut you down. **I'm going to humble you.** I'm going to teach you to be totally dependent on Me, and **I'm going to humble you privately before I use you publicly.** I'm going to do something in you that's very, very deep, so later on, you can do more than you ever thought possible. I'm going to take you down privately, so I can use you publicly." A lot of times, people are in what I call the Kerith Ravine. **They're in a season of pain.** They're going, "Where is God? Where is God?" and the reality is, often times God is right there doing a deep work in you. It's a little bit like the little bird that was flying south for the winter got off to a late start, and so he got caught in a snowstorm. And the snow and sleet was so fierce that it got on his little wings and they started to freeze, and all of a sudden, he came in for a crash landing. And little birdie was just being pelted, and he was so cold he realized his wings were frozen, and he couldn't fly, and they were just being covered. He just resigned to this horrible death and said, "This is the worst thing ever!" The little birdie, "I'm going to freeze to death." All of a sudden, a cow came along, stood on top of the little birdie, and dumped on him. That is the gross part of the story, in case you are wondering. Just a load of manure falls on the little bird, and bird says, "Ah, I thought it was bad. I was going to freeze to death. Now, I'm under this manure. It's the worst thing ever," and all of a sudden, the warmth of the manure started to cause his little frozen body to thaw out, and he started to be a little, shake his little wings. You know, "I may live. I may live," and he was so excited he started to chirp with joy. "Chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp. Chirp. Chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp." And all of a sudden, one of Satan's leading creatures, a cat, okay, showed up, heard the chirping, ate and killed the bird! That's the sad part of the story, in case you are wondering. **Three lessons from the story:** Lesson number one, everyone who drops manure on you is not your enemy. Lesson number two, everyone who digs you out is not necessarily your friend. And lesson number three, when you're in manure, keep your big mouth shut. Okay?!

Some of you right now, you, you would say, "Man, I'm living in the Karith Ravine. I'm, I'm there. I'm being broken. It's like I'm being cut down. Those things that I used to depend on, I no longer can depend on. I'm in the Karith Ravine," and God may say, "No, you've got to understand. I'm doing something in you. There's a preparatory work going on. I'm teaching you something that you couldn't learn any other way. I'm doing this work in you, so I can do more through you." Sometimes, people will ask, you know, "how are you able to do what you are able to do today?" And you could say it this way, "You've got to understand. I've been through the Karith Ravine. I, I've been through enough, where God was cutting and chipping and humbling and breaking. He did something in me in that isolated pain, when no one really understood or knew." Some of you, you're there. You're there, and you could be there on purpose. Elijah was there for months, all alone, nobody to talk to. No one understood the Karith Ravine, where God was breaking him.

A. W. Tozer, the great writer said, **"It's doubtful that God can bless a man greatly until He's hurt him deeply. It's doubtful that God can bless a man greatly until He's hurt him deeply."** So, those of you who are in the Karith Ravine, be encouraged. The more that God breaks you, the more that God is preparing you — the isolated pain, the season of the Karith Ravine.

- b. **A season of total and complete dependence**, where Elijah cannot depend on anything at all but God, and God alone. Verses 4, 5, and 6 says this. God says, "Elijah, you will drink from the brook that I have ordered the ravens to feed you there. So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of Jordan, and stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook." *First thing, those of you who are against meat and are all vegetarians, God brought him meat!* Praise be to God in Heaven and on High. So, here we see Elijah's all by himself, and God does this cocky miracle. In the middle of a draught, there's no water at all, and this brook comes up. In the middle of the draught, no rain, there's this brook that he gets to drink from. Then, we've got God's Heavenly catering service. These birds go out and find bread and meat, and every morning and every evening, they deliver them straight to the prophet. What was God doing? God was very clearly and very distinctly saying that no matter what, and for always, **"I will be faithful. You can count on Me to provide for you."**

Many of us right now, are in a season where there was something you used to trust in for your security, and it's been taken away. And you don't have anything else to trust in, but the giver life and giver of all good things. And you are having to learn that when everything else that you used to believe in fades away, **God will forever and always be faithful to you.**

A single mom knew this well. She would pray everyday, very loudly in her apartment. She would pray to God and worship Him for His provision, and she lived next door to an atheist, who hated hearing her prayers through the very thin walls. And she would worship God, and the atheist would come over and say, "Lady, you're a fool. There is no God." And one week, there was more month left than money, and she was crying out to God, "Oh, God, You've always provided for me. You've always been faithful. I know you'll come through again. Oh, God, please provide food for my children." And the atheist had had enough, and so he immediately went to the grocery store, bought several bags of food, brought it back over to the woman's apartment, put it right on the front of her door, knocked on the door, ran and hid in his apartment. She came out. She saw the food, "Oh, God in Heaven, You're so good. Thank You so much. Oh, it's so amazing!" And he jumped out and said, "You fool! There is no God. God didn't do that. I did it just to prove to you that there is no God," and she worshipped God all the more. "Thank You! Oh, God, You provided for my needs, and You made the devil pay the bills!"

Forever and always, God says, "I will be your provider. When you can't depend on what you used to be able to depend on, I will deliver what you need." Here's the cool thing about it is, God didn't give him two days worth of food. God didn't give him a weeks worth of food. God didn't give him a three-month supply. What did God give him? **Enough for the day, enough for the day.** Some of you, you are going to learn that right now. You are in a season where you're hurting and you're alone and you're afraid, but guess what? God delivers enough for the day. **You, you're uncomfortable, and you're afraid, but God says, "I will be your comfort for today."** You don't have much, but God says, "I will be your provision for today. You feel very weak, but God says, "I will be your strength for today." Your friends leave you, but God says, "I will be your friend for the day. I may not bring more than you need, but I will bring exactly what you need. I will be your daily bread." And Elijah learns to depend on God for that day. God is teaching him. He's breaking him. He's cutting him. He's humbling him. He's teaching him total dependence. When he, when he has no ability to provide for himself, God is teaching him, **"I will always be your provider."**

- c. **A season of unconditional obedience.** **There's isolated pain. There's total dependence, and then, there's a season of unconditional obedience.** Verses 7, 8, and 9, the story starts to break down. "What is God doing? He told me to go do this, and now, it, it's all changing. What's going on, God?" Verse 7, the Bible says, "Sometime later, the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the LORD came to him: "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there." Now, let's put ourselves in the prophet's place. It's been months that he's been by this ravine, and it's been feeding him daily water. And God told him to go there, and then the brook dries up, and God says to move on. In my mind, I'm starting to think, "Okay, God, where are you? What's the purpose of being here? You, you gave me water from the brook. Now, the water dries up. Did I do something wrong? You're telling me to go on. Did I miss you the first time? Am I hearing You, God? I don't quite understand. The brook dried up. Why would the source of what used to feed me dry up?" And he's going to learn that the same God who gives water can take water away, because often, God may cause the brook to dry up to give us the courage to leave where we are and to go where we are supposed to be. Some of you right now, you may be going, "Oh, my God. My brook is drying up. I used to be able to trust in my job, but I'm not so sure I can trust in my

job, anymore. My brook's drying up. I used to be able to trust, and I had all these good friends and then, boom, they turned on me and my friendship brook is drying up. I used to believe that I had a good marriage that would last a long time, but oh my gosh. It seems like the brook in my marriage is, is drying up. I used to be really like close to God, and it, it's like the brook's drying up." A lot of times, people will say this. They'll say, "God guides by what He provides," and, and He does. Preachers will say, you know, "Where there is vision, God gives the provision," and God will often guide by what He provides. **But, I believe with all my heart, God also often guides by what He does not provide.** God, the same God who gives water, may cause the brook to dry up to give us the courage to take a step of total obedience. He will guide often by what He doesn't provide. The brook dried up, and it gave Elijah the courage to be obedient, even when it didn't make sense. God said, "Go to Zerephath." "Well, but, but I'm not sure the brook ... I don't understand. God, I don't understand what you're saying."

(Karate Kid example) God says to the prophet Elijah, "Go to the Karith Ravine." "Huh? What's that?" "And be fed by the ravens." "What?" And the brook dried up. "Huh?" And, and, and God causes him to go into this new place. You need to read it all sometime, all the way through the end of I Kings 17. He moves, and then he travels to this place, maybe a hundred miles or so, across a barren land. And he comes and sees this widow, who God says is going to provide for him. And so he humbles himself, and he says, "Madam, I'm really thirsty. Could, could you give me some water to drink and maybe a little snack, 'because I'm kind of hungry?" And the widow looks at him and goes, "Are you, are you the only guy that doesn't know, it hasn't rained! We're dying. There's a draught here. I'm a widow. I've got one son. He's back at the hut. I came out here to get some sticks. I'm going to go make the last meal. I've got a little bit of flour left, and I've got a little oil in the jug. That's all I've got left, enough for one last meal. We are going to eat, and then we are going to die." And because of what God is doing in Elijah's life, he says, "No, you're not." And he looks at an impossible situation and speaks faith into it. And he says, "The flour that you have will not run out. And the jar of oil will not run dry. Go back and bake me some biscuits." And she does, and they ate the biscuits, and the flour did not run out and the oil did not run dry. And they ate for weeks and months. God again, supernaturally provided for Elijah in his unconditional obedience to God. Then one day, tragedy struck, and the son died mysteriously. Momma freaked out, as you would expect, and said, "Is this God's judgment on me because I turned against the one true god, to these false gods? Elijah, did you come here so this would happen?" **And Elijah, because of all that had happened, because God was shaping him, did something that to our knowledge had never happened before in history.** There's no record of this in the Bible. He takes a dead boy, carries him up to the upper room, puts his body on top of him, looks up to Heaven and says, "God, I think you could heal this guy. I'm asking You to do it," and God raises a dead boy to life.

Why did this happen? Because God took him to the Karith Ravine, where he was cut down. God took him to a season of total dependence, where he couldn't depend on anything at all but God, and God alone. Then, God dried up the brook, so that he would leave where he was, to go to where God ultimately wanted him, so once again, He could perform a miracle and raise the dead back to life. **God used the horrible things to shape him into a true man of God.** Why could Elijah have such faith? **Because he had been through the Karith Ravine.**

Some of you right now, you are in a season of, of deep pain, and God may just say, "I'm doing something in you, because one day, I'm going to do more through you." Verse 1, Elijah was described as Elijah the Tishbite. He was known with where's he's from. Twenty-three verses later, he's not known for where he's from, but instead, for whom he's from. And look at how the story changes. Verse 24, the end of the story. "The woman of God, He'd just raised her son. She, she says to Elijah, "Wow! Now I know that you are a," what? "Now I know you are, you are a man of God and the word of the Lord from your mouth is truth." God may allow you to go through the Karith Ravine, so one day, someone could look at you, say, "Now, I know. I see it. I see it. I see. Wow! You are a woman of God. Now, I see it. You are child of God. Now, I see it. You are a man of God." And, I'll tell you right now, I praise God for all the pain and all the shaping experienced, and all the hurt, and all the brokenness, and all the supernatural provision, and all the unconditional obedience, because I pray that when people look at me today they wouldn't say, "Oh, yeah, there's Wa that guy from Nairobi." But instead, they say, "Oh, there's Wa. He's not perfect, but we know he is a man of God." **In The making of a man or a woman of God, they often go through the Karith Ravine, so God can do in them what He wants to do before He does more through them.**

Prayer (Ministry/Singers up)

“Would you do a supernatural work in all of us, God, especially those today that really are in a season of hurt and pain? God, we call out to you.”

- a. Those in the ravine of hurt and difficult. Learning to trust God, those needing to make a bold move of faith, May God meet you day by day.
- b. Those who have nowhere to turn to, except Jesus. Your circumstances are pointing to Him only. Turn your eyes towards him.
- c. Those without Jesus. Salvation prayer.