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# First Baptist Dyersburg • Sermon Notes

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## Elijah and the Contest on Mt. Carmel

Message #4 in the series

### *Lessons from People Like Us*

Sunday, June 7, 2026 • Mike Hickman, Senior Pastor

<sup>16</sup> So Obadiah went to tell Ahab that Elijah had come, and Ahab went out to meet Elijah. <sup>17</sup> When Ahab saw him, he exclaimed, “So, is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?”

<sup>18</sup> “I have made no trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “You and your family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the LORD and have worshiped the images of Baal instead. <sup>19</sup> Now summon all Israel to join me at Mount Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who are supported by Jezebel.”

<sup>20</sup> So Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup> Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, “How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!” But the people were completely silent.

<sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only prophet of the LORD who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets. <sup>23</sup> Now bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the altar, but not set fire to it. <sup>24</sup> Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by setting fire to the wood is the true God!” And all the people agreed.

<sup>25</sup> Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls, and prepare it and call on the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood.”

<sup>26</sup> So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning until noontime, shouting, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no reply of any kind. Then they danced, hobbling around the altar they had made.

<sup>27</sup> About noontime Elijah began mocking them. “You’ll have to shout louder,” he scoffed, “for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is daydreaming, or is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened!”

<sup>28</sup> So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. <sup>29</sup> They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no sound, no reply, no response.

<sup>30</sup> Then Elijah called to the people, “Come over here!” They all crowded around him as he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn down. <sup>31</sup> He took twelve stones, one to represent each of the tribes

of Israel, <sup>32</sup> and he used the stones to rebuild the altar in the name of the LORD. Then he dug a trench around the altar large enough to hold about three gallons. <sup>33</sup> He piled wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood.

Then he said, "Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water over the offering and the wood."

<sup>34</sup> After they had done this, he said, "Do the same thing again!" And when they were finished, he said, "Now do it a third time!" So they did as he said, <sup>35</sup> and the water ran around the altar and even filled the trench.

<sup>36</sup> At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. <sup>37</sup> O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself."

<sup>38</sup> Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! <sup>39</sup> And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, "The LORD—he is God! Yes, the LORD is God!"

<sup>40</sup> Then Elijah commanded, "Seize all the prophets of Baal. Don't let a single one escape!" So the people seized them all, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon Valley and killed them there. (1 Kings 18:16-40, NLT)

## **Two lessons we learn from this part of Elijah's story:**

- 1. Before Elijah asked God to show His power, he first made repairs to the altar. We, too, often need to make \_\_\_\_\_ to our own personal altar, which is found in our \_\_\_\_\_.**
- 2. As our heart begins to reflect the heart of God, we must learn to hate \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ it from our lives.**

What we do with God in private is far more important than what we do for God in public. Our hidden life prepares us for our public life. Unless we are willing to go through such disciplines as the dry

brook, the depleted barrel, and the dead boy, we will never have the victories of Mt. Carmel. (Warren Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, 1 Kings 18.)

<sup>9</sup>But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. <sup>10</sup>If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. (1 John 1:9-10, NLT)

<sup>9</sup>If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. (Romans 10:9-10, NLT)

<sup>10</sup>You who love the LORD, hate evil! He protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the power of the wicked. <sup>11</sup>Light shines on the godly, and joy on those whose hearts are right. (Psalm 97:10-11, NLT)

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Success can distract you as you seek to follow God's will. Elijah's primary assignment was to announce when a drought would begin and end (1 Kings 17:1). God had told him to proclaim to King Ahab that the drought was an act of judgment upon a people who worshiped idols rather than God. In the middle of Elijah's assignment, a spectacular thing happened. Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal and called fire down from heaven, putting hundreds of priests of Baal to death. This was one of the most awesome displays of God's power recorded in Scripture. Elijah could easily have focused strictly on that event. Fire falling from heaven is much more spectacular than a rainstorm!

When something spectacular happens, we can easily be sidetracked. If Elijah lived today, he might have begun a "Calling Down Fire from Heaven" ministry! The dramatic is far more appealing to us than obedience to the mundane. Destroying hundreds of Baals prophets would appear to be a climatic victory for any prophet of God. Yet Elijah persisted in his assignment. He announced the coming rain. This had been his primary message, and he delivered it.

If you aren't careful, you may become so distracted by the successes you experience that you never complete what God originally assigned you to do. Will your success today cause you to disobey tomorrow? (Henry Blackaby, *Experiencing God Day-by-Day*, April 22.)

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### *Elijah Prays for Rain*

<sup>41</sup> Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go get something to eat and drink, for I hear a mighty rainstorm coming!"

<sup>42</sup> So Ahab went to eat and drink. But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his face between his knees.

<sup>43</sup> Then he said to his servant, "Go and look out toward the sea."

The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, "I didn't see anything."

Seven times Elijah told him to go and look. <sup>44</sup> Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, "I saw a little cloud about the size of a man's hand rising from the sea."

Then Elijah shouted, "Hurry to Ahab and tell him, 'Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don't hurry, the rain will stop you!'"

<sup>45</sup> And soon the sky was black with clouds. A heavy wind brought a terrific rainstorm, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> Then the LORD gave special strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt and ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to the entrance of Jezreel. (1 Kings 1:41-46, NLT)

- **When we pray within God's \_\_\_\_\_ there is no \_\_\_\_\_ to the power of our prayer.**
- **Elijah was as \_\_\_\_\_ as we are, and yet his earnest prayer produced wonderful results – all through the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God!**

Elijah didn't pray so that people would think he was a great prophet or talk about his power. He didn't pray in order for his church to grow. He asked God to answer him so the people would know that the Lord was Yahweh, the Lord God. (Michael Catt, *The Gospel Project*)