

The Prophet Elijah
1 Kings 18:30-40
The LORD He is God!

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel shall be your name," ³² and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs of seed. ³³ And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." ³⁴ And he said, "Do it a second time." And they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time." And they did it a third time. ³⁵ And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water. ³⁶ And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. ³⁷ Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God." ⁴⁰ And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there. (1 Kings 18:30-40)

Introduction

- Last week we ended on **a bit of a Cliff Hanger**.
- We left **Elijah**, the prophets of **Baal** and the **People of Israel** all on Mount Carmel.
- **Elijah** had first **confronted** the people saying...

²¹ ... "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21)

- And then, seeking to convince limping (wavering) Israel, **that the LORD, not Baal is God...**
- **Elijah** challenged the **450 prophets** to a bullfight.

²³ Let two bulls be given to us, and let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood and put no fire to it. ²⁴ And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken." (1 Kings 18:23-24)

- Baal's prophets **accepted Elijah's Challenge**.
- And they spent all day crying out to their god, dancing around the altar,
- eventually even **cutting themselves**, begging Baal to send fire.

- But in the end...

²⁹ ...there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. (1 Kings 18:29)

- Baal was **deaf and dumb**, and he certainly **couldn't answer by fire**.
- The bull **that his prophets had prepared lay in pieces, rotting in the sun**.
- And the **silence on the mountain had its desired effect, Baal had proven to be no god at all**.
- Then it was Elijah's turn.
- It was time to see if **His God** would hear and answer **His prayer**.
- Thus, **proving to Isreal that The LORD (Yahweh) He is God!**
- But before the **proof and the prayer** came...

1. The Preparation

- Elijah's **preparation** began with an **invitation... Verse 30...**

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down. (1 Kings 18:30)

- Having made a mockery of the prophets of Baal, **Elijah's status among the people has grown**.
- Maybe they're beginning to believe, if Baal isn't God, then maybe Yahweh is.
- And so, like a father gathering his children,
- **the prophet invited God's people to come back to Him**.
- And as the **children of Israel** crowded around to **see what Elijah would do**,
- He gathered the stones of the **broken altar and rebuilt it**.
- This need to **repair the altar** gives a clear indication of **Israel's prior spiritual condition**.
- Apparently, sometime in the past **Isreal had worshiped Yahweh on this mountain**.
- But their altar had been **thrown down**.
- It **needed to be rebuilt** because **it was in ruins**.
- Their place of worship was in a shambles because the people of Isreal had turned from worshipping their true LORD, **to worshipping other false gods (like Baal)**.
- But **through Elijah** God would extend **his grace and mercy to His people. Verse 31...**

³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel shall be your name," ³² and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two seahs (Say-ahs) of seed. (1 Kings 18:31-32)

- Twelve stones for **twelve tribes** would have reminded the people **who they truly were**.
- **They were descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** whose name God changed to **Israel**
- They were part of **Israel, God's covenant people**.

- Elijah was gathering **the tribes of Israel** together at the altar of God.
- He was **calling them back** to the faith of their **fathers**,
- back to their covenant, and back to **biblical worship**.
- The Lord's prophet rebuilt the Lord's altar for the Lord's people

in the name of the Lord

- And notice also that Elijah **digs a trench around the altar**.
- The trench would **hold 2 seahs (say-ahs)** of seed which translates to **about 8 gallons of water**.
- This trench was not a normal part of altar design, **but its purpose would soon become clear**.
- And once the altar is prepared, **Elijah then prepares the sacrifice**.
- **Now last week** we saw that Elijah let the prophets of Baal choose their sacrificial bull first.
- He also allowed them to call on **their god** first, thus **giving them every advantage**.
- Now it's his turn, and he gives himself **a serious disadvantage, verse 33...**

33 And he put the wood in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood.

- Elijah prepared his sacrifice in a similar way to the prophets of Baal.
- **And that was all that was required**, but then he **took it to the next level**.

And he said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." 34 And he said, "Do it a second time." And they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time." And they did it a third time. 35 And the water ran around the altar and filled the trench also with water. (1 Kings 18:33-35)

- The prophets of Baal didn't put any water on their sacrifice (it wasn't required).
- And don't forget there was a drought in the land!
- So, what must the people have been thinking as they saw precious water being poured over the altar, the sacrificial offering and soaking into the wood.
- **Not once, not twice but three times.**
- So much water was used that the trench Elijah had dug around the altar was filled.
- **And why did he soak his sacrifice?**
- **Well**, the text doesn't explicitly say but it's pretty obvious.
- Elijah knew that **whenever God performed a miracle, there would be doubters**.
- **So**, he made it **as clear as possible** that only God **could start this fire**.
- He wanted Israel to have no doubt that **only a true God could light this sacrifice**.
- And as I mentioned last week, when Elijah gave the prophets of Baal every advantage...
- He did this because he knew that **their god** was nothing and **would not answer**.
- And in a similar way he could give himself the disadvantage of a drenched sacrifice,
- because his sure faith was in the all-mighty all-powerful God to whom a **wet bull meant nothing**.
- Elijah could take the **risk of soaking his sacrifice, because it was no risk at all**.

- And the same principle applies to us.
- If our faith is **in the all-mighty, all-powerful living God**, then no matter what “risks” He calls us to take (**like representing him in a godless culture**), they are no risks at all,
- Because as Jeremiah declares...

17 ‘Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. (Jeremiah 32:17)

- Consuming a drenched sacrifice **is not too hard for God**,
- and confronting a godless culture,
- or anything else God calls us to do, is not too hard for Him.
- **This** will shortly become very clear in Elijah’s life,
- and it will become clear in our lives, if we are willing to step out in faith,
- Trusting and obeying God to do Hard things through us.
- And so, with **the preparation** complete, **Elijah turns to...**

2. The Prayer

- **Verse 36...**

36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” (1 Kings 18:36-37)

- And that was it, that was Elijah’s prayer.
- Think about the difference between this prayer **by one prophet of God**,
- and **what we saw last week with the 450 prophets of Baal**.
- **Baal’s prophets** prayed for **at least 6 hours**,
- shouting at their god to wake-up, **with no answer**.
- Elijah prayed for less than a minute.
- **I timed it and Elijah’s prayer took me less than 30 seconds to read aloud**.
- The power of Elijah’s prayer (like all prayers) did not depend on **length, eloquence, or volume**.
- A prophet has **to pray long and loud** only if **his god is hard of hearing**.
- But Elijah’s God hears and answers.
- The power of his prayer did not lie in the prayer itself, **but in the God to whom he prayed**.
- Elijah prayed the way that Jesus, some 900 years later taught his disciples to pray...

7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matthew 6:7-8)

- Elijah's **prayer** stands in complete contrast to those of Baal's prophets.
- At first, the people **on Mount Carmel** must have been **very impressed** with the way **they prayed**.
- They prayed long, they...

²⁶ ...called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon,

- And they prayed loud, shouting...

"O Baal, answer us!" (1 Kings 18:26)

- Their prayers were **vigorous**; they moved (probably dancing) so intensely that eventually...

²⁶ ...they limped around the altar that they had made. 1 Kings 18:26

- Their prayers were personally costly...

And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them" (1 Kings 18:28)

- This was hardly a boring prayer meeting.
- All the shouting, movement and slashing **must have been very intense and exciting**.
- "How was the prayer time at Carmel?" **someone might have asked**.
- "It was awesome. **It went on for hours**."
- There was **this huge committed, exciting, worship team, Blood everywhere**.
- 450 prophets singing 'Come on, Baal, Light My Fire!'
- But it was all for nothing, because Baal was nothing.
- And the **methods** of these prophets reveal that they knew nothing of what the true God desires in prayer and worship.
- **Because God is not impressed with outward displays**.
- God judges by the heart,
- and what seems impressive from **the outside is often empty on the inside**.
- **Religious frenzy** is not necessarily a sign of **spiritual life**.
- God doesn't command **long services or loud prayers**.
- He certainly doesn't demand his worshipers **cut themselves**.
- This practice could have come **only from the devil**.
- Because nowhere in the Bible are God's people commanded to hurt themselves for God.
- **In fact**, God expressly prohibited his **people from cutting their bodies**:

¹ "You are the sons of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves..." (Deuteronomy 14:1)

- God's people belong to him in **body as well as in soul**.
- And he **does not require or desire** that we abuse ourselves for his pleasure.

- Instead, Jesus in **John 4:24** gives us a **beautiful summary** of what our God desires in worship...

24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)

- The point of our prayers, our worship is not what we do with **our bodies but with our spirits.**
- Our worship should come from **the spirit (the heart and soul)**
- **in connection with the Spirit of God.**
- And it must **be true, directed to the one true God.**
- Also, Paul reminded **the Corinthians that...**

33 ...God is not a God of confusion but of peace. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

- Elijah **prayed to and worshiped** the true God in **the simple, biblical way.**
- He offered a **proper sacrifice on a proper altar.**
- He did not whip himself into a **frenzy or wound himself.**
- Furthermore, Elijah offered his sacrifice at **the proper time of day.**
- **Last week** I made a mistake that I discovered this week.
- In **verse 29** we read...

29 And as midday passed, they (the prophets of Baal) raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. (1 Kings 18:29)

- I said that the prophets of Baal made **one final offering to get Baal to answer.**
- **But that was not the case.**
- The text says that the prophets of Baal worshiped until the time for the **oblation (evening sacrifice).**
- But Elijah **offered his sacrifice at the proper time,**

the time of the offering of the oblation

- This small detail shows the difference **between false worship and true worship.**
- The prophets of Baal **worshiped anyway they pleased,**
- but **Elijah worshiped the way God pleased.**
- He not only worshiped the **right God but also worshiped him the right way.**
- Theologians sometimes call the principle that governed Elijah's worship... **the “regulative principle.”**
- The **Westminster Confession of Faith** expresses this principle as follows:

The acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture. (Westminster Confession of Faith - 20.1)

- Christians sometimes disagree about how this **regulative principle** ought to be applied,
- **but the principle itself is valid.**
- Because God is the **one who receives our worship**,
- He alone has **the right to determine what kind of worship we must offer.**
- And The New Testament describes **corporate worship in the church.**
- **It involves prayer**, the **reading and preaching of the Word of God**,
- the **sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper**,
- **singing and the giving of offerings.**
- **We may be creative in the way we do these things**,
- but we are not to worship God in ways that he did not intend.
- **Elijah and his prayer were accepted by God because he worshiped in the way that was acceptable to God.**
- And the **same should be true of us!**
- So, we have seen the predation and the prayer, now we come to the climax...

3. The Proof

- Now remember **Elijah had a two-part strategy** for showing wavering Israel who the true God is.
- **First**, as we saw last week, he showed them that **Baal was nothing, a false god.**
- This was accomplished **by the silence on the mountain.**
- **Second**, he would prove to them who **the true God is.**
- And remember **his preparation involved soaking his offering three times.**
- Then he **offered a simple yet proper prayer...** and in verse 38 we read the LORD's answer.

³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. (1 Kings 18:38)

- No bull. No wood. No stones. No dust. No water. Nothing was left.
- This was not merely a fire, but **a raging, intense, sweeping blaze of glory!**
- The fire of **the Lord God Almighty** came down from heaven and consumed everything.
- And this proved the deity (the **Godness**) of the **Lord God of Israel.**

²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire.... (Deuteronomy 4:24)

- He is the God **who sent fire and brimstone** upon **Sodom and Gomorrah** (Gen. 19:24),
- who appeared to **Moses in the burning bush** (Ex. 3),
- who led the children of Israel with **a fiery pillar by night** (Ex. 13:21),
- who **consumed the burnt offering on Aaron's altar** (Lev. 9:24),
- who destroyed **Nadab and Abihu with flames** when they offered unauthorized fire (Lev. 10:1-2),
- and who sent fire from **heaven when Solomon dedicated the temple** (2 Chron. 7:1).
- He is the **same God** who answered Elijah's prayer and defeated **Baal on Mount Carmel with fire from heaven.**

- And at least **one thing this shows** is that **God is his own proof.**
- Only God can **prove his own existence.**
- Elijah helped to disprove Baal, **but he did not really prove God at all.**
- **He made the challenge; he set up the circumstances BUT God proved himself!**
- The same thing is true whenever **we share the good news** about Jesus Christ.
- We can challenge people; we can set up circumstances.
- We may even sometimes disprove the false gods of this world.
- If we can **show the inconsistency and contradictions** of any non-Christian worldview.
- **But we cannot prove God to an unbeliever.**
- When we speak to people about our faith in Jesus Christ,
- we can offer many **persuasive arguments in defense of biblical truth.**
- We can talk about **how the whole universe** gives abundant evidence of **intelligent design.**
- We can talk about the **reliability of the Bible** and how the science of archaeology confirms the truth of biblical history.
- We can talk about the **historical evidence for Jesus Christ** and how the four Gospels give independent testimonies of his life, death, and resurrection.
- We can give many persuasive and convincing **arguments for the truth of Christianity.**
- **But only God can prove himself.**
- Believing in the one true God of the Bible, not just believing in some vague divine being,
- **is a spiritual matter.**
- Only God can change an unbeliever's mind and heart.
- Only God can bring a sinner to saving faith.
- This is really what Elijah prayed for on **Mount Carmel...**

³⁷ ...that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." (1 Kings 18:37)

- The fire from heaven **was not simply a sign of God's power,**
- but a means **of spiritual grace** that brought **regeneration to the people of God.**
- **So, if it's God's job to prove himself and to bring salvation, then what's our job.**
- **Well, our job is to do what Elijah did.**
- We're to identify the idols, the wrong beliefs of our culture or of an individual,
- Seeing what they are trusting in besides God,
- and then we confront people with the choice between **the one true God and their false gods.**
- Then we pray, because only God can **change a sinner's mind or heart.**
- It's ours to **speak and to pray** but **God's to convert. As Jesus said...**

⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him... (John 6:44)

- And how does God do this? How does he prove himself?
- **How does he draw people to Jesus?**
- Or we could ask, what **means** does God use to **impart grace** and bring salvation.
- Well, we've already seen that for the children of Israel in Elijah's day he did it with fire from heaven.
- For the apostle Paul he did it through an encounter with Jesus on the Road to Damascus.
- For Doubting Thomas, he did it through the appearance of **the resurrected LORD**.
- But what about our day, what does God use as means to **impart grace and salvation**.
- Each one of us **has a story of how** we came to believe in the one true God of the Bible,
- and then trust in his Son Jesus Christ for our salvation.
- For me it began **by seeing my parents' conversion**.
- It may not have been **fire from heaven** but seeing how dramatically their lives changed made it clear to me that **God was real** and it put me on the path to faith in Jesus Christ.
- For others it might simply be hearing the truth of God's word, hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- For Paul wrote...

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

- Last Thursday in our Bible study, as we shared our testimonies,
- Hearing His seemed to be the main way God proved himself and brought us to faith.
- For others it might be observing **the miracle of creation** that puts them on the path to seeking the creator. **For as the Psalmist wrote...**

1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (Psalms 19:1)

- And even in post Biblical days, as he did in the days of Elijah...
- God has (at times) proven himself in dramatic, miraculous, confrontational fashion...
- Let me share a more modern story with you. It's a bit long but I think it makes the point..
- In his book **Sit, Walk, Stand**.
- **The Chinese Christian Watchman Nee** offers an account of the way God once proved himself.
- Sometime before the outbreak of World War II,
- Watchman Nee led an evangelistic **mission to an island south of the Chinese mainland**.
- **Six of the evangelists** were veteran missionaries,
- but they also brought with them **young brother Wu**.
- After days of vigorous preaching without any apparent success,
- Wu was so frustrated that he asked, **"Why is it that none of you will believe?"**
- The people answered, "We have a god—one god—**Ta-wang**, and he has never failed us."

- “How do you know that you can trust him?” asked Wu.
- The people explained: “We have held his festival procession every January for 286 years.
- The chosen day is **revealed by divination beforehand,**
- **and every year without fail his day is a perfect one without rain or cloud.”**
- “And when is **the procession this year?**” asked Wu.
- “It is fixed for **January 11** at eight in the morning.”
- “Then,” announced Wu **audaciously**, “I promise you that it will certainly rain on the 11th.”
- They cried out, “That is enough! No more preaching!
- If there is rain on the eleventh, **then your God is God.”**
- Then Wu went to tell the other missionaries what he had done.
- **He had laid down a challenge like the challenge Elijah gave to Israel.**
- Wu’s challenge may have been impetuous, **it may have been reckless**, it may have been risky,
- it may have made the other evangelists more than a little nervous,
- but by the time the other missionaries heard what their brother had said,
- **it was too late to do anything about it.**
- Just as in Elijah’s day, the news quickly spread throughout the land.
- What would the Christians do?
- They did not doubt that **Ta-wang** was capable of **providing fair weather.**
- Either through **demonic influence** or through **the ability of the local fishermen** to predict the weather, it had not rained on the festival day for nearly three centuries.
- Yet they began to pray, trusting that **the God of Elijah** was with them.
- They did not pray desperately, but confidently,
- resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ and in his power over sin and death.
- Here is how Watchman Nee describes the **events of January 11:**
- I was awakened by the direct rays of the sun through the single window of our attic.
- “This isn’t rain!” I said. It was already past seven o’clock.
- I got up, knelt down and prayed.
- “Lord,” I said, “please send the rain!” . . . **I walked downstairs before God in silence.**
- We sat down to breakfast—eight of us together, including our host—all very quiet.
- There was no cloud in the sky, but we knew God was committed.
- As we bowed to say grace before the food I said, “I think the time is up. Rain must come now.
- We can bring it to the Lord’s remembrance.”
- Even before the evangelists pronounced the “Amen” at the end of their prayer,
- They could hear a few drops of rain pitter-patter on the tiles.
- As they ate their rice, the drops became a steady shower.
- As they began to have seconds, they asked God for a heavier downpour,
- and the rain came down in buckets. **By the time they had finished breakfast,**
- The streets were flooded and **the bottom three steps** of the house were covered with water.

- **Later the missionaries heard what had happened in the village.**
- As the rain began, some of the younger men began to say:
- **“There is God; there is no more Ta-wang! He is kept in by the rain.”**
- But Ta-wang was a portable idol,
- so, the older men carried him out on a litter to begin the festival procession.
- As soon as they brought their god outside, the downpour increased.
- The men who were bearing the litter slipped and fell,
- whereupon Ta-wang tumbled from his chair, breaking his jaw and his left arm.
- But he could still be repaired, so they patched him together and brought him outside again,
- until the rain came down so hard that they could not see and the mud grew so thick that they could not walk.
- **God proved himself, defeating Ta-wang as easily as he defeated Baal.**
- God proves himself when his people pray.
- He does not always prove himself in **miraculous ways, of course**, but he does prove himself.
- If God has not yet proved himself to **people you know and love**.
- Then you should do as Elijah did...
- Seek opportunities to lovingly confront their false beliefs, **their false Gods, share the gospel of Jesus Christ.**
- And then pray **that God in his grace would prove himself to them.**

Lord make yourself known, make yourself real to my father, my mother, my brother, my sister, my child, my grandchild, my friend, my coworker, my neighbor, turn their heart so you O LORD.

- This should be our daily prayer for those who like Isreal are following other gods, other religions, other philosophies, **instead of following the One True God.**
- And know this, the God of Elijah, Our GOD, loves to hear and to answer the prayers we offer for hearts **to turn to or back to him.**
- So, God has proven himself to Isreal in a miraculous way, but that's not the end of the story.
- After the preparation, the prayer and the proof came...

4. The Prostration

- **“Prostration”** means **falling down flat on one's face**, like taking cover from gunfire.
- And this is exactly what happened to the Israelites **when the fire came down from heaven:**

³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.” (1 Kings 18:39)

- This was real worship, **not the worship of yelling and shouting**, of slashing and bleeding,
- but the worship of total **prostration** before the awesome majesty of God.
- Truly, this was worship in **spirit and in truth.**

- It was **worship in spirit** because the posture of prostration **demonstrates absolute reverence in the presence of God.**
- When the Lord reveals himself in the fire on the mountain,
- The only **appropriate response is to fall flat on one's face.**
- **It was also worship in truth,**
- because the words that were coming from the people's mouths **were absolutely true.**
- At the beginning of the **confrontation between Baal and the Lord,**
- the people of Israel didn't know what to say.
- Back when they were limping between two opinions, we heard the silence of their doubt.
- But now they'd found their voices:

The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.

- No false god could ever be worshiped like this!
- The worship of the people of Israel was no longer **man-centered like Baal worship;**
- This is what I must do to get Baal to respond to me!
- Now they were totally absorbed in the **Godness of God.**
- It must have been wonderful to be on Mount Carmel, **to lie in the dust shouting,**
- **"The LORD, he is God" "The LORD, he is God"**
- We should have such worship.
- We don't need to see the fire on the mountain to experience the **Godness of God** in our worship.
- If there is **little passion** in our worship,
- It's not because we don't have **enough dancing and shouting and frenzy.**
- If there is **little awe** in our worship,
- it is not because we do not have **swords and spears and blood.**
- It's because we don't have a true sense of the weightiness, the holiness, **and the majesty of Almighty God.**
- In his book **The Knowledge of the Holy**, A. W. Tozer writes...

With our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine Presence. We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence. Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit. (A. W. Tozer)

- We have lost a sense of **the weightiness of the majesty of God,**
- not only in **our worship, but in our whole lives.**
- The problem does not lie with God; it lies with us.
- **We are too much like the prophets of Baal.**
- We mistake the **external forms of worship** for the reality of the presence of Almighty God.

- At the same time, **we are too much like the people of Israel.**
- We **limp between two opinions, worshiping with divided affections.**
- With one foot we step into the house of the Lord,
- but we have left one foot somewhere out in the **world.**
- If we want to recapture a sense of the **awesomeness of God,**
- we need to do what the people of **Israel did after they got up and dusted themselves off.**
- They didn't remain prostrate for long, for Elijah compelled them to **put an end to their wavering.**

40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there. (1 Kings 18:40)

- **This may seem harsh to some,** but it was done in **obedience to God's Law.**
- Throughout the **Law the worst punishment** is given to those **who follow other Gods.**
- In **Deut 13**, we read of God's judgment on entire cities if they are led into following other gods...

15 you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. (Deuteronomy 13:15)

- And so, it was a mark of God's grace and mercy that he hadn't already wiped out Israel for following Baal.
- But those who pushed Israel into idolatry would not receive his mercy.
- **Idoltrous leaders pose the greatest spiritual danger to the people of God.**
- If the Israelites were **to stop wavering between two religious opinions,**
- they needed to put Baal worship to death once and for all **and prostrate themselves before God and God alone.**
- **And the same thing should be true for us!**
- **NOW the Lord hasn't placed the same sword into our hands.**
- Our weapons and our warfare are spiritual, not physical.
- But we **must put our idols, our flesh, our own sins to death.**
- And frankly, most Christians don't know how to do this very well.
- We're not **harsh or ruthless enough with our sins.**
- This is why we **waver between two opinions,**
- and why we don't have a proper appreciation of the **weightiness of God in our worship.**
- **Do not waver between two opinions any longer!**
- Instead, acknowledge the lordship of Jesus the way that Thomas did when the risen Christ appeared to him and Thomas said,

28 ... "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)

- We are called to take the **false gods that are hiding in our hearts,**
- the idols, the sin that **we indulge in** and put them all to death.

- As Paul wrote...

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:13)

- And so, we need to be harsh with our sins.
- We need to stop thinking we can indulge in this or that sin every once in a while,
- and still follow Christ.
- We need to allow the Spirit to kill the sin in our lives.
- But we can't stop there we must also lie prostrate before the Lord in every area of life,
- offering him our work, our leisure, our entertainment, our cell phones,
- our relationships, our family, everything.
- **As you prostrate yourself before him, and say and live out...**

“The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.”

Prayer!