

Headspace

Week 5: Rejoice

1 Kings 19

Everywhere you look, there are signs that Fall is upon us. And, while I'm excited about cooler temps and bonfires, there are things about summer that I'm going to miss. At the top of the list for me is mowing. I'm one of those strange people that just loves to mow. Anyone else with me on that? How many are the exact opposite and you're like, "I can't wait to be done with mowing!"

I've always loved mowing. In fact, in 4th grade, we had to write a poem about something we love, and while other kids wrote about their pets or their parents, I waxed poetic about my love for mowing. True story! I wrote a poem about how much I love mowing. And, my sentiments are still the same.

And, while I'm going to miss mowing for the next 5 months or so, there's one part of lawn care that I'm always glad to see go this time of year and that's pulling weeds. As much as I love mowing, I hate pulling weeds, because it's a never ending battle. There are areas in my yard I can't get grass to grow, but we have a flower bed that, it doesn't matter what I put down, or how much weedkiller I use, somehow the weeds ALWAYS pop back up! I can almost hear them mocking me. It doesn't matter how many times I pull them out, they just keep coming back.

And, for many of us, that's what it's like fighting the lies that our enemy has planted in our minds. It doesn't matter what we do, or how many times we pull them out, they just keep coming back, and sometimes, our headspace feels overgrown with them.

But, our Heavenly Father has given us tools to root them out. He's given us weapons to fight the battle we're in over our Headspace. To win the war raging in our minds. And, it doesn't mean that those lies will never come back, it means that we can fight them off before they take root and start to grow.

The great Reformer, Martin Luther, once said, "You cannot keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." You can't keep weeds from growing in your garden, but you can keep them from taking over. You can't keep Satan from whispering lies in your head, but you can keep those lies from taking root and controlling your life, your emotions, and your relationships.

And as we wrap up our Headspace series today, I want to give you one more tool, one more weapon, to use in this battle for your headspace. So far, we've talked about replacing those lies with the truth of God's Word. Josh did an excellent job teaching us a few weeks ago about rewiring our minds and getting out of the mental ruts that we're stuck in. Last week, we looked at the power of reframing our circumstances and challenging our thinking errors that inform our emotions and behaviors.

And this week, we're looking at the power of praise in the midst of the battle. Rejoicing, not in the trouble, or the trial, or the pain, but in the loving, tender presence of our Heavenly Father. So, if you have a Bible, or a Bible app you like to use, turn with me to 1 Kings 19.

Now, some context to catch us up as we dive into our text. In chapter 16, a guy named Ahab becomes king over Israel, and he is not a good dude. In fact, verse 30 says that he did more evil than any king before him, and that's saying something. So, to get Ahab's attention and rescue His people, God sends the prophet Elijah to confront him about his sin and evil actions.

But, instead of turning back to the Lord and changing his ways, King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, start killing God's prophets and try to hunt down Elijah to take his life, too. That'll mess with your headspace, right?

Well, in chapter 18, Elijah stops running and confronts King Ahab again. He sets up a show-down between himself and 850 false prophets who were more committed to their king than to the Lord. In the end, Elijah emerges victorious after an incredible display of God's power.

And, you'd think that Ahab would have finally gotten the message, but instead, he and his wife double down on their pursuit of Elijah, and so he runs for his life. And, in chapter 19, Elijah sits down underneath a tree. He's emotionally, and physically, and spiritually exhausted and he says in **verse 4...(READ)**

Have you ever been in that place before. When you've just had enough? You're worn out and exhausted. You have nothing left to give. No more fight in you. That's where Elijah is. And, it's so bad that he says, "My ancestors have it better than I do because they're already dead!" Elijah was not in a good headspace, and so he did what we do when we're in that place...he takes a nap.

And, don't miss what God does next. I think there's this idea that has crept into the Church that, to be a good Christian, you have to have it all together. That you have to put on a good face and pretend like everything is okay. And that anything less than that is somehow a lack of faith. Or, that if we're anything less than that, God will be disappointed in us.

But, that's not what we see in our text. Elijah was not in a good place mentally or emotionally. He was done. He'd had enough. In fact, let's not gloss over this...Elijah wanted to die. And, God's response wasn't judgement on him, it wasn't condemnation. God's response to Elijah in that moment was tender, loving compassion.

I just want you to know today that, whatever you're going through and however you feel, you can be honest about that. Be honest with others, but be honest with God, too. His shoulders are broad enough to carry your concerns and his love is gentle enough to bind up your wounds.

Elijah wakes up from his nap and finds fresh baked bread and some water. He eats and drinks, and goes back to sleep. He wakes up again and finds the same thing. When Elijah is going

through a hard time, God's like that friend who says, "Hey, stay in your pajamas today and get some rest. I'll bring you some food and make sure you're taken care of."

In our moments of weakness, and we all have them, God draws near to us. He cares for us. In fact, one of the promises of Scripture in Psalm 34 is that God is near to the brokenhearted. He comforts us in our affliction and walks with us in our pain. That's what He does for Elijah, and like a good friend, God doesn't just let him keep walking down this path of darkness. He helps him find another way, a better way.

In verse 9, God asks him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Does God ask him that because he doesn't know what's going on? No. I think He's drawing it out of Elijah to draw Elijah closer to Himself. He's doing the hard work of heart-work in Elijah. He has cared for his physical body by providing food and water, and now he's caring for Elijah's soul. And so, He asks, "What are you doing here?" and Elijah responds in **verse 10...(READ)**

"I am the only one left..." That's a telling statement into Elijah's headspace because it reveals a lie he believed. In fact, this was more than just a lie he believed, it was a stronghold in his life. It's one that we see repeated multiple times. He says it in chapter 18, verse 22 and he repeats it again a little later in verse 14. Elijah believed the lie that he was alone. The no one understood what he was going through and that he had to go through it by himself.

And, we know this is a lie because of a conversation that takes place earlier in chapter 18. In verse 3, we're introduced to a man named Obadiah. This is what it says **...(READ 1 Kings 18:3b-4)**

When Obadiah meets Elijah in verse 7, he tells him this. Elijah knew the truth, but he felt the lie. And, like we saw last week, **A lie believed as truth will affect your life as if it were true.** Elijah was stuck in a rut by the lie he believed and it was affecting his life as if it were true.

But, listen, even if it was...even if Elijah was the only person on earth who loved God and served Him, it didn't mean he was alone. And God, who had drawn near to Elijah in his emotional pain and cared for his soul, now draws Elijah closer to Himself to show him he's not alone.

He has Elijah go stand on the mountain of God as His presence passes by, and this is what we read **...(READ vs. 11b-12 – Not on screen)**

God was not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. Instead, God was in the whisper. When someone whispers, you lean in. You draw close. You quiet yourself and your surroundings to hear them.

All Elijah can see and feel is worry, fear, and anxiety. Jezebel is coming to kill him, he feels alone, so God quiets Elijah's soul and gives him a new perspective. He draws near to Elijah and cares for him, and he draws Elijah even closer to Himself. And, when he does, everything changes. Elijah has a new perspective. God combats Satan's lies with the truth and says, "Listen,

you're not alone. I'm with you, and there are 7,000 others who love and serve me just like you." After this encounter with the Father, Elijah sets off, feeling refreshed and restored.

And, what we see in Elijah is also true for us...**The presence of God changes our perspective.** Knowing that God is with us and for us changes the way we look at the challenges in front of us. Craig Groeschel writes, **"We get fixated on the presence of our problems, and we lose our focus on the presence of God."**

I think it's why in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus tells us to start by focusing on the powerful presence of God. He knows that everything else, all of our worries, cares, and concerns, become right-sized when we remember how big our God is and that He is with us through it all.

And, when we have this perspective, we're able to practice what the Apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4...**(READ Phil 4:4-5)**

We can rejoice, not because of the things we're going through, but because of the powerful presence of our Heavenly Father, who is near. We can rejoice because His shoulders are broad enough to carry our concerns and his love is gentle enough to bind up our wounds.

And, as we close today and wrap up this series, I want to invite you into a little exercise that has helped me focus on the presence of God in the midst of the things that cause me to worry, fret, and fear. It's a practice that author John Eldridge calls, **"Benevolent Detachment."** It's showing kindness to yourself by entrusting people and circumstances into the care of God and rejoicing that He is in control, not me!

It's a simple 8 word prayer that you just pray over and over when you start to feel anxious. It goes, **"God, I give everything and everyone to you."** Say that with me...

So, as we wrap up, I just invite you to put your feet on the floor, relax your shoulders...and pray that prayer..."God, I give everything and everyone to you."

Now, let's break that down a little. What situation or circumstance do you need to turn over to God today? Spend some time giving it over to Him, trusting that He cares about it and He cares about you.

What person or relationship do you need to give to the Father? Spend some time giving it over to Him, trusting that He cares about them and He cares about you.

Spend some time rejoicing in the Lord that He invites us to give everything and everyone to Him, and that we can trust Him with the things and people we care about most.

Let me close with this invitation from Jesus in Matthew 11. **"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced**

rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Are you tired, worn out? Turn to Jesus who brings rest and renewal to your heart, soul, and headspace.