



Maybe your faith used to feel certain, and now it just feels heavy.

Maybe you have prayed prayers that seemed to dissolve into silence.

Maybe the gap between who you thought you would be by now and who you actually are has grown wide enough to hurt.

Three thousand years ago, a man named Elijah stood in that same gap.

He called down fire from heaven and then collapsed in a desert, begging God to let him die. He stood fearless before a wicked king and then ran terrified from a single threat. He was chosen, gifted, called, and broken, sometimes all in the same week. And through every moment of it, God did not abandon him. God did not replace him. God met him exactly where he had fallen and refused to leave him there.

This is not a study for people who have it all together. It is a study for people who are honest enough to admit they do not. Over nine weeks, we will walk through one of the most raw, dramatic, and deeply human stories in all of Scripture, and discover that the God who sustained Elijah's faith through drought, fire, and despair is the very same God who is with us now.

We are not afraid of the fire, because the fire is not what destroys faith. It is what proves it.

WEEK 1

When Faith is Called

Elijah appears without introduction. No backstory, no training, no slow build-up. He simply walks onto the stage of Israel's history and delivers a word that stops the rain for three and a half years. It is a breathtaking entrance, and it tells us something important right from the start: God does not always wait for us to feel ready before He calls us to act. In this week's passage, we see a man who trusted the word of God enough to stake his life on it, and then followed that word into the wilderness where God would sustain him in unexpected ways.

1 KINGS 17:1-7

¹ Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." ² And the word of the Lord came to him: ³ "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. ⁴ You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." ⁵ So he went and did according to the word of the Lord. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. ⁶ And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. ⁷ And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

WEEK 1 LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Think of a time you were asked to do something before you felt fully ready. What was it, and how did it go?
2. If you were going to be “hidden away” somewhere by God for a season of rest and provision, where would you want that place to be, and what would you hope to find there?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 1 Kings 17:1-7 aloud together. What action words stand out to you in this passage? What is Elijah doing, what is God doing, and what are the ravens doing? What does that list of actions tell you about how this story works?
4. Elijah’s name in Hebrew means “Yahweh is my God.” In a culture that had embraced Baal worship, what do you think it meant for a man to carry that name every day? How might a name like that function almost like a personal statement of faith?
5. James 5:17-18 describes Elijah as “a man with a nature like ours.” Why do you think James felt it was important to say that? What would be lost from the story if Elijah were superhuman?
6. Notice that verse 7 says the brook dried up. God sent Elijah to the brook, the brook sustained him, and then the brook ran dry. Why do you think God allowed that to happen rather than simply keeping the brook flowing? What might God be doing in the dried-up brooks of our own lives?

8. Elijah's obedience in verse 5 is simple and almost understated: "So he went and did according to the word of the Lord." No questions asked, no negotiating, no waiting for a second sign. Where in your own life is God asking for that kind of simple, immediate obedience right now?

9. This week, identify one area of your life where you sense God is calling you forward but you have been waiting to feel more ready. Share it with one person in your group, and ask him or her to pray for you and check in with you by the end of the week.

WEEK 2

When Faith Goes Where It's Sent

When the brook dried up, God did not leave Elijah to figure out his next move. He sent him to Zarephath, a Gentile city outside Israel's borders, to be cared for by a widow who had nothing left. It is a passage full of surprises. The widow was not a person of influence or means. She was preparing what she believed would be her final meal. And yet God chose her, and Elijah chose to trust God's choice. What follows is one of the most tender demonstrations of provision in all of Scripture, as a jar of flour and a jug of oil refuse to run out.

1 KINGS 17:8-16

⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him, ⁹ "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." ¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." ¹² And she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." ¹³ And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son." ¹⁴ For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.' " ¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

WEEK 2 LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Has God ever provided for you in a way you did not see coming, through a person or a source you would never have thought to ask? What was that like?
2. Think of the most unlikely mentor or teacher you have ever had. Someone who surprised you with what they had to offer. What made them unexpected, and what did you learn from them?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 1 Kings 17:8-16. Look carefully at what Elijah asks of the widow in verse 13. What does he ask her to do first? What does that request assume about her, about God, and about Elijah's own confidence in the word he carries?
4. Jesus references this story in Luke 4:24-26, and the crowd's reaction is explosive. Why do you think the fact that God sent Elijah to a Gentile widow was so provocative? What does it tell us about the scope of God's concern?
5. The widow says in verse 12, "I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." She has given up. And yet Elijah does not respond with pity or apology. He responds with a command and a promise. How do we hold together compassion for people who are suffering and confidence in what God can do through them? Is there a temptation to lower our expectations for people in desperate circumstances?
6. Elijah was a Jewish prophet sent to a foreign widow. He had to cross cultural, national, and probably social boundaries to receive what God had for him there. Imagine you were Elijah. What would make that journey uncomfortable? What boundaries might God be asking you to cross in order to receive, or to give, what He has for you?

7. The flour and oil did not replenish all at once. They simply never ran out. There was just enough, one day at a time. What does this kind of daily, measured provision teach us about how God often works? How is that different from the way we usually want to be provided for?

8. Our year-long theme reminds us that “He must increase, we must decrease.” How does the widow’s act of giving her last meal away reflect that kind of surrender? What did she have to decrease in herself in order for God to increase in that household?

9. This week, can you think of a way that you could respond in generosity that requires you to give something before you feel you have enough to spare? What would that look like?

WEEK 3

When Faith Wrestles with God

Everything had been going as well as it could. The flour held. The oil held. The widow and her son were alive because of the word Elijah carried. And then one day, the boy just stopped breathing. Death walked into a house that had been full of miraculous provision, and the widow turned on Elijah with words that cut straight to the bone. Elijah did not offer her a tidy answer. He took the boy in his arms and carried him upstairs and cried out to God in one of the most raw and honest prayers in all of Scripture. This passage gives us permission to bring our most unpolished grief straight to God.

1 KINGS 17:17-24

¹⁷ After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. ¹⁸ And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" ¹⁹ And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰ And he cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" ²¹ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again." ²² And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. ²³ And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." ²⁴ And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

WEEK 3
LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. When you were a child and something went wrong, were you the kind of person who cried out, got quiet, or looked for someone to blame? How has that changed, or not changed, as you've grown?
2. What is the most honest thing you have ever said to God? You do not have to share what it was, but what made it feel risky to say?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 1 Kings 17:17-24 together. Look carefully at Elijah's prayer in verse 20. He says, "O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" What is striking about how Elijah addresses God here? What does this prayer tell us about the kind of relationship Elijah had with God?
4. Elijah stretches himself over the boy three times and prays the same prayer three times. What do you make of that repetition? What does persistent, repeated prayer suggest about faith rather than undermining it?
5. Compare Elijah's prayer here with the prayers of lament in Psalm 22:1-2 and Psalm 88:1-3. What do these passages have in common? What do they tell us together about what God welcomes in prayer?
6. The widow says to Elijah in verse 18, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son." She is in grief and she is looking for someone to blame. Have you ever been on the receiving end of that kind of grief? Have you ever been the one doing it? How do we hold space for people who are hurting without taking their words personally or defending ourselves?

7. There is something Elijah does before he prays: he takes the boy in his arms and carries him. He does not keep his distance from the grief. How might this posture, getting close to what is broken rather than standing apart from it, shape how we accompany hurting people in our community?

8. The widow says at the end of the passage, “Now I know that you are a man of God.” Interestingly, she already knew that before this moment. What does she mean? What kind of knowing is produced by walking through death and resurrection together with someone?

9. Take five minutes before your group closes to pray together. This week, invite everyone to pray one honest sentence to God about something they are carrying that has felt too raw or too complicated to bring to Him. Leaders: go first!

WEEK 4

When Faith Stands Alone

This is the passage that most people think of when they think of Elijah. One man, four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, a mountain, and a contest to prove which God answers by fire. What is easy to miss in the drama of the flames is what comes before them: Elijah's quiet, deliberate, almost liturgical preparation of the altar. He does not race into the moment. He rebuilds what has been torn down. He digs a trench. He soaks the sacrifice until there is no natural explanation for what is about to happen. And then he prays a simple, confident prayer, and God answers.

1 KINGS 18:20-40

²⁰ So Ahab sent to all the people of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. ²¹ And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "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. ²² Then Elijah said to the people, "I, even I only, am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. 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." ²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many, and call upon the name of your god, but put no fire to it." ²⁶ And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. ²⁷ And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." ²⁸ And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹ And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. 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.

WEEK 4 LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever had to stand up for something you believed was right, and found yourself largely alone in that conviction? What did that feel like?
2. What is the most dramatic “before and after” you have ever personally witnessed? Something that changed suddenly and completely?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 1 Kings 18:20–40 together. Count the verbs in verses 30–35 that describe what Elijah does before he prays. He repaired, arranged, cut, filled, poured, and dug. What do all of those actions tell you about how Elijah approached this moment? What does careful preparation have to do with bold faith?
4. Verse 21 contains one of the most powerful questions in the whole passage: “How long will you go limping between two different opinions?” What does the word “limping” suggest? Why is indecision not a neutral posture but actually a kind of damage?
5. Read Matthew 6:24 alongside verse 21. Jesus speaks to a similar dynamic. What is the common thread between what Elijah confronts on Carmel and what Jesus addresses in the Sermon on the Mount? Is divided loyalty still the same challenge in our culture today?
6. The prophets of Baal cry out, cut themselves, and rave from morning to evening with no answer. Elijah’s prayer, by contrast, is twenty-seven words (in our version). What does the contrast between their frantic performance and his quiet confidence teach us about the nature of prayer? What has your own prayer life looked like more like lately, frantic performance or quiet confidence?

7. Elijah rebuilt the altar using twelve stones, one for each tribe of Israel, including the northern tribes that had broken away. It was a statement about the wholeness God intended for His people. If you were going to identify the “broken altars” in your own life, the places where your devotion has fallen into disrepair, what would you rebuild first? What would the first stone represent?

8. After the fire falls, the people fall on their faces and say, “The Lord, He is God.” The confrontation was not just about winning a contest. It was about recovering a confession. What is the difference between intellectual belief in God and the kind of confession that changes the posture of your body and the direction of your life?

9. This week, identify one place in your life where you have been “limping between two opinions.” Write it down. Share it with a trusted person. Ask God to give you the clarity and the courage to come down clearly on the side of faith.