

WEEK 5

When Faith Keeps Praying

The fire has fallen. The false prophets have been dealt with. And now Elijah turns his attention to something he has been holding onto for three years: the promise of rain. He climbs to the top of Carmel, tucks his face between his knees, and sends his servant to look at the horizon. Nothing. He prays again. Nothing. He sends the servant six times, and six times the servant comes back with the same report. On the seventh trip, a cloud the size of a man's hand appears over the sea, and Elijah takes that tiny sign and runs with it. This is a passage about what it looks like to hold on when heaven seems quiet.

1 KINGS 18:41-46

⁴¹ And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." ⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times. ⁴⁴ And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" ⁴⁵ And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

WEEK 5 LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What is something you waited a very long time for, and what did waiting do to you in the meantime? Did it strengthen your desire, wear it out, or change it into something different?
2. If you were the servant being sent to look at the horizon six times and coming back with nothing to report, what would you have been thinking by trip four or five?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 1 Kings 18:41-46. What is the posture Elijah takes in verse 42? He “bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees.” This is a physically intense posture of prayer. What might it communicate about the state of his heart in this moment? What does our physical posture in prayer say about what we believe we are doing?
4. Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8, and says he told it so that people “ought always to pray and not lose heart.” How does Elijah’s seven prayers on Carmel illustrate what Jesus is describing? What does Jesus suggest is at stake when we give up on prayer too soon?
5. The cloud that appears is described as “small as a man’s hand.” How did Elijah respond to that tiny sign? What would it have looked like to dismiss it as too small to take seriously? Is there a difference between wishful thinking and taking a small sign of God’s faithfulness seriously?

6. There is a real tension between persistence in prayer and acceptance of God's will. How do we know when to keep pressing in, and when to open our hands and surrender the outcome? What does this passage offer us in navigating that tension?

7. Think of a prayer you have prayed more than once, maybe many times, without a clear answer yet. If you were to send a servant to the horizon on your behalf to look for any sign of God at work in that situation, what would you be asking them to look for? What small signs might already be there that you have been too discouraged to notice?

8. Elijah ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to Jezreel, empowered by "the hand of the Lord." The same God who answered by fire also answered by rain. What does the consistency of God's faithfulness across these two very different moments tell us about who He is?

9. Choose one prayer request you have been tempted to give up on. Write it down and commit to praying it daily for the next seven days, one prayer for each of Elijah's seven prayers. At the end of the week, look for even the smallest sign of movement, and report back to your group.

WEEK 6

When Faith Hits the Wall

What happens in this passage should astonish us. Elijah just called down fire from heaven. He led the nation in one of its greatest spiritual recoveries in a generation. He prayed seven times for rain and watched a drought end. And then Jezebel sent him a message, and he ran. He ran until he reached the desert, sat under a broom tree, and asked God to take his life. "It is enough," he said. "I am no better than my fathers." And into that absolute low point, God did not come with a rebuke. God came with bread.

1 KINGS 19:1-8

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." ³ Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." ⁵ And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." ⁶ And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." ⁸ And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

WEEK 6
LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What does burnout or exhaustion feel like for you? Not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually? How do you usually know when you have hit a wall?
2. Has a meal or a good night's sleep ever changed your perspective on something that felt impossible? What happened?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 1 Kings 19:1–8 together. Notice that God does not respond to Elijah's request to die with a rebuke, a lecture, or a correction. What does God actually do? List the specific things God provides in this passage. What do those things tell you about what God thinks Elijah's most urgent need is?
4. Verse 5 says an angel touched Elijah and said, "Arise and eat." Then Elijah lay down again. The angel came a second time. Why do you think the passage includes the detail that Elijah lay back down after the first encounter? What does that suggest about the depth of his exhaustion, and about God's patience with it?
5. Read Matthew 4:11, where angels minister to Jesus after His temptation in the wilderness. What is similar between that moment and what happens to Elijah here? What does it tell us that God has a pattern of meeting His servants in the wilderness with physical care and provision?

6. Elijah ran because of a single threatening message after one of the greatest spiritual victories in his life. We might be tempted to dismiss his fear as irrational. But the timing of his collapse, right after his greatest triumph, is significant. Why do you think we are often most vulnerable to fear and despair after significant spiritual moments? What makes the “after” of a high moment so dangerous?

7. Elijah said, “I am no better than my fathers.” He was not just tired; he was comparing himself and finding himself lacking. If someone in your life said those exact words to you, what would you do? What would you not do? How do you sit with someone who is in that place without trying to fix them too quickly?

8. The angel tells Elijah that “the journey is too great for you.” That is a remarkable acknowledgment. God is not pretending the road is easy or that Elijah should be stronger. What does it mean to you that God sees the difficulty of the road you are on and does not minimize it?

9. This week, do an honest assessment of your own spiritual, physical, and emotional reserves. Are you running on empty? Share that honestly with one person in your group. Then together, identify one concrete act of rest or care you will take before next week’s gathering.

WEEK 7

When Faith Hears the Whisper

Elijah has been fed, rested, and carried to Horeb, the mountain of God. And now, standing in the same place where Moses encountered the Lord centuries before, he is asked a simple question: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" What follows is one of the most famous theophanies in the Bible, and one of its most unexpected. Wind tore the mountains. Earthquake shook the ground. Fire swept through. God was not in any of them. And then, after the fire, a still small voice. Or as the Hebrew renders it more literally, a sound of gentle stillness. And Elijah heard it, and everything changed.

1 KINGS 19:9-18

⁹ There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰ He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹¹ And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴ He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹⁵ And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷ And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

WEEK 7
LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Where is your favorite place to be quiet? Not just physically quiet, but genuinely still inside. What makes that place different from everywhere else?
2. When have you expected God to show up in a dramatic way and instead found Him in something small, quiet, or easy to miss?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 1 Kings 19:9-18 together. God asks Elijah the same question twice: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah gives God the same answer both times. What do you notice about the repetition? What might it mean that God asks again after the wind, earthquake, and fire, and Elijah's answer has not changed?
4. Look carefully at Elijah's self-assessment in verse 10: "I, even I only, am left." We will learn in verse 18 that God had seven thousand people in Israel who had not bowed to Baal. What does Elijah's belief that he was completely alone tell us about what isolation and exhaustion can do to our perception? Have you ever been in that place?
5. The location matters here. Horeb is another name for Sinai, where Moses encountered God in fire and heard the law given. What is significant about God choosing to meet Elijah in that particular place? Read Exodus 19:16-19 for reference. What is different about how God comes to Elijah compared to how He came to Moses?

6. God's response to Elijah is not the grand reversal of circumstances Elijah was probably hoping for. He gives him a task, a companion, and the news that he was never as alone as he thought. Which of those three things do you most need right now, and why?

7. The still small voice required Elijah to come out of the cave. He could hear the wind and the earthquake and the fire from inside. But the whisper only came when he stood at the entrance and listened. What is the "cave" in your life right now, the safe, hidden place you have retreated to? What might God be inviting you to step out of in order to hear what He is saying?

8. Our year's theme calls us to a posture of decrease, a willingness to make less of ourselves so that God becomes more visible in our lives. Elijah's cave moment is in many ways the story of a man who had to stop insisting on his own version of the story so that God could write a different one. What would it look like for you to surrender your version of the story this week?

9. This week, try to set aside fifteen minutes for intentional silence with God. No music, no agenda, no list. Just sit, be still, and listen. Come back to your group ready to share what happened, or what did not happen, and what that was like.

WEEK 8

When Faith Doesn't Flinch

Years have passed since Carmel, since the cave at Horeb, since the still small voice. And yet Elijah's fire has not gone out. When King Ahaziah sends messengers to consult Baal-Zebub rather than the God of Israel, Elijah intercepts them with a word so pointed that the king sends fifty soldiers to deal with him. And then another fifty. And then another. Elijah does not negotiate, compromise, or soften what God has said. He delivers it exactly as it was given. This is a portrait of a man who has learned, through fire and drought and cave and whisper, that the word of God is worth protecting even at great personal cost.

2 KINGS 1:1-18

After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel. ² Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria, and lay sick; so he sent messengers, telling them, "Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this sickness." ³ But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?' ⁴ Now therefore thus says the Lord, You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" ⁵ So Elijah went. ⁶ The messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, "Why have you returned?" ⁷ And they said to him, "There came a man to meet us, and said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, Thus says the Lord, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" ⁸ He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?" ⁹ They answered him, "He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." ¹⁰ Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty men with his fifty. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "O man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'" ¹¹ But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

¹¹ Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty men with his fifty. And he answered and said to him, "O man of God, this is the king's order, 'Come down quickly!' " ¹² But Elijah answered them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. ¹³ Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and entreated him, "O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight." ¹⁴ Behold, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties, but now let my life be precious in your sight." ¹⁵ Then the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king ¹⁶ and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron—is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word?—therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.' " ¹⁷ So he died according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son. ¹⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

WEEK 8
LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Who is the most consistently courageous person you know personally? Not someone famous, but someone in your actual life. What makes their courage real and not just impressive?
2. Has anyone ever delivered a hard truth to you that you needed to hear? Looking back, how did that go, and what did it produce in you?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 2 Kings 1:1-18. The word of the Lord through Elijah is essentially the same word repeated three times to three different groups of soldiers. Do you think there's anything significant about that repetition? What does it tell us about the nature of the word God gives to His servants?
4. Look at how Ahaziah is described throughout this passage. He was injured, he sent to consult a foreign god, and when his messengers were intercepted, his response was to send armed men rather than to ask what God was actually saying. What does this pattern reveal about the posture of his heart? What happens to a person when they seek answers everywhere except from the one God who actually has them?
5. The third captain comes to Elijah and kneels before him, saying, "Please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight." Compare his approach to that of the first two captains. What made the difference? Read Proverbs 15:1 alongside this. What does the third captain model about how to approach someone who carries a hard word?

6. Elijah was already an old man at this point. He had seen fire fall from heaven, heard the still small voice, and poured his cloak over a successor. And yet here he is, still delivering the word faithfully, still unwilling to dilute it. What does faithful old age look like in the life of some one who has walked with God for a long time? What do you hope is still true of you in thirty or forty years?

7. There are moments in life when we know what the truth is, and it would be far easier to soften it, qualify it, or simply stay quiet. Think of a situation in your own life right now where speaking truthfully would cost you some thing. What would help you find the courage to say what needs to be said with both honesty and grace?

8. The king died “according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken.” In the end, God’s word proved exactly as reliable as Elijah believed it would be. How does the long track record of God’s faithfulness in Elijah’s story shape the way Elijah delivers that word without flinching? How does your own track record with God’s faithfulness shape the confidence with which you stand on what He has said?

9. This week, ask God to show you one place where you have been softening or avoiding a word He has given you to carry. Write it down, sit with it, and ask Him for the grace to hold it faithfully rather than set it aside.

WEEK 9

When Faith Passes the Torch

Every great life produces more than it contains. As Elijah's earthly ministry draws to its close, what is most striking is not the chariot of fire or the whirlwind that carries him to heaven. It is what he leaves behind. Elisha has been following him, refusing to be sent away, pressing close all the way from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho to the Jordan River. When the moment comes and Elijah is taken, Elisha tears his own garment in two and picks up the mantle. A life of faith does not end with the one who lived it. It spills over into the lives of those who watched and followed and refused to look away.

2 KINGS 2:1-14

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ² And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³ And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." ⁴ Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. ⁵ The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." ⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. ⁷ Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸ Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground. ⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." ¹⁰ And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so."

WEEK 9
LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Who has most significantly shaped your faith? It could be a parent, a mentor, a pastor, a friend. What is it about how they lived that made the deepest impression on you?
2. If you had to identify one thing you hope you are passing on to the next generation, whether to your children, people you mentor, or simply the people around you, what would it be?

DIVING DEEPER

3. Read 2 Kings 2:1-12. Notice how many times Elijah tells Elisha to stay behind, and how many times Elisha refuses. Count them. What does Elisha's stubborn refusal to leave tell us about what he understood was happening in this season? What does it cost to stay close to a mentor in the final chapter of their story?
4. Elijah asks Elisha in verse 9, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." Elisha's request for "a double portion of your spirit" is not a request for twice Elijah's power. In Hebrew inheritance law, the double portion belonged to the firstborn son. What is Elisha actually asking for? What does that tell you about how he understood his relationship to Elijah?
5. Read Malachi 4:5-6 and then Luke 1:17. Elijah casts a long shadow in the prophetic imagination of Israel. How does the spirit and power of Elijah reappear in John the Baptist? What does it mean that a faithful life does not simply end but echoes forward into generations yet to come?

6. Elisha sees Elijah taken up in the whirlwind and cries out, “My father, my father.” That is not the language of a student for a teacher. It is the language of a son for a father. What is the difference between having a mentor and having a spiritual father or mother? What does that deeper kind of relationship require of both people?

7. Elijah poured his mantle over Elisha back in 1 Kings 19. He chose him, invested in him, and kept him close. Now that investment becomes the future. Who in your life are you intentionally investing in, not just caring for, but genuinely pouring into their faith? Is there anyone who needs you to pick them, the way Elijah picked Elisha?

8. The year’s theme has been calling us to decrease so that Christ can increase. Elijah’s final act is, in a sense, the ultimate decrease. He leaves the stage entirely, and what remains is what God did through him, in Elisha and in the generations that followed. What would it look like for you to hold your own gifts, your role, and your influence a little more loosely, so that the people around you have room to grow into what God has for them?

9. As we close this nine-week series together, take a moment to name something God has done in you over these weeks. Write it down. Then share it with your group. And before you leave, pray together and ask God to show you who you are meant to pour into next. Because faithful lives always produce more than they contain.