CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
MARCH09 2024

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 18:1–40.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 10 last part (pp. 133-154); 11.

faith on the mountaintop



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

"God cannot use men who, in time of peril, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are needed, are afraid to take a firm stand for the right. He calls for men who will do faithful battle against wrong, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 142).

keytext

"Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command.' "

(1 Kings 18:36, NIV)

what do you think?

When I see others in my life doing something I think is wrong, I usually

____ Ignore it.
____ Join in.
____ Tell them what they're doing is wrong.
____ Keep quiet unless they ask me what I think, then say I think it's wrong.
____ In a kind, caring way provide positive advice and point them to a better way that is possible through Jesus.

If I'm doing something wrong, I appreciate it when others in my life

____ Don't bother me about it; mind their own business.
____ Respectfully tell me where they think I'm making a mistake.
____ Talk to others and leave me alone.

did you know?

The name Baal means "lord." It is used to refer to a number of different pagan gods that were worshiped by the Israelites and the people who lived around them. King Ahab's wife, Jezebel, made the worship of Baal popular among the Israelites. Pagan gods were believed to control such things as weather, crops, and so on. By declaring that the God of heaven had stopped the rain for three years, Elijah was challenging the belief that Baal would bring rain and good crops. His "showdown" on Mount Carmel demonstrated that God alone controlled every aspect of life and that He alone was worthy of Israel's worship.

INTO THE STORY

"Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire.' So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

"Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. 'Baal, answer us!' they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

"At noon Elijah began to taunt them. 'Shout louder!' he said. 'Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened.' So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

"Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones. . . . With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it. . . . He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, 'Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood.'

" 'Do it again,' he said, and they did it again.

" 'Do it a third time,' he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

"At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: 'LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.'

"Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

"When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!' "

(1 Kings 18:25–39, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Why do you think Elijah thought of the idea of staging a challenge between Baal and the true God?

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_____

What did he hope to accomplish by doing this?

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Why do you think Elijah made fun of the prophets of Baal? How might they have responded when he did this?

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What was the point of soaking the sacrifice with water?

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How did Elijah have enough faith to trust that the sacrifice would burn?

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What was God's purpose in offering this spectacular display of His power?

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How do you think the people watching felt when they saw the sacrifice consumed? How do you think the prophets of Baal felt?

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punch lines

"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" **(Hebrews 11:6, NIV).**

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" **(Ephesians 6:10–12, NIV).**

"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" **(Matthew 17:20, NIV).**

"And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" **(Luke 1:17, NIV).**

further insight

"Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 63

Sabbath

Read Hebrews 11:6.

Elijah had the courage to speak out when he believed the people of Israel were doing wrong. God gave Elijah a job to do, and Elijah had the courage and faith to follow through with it.

What does it mean to you to say that "without faith it is impossible to please God"? If you felt you had to speak out against something you thought was wrong, would it take a lot of faith to do that? Would you trust God to come through for you as He did for Elijah in this story?

Think about a situation in your life in which you believe God is calling you to trust Him. If you had greater faith, what could you do in this situation?

Sunday

Read Matthew 17:20.

Imagine yourself watching in the crowd on Mount Carmel as Elijah faces off against the prophets of Baal. As an ordinary Israelite, you may be torn between Baal worship and faith in the true God. After three years of drought and famine, you're prepared to worship any god who can bring rain.

All the odds seem to be stacked in Baal's favor. Yet after hours of noisy worship, the priests of Baal have accomplished nothing. Your attention swings to the lone prophet of God, Elijah. His sacrifice is soaked with water, making it abundantly clear that he can't light it himself. He relies completely on the invisible God of your fathers.

Write three words that describe what you might feel at that moment:

_____ _____ _____

Monday

Read 1 Kings 18:36.

According to the *Key Text*, what did Elijah hope the demonstration on Mount Carmel would prove? _____

Was this goal accomplished? _____ Find a text in the *Into the Story* section that supports your answer. _____

Tuesday

Read Ephesians 6:10–18.

What do you think it means to "take a firm stand for the right" as the passage from *Prophets and Kings* says that Christians should do?

Sometimes we face situations in which others are doing wrong and we need to have the courage and faith to speak out. In which of the following situations would you feel that, as a Christian, you should point out that what's happening is wrong?

____ Your classmates are making fun of a disabled student behind his back.

____ You are shopping with your friend when you notice she quietly shoplifts a small item.

____ You are at a friend's house with no adults around when someone brings in a case of beer and several of your friends start to drink.

____ A friend brings an Ouija board to your house and asks that you help him ask it to contact his uncle who died last year.

____ You notice someone cheating off your paper during a test.

How likely would you be to speak out in these situations? What different ways are there of handling these situations?

Wednesday

Read Luke 1:17.

The Bible verses in the *Punch Lines* section talk about what it means to be a person of courage and faith, to take a stand for what is right. Elijah was such a powerful biblical example of this kind of faith and courage that centuries later, in the time of Jesus, people still looked to him as the ideal man of courageous faith. John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, was said to have come "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (NIV), and some people even believed that Jesus Himself was Elijah reborn! That's the kind of impact a person of courage and faith can make on the world.

As you look around you today, who do you see setting an example of courageous faith?

Thursday

Read James 1:12.

Look back at the situations presented in Tuesday's lesson. Are any of them similar to situations you have faced? How do you react when others are doing things you believe are wrong?

_____

What's one situation you're facing now in which you feel God is calling you to stand up for what is right? _____

What could you do to stand up for God in this situation? _____

Friday

Read 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

Elijah's faith was strong on Mount Carmel because he had a lifetime of experience in trusting God. He had just lived through three years of famine, depending totally on God's power to provide even the most basic, everyday needs for him. Sometimes we read stories like that of Elijah on Mount Carmel and think, *I could never have that kind of faith!* But faith is like muscle—it gets stronger by being used.

In your prayer time today talk to God about the things you're worried about. Place them trustingly in His hands and ask Him to help your faith grow so that you will be ready when bigger tests come.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapters 10 last part (pp. 133-154); 11.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.