

THE FIRE OF GOD
1 Kings 18:17-40

Intro: When we started Trinity Bible Church a little over 4 years ago, I told those of you who were present that we could not just be starting another church, that there had to be a reason for establishing another work. We believe that the Lord gave us that purpose, and that He was actually the One Who brought us together.

That purpose was to declare the glory of God in a day when man's ways have almost completely taken over the work of the Lord. It is impossible to declare the glory of God without showing that He is sovereign in His work, and that it is His purposes that we need to be concerned about.

We have seen the blessing of the Lord in many ways. Although we have moved around quite a bit, yet we have never lacked a place in which to meet. The Lord has graciously supplied our needs. We have had our trials. Some people have fallen by the wayside, but others have joined us. It seems to me that our numbers are more solid today than they were in the beginning. Most people like the excitement of something new, but it is when things begin to become ordinary that many will lose interest. The Lord may have been dealing with us like He chose to deal with Gideon. And God did with 300 what He did not do with 32,000!

Our job is not yet accomplished, and therefore we need to keep our eyes on our original goal--a God-given goal! But we need some encouragement along the way. Perhaps Elijah can help us tonight.

But before we turn to the Word, let me read again what I read to our Wednesday night prayer group several weeks ago from the autobiography of George Mueller. It shows how he "argued" with God about the work of the orphans. Many of the things that he took up with the Lord apply to our circumstances here and Trinity, and are not unrelated to the story of Elijah.

(Read Mueller's autobiography, pp. 145, 146.)

See the issues that Mueller was concerned about. They are just as pressing upon us today--and these comments should help us to understand what it means to be concerned about God's glory.

Now to the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal and the prophets of Asherah (a goddess associated with Baal). In all Elijah stood against 850 prophets, even though they must have been very reluctant to come. But notice the main points of this inspiring story.

I. AHAB'S CHARGE AGAINST ELIJAH (1 Kings 18:7).

When a man is out of step with the nation like Elijah was, of course he is considered to be the troublemaker. This has always been the case.

II. ELIJAH'S COURAGE.

Let me mention three things here which took all of the courage the Lord would give him.

A. Elijah's response to Ahab. Cf. 1 Kings 18:18).

Ahab had the human power to kill Elijah, but Elijah spoke out against the King.

B. Elijah and the false prophets--850 of them!

Here you see the hand of the Lord and the tremendous influence of Elijah, how the Lord was working through him, when the King and the 850 prophets came when he challenged them.

When a man knows the power of God and the truth of God he is unconcerned about numbers.

C. Elijah's willingness to put the Lord to the test.
See vv. 23, 24.

What faith he showed!

III. ELIJAH'S SIMPLE PRAYER.

It was not long, nor was it complicated. A child can understand it. There are actually four requests, one is repeated.

How different this was from the prayers of the prophets of Baal, and all of the antics they went through.

IV. THE OUTCOME.

Read it in 1 Kings 18:38-40. Not only was the sacrifice consumed, but also the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water! How often God goes beyond what we expect in showing that He is the Lord God!

Concl: Now what are the lessons for us? What can we learn from Elijah?

I am not just talking about myself tonight, nor just about the elders and deacons. I would like to have a church full of

Elijahs--and whatever the feminine form might be of Elijah!

Let me mention 4 things about Elijah.

- 1) He served the Lord, he was the Lord's servant.

What does this mean?

Look at verse 21. It means to follow the Lord, to live for the Lord, to do His will. It means that you are not going with the crowd when the crowd goes the wrong way. It means that you will not be influenced by the greatest number if the majority is moving contrary to the Word of God.

But you need to know the Word of God if you are going to be a servant of the Lord. See what Elijah said to Ahab in v. 18.

You are always going to be serving somebody. Make sure it is the Lord!

- 2) He was a man of faith.

Who was it who said, "God and one man are a majority."

Elijah was so burdened for his people that he was not afraid of the King, nor the false prophets of Baal and Asherah (even though there were 850 times more than he was), nor did he fear the nation that was sympathetic with Ahab, or at least afraid to stand against him.

This all comes from serving the Lord--which has to come first.

- 3) He was a man of prayer.

Elijah did not just pray in public. He was a man who knew how to talk to the Lord. Note the requests that he made, and remember that these are requests fit for us to take before the Lord.

- 4) He was a man of hope.

Faith and hope are similar, but not alike. They are companions, and yet we must distinguish between them. Faith meant that Elijah was trusting the Lord to work out His own will and purposes; hope meant that he believed that things could be different. Do you?

Are you like Elijah? If not, will you take these four terms and pray that you will become like he was. We fight for the same cause. God is with us. Let us learn from Elijah, and then move ahead to the glory of God.

Where is the God of Elijah? See God of Elijah still lives.