

Welcome: We would like to welcome you here today for our worship service with our theme today **“God Calls Us Back to Himself.”** This is message two in our series “Trials of the Prophets.” “Note” the messages each week are also available on the sermon player on our web page www.lightofchristwi.org.

Sermon Outline

1. What is God telling you in the context?

2. What are you hearing from the story, what verses stand out to you?

3. God is pursuing you as He goes ahead. Where is that happening in your life?

4. God is pursuing you as He provides. What has He provided lately?

5. God is pursuing you as He reassures you in your doubt. Do you need reassurance? Or do you need to give us reassurance.

Main thoughts of the sermon message

1. What happens in my life when I begin to drift away from the Lord or abandon the Lord all together to chase after false gods, or the things of this world?
2. Look around today? Who is not here, or has not been here for a while? Maybe the Lord is putting on your heart to encourage that person, or family...to make a phone call, to send a card, or to be praying for them.

3. Throughout the Scriptures there is a constant pattern of man drifting away from the Lord and God intervening to lead a person or a group of people back to himself.
4. The altar was symbolic of the hearts of the people. Their hearts were broken down, and in disrepair, but God sent Elijah to be God’s instrument to repair the altar and the hearts of the people.
5. Maybe today you are riding the fence or feel far away from God, but today the Lord is breaking into your life...calling you back, leading you to repentance and leading you to the cross.
6. **Questions**

a. Who is God calling you to encourage this week?

b. How has God intervened in your life...take time to thank Him.

c. How can the Lord repair your heart today?

Message 02 / Series: The Trials of the Prophets / Theme: Elijah on Mt. Carmel – 1 Kings 18:16-45

1. Open with prayer
2. Review the guidelines below
3. Note: Tell the people that as you tell the story to put yourself into the story...be Elijah.
4. Tell the story orally
5. Rebuild the story
6. Read the story
7. Go to the questions of the heart



TARGET

We want the participants to understand why they are here and to lay a foundation of the guidelines for small group's discussions. It is helpful to go over these guidelines briefly every time your huddle meets.

SMALL GROUP / HUDDLE GUIDELINES

SAFE ENVIRONMENT: This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing with one another. Below are some guidelines that will help create a safe environment:

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussion by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO "CROSS TALK": Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement; speak truth, point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

“I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church,” “us” “we”, etc.

LISTEN TO THE STORY: When the story is being presented the most effective way to understand the story at this point is just listen...don’t try to follow along in your bible. Opening the Bill will come later.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (there are many others)

- If someone sins against you
 - Matthew 18:15-20
- Restoring someone in sin:
 - Galatians 6:1-5
- Forgive a sinner:
 - Colossians 3:12-13
- Reconciling differences
 - Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5

Message 02 / Series: The Trials of the Prophets / Theme: Elijah on Mt. Carmel – 1 kings 18:16-45

Elijah on Mount Carmel

¹⁶ So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. ¹⁷ When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?”

¹⁸ “I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the Lord’s commands and have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

²⁰ So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. ²¹ Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

But the people said nothing.

²² Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. ²³ Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”

Then all the people said, “What you say is good.”

²⁵ 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.” ²⁶ So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

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

²⁷ 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.” ²⁸ So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. ²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come here to me.” They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins. ³¹ Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, “Your name shall be Israel.” ³² With the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs of seed. ³³ 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.”

³⁴ “Do it again,” he said, and they did it again.

“Do it a third time,” he ordered, and they did it the third time. ³⁵ The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶ At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O Lord, 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. ³⁷ Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”

⁴⁰ Then Elijah commanded them, “Seize the prophets of Baal. Don’t let anyone get away!” They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

⁴¹ And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain.” ⁴² So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

⁴³ “Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

“There is nothing there,” he said.

Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

⁴⁴ The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.”

So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’”

⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Questions of the Heart

1. What verse or verses spoke to you or verse that the Lord gave you revelation about?
2. Up until this time Ahab was the evilest King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Why do you think he called God's prophet Elijah...you troubler of Israel?
 - a. What do you think was Israel's largest problem...lack of rain or the fact that they were in a deep spiritual decline away from the Lord?
 - b. Why do people not just leaders struggle with following the Lord...who is the Good Shepherd and has our best interest at heart?
 - i. How is this similar to our own country?
 - c. Jesus said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23.
 - i. How does taking up the cross of Jesus and following him change us?
3. Why would King Ahab lead his nation into worshipping the Baals (false gods made from natural material)?
 - a. Why is that people can be so easily deceived into false worship and what does this tell us about man?
4. For a moment put yourself in the place of God...What do you think he is trying to accomplish through this contest between the God of Israel and Baal? Note...King Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assemble the prophets on Mt. Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him?"
 - a. What does this tell us about God?
 - b. Why is sitting on the fence in a spiritual way a dangerous place?
 - c. Share if you like a time when the Lord was nudging you to come to him in faith and stop riding the fence
5. Who is God...how can knowing the true God change you on the inside and change your behavior?
6. Why are object lessons that play out in real life in real time so powerful in changing your spiritual view?
7. What do we learn about God when he sends fire down on the sacrifice prepared by Elijah and it burns up everything?
8. What do we learn about prayer...Elijah a simple prayer to the Lord...and the prophets of Baal crying out for a long period of time, cutting themselves etc.
9. What do you think was the purpose of putting the false prophets to death?
 - a. Why is it so easy to lead astray spiritually?
 - b. How does being in the word and being led by the Holy Spirit work to prevent a person from being led astray spiritually?
10. In the Old Testament in which this story takes place they sacrificed animals to God, but when Jesus died on the cross for our sins as the Passover Lamb there was further need for animal scarifices...(A Living Sacrifice to God) And so, dear brothers and sisters, * I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. What is this verse telling us from Romans 12:1-2 and why is this important? If we do what these two verses tell us...how does that change us?

11. What does this story tell us about man?

12. If you were a person in the crowd watching what happened on this day...how would that have changed you?

Application and accountability

1. What is our theme for our message this today?
2. As you reflect on this story what is the Lord telling you that you need to do or maybe change in your life? Why is that a challenge for you? How can we hold you accountable to accomplish what the Lord wants you to do?
3. Who do you think needs to hear this story?

Close with prayer