

Where are you, God? (1 Kings 17-19)

1. INTRO:

- a. Planting Revolve → clarity, provision, people, money, buildings, sound, miracles
- b. Now: **Where are you, God?**
- c. Ever feel like that? God's proven himself to you in the past, but now you look around and you say, "Where are you, God? Are you in this? Are you here?"
- d. Take heart - you are in good company. Elijah was a man just like us.

2. Introduce Elijah and Ahab || Drought || God and Baal

- a. Ba'al was the Canaanite god of the storm; Lord of sky who controlled rain, lightning and, therefore protector of life and agriculture
 - i. During dry season, the Canaanite's believed that Ba'al was absent, on a journey of sorts, fighting the god of death, Mot.
 - ii. In the myth, Baal travels to battle Mot, but loses. This causes dry spells, starvation, death, and chaos.
 - iii. Another member of Baal's pantheon, Anath, goddess of war, comes to his rescue, kills Mot, and Baal is resurrected.
 - iv. So, if there was no rain for an extended period of time, it would act as a direct attack against Ba'al's ability to provide for the people who worshipped him. Where was Ba'al that the rains had ceased? Was he defeated by Mot? Was there a problem? These would be the thoughts that would be on the minds of Ahab and other Ba'al worshippers.
- b. 1 Kings 17:1-7 → Drought; Raven and the Wadi;
- c. 1 Kings 17:8-16 → Sidonian Widow;
- d. 1 Kings 17:17-24 → Widow's Dead Son;
- e. 1 Kings 18:1-19 → Obadiah and the Prophets;
- f. 1 Kings 18:20-45 → Mt Carmel and Baal; Outrunning Horses;
- g. 1 Kings 19:1-8 → 40 Days of Fear and Loathing;
- h. 1 Kings 19:9-14 → Earth, Wind, Fire and a Whisper;

3. Where are you, God?

a. God is in the big picture and in the details

- i. God sees the big picture. You don't. Not yet, at least.
 - 1. It's easy to get discouraged when you can't see the end of it all
 - a. Details might give us hints to the end, but often we miss it
 - 2. Why isn't God just healing me, taking away this pain, removing this trial. What's up with God's timeline?
 - 3. God is in the big picture and in the details (including the timing)
- ii. Drought → God vs. Baal
 - 1. For 3 years God humiliates Baal so that it goes beyond "just a bad season without rain"
- iii. Widow → Gentile, provision for widow in Baal's backyard

1. God waited until she had one handful of flour left... It would be easy for her to spare a cake if she had a barrel
- iv. Widow's Son → The god of death may have defeated Baal, but not YHWH → points to resurrection and the defeat of death itself
 1. God waited until Elijah asked multiple times... Elijah panicking while mom wails downstairs over another loss
- v. Mt Carmel → God's Vineyard, not Baal's
 1. God makes sure that it happens there, on what should be a most fertile area to see who really is the God of Provision (in details)
- vi. Prophets defeated → a mockery of Baal
 1. The cutting, the ritual, the sacrifice, even the means (fire from heaven) point to a mockery of the Storm God and the reality of Elijah's God
- vii. Rain arrives, but God has Elijah pray and send his servant 7 times. 7 times! Would you be panicking? Wondering? Worrying?
- viii. God is in the big picture, but he's also in the details.

b. God is in those mountaintop experiences, the miracles

- i. Elijah... When we planted...
- ii. We want the big, the miraculous, the miracles, don't we? Wouldn't you love to see that? But what do we do with this:
 1. Matthew 12:39, 16:4 → "This wicked generation seeks a sign..."
 2. "Don't rejoice over this, rejoice over your names in the book..."
- iii. When we just pursue the big, the special, the miraculous, we miss the point. Sometimes we actually miss God...
- iv. We stand in awe of the tricks instead of standing in awe of the God behind the curtain.
- v. We become like my generation, "Here we are now, entertain us"
- vi. God is in the mountaintop experiences, the fire and smoke, but also...

c. God is also in the normal: the still, small voice

- i. Raven and Wadi → Why have the wadi dry up? Why not just provide with Raven deliveries for three years?
 1. Eventually the miraculous becomes the new normal. You stop growing, you stop standing in awe of God.
- ii. When we just pursue the mountaintop experience, we miss the intimacy
 1. It's easy to be romantic on your honeymoon, but what about after a couple of kids and being up to your elbows in dirty diapers or teenage angst?
 2. Experiences are fleeting, intimacy is lasting
 3. You can't have real intimacy without slowing down, quieting down
- iii. It isn't until Elijah spends 40 days starving in the wilderness that he is still enough to hear God's voice
- iv. God is in the stillness, but we want the flash
 1. Testimony of healing vs. the testimony of dying well

2. Testimony of trial-free vs. the testimony of perseverance in trials
4. **Where are you, God?** I want to see you. I want to hear you. Where are you, God?
- a. What do we do about it?
 - b. It's hard to hear the still small voice when you won't be quiet, when you won't slow down.
 - c. *Psalm 46:10 ESV, "Be still and know that I am God."* (CSB: "Stop fighting" - like a parent says to a child. Relax! Stop arguing. I'm in charge.)
 - i. Craig Groeschel's story → 5 minutes of non-productive stillness
 - ii. An amazing thing happens when you are still - you realize he is God
 - iii. Our default is fight or flight... be still!
 - iv. When ravens feed you, you raise people from the dead, you call down fire from heaven, you outrun chariots and then fast for 40 days you start to think something else → maybe I'm God... and if not that, maybe this: I'm the only faithful one left. After all, do you see anyone else doing this stuff?
 - v. When you panic and worry, running for your life, desperate for a miracle you start to stress. You become miserable. You are afraid. Why? You forgot who God was.
 - vi. Be still and notice: the world is still turning.
 - vii. Be still and notice: Jesus is still building his church.
 - viii. Be still and notice: God hasn't abandoned you. He is in the big picture and the details.
 - ix. Be still and notice: God has brought you this far w/ a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.
 - x. Be still and notice: you're not God.
 - xi. Be still and listen... he's there. He is God. It's about him.
 - d. Does God feel absent? Does God feel far away? Does he feel silent and aloof?
 - i. Where are you looking for him? In the flash, the emotion, the smoke? Or in the still, small voice - the voice that you can't hear unless you slow down and wait
 - ii. **Do you have any stillness in your life?**
 1. "I can't afford to." You can't afford not to.
 - e. Bottom line:
 - i. There are seasons in your life when God makes his presence known with a flash. It may be more exciting during those times, but we need to remember to look past the miracle at God (Luke 10:20)
 - ii. During other seasons, God seems to be silent, absent or even disinterested. In those moments, realize that the only way you will hear from God is if you slow down and be still.
 - iii. When you feel like you need to dig to find God, it's because he wants you to dig.
 - iv. When you need a mountaintop, he will give you a mountaintop
 - v. When you need a valley, he will give you a valley
 - vi. When God is loud - enjoy it.

- vii. When God seems silent - slow down and listen until you hear him speak.
- f. We want the pinnacle but we need the presence
- g. Where are you, God? Wait for him in desperation. He's not just in the miraculous and the exciting. He's also in the still, small whisper.

Discipleship Group

- Do a discovery study on 1 Kings 19:8-14
- Afterwards, ask some of these questions:
 - Is God speaking to you loudly during this season of life?
 - If yes, how is his message preparing you for what is coming?
 - If not, are you slowing down to listen?
 - Do you have any margin for stillness in my life?
 - What would you need to do to create margin for stillness and silence before God?
- Make a plan as a group for action and accountability