

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Amazing God, I Call You Jesus, Man of Sorrows, More Like Jesus

WELCOME

What is your favorite pet? Can you share what is the special characteristic of your pet?

In the life of prophet Elijah, God used a very unusual 'pet' to provide for him, a scavenger bird, the raven! How have you seen God provide for you in extraordinary ways?

WORD

PSALM 34:18

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

1 KINGS 19:11-13

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Read **1 Kings 19** in its entirety.

In our lives God uses the process of brokenness to make ordinary beings like us into extraordinary instruments of His great works. **Psalm 34:18** declares that God is close to the brokenhearted. As this psalm implies, we will experience brokenness as we go through life, but God will be close at hand. When God breaks us, our part is to cooperate because He is creating something extraordinary in the process.

Cooperating with God means seeking Him earnestly, surrendering our plans and submitting to Him. But why do we need to cooperate with God? Let us look in the life of prophet Elijah, how brokenness changed his life and ministry as he cooperated with God.

1 Kings 17 gives us an idea of the miracles Elijah experienced as God's prophet. Elijah declared to Israel's most wicked king, Ahab in **verse 1**: "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." God used Elijah's to perform miracles hoping that Ahab would turn away from his wickedness. God's faithfulness was seen not only in the fulfillment of the prophesied rainless three years, but in His amazing provision for Elijah through the most unexpected sources—ravens, and an impoverished widow who was on her last meal (**1 Kings 2-24**). In this passage, notice that it both Elijah and the poor widow cooperated with God against all odds, and they experienced His power as they did so.

The drought and famine that followed set the stage for a showdown between Elijah's God, Yahweh and Ahab's god, Baal represented by hundreds of priests in **1 Kings 18:16-40**. Yahweh clearly and convincingly came out the winner—revealing Himself to Ahab, the Baal's priests and the people that He is the only one true God of Israel (**vv. 38-39**).

However, not even this great display of God's sovereignty and power convinces Ahab to repent and turn back to the Lord (**1 Kings 19:1-2**). With his evil queen, Jezebel calling the shots, the prideful rulers of Israel plotted to destroy Elijah and any remaining prophets of the Living God. When pride rules our hearts, we cannot genuinely experience God because there is no brokenness in us. No amount of God's display of His greatness in our lives will matter if we do not respond in humility and repentance.

Elijah became severely discouraged with this apparent failure of his ministry to convince Ahab and Jezebel to repent of their wickedness and turn to the one true God. On top of that was the threat to his life, and **1 Kings 19:3-4** tells us that Elijah became afraid and wanted to die, believing that he was useless and a failure. He ran away, wanting to leave his calling to be Israel's prophet behind and focused on his fears and doubts. This mighty man of God fell into depression, like many of us do when discouragement hits us when we experience troubles and resistance as we represent God to others.

GOD PROVIDES STRENGTH

But in his brokenness, God graciously restored him physically, emotionally and spiritually (**1 Kings 19:5-8**). While it was true that Elijah was feeling depressed, he still wanted to seek God's presence at Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God (**vv.8-18**), the very place where God met Moses face-to-face at the burning bush and when He gave the Ten Commandments. Here, in his brokenness, Elijah sought an intimate encounter with his God, and God met him there (**vv.11-12**). Throughout Elijah's journey, we see that in his brokenness, he experienced God repeatedly as God

WORD (cont'd)

provided for his every need. God strengthens us for the journey towards intimacy with Him.

Elijah's 40-day journey to Mt. Horeb could have done in 12 days, but why did allow Elijah to travel that long? Because Elijah needed a personal retreat; spending time with God unhurriedly as he walked on to Mt. Horeb. Do you need to take a personal retreat just to be with God?

GOD PROVIDES GRACIOUSLY

Upon reaching Mt. Horeb, God gently asked Elijah a heart-searching question: "what are you doing here?" The Lord knew that Elijah wanted to leave his place of calling—Israel, because of discouragement. Perhaps God is asking us, "what are you doing with your life?" We need to align our hearts to God's will because not everything we feel right is good for us. We may want to just run away from ministry or life in general and retreat permanently into a place where we feel comfortable and safe. God understands, but He also challenges us to face reality and fulfill our calling because He who has called us is faithful (vv. **1 Kings 19:15-18**). God deals with us graciously, not

in harsh anger or a loud rebuke so let us not be afraid to cooperate when He breaks us (vv. **1 Kings 19:11-12**).

GOD VINDICATES IN HIS TIME

Jezebel vowed to take Elijah's life, but God avenged Elijah and the Lord's prophets the wicked queen slaughtered (**1 Kings 19:2,10**) not right away, but in His own way (**1 Kings 19:17**). **2 Kings 10:17** records how "vengeance is the Lord's", and He completely vindicated Elijah! The Lord may allow people to break us, but He will vindicate us in His perfect time.

GOD GIVES A GLORIOUS FUTURE

Many people miss out on God's amazing plans because they choose their own way, but not Elijah! God had a glorious future for His prophet which included a successor, Elisha (**2 Kings 2:1-11**) and a special "heavenly limousine service", chariots of fire that took Elijah away from earth and into heaven (**2 Kings 2:11**)! Elijah cooperated with God through his period of brokenness and it was truly worth it. When God breaks, cooperate!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. "Our response is the key to brokenness" — how do you respond to the process of brokenness? Are you like Elijah who wanted to run away from his calling because of fear, or a feeling of inadequacy? How does cooperating with God look like for you at this point in your life?
2. Elijah asked God to 'take away his life' at one point in his journey. Was there a time when you felt so discouraged that you wanted to give up on life? How did God restore you?
3. Have you heard God speak to you through Elijah's life? What do you believe is He saying to you?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray that like Elijah, God will reveal to you the specific place and people that He calls you to minister to. Take courage and speak God's truth to people who may or may not listen to God's Word. Share the gospel of grace to them, and trust God to accomplish His plan in their lives.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends