Living Like Elijah

Big Idea:
The importance of private devotion before public success.

Back To Where It All Began
One of the great stories in the Bible is found in 1 Kings 18 – Elijah and the prophets of Baal. It has great drama, humour, villains, heroes, an unexpected twist, and supernatural intervention – the stuff of a great Hollywood blockbuster. But did you ever stop to think how Elijah became so confident in his God? What prepared him for this almighty test of faith? We know how the story ends, but remember Elijah didn’t, and yet he proclaimed the power of God with unflinching confidence and an incredible passion. 1 Kings 17 provides an interesting and revealing insight.

- Why is preparation important?

Enter Elijah
Read 1 Kings 17:1-6, Matthew 6:1-8
Elijah had a desire to stand for the truth (v1), he positioned himself to hear from God (v2), he was obedient (v5) and he accepted that God’s way was not his way (v6) – four vital qualities that God needs if He is to use us for His glory. The place where Elijah camped has a very significant name – Kerith Ravine. Kerith means cutting, as in separation, but also in terms of an agreement or covenant (the ‘cutting of a deal’). Can you see the spiritual significance? The private place where we meet God alone in devotion – the bedroom, office, backyard, beach, lounge chair etc – this is where it all happens.

- Elijah learned to be personally and privately devoted to God.

- How healthy is your private devotional life?

- What are the components of a healthy devotional life?

- What was the outcome of Elijah’s obedience (v6)? What is the application for us?

Lessons From The Brook
Read 1 Kings 17:7-8
Elijah’s isolation at the brook was only ever going to be temporary. Elijah would have realised that with the drought, the brook would not have an endless supply of water – that’s what happens in a drought! He could have begun to doubt God’s provision, or left in search of more water, but he stayed until “some time later” (v7) when God spoke again. Notice that God spoke again only after the brook had dried up - a test of patience and trust in God.

- Elijah learned to wait for God’s timing

- What might Elijah having been thinking as the brook began to dry up?

- What do we do when God seems silent and we are “running dry”?

- What does God ask us to do when our situation is serious and no answer is in sight?
Risk Taker
Read 1 Kings 17:9-11
Elijah knew that he had heard from God but now he needed to step out in trust and put his faith into action (remember, with the ravens all Elijah had to do was receive). Notice how Elijah’s faith actions begin quite small (v10). He asks for water almost apologetically, something he need not do considering the culture of the day. But let’s not underestimate the significance of what he is asking for – water in a drought! Elijah’s confidence begins to grow as he then asks her for some bread (v11).

Elijah learned to take a risk for God.

- Why can it be difficult to take that first step in trusting God?
- What does the Bible say about the trustworthiness of God?

Risk Taker
Read 1 Kings 17:12-16, Mark 9:23
God had a surprise for Elijah – He hadn’t revealed that the woman had no bread and that death was imminent. Now Elijah’s faith was on the line! But Elijah must have remembered that God had told him that the woman would supply him with food (v9). Elijah made a decision to trust what he knew in the supernatural, and not what he saw in the natural - a powerful description of faith in God.

Elijah learned to trust God’s word and not in circumstances.

- “Faith isn’t faith until it’s all you’re holding on to”. What does the saying mean to you?

Risk Taker
Read 1 Kings 17:17-24
God requires us to pass through challenges and tests in order to grow us and prove us. Elijah could have been offended by the widow’s seeming forgetfulness of the first miracle and her blame of Elijah for her problems (v17 18). She was not fully convinced about the power of God until the end of the story (v24). Elijah could also have let his fear win. Elijah appears very confident in his reply to the widow v19), but verse 20 reveals his true feelings! However, Elijah does something that would change his life for ever and prove him to be God’s choice for the battle with the prophets of Baal. The answer is in verse 24, and the key word is then.

Elijah learned to breakthrough and not breakdown

- What was the amazing decision Elijah made in v21?
- God had not told Elijah to pray for the widow’s son and yet he heard Elijah’s cries and performed a mighty miracle. What does this teach us?

The Results
- Elijah learned that God can do anything
- Elijah learned that God could use him
- Elijah learned that God wanted to use him
- Elijah learned that what he was doing now had significance
- Elijah learned later that God was preparing him for his next assignment