



This week, Pastor Bruce communicated the 3<sup>rd</sup> message in our Faith FORward Future series by reminding us that Elijah had a rhythmic relationship with God, as He leaves the widow's house and presents himself to the king after three years of a drought; a drought that he had commanded. No matter how blind the next step seemed, we see his rhythm of decisively obeying in 1 Kings 18:1-2: "*The word of the Lord **came to him...**and Elijah obeyed and **went.***"

The context of today's message is Elijah's journey back to the very king that had been trying to kill him. Elijah is met by Obadiah

(the king's administer) and the Obadiah reports to the king that Elijah is back, and Elijah is summoned before the king.

The king calls him, "*a troubler of Israel.*" But Elijah reminds the king that both the king and God's people have abandoned God's commands and introduced other gods to which Elijah invites 850 prophets to Mount Carmel and here once again, we see how God **does things at the most unexpected times, and in the most unprecedented ways with the most unconventional people to build our faith. Through this story we learn some realities about faith in uncertain times:**

**Obedience and trouble go hand in hand (v.16-19):** Elijah understands the pattern of faith even when the odds are 850-1. He understands in the rhythm of trusting, that obedience and trouble go hand in hand. God sets it up so no human action can help. Then he does it. And he leaves everyone spellbound.

**Knowing who is in control when our life is out of control (v.20):** We learn that our lack of faith doesn't weaken God's ability to show up in our life. As we make sense of faith in uncertain times Pastor Bruce reminds us that *faith is obeying for today and trusting God for the unknown tomorrow.*

**Complete obedience (v.21):** The Israelites had a faith problem; their knowledge of God didn't translate into their experience with God. Pastor Bruce makes it personal for us: It saddens the heart of the Father when we stagger between other opinions and His commands. What makes faith difficult isn't always unbelief, it's placing our faith in the wrong things.

Note: V.21: Elijah was effectively saying, how long will you limp between two branches. It's the imagery of a tree that has its root system in God. One branch strong and sturdy, the other unable to sustain our weight.

**Complete dependence on the power of God (v.22-24):** God is the only option. If you are out on a limb, and the odds are against you, God shows up unexpectedly, in the most unprecedented way and uses an unconventional person. Pastor Bruce challenges anyone who is standing out on a limb and there is a drought in your heart. God wants to demonstrate something to us in the middle of our troubled faith.

**Our identity is established in Him (v.31-38):** Elijah was reminding the people of God that their identity must be re-established in God and Him alone. They got back to the branch that was designed to hold their weight. It is a reminder to us that faith is surrendering all that we have to God who is the source of all that we need.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from the message today?
2. What kind of rhythms are you building in your faith journey? When God commands do you obey? Go? Give?

3. God's power doesn't weaken because our faith isn't strong. Have you ever experienced a time when you felt God's power in the middle of your struggle to have faith?
4. Pastor Bruce said, "*What makes faith difficult isn't always unbelief, it's placing our faith in the wrong things.*" How do you interpret this statement in light of your faith experiences?

This week take some time to reflect on your own faith journey in a difficult time. 1 Kings 18 is a reminder that when we place our faith in God and He is the only option, He shows up in His time to do something that no human being can do.