



This week Pastor Bruce communicated the 4th message in our Faith Forward Future series by reminding us that sometimes fear can also be the catalyst to faith if directed properly. This principle is demonstrated through the continued journey of Elijah as he leaves the faith injecting experience of Mount Carmel. God allows the rain to fall and what was a blessing for God's people was the beginning of a dark season for the prophet Elijah. One of the most bizarre verses in the story of Elijah is in 1 Kings 19:3, which says, "Elijah was afraid and ran for his life." Pastor Bruce posed a statement that creates the framework of today's message, which is this:

"In the middle of fear, the direction of our heart has a lot to do with the success of our faith."

Text: Elijah has fulfilled his calling and destroyed the false prophets on Mount Carmel. The problem came when word got back to Jezebel that her prophets were dead. Elijah quickly shifts from a strong faith to a running faith because Jezebel declares that Elijah will be dead in 24 hours and Elijah runs for his life. He comes to Beersheba and leaves his servant and travels one more day and lies down under a tree and prayed that he would die. Elijah was no longer running for his life, now he was running from his life.

The context of today's Talk It Over is Elijah's running in fear from Jezebel and what God is teaching us in the middle of our faith and fear.

1. Feed Your Faith ("Get up and eat" v.5-8). God speaks to Elijah twice to get up and eat for the journey is too much for him. Elijah's present location has been the location of our faith – he had enough! It's a reminder that even the strongest human courage isn't enough. Elijah wasn't really afraid that Jezebel was going to kill him, God had preserved him through 850 prophets and an evil king, what he feared (what we fear) **is that he had to face another battle and he didn't have the strength.** Pastor Bruce tells us that we allow fear to dominate our faith when we do not feed our faith with God's word.

2. Hear God Speaking ("Go out and stand" v.9). It seems faith is the combination of our efforts and God's power. It was only when Elijah obeyed and went that God showed up and responded. This is a question that reverberates through any heart that's running in the wrong direction of our faith – what are you doing here? Why are you on this cave?

A cave can represent the place you have created that doesn't require much faith. Caves can hide us from some things, but it doesn't hide us from fear. *Fear will obstruct our ability to hear God speaking.*

Elijah, in his fear had to leave the cave. God doesn't join him in the cave. God says, "go out," **because sometimes in order to increase our faith we have to take a step of faith.** Before God does something, God confronts his greatest fear by telling him to expose himself from his hiding place, where fear lives. God did not show up in the earthquake or the fire because God has a way of doing things at the most unexpected times, in the most unprecedented ways to grow our faith...1 Kings 19:12, "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."*

Elijah needed God to show up for him and he doesn't do it by shouting or showing off but drawing us closer because **God confronts our fear by calling us closer.** There is purpose in caves because it is designed to call us closer and when we are close, we have better clarity.

3. Obey God's Calling ("Go back the way you came" v.15-19). In caves the reception isn't good. God tells Elijah to go back the way he came because now he has the right faith perspective. When we fear, God shows up and whispers for us to come closer and when we are close, we will have better clarity on what we are called to obey.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you from the message today?
2. One of our greatest fears is not having enough strength to face our battles. Why? How do we manage our fear in these moments?
3. Fears' greatest threat is that it obstructs our ability to hear God. Elijah was able to truly hear God when he left the confinements of his cave. What are some distractions in our lives that keep us from hearing God?
4. What Bible verse have you memorized to feed your faith when fear creeps in? Share it with your group.

Isn't it true that often times, before God does something in our life, He confronts our greatest fear by telling us to expose ourselves from hiding? This week take some time allowing God to speak to the very thing that keeps you from truly hearing God in the middle of your faith.