



Nobodies Like Elijah

Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

(James 5:17-18, NIV)

“Georgie, don’t you ever get tired of just reading about things?” Violet’s question to George Baily in the movie, **It’s a Wonderful Life**, could be asked of many in today’s church. Always learning, but never growing in the intimate knowledge of Christ in whom truth is more than a library of knowledge, but a living reality in the hearts of God’s people. This is why Jesus taught that spiritual maturity is not marked by intellectual knowledge, but rather by the likeness of the teacher found in the disciple. (Luke 6:40) He warned the Scribes and Pharisees that their discipleship methods resulted in those who became twice the sons of hell that they were. (Matthew 23:15) Jesus also warned these misguided religious leaders saying, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39-40, NIV)

Scribes and Prophets

Understanding the difference between scribes and prophets is something I have mentioned before, but let me come back to it, because it is a vital part of our quest to experience God in these days of spiritual drought. The scribes study the Scriptures diligently. Their passion is for orthodoxy. They are convinced that the pathway to green pastures and still waters is found in right doctrine. The prophets also study the Scriptures diligently, and right doctrine

is by no means unimportant to them. But the passion of the prophets is first and foremost for God himself. They hunger and thirst for the good shepherd. Recognizing His voice is the only way to experience the green pastures and still waters where He Himself longs to lead His sheep.

That all God's people might be prophets was the heart cry of Moses, and the way out of the desert in which the church currently finds itself. (See Numbers 11:29) To experience the presence, and recognize the voice of God is our greatest need. Knowing what God **has said** is not enough. We must know what God **is saying**. Geological facts about a rock in the desert are useless. What God's people need is the living water from that rock, who is Christ. (See Numbers 20:11 and I Corinthians 10:4)

Nobodies Hearing God

In order to hear God we must believe that we can. It's easy to believe that Elijah heard God. After all, he was Israel's greatest prophet. Who are we to believe that we can hear God in the same way Elijah did? James, the half-brother of our Lord Jesus Christ tells us exactly who we are and why we can expect the same kind of experience with God that Elijah had. We are human beings with the same nature, passions, struggles, experiences and, most important of all, the same God as Elijah.

In 1 Kings 17:1, Elijah is introduced as "the Tishbite from Tishbe in Gilead." What is a Tishbite and where is Tishbe? No one really knows, but one thing on which all the experts are agreed is that Elijah came from an obscure part of Israel, living in the desolate, desert wilderness beyond the Jordan River. In other words, he was a nobody from nowhere.

It is not God's intention to place the men and women found in the Bible on pedestals beyond our reach. They are examples to us. They are meant to encourage us in our own pursuit of God. The fact is that a major theme of Scripture is God's choice of *ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things*. Gideon was from the smallest family of the least tribe in Israel. Jeremiah was just a teenager. David tended sheep. Amos picked figs for a living. Hosea had a bad marriage. John the Baptist, like Elijah lived in the desert. Our Lord Jesus himself was an uneducated peasant from the despised town of Nazareth. God chooses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

We Can Hear God

What does this mean for those of us living in these times of spiritual drought? Simply this – we *can* hear God. In a day not unlike our own, a nobody from nowhere experienced God’s presence and recognized God’s voice. And as we’ve already learned, there were many others in Elijah’s day that learned to experience the presence and know the voice of God as well.

What about you? Do you want to know not just what God has said, but what God is saying? Would like to learn to recognize the voice of the good shepherd as He seeks to lead you to green pastures and still waters? Is the living water that comes from the Rock that is Christ, what you are thirsting for in this spiritual desert? God’s word is not just something to be learned, it is something to be experienced. Believe Him when he says, “I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. (Isaiah 41:18, NIV)

Think About it

Take time in a quiet place with as little distractions as possible to reflect on the following questions. Remember, a journal is a good way to keep track of what God is doing in your life. Take time not only to record your prayers and answers to these questions, but be sure and reread your journal from time to time. You will be surprised at how God uses it in your life.

1. How would you describe your relationship with God? Do you know what God **has said**, but struggle to hear what He **is saying**?
2. When you read the stories of God's people in Bible, do you feel "less than" these men and women of God? Take some time to reflect on people and stories in the Bible. Imagine them as no different from you. Ask God to grant you the faith to believe that you can experience Him in the same ways they did.
3. If you haven't already, begin reading the story of Elijah starting in 1 Kings, chapter seventeen. Record thoughts, impressions, and feelings that come to you while you read. Ask God what He is saying to you through Elijah's story.