

Choosing Whom to Serve: Faith in Action

Hearing from God Before Acting

After three years of drought, God spoke to Elijah: *“Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth”* (1 Kings 18:1). This is a crucial detail—Elijah was moving based on God’s word, not his own initiative.

So often, we rush into decisions without first hearing from God. We get caught up in emotions, circumstances, or what seems logical, rather than waiting for His direction. But real confidence in prayer and action comes from having a listening ear. When we take time to seek God and hear from Him, we can move forward boldly.

Obadiah: A Man of Fear and Faith

On his way to confront Ahab, Elijah meets Obadiah, a man who feared the Lord but also served in Ahab’s corrupt administration. Obadiah had secretly protected a hundred prophets from Jezebel’s persecution. But when Elijah asked him to tell Ahab that he was there, Obadiah hesitated. He was afraid of the consequences.

How often are we like Obadiah? We love God, but when confronted with situations that challenge our faith, we hesitate. Maybe God has called you to speak truth at work, in your family, or in your community, but you’re afraid of rejection or consequences. Like Obadiah, we have to trust that if God calls us to do something, He will take care of the outcome.

The Confrontation on Mount Carmel: A Choice to Make

Elijah finally meets Ahab, and the king immediately blames him for Israel’s troubles. But Elijah boldly sets the record straight: *“I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed Baal”* (1 Kings 18:18).

It’s easy for people to blame God or His messengers for their hardships when, in reality, their own sin has led them into trouble. Sometimes, even as believers, we find ourselves in difficult situations because we have drifted from obedience. The good news is that when we turn back to God, He is ready to restore us.

Elijah then issues a challenge: *“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him”* (1 Kings 18:21). The people remain silent. They had become comfortable living with divided loyalties—trying to serve God while still entertaining idolatry.

This is where we must apply the passage personally: Is there anything in our lives that is competing with our full devotion to God? It may not be a literal idol, but it could be money, success, relationships, or personal comfort. Elijah’s challenge is still relevant today: You can’t have it both ways. If God is truly God, then give Him your whole heart.

The Fire of God: When God Moves Powerfully

Elijah sets up a dramatic test—both sides will prepare a sacrifice, but only the true God will send fire to consume it. The prophets of Baal cry out for hours, cutting themselves in desperate attempts to get their false god to respond. But silence fills the air.

Then, Elijah takes twelve stones (symbolizing God's covenant with Israel) and rebuilds the Lord's altar. He drenches the sacrifice with water—making it humanly impossible to burn. Then, in simple faith, he prays:

“LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant... Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.” (1 Kings 18:36-37)

And immediately, fire falls from heaven—consuming not just the sacrifice but also the stones, the water, and even the dust! The people fall on their faces and declare, *“The LORD, He is God!”*

When was the last time you saw God move powerfully in your life? Maybe you feel like you're stuck in a spiritual drought, like Israel. The key to revival—whether personal, in your family, or in your ekklesia—is to rebuild the altar of the Lord in your life. Return to full devotion. Pray with faith. And trust that God will answer in His way and His time.

The Rain Comes: Praying with Expectation

After this miraculous display, Elijah tells Ahab, *“Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain”* (1 Kings 18:41). Notice—there was no visible sign of rain yet, only the promise of God.

Elijah climbs to the top of Mount Carmel, bows down in prayer, and persistently asks God to fulfill His promise. He sends his servant seven times to check for a sign of rain. Finally, a small cloud appears, and soon a massive storm follows.

This teaches us something crucial about prayer: Faith-based prayer is persistent. Elijah didn't pray once and give up. He kept pressing in until he saw the answer.

Maybe you've been praying for something—a lost loved one, a breakthrough, healing, or direction. Don't stop just because you don't see immediate results. If God has given you a promise, hold on to it and keep praying with expectation.

Running in God's Strength

At the end of the chapter, we see something extraordinary: *“The hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel”* (1 Kings 18:46).

Elijah, filled with the power of God, outran Ahab's chariot for miles! This reminds us that when we are in alignment with God's will, He gives supernatural strength to accomplish what He calls us to do.

Personal Applications from 1 Kings 18:

1. Before taking action, seek God's direction – Elijah didn't move on his own; he acted according to God's word. Are you making decisions based on His leading or your own desires?
2. You can't serve two masters – Elijah challenged Israel to make a choice. Are there areas in your life where you are trying to serve both God and the world?
3. God moves when we trust Him fully – Elijah rebuilt the altar and soaked the sacrifice in water, making the miracle undeniable. Where is God asking you to step out in faith?
4. Pray with persistence – Elijah didn't stop praying until he saw results. Are you pressing into prayer, even when the answer isn't immediate?
5. When God empowers you, you can do the impossible – Elijah ran ahead of Ahab's chariot because God strengthened him. When God calls you, He will equip you with all you need.

This passage is not just about a historical event—it's a call for us to fully surrender, trust in God's power, and pray with expectation. Which part of Elijah's story do you need to apply to your own life today?