

My Dad is Bigger than Your Dad!

1 Kings 17-18

POWER—when I think of power I think of water. (Tell the Punchbowl Falls story).

TRUST—toss my kids into the air. I want them to trust me, they can trust me and do what I say. I will take care of them.

OBEDIENCE—all day long we are teaching our kids to obey

When I was a kid, there was a statement I used a few times, maybe you used it too, “My dad is bigger than your dad!” Well, you were probably lying when you said it, but I might have been telling the truth. After all, my dad is 6’5” and about 270 lbs.!! Let’s just say my dad would make a good Santa Claus!

POWER, TRUST, OBEDIENCE. Elijah was a man who experienced each of these in some unique ways. I want you to take a look with me at 1 Kings 17.

A little background---1 Kings 16:25—“Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord and sinned more than all those -before him.”

1 Kings 16:29—“Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him.

1 Kings 16:31—“He married Jezebel and began to serve Baal and worship him.”

1 Kings 16:33—“Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.”

Who was Baal? Baal was the god worshipped by the Canaanites. Believed to give fertility to the womb and life-giving rain to the soil, he is pictured as standing on a bull, a popular symbol of fertility and strength. The storm cloud was his chariot, thunder his voice, and lightning his spear and arrows. The worship of Baal involved sacred prostitution and sometime even child sacrifice.

What was an Asherah pole?—Asherah was the name of the wife of El (the mother of Baal), the chief Canaanite God. Wooden poles, perhaps carved in her image, were often set up in her honor and placed near other pagan objects of worship.

You think this is ridiculous, well, I found this on the web—“Get a beautiful [certificate](#) declaring that you are a priestess, priest, high priestess, high priest, witch, or shaman of Asherah. This is a real religious certificate meeting government standards for conducting marriages and other ceremonies.” You can buy one for just \$30.00!! WOW!!

So the scene is set with Ahab as the king of Israel, leading God’s people to worship and serve false Gods and to engage in gross immorality.

Along comes a man names Elijah. His name means “My God is the Lord” and this was the heart & soul of his message.

Who is your God? Is your God powerful? Can He be enough for you?

Elijah goes to Ahab and says there is going to be no dew or rain in the land for the next few years. (This was the first global warming prediction!)

But notice a theme in the next chapter...

1 Kings 17:2—"Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah..." telling him to hide in the ravine. God says, "**I have ordered** the ravens to feed you there and you will drink from the brook."

What does Elijah do?

1 Kings 17:3—"So he did what the Lord had told him!"

When we know what God wants us to do, let's do it! Action of obedience. One of the most important actions about the Jesus way—to obey, to obey is to love God.

1 Kings 17:6—An act of power, seems simple, yet it is amazing...ravens bring him bread and meat in the morning and evening. Where are they getting bread from? Raven bakery—we haul our buns for you! God is powerful.

1 Kings 17:7—Brook dries up—so much for God knowing what he is talking about. Now what?

1 Kings 17:8-9—"Then the word of the Lord came to him..'Go at once to Zarephath, **I have commanded** a widow to supply you with food." **God is in control!** God is capable! What does Elijah do?

1 Kings 17:10—So he went! Elijah's trust and reliance on the Lord demonstrated the trust in the Lord that Israel should have been living by. Action of doing it! Woman was there gathering sticks—he didn't know she was a widow. He asked her for a drink and bread. She told him she had only enough for one last meal before her and her son died.

1 Kings 17:13—Elijah tells her, "Do not be afraid. Go home and make a small cake of bread for me. The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the days the Lord gives rain on the land."

Elijah notices she is afraid. Is this ok? Yes, it is ok for us to be afraid in situations in our lives. Question is what do we do with our fear?

Fear can prevent us from obeying—think 12 spies/Josh/Caleb!

Does her fear stop her? What does she do?

1 Kings 17:15—"She went away and did as Elijah had told her!! She obeyed his command. By her faith the woman received the promised blessing.

Contrast with Israel-- Israel had forsaken the covenant and followed Baal and Asherah in search of riches and wealth. Here this widow realizes that trustful obedience to the word of God is the way that leads to life. What about you??

One of the most defining experiences of my life that taught me some of these lessons was when I was dating my wife. Zambia—get killed, never come back, find an African to marry.

There was food every day for Elijah and for her family!!! Wow! The power of God to make flour and oil appear every day in this woman's kitchen cabinets.

I am encouraged by the power of God that is displayed in each situation in the story of Elijah. God is powerful and in control. Do we trust Him and His power like we should?

We now come to Chapter 18. Ahab is still king of Israel. He is a bad dude. The famine in the land is severe. Ahab wants the head of Elijah because he thinks it is Elijah's fault.

1 Kings 18:1—"The word of the Lord came to Elijah, 'Go and present yourself to Ahab.'"

1 Kings 18:2—"So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab!"

Action of obedience. We can trust God when he tells us to do something, because He is telling us!! He will take care of us. Do you really believe that? Do you live in the reality of His power? Of his control?

Finally Ahab and Elijah meet.

1 Kings 18:17—Ahab accused Elijah of being a troubler for Israel.

1 Kings 18:18—Elijah says, no way Jose (Sorry if your name is Jose) "I have not made trouble for Israel, but you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Israel had ditched their covenant w/God. Now, let's settle this. You get the 450 Baal and 400 Asherah prophets and meet me at Mt. Carmel

1 Kings 18:21—Elijah challenges them on their wavering worship. "If the Lord is God, follow him, but if Baal is God, follow him." HA! Elijah knows the Lord is God, he must be laughing inside. It is a sure thing. Like taking candy from a baby—(I can't wait for Candyland)

1 Kings 18:24—"The god who answers by fire—he is God."

The people liked it. "What you say is good" they say. The showdown of "My dad is bigger than your dad" begins. When something powerful comes up my 2 little kids always remind me that God is more powerful and that Bernhard is powerful!

1 Kings 18:25—take the bull and call on the name of your god.

1 Kings 18:26—"they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. 'O Baal, answer us!' But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar."

Why did no one answer them? Because there is no other God besides Yahweh!!

1 Kings 18:27—At noon—Elijah began to taunt them—'shout louder! Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is in deep thought, or busy or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping!"

1 Kings 18:28—they shouted louder, slashed themselves—symbolic of self-sacrifice as an extreme method of getting a response from their god. They continued their frantic acts until twilight—"The time for the evening sacrifice—

This is cool because in Exodus 29:38-45 as God describes to the people how he wants them to perform their burnt offering every day, he says in v. 42—"There I will meet with you and speak to you!". He promised to meet with the Israelites, to dwell among them and be their God, so that they would know He is the LORD **their God. He is a personal and powerful God to you and I!!

So all day, thousands of prayers, cutting, dancing, all for nothing.

1 Kings 18:29—"But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention."

Elijah had challenged the people and their god and was stuffing their pagan religion in their face—Baal had no power, Baal was not a god. No answer!!

1 Kings 18:30—Elijah's turn

He called the people to him and they came to him, he repaired the altar, took 12 stones for 12 tribes of Israel—why---calling attention to the covenant unity of Israel as the people of God.

1 Kings 18:33-35—he drenches it with water—to prove he is not using any tricks, but to show the power of the Lord.

1 Kings 18:36—Elijah’s prayer—“God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel!! Let it be known today that you are God in Israel. Answer me so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

How many prayers did he pray for a response? ONE!!!

What did he want to come out of this miracle?? To have Israel turn their hearts back to God their creator. My question for you is what do you have to turn your heart away from in order to turn it back to God?? Now is the time to turn it back God’s direction.

What happens after Elijah prays??

1 Kings 18:38—“Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice and all—even water!

WOW! Now that is power!! This seems more magnificent than the ravens and the oil and flour jug, but it’s really not. We need to consider the whole of God’s power—seemingly small things to intense large powerful displays. Thunder and Lightning is just as powerful in God’s economy as is the human eye.

What did the people do? v. 39—“When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, ‘The Lord, he is God! The Lord, he is God!’”

We see in these stories the subtle and strong power of God through his powerful interactions with Elijah. Also in Elijah’s prayer, we see his desire for Israel, God’s people to turn their hearts back again to Him. Now this heart turning is not just most of your heart, wallet, priorities, investment properties, or Seahawks season tickets. It is all of your heart. Just like the widow who risked it all by using her last supplies to make a meal for Elijah. He takes care of us and will take care of you.

To see the hearts of the people turned back again to the Lord. I ask you today, how is your heart? Is your heart turned towards the power of the Lord? Is He your God? God wants to meet with you and I. He wants to work powerfully in and through our lives. He wants to meet our needs. He wants us to trust and then obey Him.

A person who hears what the Lord wants them to do and then quickly does it is the mark of a person whose heart is turned towards the Lord. Is this you?