

Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 17.1-7

Key Verse: *“Elias was a man with feelings like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it didn't rain on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”* James 5.17-18

Elijah was a prophet to Israel during the reign of Ahab, a very wicked king. Into this scene stepped Elijah to rebuke him, and announce God's censure. There are some things we should know, remember and copy about this remarkable man of God.

First, He was just an ordinary guy.

Verse 1 tells us that he was a Tishbite, that is he came from Tishbe, which Josephus says was in Gilead on the east bank of the Jordan, a rural area. He would be a farmer. Any of us can be like Elijah. God uses people of high estate, and also very ordinary people; farmers, fishermen, tax collectors. Jesus was a carpenter. He can use you.

Second, He was a man of God.

His name, Eli-jah comes from two words meaning 'My God is the Lord.' James tells us that he was a man of prayer. This was not cold, formal, ritual prayer, but the evidence of a vital, personal relationship with God. In verse 1 he testified that he stood before the Lord God of Israel. The word 'stand' here includes the thought 'in Whose presence I abide' He knew God personally. Do you?

Third, he lived in a godless society

under a wicked king. For God's comment on Ahab, see 1 Kings 16.29-34. His wife, the infamous Jezebel, was

even worse. These verses tell us that Baal worship was prevalent, which included prostitution of the worst kind. It seemed that everyone was only intent on wickedness and immorality.

Fourth, he was obedient to the command and word of God.

We have no record of his call, but we do know that he gained an audience with King Ahab, to bring God's word of rebuke. It may not have been his first word to Ahab, but it is our first reference. To witness as a Christian often calls us to take a stand in obedience to our calling.

Fifth, his witness was difficult.

We learn in chapter 19 that Elijah was fearful of Ahab and Jezebel. He ran for his life at their threat and went into deep depression. To witness before Ahab must have been traumatic to his sensitive nature. In truth he was more fearful of God than Ahab.

Sixth, he believed in the mighty power of Almighty God. Notice that Elijah had complete confidence that God

would do just as he proclaimed to Ahab, in response to his prayer. This kind of boldness comes only from the exercise of faith. He knew the language of faith. He had trusted God and experienced His prayer answering power so often that he was familiar with the way God works. See Hebrews 5.14,. Faith grows through exercise also, Luke 17.5, Romans 1.17. It can be minute; Matthew 17.20; small; Luke, 12.28, great Matthew 18.10 & 15.28; or missing, Luke 8.25. Our experience of God's dealing with us in small matters teaches us to trust God for greater things. Our failure to follow God's word, or the way of faith, or prayer, teaches us even more than the times of success. We should never be afraid to venture out on God and fail. This is exciting Christianity, not ritualistic religion.

Seventh, his ministry was true to the word of God. See Deuteronomy 11.16-17 & 1 Kings 8.35. No valid prophetic or public ministry can be out

In this series of studies we will examine the events that made Elijah a role model of faithful service to God for centuries (Malachi 4.5, Matthew 11.14, 27.47, Luke 1.17, John 1.21 and James 5.17-18). We will try to learn from his example of faith and fear and failure. Francis W Dixon tells us that Elijah is of particular interest to all those who feel their sphere of service is hard, those who feel they are lone workers, those whose patience is sorely tried and get few results, those who feel there is little they can do to influence an apostate age and those who have failed. It will be an exciting time for all those who want to trust the living God, as did Elijah

of harmony with the word of God, the Bible, for it is the inspired record of God's revelation to His people in ages past. God cannot contradict Himself. See Hebrews 13.8. We should always test our experience against the instruction of God's word.

Eighth, he served the living God.

See verse 1. God is not an idol, an icon, a statue, an idea or a force, but a living being. Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us. Thus He is mighty to interact on our behalf. (See Hebrews 7.25)

Last, He acted in the power and

authority of the Living God. He told King Ahab, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" The servant of God has the authority of God when acting in accord with the word of God. Matthew 17.20, Matthew 21.21&22, Acts 16.18, 2 Corinthians 5.18-20 As ambassadors we have the authority of our King and country.

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

These notes may be reproduced in part or in full when distributed without cost, with the words 'Used by Permission, Glen Park Gospel Church.' included.
Visit us at glenparkgospel.org.au