

Courage on Carmel

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 18.17-40

Key Verse: “ *Our God is a consuming fire.*” Hebrews 12.29

What is the greatest need in our Church today? Better men, more money, modern methods? We suggest that we need what Elijah needed, for the fire of Jehovah to fall upon the sacrifice of our service and commitment to Him. This phenomenon is consistent in the scriptures as the symbol of God’s manifest presence and power. Look up Exodus 3.2-6 the fire of commission; Exodus 13.20-22 the fire of guidance and direction; Exodus 19.18 the fire of majesty; Leviticus 9.23&24 the fire of approval; 1 Chronicles 21.21-26 the fire of forgiveness; 2 Chronicles 7.1 the fire of consecration; Isaiah 4.2-6 the fire of cleansing; Luke 3.16&17 the fire of judgment; Acts 2.1-4 the fire of empowerment; Hebrews 12.29 the God of consuming fire.

Whether the fire was literal or figurative it always made a significant spiritual difference in the lives of those on whom it fell. What is your need before God? As we look at Elijah’s life and example there is much for us to learn of the life of faith.

First. Note that **Elijah was in Direct Consultation with God** in all that he did. See 1 Kings 18.1&36. Faith is always the action of obedience to the word of God. If God does not instruct, then our action is a presumption on our part. God has an obligation to keep His word. He has no obligation to fulfill our wishes (although he may choose to do so), but He will always do what He says He will do. See Numbers 23.19. Faith is obedience.

Disobedience is sin. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin Romans 14.23. We need to study God’s word and listen to Him in prayer. Jeremiah 35.17 & Matthew 22.29&31.

Second **Elijah Knew Just What God Would Do.** He acted in accordance with that knowledge. There was no hesitation on his part. This decisiveness can only come from a man who is in open communication with God. Elijah knew when to be silent, where to hide, when and where to appear, what to say and what to do. He was not in a quandary. Compare Jeremiah 1.4-10 with Jeremiah 23.21.

Third, **Elijah Called the People to Decision.** V21. “How long will you shuffle between two opinions? If the Lord is God follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him.” Like Joshua in 24.15, this is our task today. 2 Corinthians 6.2.

Fourth, Although **Elijah** did his part, He **expected God to do His part.** Elijah did not bring along fire lighters and a jug of kerosene in case God found Himself in difficulties. In fact He revelled in making the task humanly impossible by saturating everything in water. (And how precious was water just then!) It is easy to not believe that God can do what He says He will do. This is just as bad as expecting God to do what He has not said He will do.

Fifth Elijah’s experience tells us **How to Prepare for the Fire to Fall.** The fire fell:

When the Altar was Repaired. V30. The altars of the Lord were broken. These altars in our lives must be fully restored and our sin freely and fully confessed. See John 1.29 & 36. And 1 John 1.9

When the Sacrifice was Offered. V33 Elijah placed it piece by piece on the altar. Romans 12.1-2 tells us to lay each part of our lives on the altar, no matter how hard this may seem to do.

When the Water was Poured. Elijah made sure that there could be no trickery or deceit. We can mistake emotional services for real spiritual power, or slick organization for God’s blessing. Humanist philosophy denies the miraculous but here is no substitute for fire from Heaven. Wait for the real thing.

When Prayer was Made V36&37. See James 5.16-18. James tells us clearly that prayerlessness limits power. Sooner or later the fire will fall upon our lives and our work as we remain faithful to the sovereign God. We have God’s word for it.

When the Motive is Right. V36&37 Look carefully at the personal pronouns employed in Elijah’s prayer. Then read James 4. 2&3. Lack of prayer and wrongly motivated prayer can hinder the Fire from above. Notice how Elijah was affected by his isolation and the hardness of his mission. The theme recurs in 1Kings 18 22, 18.36 and again in 19.10&14. However in this prayer the need for personal vindication turns to a concentration upon the purposes and mercies of God. Then the fire fell!

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

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