

## From Fear to Near

1 Kings 19:1 – 9

### I. Intro

- A. **Koinonia relationships**; “why”, “what”, and “where”; last week talked about consequences of not building these relationships
- B. **Question**: Why are these type of relationships not more common, especially in church culture? Fear
- C. **Illustration**: Nephew and waving to people passing by; in general, live in an impersonal culture; meeting someone first time and remembering name
- D. Not only issue in relationships between people, but extends to relationship with God; because of fear, consciously or subconsciously, we’re always maintaining a shield of protection around ourselves; we don’t do well with transparency and vulnerability
- E. 2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)  
<sup>7</sup>for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
- F. God doesn’t want us to live with attitude of fear when it comes to relationships, but His intent is for us to draw near to Him and others
- G. 1 Kings 18, Elijah (greatest prophet of OT), had “mountain top” experience
  - i. Challenged prophets of false god, Baal – introduced to God’s people by Queen Jezebel, wife of King Ahab, to a duel (contest)
  - ii. Prophets and Elijah would offer sacrifices to each one’s god and whichever god responded would determine winner
  - iii. Each did, and dead silence, no response from the god Baal (no surprise); immediately the one true God, the god of Elijah, sent fire from heaven and consumed Elijah’s sacrifice
  - iv. Revival broke out, and Elijah led the people to execute all prophets of Baal – a great spiritual experience and victory; told later 7,000 didn’t bow down to Baal
  - v. Queen Jezebel not happy when Ahab told her about what happened
- H. **READ 1 Kings 19:1 – 9**
- I. Elijah tired of being sick and tired; **REFER v. 10 (repeated v. 14)**; actually ready for his life to end; Lord sends angel to minister to Elijah by providing food – happens twice; Elijah was so worn down he had absolutely no strength, ready to completely give up
- J. Finally, angel persuades Elijah to go to Mt. Horeb (mountain where God appeared to Moses and gave the Law); Elijah arrives, crawls in a cave and hides – secludes himself from God and anyone else; God asks, “*What are you doing here?*”

**K. Just as God called out to Elijah in a time of struggle and despair, God will also call to us in our fear of drawing near into deep, personal, intimate relationships; when He calls out reminds us of several things ...**

## **II. 1 – Remind Us We’re Not Alone**

### **A. Look for His presence**

**i. REFER v. 11 – 13**

**ii. So often when we’re seeking the Lord we expect Him to respond in some grandiose, majestic, powerful, dramatic way**

**iii. This moment in Elijah’s life, God wasn’t speaking through the wind, earthquake, or fire – speaking in a small, quiet voice, gentle whisper**

**iv. Wanted Elijah to know that He (God) was with Him even though there wasn’t an elaborate outward manifestation of that presence**

**v. [SLIDE] In our times of struggle, when it seems there’s no one around who cares, we know God will never abandon us**

**vi. As believers we are to reflect the image of God and His Son Jesus Christ, we don’t need to abandon each other in these times**

**vii. Romans 12:15–16 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

<sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.

**viii. Associate, reach out to comfort those who are *lowly***

**ix. Lion trainers, reason why carry stools into cage with lions, point legs of chair to animal instead of the seat – causes the lion to focus on all four legs which confuses/causes a kind of paralysis, weakens/disables the lion because his attention/focus becomes fragmented**

**x. Humans get caught up in the “paralysis of analysis” many times and become overwhelmed with situation/circumstances we’re facing at the time – we need to turn our focus away from all these things and focus on one thing only, seeking God’s presence**

**xi. Isaiah 26:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

### **B. Look to His people**

**i. Elijah certainly wasn’t alone in this struggle, God was with Him, but also – REFER v. 15 – 18**

**ii. Elijah had not been abandoned, by God or people; [SLIDE] many times the Lord’s presence with us can be felt in the presence of others around us; there is comfort found in *koinonia* relationships**

**iii. Too often, because of fear of being transparent/vulnerable, we withdraw from fellowship with other believers during difficult times**

- iv. Spurgeon quote: *“Satan always hates Christian fellowship; it is his policy to keep Christians apart. Since union is strength, he does his best to promote separation.”*
  - v. When dealing with, working to overcome, despair/discouragement there is strength in numbers
  - vi. Referred to before: Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (ESV)
    - <sup>9</sup>Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.
    - <sup>10</sup>For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!
- C. During times of trouble God reminds us He is always there with us, we just need to seek His presense, look to His people

### III. 2 – Remind Us We’re Not Through

- A. Restore our walk with Him
  - i. Twice, God asks Elijah the question, *What are you doing here, Elijah?*; not a question inquiring about location, but more about mental/emotional state
  - ii. (v. 15a) Lord tells Elijah to *Go, return on your way ...*; (God says) *letting life’s struggles get you off track, need to get back in step with Me*
  - iii. When Jezebel told Elijah she would hunt him down, she would make sure he suffered same fate as prophets of Baal, instead of standing firm in faith, Elijah fled in fear (v. 3)
  - iv. Most of time when we’ve allowed fear to take over it’s because we’ve gotten off track, we’re out of step with the Lord and then we naturally hide or run away in fear; run from God, run from others
  - v. [SLIDE] To be fearful is to be faithless, to be faithful is to be fearless; living a life that is overwhelmed by fear or one that is overcoming by faith depends on who’s “calling the shots” in our life – is it us or is it God?
  - vi. **Illustration:** Large crowd standing in line at a stadium waiting for gate to open so they could get tickets to the upcoming game; late arrival tries to push his way to front of line and big burly man grabs him and throws him to the back; second time, man tries to get up to front and crowd of fans force him to the back; after third attempt and being thrown back again this man picks himself up and in aggravation says, “If you don’t stop throwing me out of line, nobody’s getting in today. I have the key!”
  - vii. Isn’t that like us during times of struggle, even fear – the Lord wants to be at the forefront of our struggle and we keep pushing Him back – and He’s the only one with the key to help us overcome, He is the key to overcome

viii. We need to *return* back on our way to the Lord – we need to get back in step in our relationship with Him, and once that's back on track then our relationship with fellow believers

ix. Once our walk with Him is restored, He then will continue to ...

**B. Accomplish His purpose in our work for Him**

i. In this life, people strive for one of three goals: survival, success, or significance

ii. When discouraged, we strive for survival; times we become discouraged because we've focused on pursuing success; God's plan for us is to experience lives of significance by His work being accomplished in us, even if we don't see ourselves as achieving success or even if it seems the world is determined to keep us from surviving

iii. If we would remember in difficult struggles, fearful times, look for His presence with us, look to His people for strength/comfort, return to walking in step with Him, then He will work to accomplish that purpose in us for His sake

**IV. Close**

**A. In times of fear/distress don't let Satan have his way and pull you away from the Lord and from others**

**B. Let God draw you near to Him and bring others, those *koinonia* relationships, into your life that you can also draw near to**

**C. Look to the Lord in order to move from a place of fear to a place of near**