

The Still Small Voice

1 Kings 19:1-18

MEMORY VERSE

1 KINGS 19:11-12

“And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two plastic cups per child, two to three feet of string, scissors, and markers.

Brown card stock, pencils, scissors, markers or crayons, and pins or a stapler.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Listen For Your Name

As you open up your teaching time begin to teach your lesson in a whisper volume/tone of voice. Even if children are not quite listening give them a few moments. What will usually happen if someone begins to whisper in a room of people who are talking is others will tend to stop to listen to what is being whispered. Let's see if that happens in your class.

If the children respond and become quiet, listening to what you have to say, then share with them that we are going to learn about a time when God whispered to His servant and got his attention even more than a fire, and earthquake and a great wind. Share with your class that God doesn't always speak to us in the "BIG" things, but quite often in little ways and quiet ways.

If the children don't respond to your whispering, go ahead and get their attention. Like above, share what today's lesson is going to be about, but also share how important it is to be listening for God's voice. God will sometimes speak to our hearts in a whisper, what if we aren't listening? Encourage the children to listen for God's whisper in their hearts as Elijah learned to do in our lesson today.

LESSON TIME!

There were many prophets in the history of Israel who spoke God's message to the people. Elijah was a prophet who is well known for all the great miracles that God did through him. Elijah's great commitment to the Lord challenges us to be just as committed. He was sent to speak God's word to a king who often rejected his message, and whose wife, as we will see today, even tried to have him killed.

Elijah is best known for his showdown with the 450 false prophets of King Ahab at Mount Carmel. Elijah set out to prove to evil Ahab that only the Lord is God. Elijah then killed the false prophets beside the brook Kishom and fled back to Jezreel.

Though Elijah was known for many miracles, his life began with the same miracle that is available to each one of us; he responded to the miracle of being able to know God. Elijah experienced God's love and compassion in great victories, as well as in difficult times. We will see him in one of those difficult times in our lesson today and learn that **Troubles seem smaller when we remember the greatness of God.**

1 KINGS 19:1-2

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.

Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

If there was any one in Israel who didn't know who Elijah was, they did now. Elijah challenged the people to take a stand for God, turning away from the idol worship supported by King Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel. Elijah's showdown with Ahab's false prophets was no contest. God had it won before it even started. God's awesome power is displayed along with Elijah's heart to rid Israel of the false prophets. In a short period of time, King Ahab's religious system is wiped out.

Soon after Elijah's confrontation with the false prophets, he tells King Ahab to go eat and drink for there is going to be a heavy rain coming, though they were in the middle of a drought. Previously Elijah had predicted the drought to Ahab (1 Kings 17:1), now he was predicting rain, which was a further demonstration of God's power.

Elijah was hoping that King Ahab would have a change of heart towards God as he sends Ahab back to Jezebel to consider the awesome majesty of the true God. Next we see that Elijah prays for rain and then out runs King Ahab's chariot to arrive in Jezreel before him, a 25 mile journey. That was a pretty amazing thing for Elijah to do. God gave him the special energy to do that and again displays God's awesome power in the life of Elijah, backing his ministry.

Unfortunately, King Ahab didn't turn from his wicked ways. He reports to Jezebel all that Elijah had done and she becomes very angry. Her religious system was now nothing but a ridiculous display of failure in the eyes of the people. Jezebel's priests had been eliminated and her pride and authority damaged. The money she had invested in these prophets was now lost.

Elijah who caused the prophet's death was a constant thorn in Jezebel's side because he was always predicting gloom and doom for her kingdom. She was unable to control his actions so she vowed to kill him. As long as God's prophet was around she could not carry out all the evil she wanted to do.

Sometimes people are angry or irritated with God's people because they are a reminder of their sin and evil practices. They might think if they could just get away from God's people then everything would be OK. But that isn't true because we can never run from God. He loves us too much, so He is going to confront people with their sin, either through His word or through His people.

1 KINGS 19:3-8

And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat."

Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.

And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."

So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

As soon as Elijah heard of Jezebel's threat to kill him, he ran for his life. Evidently Elijah's fear came out of the power that Jezebel had. Rather than trusting in God for his protection as he had for the past 3 1/2 years he ran for his life. He ran all the way through the kingdom of Judah to the southernmost town in the land, Beersheba. Still fearful that Jezebel's spies might discover him, he told his servant to stay behind and he traveled alone one more day's journey, which was about fifteen miles into the Negev desert. He wanted to get as far away as he could.

Elijah was a great man of God who demonstrated great faith in a great God. He had just experienced two great spiritual victories with the defeat of Jezebel's prophets and the answered prayer for rain. But now fear gripped Elijah's heart, knowing that his life was threatened. This woman who set out to destroy the prophets of God (1 Kings 18:4) wanted to hunt Elijah down and kill him. The eyes that were dependent on God were now focused on the problem. He seems to have forgotten momentarily that **Troubles seem smaller when we remember the greatness of God.**

How would you respond in a situation in which your life was threatened because of your stand for God? We might want to run for our lives. We can certainly understand why Elijah ran. We can quickly be overcome with hopelessness over our problems. Have any of you ever had a time when someone laughed at you or made fun of you because you were a Christian? That happens a lot in the world.

One of the problems we see for Elijah is that he didn't stop to pray and ask the Lord what he should do. Sometimes we panic and don't seek the Lord for His wisdom in a situation. We would rather

run away than wait any longer and have to deal with the problems. But Elijah needed to pray and put his trust in God to help him. We need to do the same thing when we have problems.

Elijah lost hope and ran as though God was incapable of helping him. This only led to more problems. Feeling like he was all alone, he became even more sad. He was so discouraged he prayed that he might die. Elijah had forgotten the lessons God had been teaching him all these years. His eyes were on his circumstances rather than on the Lord. He felt that he was no more successful than his forefathers in ousting Baal worship from Israel. Exhausted and discouraged, Elijah laid down under a tree and fell asleep.

Elijah woke up at the touch of a messenger sent by the Lord. God's love and mercy is still there for Elijah. He didn't get mad at Elijah, but rather sent a messenger to him. God sent an angel to take care of Elijah's physical needs. Elijah would need energy to walk on a journey to Horeb, the mountain of God.

God didn't answer Elijah's request that he die. God didn't even acknowledge that Elijah asked for that to happen. Sometimes God answers our prayers with "no" because He knows what is best for us. The Lord wasn't through with Elijah and his ministry to the people of Israel. So God gave him what he needed and then gave him instructions for what he was supposed to do in the future.

It is interesting that Moses and the Israelites had traveled in the same wilderness for 40 years, sustained by the manna God had provided for them. They learned lessons of His faithful care and provision. Now Elijah would walk through the same desert for 40 days and nights, kept by the food that God provided and would learn the same lessons. This 200 mile trip would prepare Elijah for what God was going to reveal to him on Mount Horeb. **Troubles seem smaller when we remember the greatness of God.**

1 KINGS 19:9-10

And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

God's strength is always there when He asks us to do something for Him. Just like He empowered Elijah to stand up against Jezebel's fake prophets, God strengthens and prepares him for his next mission. God will always prepare and provide us with His power to do His work. We should never feel abandoned or alone because underneath are the everlasting arms of the Lord to help us.

Arriving at the place where God told him to go, Elijah finds a cave to hide in. Discouraged and afraid, he could only see the dark side of his troubles. There the Lord began to speak to him. The Lord began with a question, "What are you doing here Elijah?"

The Lord isn't angry at Elijah for running away, but He does want to teach Elijah a valuable lesson. He wants Elijah to think about what has happened and why he is in this place of discouragement. It's here that Elijah reveals his heart to the Lord. He had run because of fear. His response revealed that he felt he was standing completely alone and defenseless against the ungodly forces that threatened to overpower him (verse 14).

Elijah only saw the hopelessness of his problems, not the power of God. He felt like it was all a failure, even though the Lord had greatly used him. Instead of disciplining or lecturing Elijah, the Lord simply gave him a demonstration of His power and compassion. **Troubles seem smaller when we remember the greatness of God.**

Phone Call from the Lord

You will need two plastic cups per child, two to three feet of string, scissors, and markers. This is an old craft done for many years but can still teach us about communication and how the Lord wants to speak to us and into our lives.

Give each child two plastic cups and one piece of string two to three feet long. With the scissors, poke a small hole in the bottom of both cups. Push one end of the string into the hole in the cup from the bottom. Tie a knot into the end of the string. The knot end should be inside of the cup. Do the same with the second cup. Allow the children to decorate their telephones with stickers or markers.

When done with the craft have the children split into pairs. Have one child hold one end of a phone and the other child hold the other end of the phone. The string should be pulled taut, but not hard. Have one child speak into a cup while the other child places their cup to their ear. They should be able to hear the talking because of the vibration of the sound waves over the string. Allow the children to take turns. Explain to the children that it is important for us to listen for the Lord's voice. Sometimes we can hear Him very loud and clear, other times it might be more difficult, especially when there is a lot of noise around us. You can try and experiment with one pair of children and have them try it with everyone else in the room is talking and again while everyone

else is silent. Ask them which time was easier to listen. It is the same way in our lives when we let the distractions of the world keep us from hearing the Lord.

1 KINGS 19:11-14

Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;

and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Standing on the mountainside outside his cave, Elijah witnessed what Moses had seen in the same mountains centuries before, an awesome display of God's power. Elijah again got to watch a demonstration of God's control over the wind, earth and fire. But on this occasion the Lord was not in any of these.

God chose to reveal Himself in a gentle whisper. Back in the cave, Elijah heard the voice of God again, and pulled his cloak over part of his face as he went to the cave's entrance. God asked the same question He asked earlier, but Elijah gave the same response. Elijah

may have understood the point of God's display of power of natural forces for his benefit but he still felt the same way about himself.

Elijah knew that the gentle whisper was God's voice, though God used His power to judge the wicked, God would show His grace and mercy to His humble servant. If we only look for God to work in big ways, we may miss Him. Most often we may find God speaking to us in a gentle whisper.

Elijah needed to see his situation as God saw it. Elijah needed to be encouraged. God would be telling him that his ministry needs to continue. God wasn't done with Elijah. At times we may feel like God can't use us any more because of past failures or problems in our lives, but that's not true. God could have given up on Elijah but He didn't. God won't give up on us either. In God's gentle way He will speak to our heart to encourage us to continue His work in our life, and what a blessed life that is. **Troubles seem smaller when we remember the greatness of God.**

1 KINGS 19:15-18

Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

"Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

"It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

"Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Elijah is encouraged to continue the ministry that God wants him to finish. He is now able to move on, having been refreshed through the love and compassion of the Lord. He has a new view of his ministry, knowing God's plan for his life. **Troubles seem smaller when we remember the greatness of God.** God is in control and He wants to use Elijah to carry on His work.

God asked Elijah to anoint three different people. The first was Hazael, as King of Syria. Elijah was to anoint an enemy king because God was going to use Syria as His instrument to punish Israel for all of its sin. Elijah was also to anoint Jehu who would be used by God later to destroy those who worshipped the false god Baal (2 Kings 9-10).

The third person Elijah was to anoint was Elisha, the prophet who would come after him to carry on God's work. Elisha's job was to work in Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and help point the people back to God. The Southern Kingdom, at this time, was ruled by Jehoshaphat, a king devoted to God.

God then revealed to Elijah that He still had 7,000 faithful followers in Israel who had not bowed before or kissed the idol Baal. Elijah's heart must have been encouraged to hear that he was not alone after all in his desire to stand against the wickedness in Israel. Sometimes we have to trust that God sees things that we don't. When we think a situation is hopeless God is still in control and knows what is really happening.

Through all the wonderful miracles Elijah did, we might think that he was super-human because of the power of God displayed in him. But we see in this lesson that Elijah struggled with the same kinds of things we do. We can be encouraged from Elijah's life the next time we are discouraged or find ourselves in the middle of a bad situation (see James 5:17). **Troubles seem smaller when we remember the greatness of God.**

Every Step I Take!

This craft will help to emphasize to the children that God is always with us no matter where we go. Use the feet prints made from this craft to decorate your classroom or bulletin board. The children will be drawing their own feet. You will need brown card stock, pencils, scissors, markers or crayons, and pins or a stapler.

Lay several sheets of poster board on the floor. Have each child stand on the poster board and trace their feet. Let kids cut out the outlines of their feet. Allow them to decorate their feet with crayons or markers. They can draw shoes if they like or draw toes. Leave enough space to write, "I want to walk in the Spirit!" on the footprints.

After the children are finished with drawing their feet, make sure they have their names written on them. Next pin or staple the footprints to the wall or bulletin board in the classroom to remind the students to walk in the Spirit.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord when any troubles come into their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.