

Courage in a Corrupt Culture III – Showing Up for a Showdown!

Summary of the Message

In this third message, Elijah steps out of obscurity and into one of the most dramatic moments in Scripture — his showdown with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. After years of preparation and isolation, it's time for Elijah to stand publicly for God.

Elijah shows us that courage in a corrupt culture requires:

1. **Faithfulness over fame** — obeying God even when no one is watching.
2. **Faith over fear** — standing for truth even when it brings criticism or danger.
3. **Fire-fueled living** — being empowered by the Holy Spirit to confront evil and demonstrate God's power.

Before fire falls, the altar must be built, the precious must be sacrificed, and faith must be put into action. God still calls His people to stand with boldness in the face of compromise — not to win applause, but to reveal His power.

Key Scriptures

- 1 Kings 17:5
- 1 Kings 17:10
- 1 Kings 18:1–2
- 1 Kings 18:17–18
- 1 Kings 18:21–24
- 1 Kings 18:30–35

Study Questions with Answers

1. **What does Elijah's obedience at the Brook of Cherith and at the widow's home at Zarephath teach us about faithfulness over fame?**

Elijah obeyed God even when no one was watching. He served in hidden, humble places before standing in public power. God often develops our character in private before displaying His power through us in public. We have to be okay with that first.

2. Why was it dangerous for Elijah to show himself to Ahab after three years of drought? What did we learn from that?

Elijah's prophecy caused a national crisis. Ahab blamed him for Israel's suffering and sought his death. Yet Elijah chose faith over fear, trusting that obedience to God's voice was safer than hiding from a wicked king.

3. What does faith over fear look like in our own personal walk?

Let them speak to this with personal application.

4. What does Ahab's accusation ("You troublemaker of Israel") reveal about how truth is often received? Was it received well?

Those who stand for truth are often blamed as the problem. In reality, sin and compromise cause the trouble. Elijah reminds us not to be swayed by cultural gaslighting. Truth will always confront deception.

5. What does Elijah mean when he calls the people to "stop limping between two opinions"? How do we see this in our own life or in the culture we live in? Why does this not work?

He challenges Israel's divided loyalty. They wanted the blessings of God while still worshiping Baal. Elijah's call to choose reminds believers today that neutrality in a moral or spiritual battle is itself a choice — and the wrong one.

6. Why did Elijah pour water on the sacrifice before calling down fire, and what does it symbolize for us today?

First it solidified that this was a miraculous event. Not trickery or smoke and mirrors. This was a miracle. Secondly,

Water was precious during the drought. Elijah's willingness to "waste" what was valuable showed total trust in God. It also symbolizes giving God our best even when it is costly and believing that His power will fall on our sacrifice.

Family Spotlight

Illustration: “The Wet Wood Test”

- Gather some sticks or small pieces of wood. Try to light them (safely) when they're dry — they ignite easily. Then dampen them with water and see how hard it is to start a flame.
- Talk about how Elijah soaked his altar with water — making it impossible to burn without God's help.
- Teach kids: “When things look impossible, God still has the power to show up!”
- Family Challenge: Share one situation this week that feels “impossible.” Pray together that God would show His power in it, and thank Him for always being faithful to answer by fire.

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