

Life Group Notes
Sunday 17th May 2020

Speaker: Andy McCullough
Title: Elijah: A Resilient Faith
Passage: 1 Kings 17:1-16

Stephen Caiger, “Elijah had something about him that was different – something colourful, dramatic, picturesque, which endeared him to the hearts as well as to the minds of men. He was a doer of the word and not a teacher only. He was more than a Voice: he was a Man, a man, as the Epistle of St James puts it, of like passions with us.”

From this story, we learn 5 things:

1. God is the source.
 - Idolatry is attributing causality to something other than God.
 - Yahweh provides rain, not Baal.
 - Fundamentally, this story is about God providing for Elijah despite layers of difficulty.
2. A Christian is like a whale
 - Believers have times under the surface, times of private faith, when we demonstrate humility.
 - Believers also have times above the surface, times of public faith, when we demonstrate authority.
3. God is the same everywhere.
 - God provides outside the promised land/ “his territory”.
 - There are no sacred spaces – God can be present in a church meeting but also in your kitchen!
4. God uses unlikely sources of blessing.
 - Both times God speaks to Elijah, what he asks seems illogical – too difficult, unlikely, outside my box, surprising – unclean ravens and a poor widow.
 - God uses times of adversity to build our Trust in Him, but also to challenge our pride and shake our prejudice.
5. These truths about God are unpopular and dangerous.
 - Jesus, 900 years later, told this story in Nazareth (Luke 4), and as a result the crowd tries to kill him.
 - Why dangerous? Why unpopular? Because people don’t want to hear that the source of God – they want it to be something they can manipulate. And people don’t want to have their prejudice challenged.
 - In the end, Jesus died for this belief, this call to love even your enemies, the claim that access to God is available to all people, that everyone’s invited!
 - Jesus makes a new kingdom, not limited geographically and idolatrous like Ahab’s kingdom, but a kingdom in all places for all people, including in the wrong places and for the wrong people.

Questions:

1. Does something about this Elijah story really stir you or move you? If so, what?
2. Do you need God to provide for you at the moment? Pray that he would meet your needs.
3. Do you think you need to grow in humility (private faith) or authority (public faith)?
4. In what ways are you finding the Presence of God during this time of lockdown? When and where do you feel closest to Him?
5. How do you think Elijah felt being provided for by a Sidonian widow? In what ways would this have challenged his prejudice?
6. Why was this aspect of Jesus' teaching (that God loves all people) so unpopular to the Jews of his time? Why is it such an unpopular message today?