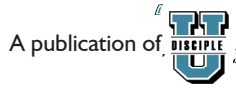


Elijah: A Man Like Us

Part Three

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. I Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "**Talking Points, Walking Points**" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "**Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time**", are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Who do you know who resembles Elijah? Who do you know who resembles Obadiah? Tell us about them?
- Which character do **you** resemble more? **Why** do you say that—give an example?
- Read 1 Kings 18:28-29. Notice the extreme sincerity and commitment of the prophets of Baal. People often say, "As long as a person is sincere—that's all that really matters." What do **you** think?
Who do you know personally who thinks that **any sincere belief** will acceptable to the One True God?
- If America could experience a radical turn toward God, what do you think God would most like to change?
- Read 1 Kings 18:21, 37, 39. **Why** do you think it matters so much that we recognize God's lordship?
In which situations of your life do you readily recognize God's lordship? **Why** those situations?
In which situations do you often fail to recognize God's sovereign lordship? **Why** those situations?

This week, "Dig Deeper" into this subject to discover the importance of this truth.
See "**Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time**".

Application-Challenge

- Are you a TLO ("This Life Only") Christian, or are eternal goals and values your perspective?
- Do you suffer from Obadiah's malady, "dedication with reservations"?
- Whom do you fear most, God or man?
- If necessary, are you willing to stand alone for God?



Sermon Summary

Key Text: 1 Kings 18:1-46

Today we come to one of the most intense and dramatic crises in the history of Israel: Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Elijah instigated this life and death struggle. It was one against 850—and it was winner take all!

[1] Events before the conflict at Mt. Carmel How do you bring revival to people who are spiritually impoverished and far-removed from God? What kind of a leader will it take to get these people's attention? I'd like to suggest three candidates for the job. Years of famine—and of private seclusion (1 Kings 17:3)—are coming to a close (18:1). Although **Elijah** no doubt enjoyed his years in Zarephath, this obedient servant puts himself completely at God's disposal. Being a man of action, he likely was ready for this new challenge. In contrast, **Ahab**, the king, was crassly materialistic. Whereas his chief concern during a famine should have been the welfare of his people, he was more concerned about mules than about men (v. 5). Not only did Ahab ignore God's wise counsel about things, he fully embraced the counsel of his evil wife, Jezebel. Together they took the nation down. Our third character, **Obadiah**, is baffling. He was the head domestic administrator over the king's affairs. He was sharp, and he had a place of strategic leadership in Israel. He also was a true believer (v. 3). But he was one of God's timid saints. He wanted to get along with evil King Ahab too much—fearing the cost of going against him. It appears that Obadiah became too comfortable with the apostate culture in which he lived. So there was a limit to his devotion and courage (v. 7-12). Notice that it was only at the end of his statement that Obadiah tacked on his testimony (v. 12)! Often when I challenge someone to take a stand for God today, they'll tell what they did for Him 20 years ago! That's what Obadiah did (v. 13). How about you? Obadiah had dedication—but with reservation (v. 13-15). A lot of Christians serve God when it is convenient, when it's not costly, when it doesn't affect our reputation with our unbelieving friends.

[2] Events during the conflict Obadiah told Ahab that Elijah wanted to meet with him—and the sparks began to fly (v. 16-18)! Ahab had the power to end Elijah's life right there, but Elijah had the courage of his convictions, as he publicly aired Ahab's sins. Elijah knew the presence of Almighty God, and that made all the difference! Elijah even issued a command to the king—and he obeyed (v. 19-20)! Hundreds of false prophets gathered, adorned in fancy prophet robes, Ahab and Jezebel were in their royal regalia, the people of Israel streamed in—and there's Elijah, in his drab garments and long, matted hair! But don't feel sorry for Elijah—God is with him, and he knows it. The people were stunned as they realized the choice they needed to make (v. 21 cf. Matthew 7:13). Elijah was in charge; he set the agenda (v. 22-25). He is precipitating a crisis. After hours of frantic effort, Elijah mocked them (v. 27-29)—and now it's his turn (30-35)! And then, Elijah prayed (v. 36-37). Contrast the prayers of the false prophets with the prayer of Elijah: they are shouting and appealing to their god for six long hours. Elijah's prayer lasts less than a minute. Elijah wasn't trying to impress God or anyone else. His only concern was that God be vindicated—and was He (v. 38-39)?! Elijah spoke just once more—he commanded that all the prophets of Baal be slaughtered (v. 40). What an incredible scene—in the morning, the nation was thoroughly apostate, but by evening the prophets of Baal were dead and true religion re-established!

America is in deep trouble today, but God can reverse things very quickly, if he chooses to—and He's looking for some 21st century "Elijahs". He can't use "Obadiahs" greatly; they're too accommodating to the culture. Elijah was a man just like us (James 5:17); God can use anyone who is sold out to him without reservation. Are you an Elijah, or an Obadiah? "How long will **you** hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." (v. 21).

Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Elijah was not the only prophet who was concerned that people know who is the **true** God. The prophet Ezekiel was consumed with this issue—over eighty percent of the occurrences of “know that I am the Lord” come from his pen! Each day this week, review several of these passages. What do you observe? **Why** does recognizing who truly is the Lord matter so much to God and his spokesmen?

Ezek 6: 7 The slain will fall among you, and you will **know that I am the LORD**.
10 Then they will **know that I am the LORD**; I have not said in vain that I would inflict this disaster on them.”
13 Then you will **know that I am the LORD**, when their slain are among their idols around their altars, on ever...
14 So throughout all their habitations I will stretch out My hand against them and make the land more desol...
7: 4 For My eye will have no pity on you, nor will I spare *you*, but I will bring your ways upon you, and your abo...
27 The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with horror, and the hands of the people of the land will tr...
11:10 You will fall by the sword. I will judge you to the border of Israel; so you shall **know that I am the LORD**.
12 Thus you will **know that I am the LORD**; for you have not walked in My statutes nor have you executed My...
12:15 So they will **know that I am the LORD** when I scatter them among the nations and spread them among the...
16 But I will spare a few of them from the sword, the famine and the pestilence that they may tell all their ab...
20 The inhabited cities will be laid waste and the land will be a desolation. So you will **know that I am the Lo...**
13: 9 “So My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will have...
14 So I will tear down the wall which you plastered over with whitewash and bring it down to the ground, so...
21 I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people from your hands, and they will no longer be in your han...
23 therefore, you women will no longer see false visions or practice divination, and I will deliver My people o...
14: 8 I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among M...
15: 7 and I set My face against them. *Though* they have come out of the fire, yet the fire will consume them. The...
16:62 Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall **know that I am the LORD**,
17:24 All the trees of the field will **know that I am the LORD**; I bring down the high tree, exalt the low tree, dry up...
20:12 Also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might **know that I am the LOR...**
20 Sanctify My sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may **know that I am the LOR...**
26 and I pronounced them unclean because of their gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass throu...
38 and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land...
42 And you will **know that I am the LORD**, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore...
44 Then you will **know that I am the LORD** when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to yo...
22:16 You will profane yourself in the sight of the nations, and you will **know that I am the LORD**.”
23:49 Your lewdness will be requited upon you, and you will bear the penalty of *worshiping* your idols; thus you...
24:24 Thus Ezekiel will be a sign to you; according to all that he has done you will do; when it comes, then you w...
27 ‘On that day your mouth will be opened to him who escaped, and you will speak and be mute no longer. T...
25: 5 I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and the sons of Ammon a resting place for flocks. Thus you will k...
7 therefore, behold, I have stretched out My hand against you and I will give you for spoil to the nations. An...
11 Thus I will execute judgments on Moab, and they will **know that I am the LORD**.
17 I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes; and they will **know that I am the LORD** whe...
26: 6 Also her daughters who are on the mainland will be slain by the sword, and they will **know that I am the L...**
28:22 and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, And I will be glorified in your midst...
23 “For I will send pestilence to her And blood to her streets, And the wounded will fall in her midst By the sw...
24 “And there will be no more for the house of Israel a prickling brier or a painful thorn from any round about...
26 They will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live securely when I execute ju...
29: 6 “Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will **know that I am the LORD**, Because they have been *only* a staff *made...*
9 The land of Egypt will become a desolation and waste. Then they will **know that I am the LORD**. Because y...
16 And it will never again be the confidence of the house of Israel, bringing to mind the iniquity of their havin...
21 “On that day I will make a horn sprout for the house of Israel, and I will open your mouth in their midst. T...
30: 8 “And they will **know that I am the LORD**, When I set a fire in Egypt And all her helpers are broken.
19 “Thus I will execute judgments on Egypt, And they will **know that I am the LORD**.”
25 Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall. Then they will kn...
26 When I scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands, then they will **know...**
32:15 “When I make the land of Egypt a desolation, And the land is destitute of that which filled it, When I smite...
33:29 Then they will **know that I am the LORD**, when I make the land a desolation and a waste because of all thei...
34:27 Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on t...
35: 4 “I will lay waste your cities And you will become a desolation. Then you will **know that I am the LORD**.
9 I will make you an everlasting desolation and your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will **know that I a...**
15 As you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You...
36:11 I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inha...
23 I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you hav...
38 Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities...
37: 6 I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you...
13 Then you will **know that I am the LORD**, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out o...
28 And the nations will **know that I am the LORD** who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst for...
38:23 I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will k...
39: 6 “And I will send fire upon Magog and those who inhabit the coastlands in safety; and they will **know that I...**
7 “My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profa...
22 And the house of Israel will **know that I am the LORD** their God from that day onward.
28 Then they will **know that I am the LORD** their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, a...

