

November 3, 2013

Lesson 9: Still, Small Voice



1 Kings 19:1-18

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.' Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.'

He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking 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 sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' Then the Lord said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.'

Still, Small Voice

1 Kings 19:1-18

“... and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.”

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The Big Story Truth: God provides even when others don't believe us, even when we are alone, even when we are worn out and discouraged, when we are afraid.

About This Scripture Passage: This passage starts with a simple sentence that really is a much bigger story: “Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done...” Some background information is needed here. Ahab was the king of Israel, but he married a woman named Jezebel who did not believe in the One True God. In fact, she worshiped fake gods and wanted everyone else to as well. In fact, she killed everyone that tried to be faithful to the One True God. In a story just before what we hear today, though, Elijah (a prophet of the One True God) and the leaders of the false god worship had a big show down to try to prove whose god was real. Elijah and the One True God won, big time... and then he killed all the fake prophets of the fake god.

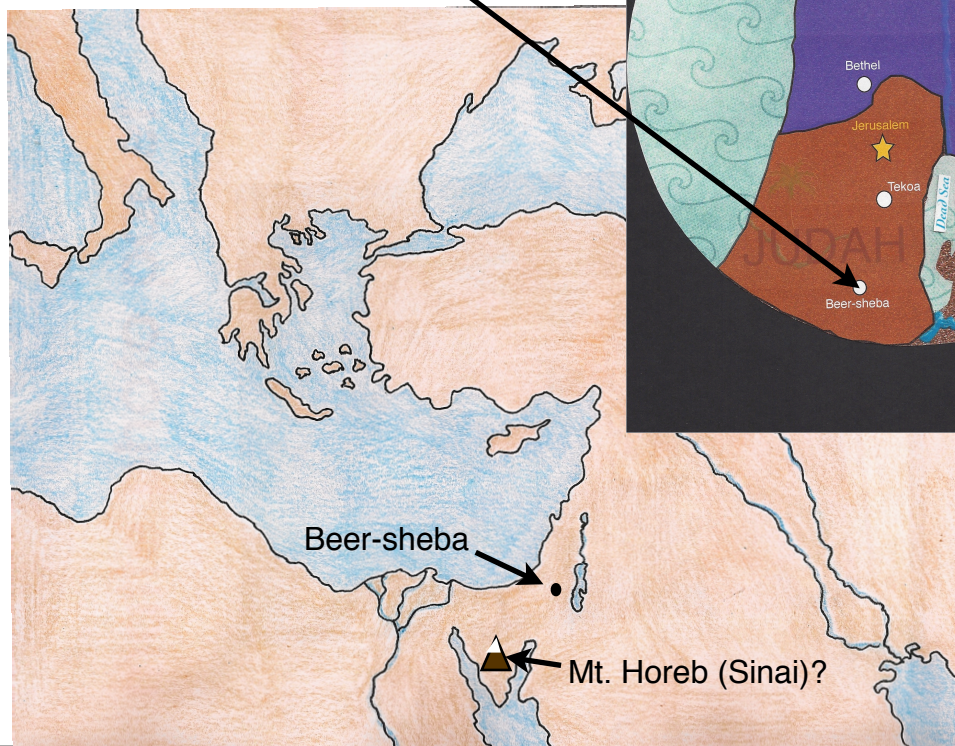
Jezebel was not someone to mess with. She would not have been happy about this. You can bet she wanted Elijah dead. But God provided safety for Elijah. God provided food and strength. And God even provided his presence to encourage and direct Elijah to continue on in faith and trust of God's work.



Making the Connection: We often think of God as big and powerful and mighty. But when God shows up to Elijah at the cave, it's not in the big and powerful ways... but as a still, small voice. Elijah was scared and needed reassurance that God was with him. There are times when we all need that. Even if they don't like to admit it, kids know what it is like to be frightened. They need to hear that even when they are afraid that God is there with them. This lesson is an opportunity to help kids listen for the still, small voice in their own lives that offers the reassurance and strength that they are loved and that God will never leave them!

Where in the World Are We? The kingdom that Solomon ruled was divided after his reign into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom that took the name of "Israel," and the southern kingdom that took the name "Judah." Ahab was the king of the northern kingdom, Israel. The two locations of the events in this story are listed as Beer-sheba and Mount Horeb.

Mount Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai (where Moses received the 10 Commandments). We don't know for certain where Mount Horeb/ Sinai is located, but pictured on the map here is one possible location.



For Your Reflection:

When you are afraid, what gives you peace?

Do you usually find guidance from God better in awesome and powerful experiences or in simple silence?

As you think about this story this week, how might you take time from the busyness for quiet listening for God?

What direction is God giving you for action this week?

Large Group Gathering

Welcome the kids and their families. Say: **Last week we learned about King Solomon (David's son) and the special house for God that he built. But later in his life King Solomon forgot about worshipping only the one true God. And many of the kings after Solomon worshiped fake gods too. What do you think God thought about that? God didn't like it! God sent prophets to tell the kings that what they were doing was wrong. But the kings didn't listen to the prophets. Today you're going to hear the story about one prophet- Elijah- who had to be very brave at a time when it was dangerous to worship the One True God. Elijah was very scared, but God came to him in the quiet and reminded Elijah that God would always take care of him. Let's see if we can practice hearing God in the quiet. Let's see how quiet we can be as we pass out our Faith 5 sheets today. Send the quietest member of your family up to get your sheets. Let's see if we can even be quiet while we're talking today. Today in your Faith 5, use whisper voices!**

Remind anyone who is there without family members that they are welcome to join in with another group and then take their Faith 5 sheet home to do with their family tonight. After 5 minutes, call the groups back together. Dismiss adults to head to the adult classes and gather the kids for song.

Sing together "Give All Your Worries to God" from Vacation Bible School. Say: **Elijah was very worried about what would happen to him. The queen was very mad because he was telling everyone about the One True God. But God came to Elijah and promised never to leave him.**

Even when we are scared, God promises to be with us and to help us! God loves us so much!

Sing together "Yes, He Loves Us", "Jesus Loves Me" or another familiar and comforting song. Sing any other songs as time allows and then dismiss kids to their classes.

Family Faith 5

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1. Each person shares their high and low (the best and worst things that happened this week.)
2. Read together this Bible Verse:

“... and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.”
3. Talk about how the Bible verse relates to your highs and lows.
4. Pray aloud for one another's highs and lows.
5. Bless one another. Make the sign of the cross on each other's heads and say these words: _____, don't be afraid. God is with you!

Preschool

Materials Needed:

- Table
- Large sheet or fabric to throw over the table to form a “cave”
- Flashlight (if your cave is dark inside)
- Fleece fabric squares (a size appropriate for a small blanket, 1 per child)
- Fabric crayons, markers, or paints
- Newspapers (if using fabric paints to protect the table)
- Baby carrot sticks
- Cheese Slices (Kraft Singles style)

Before the Children Arrive:

Set up your room so that you can gather with your class in a “cave” made with a blanket under your table. Make sure that you will have enough fleece cut into squares for each child who will attend class. Set these aside for later in the lesson along with the fabric crayons, markers, or paints.

Experiencing the Story:

Gather the children together quickly under the table tent that you have made. Say: **I’m so glad you all made it safely here this morning... even though you were praising the One True God out there. This morning, our story is about someone who had to hide because they worshipped the One True God. Do you know anyone who got in trouble for worshipping God? (Kids who attended Athens VBS last summer might say Paul). Our story is from further back in the Bible. It’s from the Old Testament time, before Jesus was born. But even back then sometimes worshipping God was dangerous.**

Do you remember which king we talked about in our story last week? You are right, we talked about King Solomon and the house that he built for God. Well, Solomon started out loving God, but then he started worshipping fake gods. And lots of the kings that came after him did too. And there was one king and queen who came along who decided that they would kill anyone who was a messenger of the One True God. (Shudder) It’s kind of scary to think about that isn’t it.

Well, Elijah was one of God's messengers and he was very afraid that he was going to be killed. So what do you think he did? What do you do when your afraid? Give all the kids time to respond. He did something like that. He went and hid. He found a cave to hide in, kind of like our tent cave we're in here today. And he prayed for God to help him.

Elijah thought God would come in some big way. Like maybe God would come and talk to him in fire like he did to Moses. Or maybe God would come in an earthquake. (Have kids stomp feet hard like an earthquake) But do you know how God came to Elijah. God came very quietly. Elijah heard God in the sound of silence. Let's practice silence. Sit in silence for a minute. When Elijah heard the silence, he knew that God was with him! Ask: Do you ever have quiet times when you know that God is with you? Maybe when you are going to sleep at night or when you are resting in the afternoon?

Activity Options:

1. **Quiet Comfort Blankets:** Today we're going to make blankets that we can use to snuggle with when we are scared or when we are having quiet time to remind us that God is always with us! Give each child a piece of fleece

Victory for God Cookies!

Ingredients:

Unfrosted sugar cookies

Blue frosting

Variety of red and orange fruit and candies

(such as strawberries, red and orange sprinkles, raspberries, orange slices, red hots, red and orange M&Ms, Skittles, Twizzlers, etc.)

Directions:

Create all the ingredients in a buffet style bar. Have kids spread blue frosting on the cookies to represent the water that Elijah poured on God's altar. Then have the kids load up the tops of their cookies with fire-like fruit and candy to show God's victory!!!!

fabric. Show children how to use fabric crayons, markers, or paints to decorate the blankets to remind them of God's love and care for them.

2. **Snack- Wrapped in God's Love Carrots:** Show kids how baby carrot sticks can be wrapped in a cheese slice like a blanket. Remind them that God's love will always surround them no matter where they go!
5. **Game- God is With You:** Play a game of freeze tag. When a child is touched by the person who is it, they yell out something scary and then freeze. Other children who are 'not-it' can rescue the frozen child by touching them and shouting, "God is with you!" When that happens, the frozen child is free to continue running around. Play with children taking turns being "it" and being the ones who are chased.

*Early Elementary, Upper Elementary,
Middle School and High School*

Movie Day!

All of the older grades will watch together an episode from the series "What's in the Bible." Show Volume 6 (A Nation Divides), Episode # 1: The Big Split.

Preface by saying: **Today in our church service we are going to hear a story about the prophet Elijah. There is more to the story though than what we are going to read in the church service, so today we are going to watch the story! Elijah lived at a time when there were lots of kings who were doing rotten things. It was a dangerous time to be faithful to God because almost everybody else was worshipping fake gods. What do you think God thought of that? Boo! God did not like that! God was with Elijah and showed everyone that he is the one true God! Let's see how it happened!**

Creative Snack Idea: If you would like something more than popcorn, and want to tie your snack into the theme of Elijah's story, try making these cookies to celebrate God's victory over the fake prophets of Baal.