



TRUSTING GOD WHO IS OUR SOURCE OF STRENGTH

**Grace Communion International
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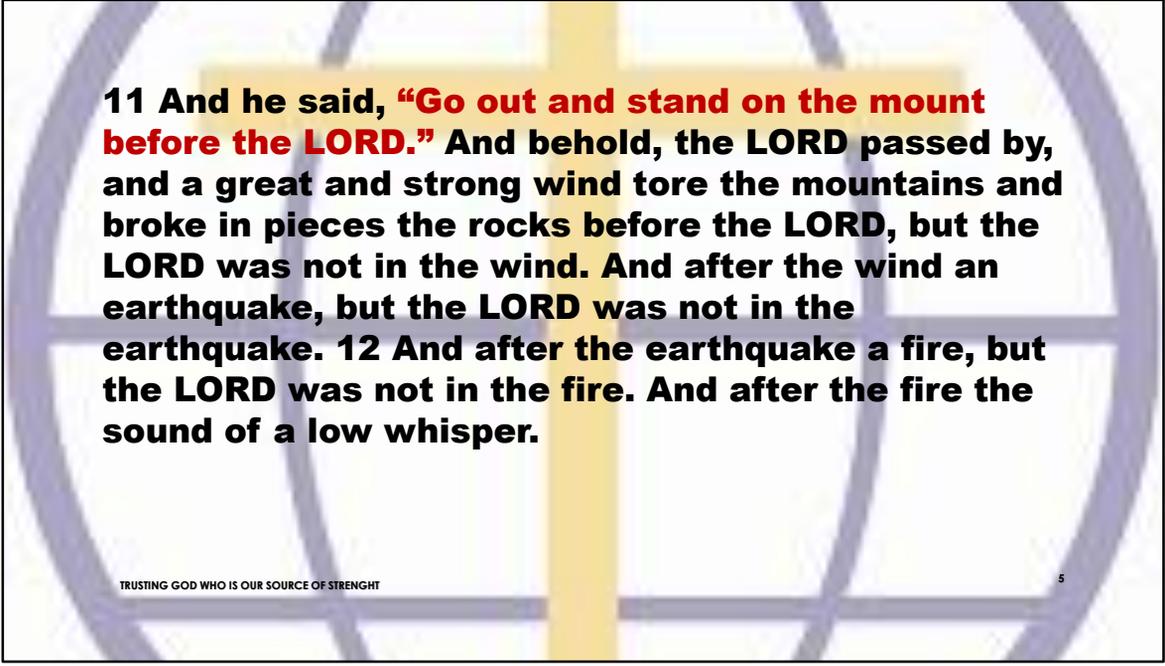
**SCRIPTURE
READING:**

**1 KING
19:1-15**

“1 ¶ Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 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 as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” 3 Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came 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 ASKED THAT HE MIGHT DIE, SAYING, "IT IS ENOUGH; NOW, O LORD, TAKE AWAY MY LIFE, FOR I AM NO BETTER THAN MY FATHERS." 5 AND HE LAY DOWN AND SLEPT UNDER A BROOM TREE. AND BEHOLD, AN ANGEL TOUCHED HIM AND SAID TO HIM, "ARISE AND EAT." 6 AND HE LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, THERE WAS AT HIS HEAD A CAKE BAKED ON HOT STONES AND A JAR OF WATER. AND HE ATE AND DRANK AND LAY DOWN AGAIN. 7 AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAME AGAIN A SECOND TIME AND TOUCHED HIM AND SAID, "ARISE AND EAT, FOR THE JOURNEY IS TOO GREAT FOR YOU." 8 AND HE AROSE AND ATE AND DRANK, AND WENT IN THE STRENGTH OF THAT FOOD FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS TO HOREB, THE MOUNT OF GOD.

9 ¶ There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” 10 He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”



11 And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks 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. 12 And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.

13 And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” 14 He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”



15 And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.” (1Ki 19:1-15 ESV)



**THESE ARE THE INSPIRED WORD OF THE
LIVING GOD**

**THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR PEOPLE
ENCOURAGEMENT**

AMEN

TRUSTING GOD WHO IS OUR SOURCE OF STRENGTH

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During today's sermon, we are going to look at a slice of the prophet Elijah's life and consider how long-suffering, patient, persevering, merciful and loving God is.

First let us overview what's Elijah had experienced before what happened in chapter 19.

One of the great things about the Bible is that God does not hide the broken humanity of his servants. He tells it like it is. It is a source of encouragement because these great servants of the Lord were ordinary human beings who struggled through fears and insecurities just like we do. We also see how God in his mercy strengthened and transformed their lives.

We read in 1 Kings verse 17 how Elijah brought the message to King Ahab that a severe drought was going to hit the land.

When the drought hit, Elijah obeyed the Lord. He went to the brook Cherith, east of the Jordan where he was miraculously fed bread and meat both in the morning and in the evening by ravens.

When the brook dried up, he was sent to Zarephath where he met a widow at the gate of the city, a widow who was gathering sticks. She had nothing. Elijah asked her for a little water and a morsel of bread. This widow only had a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in the jug. She was on the verge of starvation. This widow was reassured by Elijah that God would take care of her. **“Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the LORD the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’” (1 Kings 17).**

That is indeed what happened, the jar of flour and the jug of oil did not empty. The widow, her son and Elijah were able to eat.

The widow’s son then became ill. His illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him (verse 17). The Lord answered Elijah’s prayer and this boy was given life again. **“And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived.” (1Ki 17:22 ESV).**

In the third year of the famine, the Lord told Elijah to go meet Ahab again. In the meantime, the wife of Ahab, Jezebel, was cutting off, massacring, killing the prophets of the Lord.

In that tense situation, Elijah went to meet Ahab. Ahab accused Elijah of troubling Israel. Ahab told him very clearly why there was so much trouble. **“18 And he answered, ‘I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father’s house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. 19 Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.” (1Ki 18:18-19 ESV)**

In the Canaanite religion, Baal was the god of rain and storms. He was often pictured sitting on a bull.

The people of Israel had fallen for Baal worship. They had abandoned the covenant of God. Through Elijah, God showed the Israelite people who was really in charge. The 450 prophets of Baal tried to get their nonexistent, mythical god to burn an altar with a bull on it. Of course nothing happened.

When Elijah’s turn came, he prayed to the Lord to intervene. God intervened in a mighty way. (next slide)

“36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.” (1Ki 18:36-38

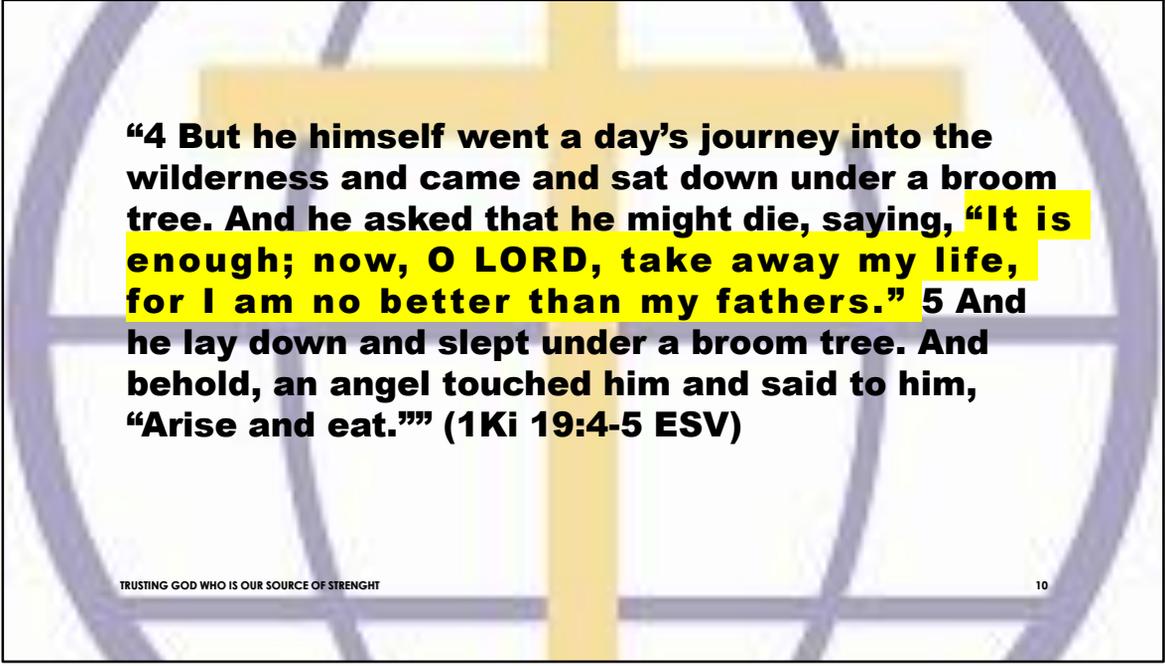
ESV)

THE GOD WHO IS OUR SOURCE OF STRENGTH

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As we read how God backed up Elijah and answered his prayers, we would think that nothing could discourage him.

However, when Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah that she would kill him, he became very fearful and despondent. Elijah was so discouraged he wanted to die. (next slide)



“4 But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.”” (1Ki 19:4-5 ESV)

Elijah was a faithful servant of the Lord. He served enthusiastically. He walked in faith and obedience. He showed much courage. However, the fruit of his ministry were not apparent. He obviously felt a sense of failure. That was from his point of view. God was working behind the scenes in his life and in the life of Israel being longsuffering, loving, compassionate and merciful.

In Elijah’s depression, God performed another miracle. He sent an angel to him and miraculously provided a cake on a hot stone and water. Elijah was so despondent and depressed that he ate and simply lied down again.

A second time, the angel appeared to him and provided some food with enough energy to last him for 40 days so he could go to Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai.

When asked why he was so despondent and so discouraged, he described in verse 10 how he thought and felt. **“I have been a very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, throwing down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, and left, and they seek my life to take it away.”**

God continued to work with Elijah and never once put him down because he was depressed and disheartened. Elijah rightly said that he was zealous for the Lord but he just felt alone. He obviously felt a great sense of hopelessness. He just did not feel he could go on anymore

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God spoke to him in a very gentle way for him to not give up. He asked Elijah what he was doing there in the cave. God touched him not in the wind, not in an earthquake nor in the fire. The Lord spoke to him in a low whisper. God told Elijah that his mission was not over. (Next slide)

“15 And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. 16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.” (1Ki 19:15-16 ESV)

What can we learn about God and for ourselves as we go through the ups and downs of life?

Is the God of the Old Testament any different from the God of the New Testament?

Of course not! God began to reveal himself to his people in the Old Testament as the one true God. We see the hand of God working in the history of Israel to bring redemption to humanity, to all those who would place their faith in Jesus Christ for eternal life.

When Jesus Christ came, he revealed more clearly who God is by becoming incarnate in our flesh. He came from eternity to reveal the Father. He came to reveal that God is one God, triune in his one being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (next slide)

“All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” (Mt 11:27 ESV)

“21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 22 All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”” (Lu 10:21-22 ESV)

God chose to work with Israel in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, he continues to work with his church to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God.

The church is made up of redeemed sinners whom Jesus has chosen to reveal God the Father through the Holy Spirit! We are part of his church, both Jews and Gentiles. We have been called for a very special purpose - **that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9)**

God knows very well that we are the weak people in ourselves. Just as he chose Elijah to show the covenant-breaking Israel that Baal could do nothing by miraculously burning the altar and the bull, he does and will show the world that he is the Saviour of the world. Presently, he has chosen the church to proclaim the wonderful news of God's Kingdom and of the need to repent and believe Jesus to enter His kingdom. We proclaim his love for people evidenced at the cross and we look forward to Jesus' second coming. Jesus is the hope of the world!

Elijah became very discouraged because he began to look at himself and the world around him. How did God help him to come out of his depressive state?

By helping Elijah to trust in Him and to be outward looking. As God's people, we become depressed when we stop looking at God and the mission we have been called to – the mission we read about in 1 Peter 2:9 and other places.

The following is what the apostle Paul said (next slide)

“26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” (1Co 1:26-30 ESV)

So who are we as God's people?

“26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Ga 3:26-29 ESV)

“4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.” (Ga 4:4-7 ESV)

As God’s people, baptized into Christ who have accepted the gift of the Father’s reconciliation, in Christ, we are the descendants of Abraham through faith. We are the heirs, the inheritors of all the promises given to Abraham with Abraham. Abraham is the father of all the faithful as we share in his faith. (Romans 4:16)

We are in the hands of the good Shepherd. We have received awesome promises in Christ through faith in him. Our identity has completely been changed. We are adopted sons and daughters. As adopted sons and daughters united in God in the man Jesus, who is both God and man in his one nature, we are heirs with Christ. It is important to say that we will always remain human for eternity in Jesus.

Because we have such a high calling, the Bible tells us that we are not to neglect our great calling. Being children of God, we are to live in our new identity. We are not to return to serving our passions. This is our participation. We are never saved by our good works. Being adopted sons and daughters in Christ, Jesus being our Lord, we are to live under his loving authority and follow him, empowered by the Holy Spirit, as our great Shepherd that he is.

We are not to neglect is great calling. We are to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as he

leads us. (Next slide)

“1 ¶ Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” (Heb 2:1-4 ESV)

In Christ, we are in an intimate relationship with God. In fact, in Christ, we call God - Abba, Father, a term of endearment. (Next slide)

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”” (Ro 8:15 ESV)

“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”” (Ga 4:6 ESV)

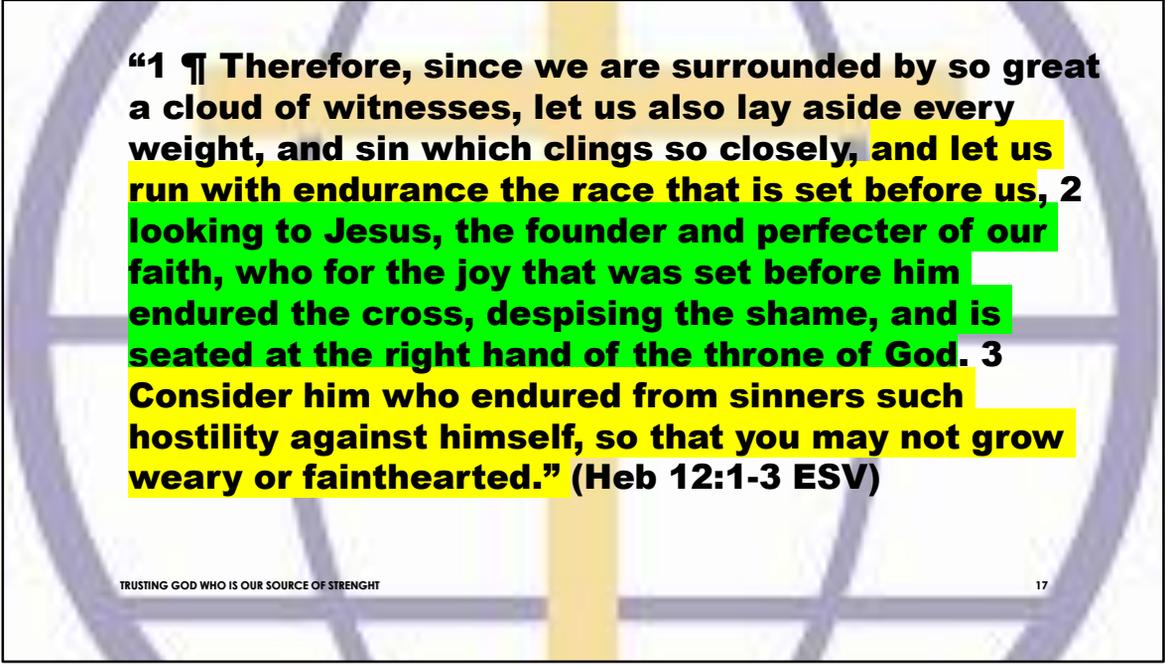
Abbá — “Father,” also used as the term of *tender endearment* by a beloved child—i.e. in an *affectionate, dependent* relationship with their father; “daddy,” “papa.” (From <https://biblehub.com/greek/5.htm>—HELPS Word-studies).

Father, daddy loves us so very dearly. We can approach him in confidence in whatever situation we find ourselves in.

He will always come towards us to be our help in times of need just as he did in the life of Elijah.

God does not change in his character. Who he was before creation, who he was in the past until the coming of Jesus, who he is now and in the future will never change. His love is beyond measure

Whatever we go through, let us remember the story of Elijah and how God treated him in moments of victory and his moment of personal darkness. As Elijah, let us not be inward focused but let us be God focused and mission focused with God’s help! Let us heed the words found in Hebrews 12 (next slide)



“1 ¶ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.” (Heb 12:1-3 ESV)

Let us remember who we are in Christ and that God the Father is not a distant God but our loving daddy. Like Elijah, let us listen to God’s direction and words and stay faithful whatever our circumstances. **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Heb 13:8 ESV)**

Let us pray in praise and thanksgiving!