

**A LESSON ON DISCOURAGEMENT FROM  
THE LIFE OF ELIJAH  
(I KINGS 19:1-18)**

INTRODUCTION

The Bible says in James 5:16 - "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are..." Oftentimes we tend to view Bible characters as supernatural individuals rather than viewing them as instruments through whom a supernatural God has worked. But the things that affect us affect them also.

In the passage before us we see there was a time in Elijah's life that he was deeply discouraged and defeated as a servant of God.

This evening I want us to consider "a lesson on discouragement from the life of Elijah."

At the outset we should consider an order or pattern. Before this incident Elijah had just experienced a great victory for God being used in a tremendous fashion. From this we can see that times of discouragement often follow times of blessings or being greatly used of God. These are no doubt designed to humble us and show us that we're mere vessels and God is the One to be glorified.

Someone has said that "discouragement is the devil's greatest tool" and if he can get us discouraged he can defeat us and destroy our effectiveness for God.

Legend goes that the devil once advertised his tools for sale at a public auction. When the prospective buyers assembled, there was one oddly shaped tool which was labeled "not for sale." When asked to explain why this was the devil answered, "I can spare my other tools, but I cannot spare this one. It is the most useful implement that I have. It is called discouragement, and with it I can work my way into hearts that are otherwise inaccessible. When I get this tool into a man's heart, the way is open to plant anything there that I may desire."

Now as we look at what happened to Elijah I want us to see how he got in this predicament and how he was able to get out of it.

## CONCLUSION

If we're not careful we can develop "the juniper tree syndrome" and become discouraged, defeated, and useless for the Lord.

## Notice...

### I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT PLAGUED ELIJAH AT THIS

#### TIME

1. Was afraid for his life because of the threats of a certain wicked woman (2,3). The Bible says ... "the fear of man bringeth ..." what a contrast between him and Daniel.
2. Was so discouraged over things that he prayed to die (4). Someone has said - "if he really wanted his prayer answered he should have stayed in Jerusalem... but he ran for some 200 miles."

### II. THE CAUSE OF ELIJAH'S PROBLEM

1. Was pre-occupied with himself and what was going to happen to him (19:10). He may have thought... "look where serving the Lord has got me!"
2. Got involved in comparing himself with others (19:4). Paul told the Corinthian believers this practice was unwholesome.

### III. THE CURE FOR ELIJAH'S PROBLEM

1. Was to get his mind off himself and get his mind on the Lord (9,10). Paul told the Colossians "set your affections..." and also Phil. -"look not every man..."
2. Was to trust in the Lord and to realize that God would provide for his own(11,12).The Psalmist said - "I have been young..."
3. Was to get up and keep on going for God (5,15).God still has something for us to do.

Notice just as sure as we get our minds on ourselves that this will lead us to discouragement and off we go on a trip aboard the train of self-pity.

What can we do to prevent this problem in our lives. First we must learn to be grateful for what the Lord has provided for us at this time.

Secondly we must keep our minds on the things of the Lord and what the Lord would have us to do for Him and others.

Thirdly we must remember that God has a purpose for what He allows in our lives. Note the poem:

"My father's way may twist and turn  
"my heart may throb and ache,  
but in my soul I am glad to know  
that He maketh no mistake."  
(A.M. Overton)\_\_\_