

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

Pastor Roger W. Huffman

1 Kings 17:1-6

August 5, 2018

Trading places with Elijah to rediscover what is truly good.

- It's easy to read the Bible: I know that. *or* That was interesting. 2D
- The next step is to visit like going to dioramas of Biblical accounts - 3D
 - ♦ study the person, place, and event as an outside observer - the sidelines
- Best served: trade places - stand in the sandals and circumstances - virtual
 - ♦ to know God's work and blessings by experience, even if vicarious

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- Our dioramas: Sunday School pictures or stained glass
 - ♦ react: *Wow! Ravens! God can do cool things.*
- But put yourself in Elijah's sandals. How well would you do if:
 - ♦ you had to live by yourself in a ravine, in a drought, fed by ravens for say 6 months to a year, (not exactly a back-to-nature 2 week camping trip)
 - ♦ knowing that the Queen hates your guts - blames you for the drought, disruption to her royal lifestyle - determined to have you killed
- Not so wow, cool, or good! Or is it?
- ❖ Standing in Elijah's sandals before King Ahab
 - Why did Yahweh send Elijah to declare this drought?
 - Ahab - King of Israel, the Northern Kingdom
 - ♦ The kings before him - Yahweh judged for the sin of Jeroboam
 - ♦ Ahab dialed up wickedness to new heights (depths) - Baal/Asherah
 - ♦ Baal: god of rain; Asherah: goddess of fertility (crops, livestock, women)
 - Drought declared: brought to you by Yahweh, the God of Israel
 - ♦ *As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives,...* He exists & is active, not an idol!
 - ♦ Making it clear who is the **real God** of rain/dew, crops and offspring
 - ♦ 3.5 years of pleading with Baal - nothing - confirmed at Mt. Carmel
 - Elijah comes on the scene like a lightning bolt coming out of nowhere.
 - ♦ First mention of this prophet of Yahweh from east of the Jordan
 - ♦ Sent as Yahweh's mouthpiece - now and later: *...except at my word.*
 - The Covenant: drought - one of the curses for disobeying Yahweh Dt 28:22
 - ♦ Justly deserved, but sent to chastise and call Israel back to him.
 - ♦ *You trust Baal. OK, let's see what he can do. Nothing! I alone am God!*
 - ♦ Expose the lies. Establish reality. Remember Yahweh - the LORD...
 - ♦ *Yahweh, Yahweh, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...* Exodus 34:6,7

- The *Baals* of our generation: what we honor and trust to provide for us
 - ♦ The groceries, produce suppliers, food industry
 - ♦ Modern agriculture, American ingenuity and industriousness
 - ♦ It's all nothing, unless Yahweh provides sun, rain, seasons, and growth
 - Trust the LORD to provide. He promises. He has a track record.
- ❖ Stand in Elijah's sandals brook-side in Kerith Ravine
 - Yahweh provided sustenance and safety.
 - ♦ Used natural means under supernatural direction to provide
 - ♦ Faithful: delivery every morning and evening - like Exodus
 - ♦ Hidden in a secret location close to his birthplace. Protected.
 - That's nice, but was it good? Why did faithful Elijah have to suffer too?
 - ♦ Not just Elijah! The 7,000 faithful to Yahweh in Israel. 1 King 19:18
 - ♦ We can see the good Yahweh works in calling the unfaithful back.
 - ♦ What good does Yahweh work through trial, trouble, terror for his own?
 - *...we know that in all things [yes droughts too] God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* Rm 8:28
 - ♦ We know from his promises and his track record - including this account
 - ♦ The challenge comes in our definition of good vs. God's truly good.
 - Us: good = nice, pleasant, easy, I like it, hassle free
 - Pleasant and easy - paves the road away from Yahweh - to hell
 - When we feel happy and in charge, trust in God decreases
 - God's good: whatever it takes to reclaim us and keep us as his.
 - Challenges to our sins - see the consequences of captivity & death
 - Challenges to see we are weak. He is strong. Live trusting in him.
 - Trusting the Father's care, disciplining us to help us grow
 - Challenges expose our complaining sinful nature to be crucified. So trusting in God's care, promises, and wisdom rediscover what's truly good - God's good - God himself and being remade in his image.
 - This is the Bible's Theology of the Cross. It's not just true. It's good!

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