

## From Victory to Despair

- I. Introduction
  - a. The meeting on Mt. Carmel (1 King 18:21, 38-39)
    - i. An amazing demonstration of the power of God
    - ii. An apparent overwhelming victory over the forces of evil
  - b. Less than two days later (19:4)
    - i. He appears totally defeated
    - ii. What happened?
  - c. The victory didn't last (19:1-4)
    - i. No change in the leader's attitudes
    - ii. More threats and living on the run
  - d. After a mountain-top experience, Elijah enters a deep valley
    - i. He goes from exaltation to exhaustion
    - ii. From delight to despair
    - iii. From victory to defeat
    - iv. From triumph to hopelessness
  - e. In our modern language, we would say that Elijah suffered a time of depression
    - i. So did Ahab - 1 Kings 21:1-16 –
      1. Causes
        - a. Wanted a vineyard, but couldn't get it -
      2. Reaction
        - a. Went to bed,
        - b. Turned his head to the wall,
        - c. wouldn't eat –
      3. Solution
        - a. His wife got what he wanted for him
        - b. Then he was happy
    - ii. So did Job –
      1. Causes
        - a. lost his health, wealth, family, friends, reputation
      2. Reaction
        - a. Remained faithful
        - b. Cried
        - c. Wanted to die
        - d. Felt that life was unfair
      3. Solution
        - a. God told him: Stand up and answer me: Job 38:3; 40:7
        - b. Job realized: God has all power, I cannot understand His purposes Job 42:1-6
    - iii. So did Jonah
      1. Causes
        - a. God didn't destroy Ninevah
      2. Reaction

- a. It is better to die than to live
    - 3. Solution
      - a. God gave him a shade plant and took it away, then rebuked him
  - iv. So did Timothy –
    - 1. Causes
      - a. Difficulties
      - b. Disappointments
      - c. Opposition
    - 2. Reaction
      - a. Fear,
      - b. Reticence
    - 3. Solution
      - a. 2 Tim. 1:6-7, 2 Tim 4:5 – Stir up the gift that is in you; fulfill your work
- II. KEY THOUGHT: Elijah's depression and God's response to it can give us encouragement and instruction for when enter life's darker times
- III. Elijah's depression
- a. The causes
    - i. Disappointment
    - ii. Loss & Grief
    - iii. External circumstances
  - b. The cycle
    - i. Thoughts
    - ii. Actions
    - iii. A downward spiral that reinforces itself
    - iv. Elijah
      - 1. Thought
  - c. The Symptoms of Depression
    - i. Desire to be alone
    - ii. Despair
    - iii. Lack of self-worth
    - iv. Desire to die
    - v. Desire to sleep
    - vi. Disinterest in food
    - vii. Feelings of failure, grief and loss
    - viii. Feelings of loneliness => Yet he isolated himself
    - ix. Underestimation of good circumstances
    - x. Overestimation of evil circumstances
    - xi. Preoccupation with the negative
- IV. God's response
- a. What it was not
    - i. Cheer up!
    - ii. You shouldn't feel this way
    - iii. If you were pleasing to God you wouldn't be in this circumstance
    - iv. Rom 12:15; Prov. 25:20

- b. What it was
  - i. Providing for Elijah's needs
    - 1. Providential care
    - 2. Arise and eat (twice)
    - 3. Did not provide his wants
      - a. He wanted to die
      - b. God elected not to kill him now
      - c. Or ever to allow him to die
  - ii. Personal contact
    - 1. Demonstration of impersonal Divine power (three times)
      - a. God can do anything
      - b. Anything we can imagine
      - c. And much more
    - 2. Demonstration of personal Divine presence
      - a. God is doing something
      - b. He is communing with us and holding us in His care
  - iii. Persistence
    - 1. What are you doing here? (twice)
      - a. You! – Elijah
      - b. Here! – In a cave in isolation
  - iv. Focus on actions rather than feelings
    - 1. Tasks to perform/Purpose to fulfill
    - 2. Correction of false perceptions/beliefs
      - a. He didn't answer according to his folly when he wanted to die
      - b. Now he gives correction
    - 3. God always has something for us to do
      - a. Do that
      - b. Even if we don't feel like it

## V. Conclusion

- a. Those who were depressed
  - i. Elijah
    - 1. Cause
      - a. Disappointment, Fear
    - 2. Reaction
      - a. Classic symptoms of depression
    - 3. Solution
      - a. Why are you here?
      - b. Stand up
      - c. You have a job to do
- b. Satan loves depression
  - i. It is a natural reaction to loss and sorrow
  - ii. But Satan can use it to
    - 1. Enslave people to sin
    - 2. Immobilize with guilt and sorrow
    - 3. Destroy lives and souls

- 4. Deactivate Christian
- c. God has a solution
  - i. To depression – 2 Tim 1:6-7
    - 1. We have the gift of being able to act independently of negative thoughts and feelings
    - 2. We have hope, power, and love through Jesus
  - ii. To Sin
    - 1. Forgiveness through the blood of Jesus
    - 2. Rom. 8:31-35
- d.