

Why Are You Sleeping Under Your Juniper Tree?

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[1Ki 19:4-5 KJV] 4 [And Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I [am] not better than my fathers. 5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree...

Introduction:

In 1 Kings 19 we find Elijah having slain 450 prophets of Baal, is now on the run from Jezebel who had threatened his life. Apparently, the stress was too much, and rather than challenge Jezebel, he flees, goes into the wilderness and collapses, helpless and despairing under a Juniper tree. This is interesting because prophets that are despairing in their assignments tended to have thought-provoking experiences with the flora and fauna around them. Elijah has a visit from an angel under a Juniper tree in our text. Jonah on the other hand, lay despairing and mourning under a gourd that had sheltered him when God Himself spoke to Jonah, correcting Jonah's thinking about the repentance of Nineveh.

Can you relate to Elijah? Have you ever been under maximum pressure for a prolonged period of time and just wanted to give up? Have you like Paul had your share of struggles and challenges to the point of just wanted to die?

[2Co 11:24-28 KJV] 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty [stripes] save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 [In] journeyings often, [in] perils of waters, [in] perils of robbers, [in] perils by [mine own] countrymen, [in] perils by the heathen, [in] perils in the city, [in] perils in the

wilderness, [in] perils in the sea, [in] perils among false brethren; 27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

[2Co 1:8 KJV] 8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

Does this describe something that you have gone through on the job? In your marriage? With your kids? In a church situation? In a health scare? In a financial situation? What Paul went through in his traveling ministry, every one of us either has gone through (at times more than once) or will go through. Some of us might feel that your whole life has been one major pressure cooker from which you feel there is no escape.

God is With You No Matter What:

Where is God in all of this? Have you despaired to the point of exasperation in your life? I want you to know that you are not alone. Jonah got so angry that God let his gourd die that he mouthed off to God about it and even dared God to kill him:

[Jon 4:8-9 KJV] 8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, [It is] better for me to die than to live. 9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, [even] unto death.

Can't you hear Jonah? Over a GOURD – "Go ahead, God – KILL ME! I dare you!" Come on – how about you? Has God let your gourd die? Sure you have. Those close to you know it because behind they said "he's lost his gourd..." If you have ever said "I just can't take it any more – I quit!" I submit to you that like Jonah –

God let your gourd die. You didn't get your way and it WASN'T that God didn't love you or have a better plan.

When Elijah got to the end of himself lying under that Juniper tree that is when God sent an angel to him. Angels show up when you are at the end of yourself. Even Jesus dealing with wild beasts and with Satan himself experienced what it was to be ministered to by angels sent to comfort and strengthen Him:

[Mar 1:13 KJV] 13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Lessons with Elijah Under the Juniper Tree:

When Elijah lay under the Juniper there were several things that happened to him that we can learn from:

[1Ki 19:5-8 KJV] 5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise [and] eat. 6 And he looked, and, behold, [there was] a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise [and] eat; because the journey [is] too great for thee. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

You might think you are out of strength, out of reserves, out of money, out of time and patience but I want to tell you that God has prepared a strengthening for you in the midst of your adversity to get you through your situation as he did Elijah. Elijah went 1 day into the wilderness and gave up – but God had 40 more days for him to go. You think you can't go any further but God says – receive My strength and I will cause you to go much further than you ever thought you could go EVEN to the MOUNT OF GOD. If you don't feel that strength in you right now then I QUESTION YOUR DIET. What are you feeding yourself on? Television? Facebook? Worldly entertainments? Things are the way they are because of what

you are doing – if you want something different you have to do something different! God is no respecter of persons. If you do under your Juniper tree what Elijah did under his – you will get the same results!

What Did Elijah Do Under the Juniper Tree?

Elijah Laid Down when He should have Stood Up:

God had a 40 day's journey for Elijah and he went ONE DAY and lay down, angry and despairing! Ask yourself – do you want your life to stay where things are now? If you are going to come out of your situation you are going to come out on your feet and not on a slab! God is not going to kill you. The lesson is NEVER LAY DOWN IN A BATTLE ZONE. The first thing that the angel told Elijah was “arise”. Why? Because a Juniper is no place to lay down. A Juniper is also known as a “broom tree” because people commonly used its branches to make broom sticks. What is the lesson? It isn't time to take a nap. It's time to clean up your mess. It isn't time to feel sorry for yourself. You have a mess to clean up. Whether it is your mess or someone else's you have no business giving up and just lying there vainly waiting for things to magically get better.

He Received the Touch of the Angel:

How many of us have refused the touch of God when we were pouting under our Juniper tree? God sends a brother, a sister or our pastor and they try to encourage us but we stubbornly resist behind an impenetrable resolve to wallow in self-pity? Maybe even your spouse realizing you were going through something tried to encourage you and you said, “don't touch me!!!” You have to quit feeling sorry for yourself and set aside the anger that is putting you in a bad place and become reachable and teachable so you know what to do next!

Elijah ate the Bread of Adversity when Necessary:

The angel not only touched Elijah – he gave him something to eat and something to drink. Many people are willing to receive the touch of God in a bad situation, but they don't go any further. The Holy Spirit is MORE than your COMFORTER, He

is your HELPER. You have to let Him help you! Elijah ate and drank what the angel gave him and then he just laid back down. The angel comes back around, touching him again and says “no that isn’t what I had in mind...”

God was ok with giving Elijah a second touch. But then Elijah had to do something about it. Peter when going through the same thing when he was in jail, sleeping between two soldiers:

[Act 12:7 KJV] 7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon [him], and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from [his] hands.

God will send the smoting angel to you when necessary. What is the message the angel gave to Peter? “GET UP!!” You are waiting for the chains, the limitations, the bad situation to come off of you but notice in Peter’s case it didn’t happen until he complied with the command.

The angel brought the food and water to Elijah and notice where he placed them. He didn’t put them at Elijah’s feet. Instead he put them at Elijah’s head. What does this mean? It means you have to get your HEAD RIGHT before you will ever get your WALK RIGHT. Are you having trouble with your walk? You might not think so but what about your spouse? Your kids? Your employer, or your pastor. I dare you to ask them “are you having trouble with my walk?” If you will eat and drink the bread of adversity – the lessons in adversity, everyone around you will take notice and you will be a blessing in their lives and not a pain. In Elijah’s case the angel agreed with Elijah “the journey is too great for thee...” Have you ever told God that? “I can’t do it, God! I can’t take anymore...” Of course, you can’t. On that score, you and God are in agreement. You can’t take anymore. Now what? It’s time to get your spiritual diet right and to partake of what God has to say to you in that difficult season.

What Was God Strengthening Elijah For?

You would think that Elijah would eat the food and drink that the angel gave him and live happily ever after. It’s all good now right, Momma Bug? No – there is still a journey to take. The plan hadn’t changed. Where God was taking Elijah that he

didn't think he could survive even 1 day? Elijah still had 40 days to go. Where was he going? To Holy Ghost Disneyland? Hmmm. In reality Elijah was going to Horeb. Horeb means "desert". He went 1 day into the wilderness and then 40 days on the strength of angel's food and it's all coming up roses right? No – what he has achieved is a timely arrival in the desert – into the "dry place". This is a place where the only redeeming factor here is that this is where a conversation with God takes place. God was strengthening Elijah and motivating Elijah just to get him into the place where he could talk to him.

God wants to talk with you. You can go there willingly but one way or another you are going. You can't have THIS CONVERSATION with God in your sleep number bed with a belly full of a warm supper. After this conversation with God this prophet Elijah will anoint KINGS and ordain a prophet who will in his lifetime do TWICE what Elijah did. The power of God that comes on Elijah at Horeb is so immense it couldn't be fulfilled in his lifetime – it took two generations, a king, a prophet and a eunuch just to bring it about. The power of God that came on him BECAUSE HE OBEYED and came out from UNDER THE JUNIPER – Elijah's life was so full of God and so full of His glory that even death couldn't take Him and God had to send His personal transportation to get him to heaven.

Conclusion:

Are you ready to come out from under your Juniper? Are you ready to stop feeling sorry for yourself? Are you ready to stop asking for "just another touch"? Are you ready to feed on His bread in the place of adversity and be teachable and reachable? Are you ready to have a conversation with God and settle things and receive assignments that will change your life and the generations after you forever? Then arise and receive the truth of this message and act upon it until things change in your situation.

