

KESSID SERMON NOTES



Sermon

"The Work Before the Work"

Date

12-31-17

Speaker

Pastor Chris Potter

If we were to perform an Autopsy of 2017, what would we find?

We all received 365 Days, 8760 Hours, 525,600 Min., and 31,536,000 seconds...

But how do you measure them? Not all time is created equal....

The ancient Greek language has two different words for time....

- **Chronos** refers to the kind of time we measure by the ticking clock. It's the time we use as we try to meet deadlines, make it to appointments, or go to bed at a decent hour. We cite it in numbers: 8:45 a.m., 4:15 p.m. One day of Kronos is exactly 24 hours long...
- **Kairos** on the other hand is lived time, experienced time. Kairos has a spiritual implication, a sense of significance. It represents time "in the moment," giving everything into that moment and receiving everything it has to offer. On Kairos time, you are truly present, not rushing toward the next thing. This still small moment cannot be measured in seconds, minutes, or hours. It is measured in depth and response.

With this idea in mind, we want to today step into the life and experiences of on character in the Bible....

The Prophet Elijah.

Prophets – Tell the truth about what is, and give voice to the alternative.

Elijah lived in 9th century B.C., about 100 years after King David. We find his story in the midst of the books 1st and 2nd Kings in the Old Testament. These books chronicle the downfall of the people and kingdom of Israel under the leadership of many different, not so great, Kings. Elijah was a prophet during the reign of King Ahab. And Elijah's life, like many of ours, was filled with turmoil. At times he was bold and decisive, and at other times fearful and tentative. As we will see, Elijah was not afraid to tell the truth about what was going on around him....

1 Kings 18:20-21

- Elijah challenges 450 prophets of Baal
- When Baal doesn't seem to be showing up...

1 Kings 18:27

- Elijah organizes 12 stones (symbolizing the 12 sons of Jacob) digs a trench, fills it with water....

1 Kings 18:36-37: Elijah's - 2 Part Prayer

1. These people would know that this is the one true God.
2. Their hearts would turn to Him.

1 Kings 18:38-40

1 Kings 19:1-8

- Mount Horeb, where Elijah found himself after his long journey through the desert, was the very mountain where Moses had encountered God in the fire of a burning bush (Exodus 3:1). It was at that mountain, also called Mount Sinai, that God had given the law to Moses amid fire, smoke, and thunder (Exodus 19:16).

1 Kings 19:9-13

- Am I where I should be?

And now the thunder ceased, and the lightning was gone, and the earth was still, and the wind was hushed, and there was a dead calm, and out of the midst of the still air there came what the Hebrew calls "a voice of gentle silence," as if silence had become audible.

Still - deep silence and calm

Charles Spurgeon – Elijah was a "child of the storm"

Men can be made to tremble when God sends pestilence, and famine, and fire and others of His terrible judgments, but these things usually end in the hardening of men's hearts, and not in the winning of them. (Pharaoh)

"Even the noise of the wind and of the storm was not as terrible as the still small voice by which Jehovah called His servant near. Then the prophet covered his face, and went to the mouth of the cave and stood to listen, for the still small voice had won the solemn attention of his soul. It had done for him what all the rest could not do, for this reason, that the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but the Lord was in the still small voice, and Elijah knew it, and was awed, and prepared himself to hear what God the Lord would speak." – Charles Spurgeon

God may devour His enemies with lions, but He wins His friends with love.

- **Zechariah 4:6 - 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.**
- The still small voice within the conscience is God's chosen instrument to convert and comfort the souls of men.

Observe very carefully and gladly how God dealt with His downcast servant. He knew that he was faithful at heart. He understood that Elijah was a true man who loved his God and feared Him, and was very jealous for His honor, therefore He did not put His servant away in anger, but He determined to revive and restore him, and bring him back to His holy warfare. Now must Elijah learn the meaning of David's song, "He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." When the quiet had in a measure calmed his mind, the Lord began to speak with him.

"Before I turn to my work in the world, I have inner work to do." — Parker Palmer
This was "The Work before the Work" ...

Elijah would eventually anoint kings and stir up rebellion against Ahab and Jezebel. He would call his replacement, Elisha, into the role of prophet to do as he had done, but not before God initiated this inner work inside of him.

Think back to Eden though, the serpent's invitation "Eat this, it will make you like God." His invitation was to be like God in power, but not in virtue.

"If you uproot an idol in your life and fail to plant the love of Christ in its place, the idol will grow back." Tim Keller

Am I where I should be?

- Jesus points out in the Parable of the Sower that we are choked and suffocated by the brambles and the cares of this world...
- Elijah was calm in the storm, but stirring in the quiet. But this is the place that God wanted to speak to him, the same is true of us, children of the Storm?

The Exodus story starts out by saying they groaned and cried out, and their cry summoned God into the narrative. How long does it take? It takes exactly how long it takes...

1. Wherever you are, it is 'Egypt'
2. There is another place to go
3. The only way to get there is by marching

1 Peter 4:12-13 (MSG) – "Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner."

God's object lesson, for Elijah, and for us: The battle is fought in the storm, but it is won in the quiet...The Work before the Work.

Satan can set the soul on fire with agony, doubts and fears and terrors rend it like an awful earthquake, bringing us to trouble and confusion. But the Spirit comes in tenderest love, revealing Christ the gentle One, setting up the cross of the Savior before the sinner's tearful eyes and speaking peace, pardon, and salvation. Brothers and sisters, this is what we need—the work of the Spirit of God in His own manner of living love. – Charles Spurgeon

Communion– It has always been a time to not only reflect and celebrate Jesus atoning sacrifice on the cross, but also as 1 Cor. 11 reminds us, to examine ourselves... to tell the truth about ourselves, however terrifying or uncomfortable it may be... to the One who meets us with the love and gentleness we read of today...

Matthew 26:26-28