

Fight

It's Time To Get Your Fight Back

For those who are just not aware of it today, you are in a spiritual battle. The apostle Paul tells us in **1 Timothy 6:12**, to **“fight the good fight of faith.”** A lot of Christians complain to God because they're in a fight, but until we understand that fighting is sometimes part of our faith walk with Christ we will always resent God for the struggle we are currently in.

Now that we are closing in on another year, sometimes it's important to reflect on the year we just had. For some of you here today 2017 may have been one consistent and long fight. Maybe you're here today and the challenges in this has made you weak, passive, discouraged, wounded, and maybe perplexed as well. So today we're going to look at a prominent figure in the old testament who became discouraged, but we are going to see how he got his fight back.

His name is Elijah. It's important to note that Elijah was not a weak man or a man who lived his life on the fence. He was a prophet of God and a steady voice for a nation who had turned its back on God. Here are some of his accomplishments throughout the years: by his word he stops the rain from falling for 3 ½ years. He was supernaturally provided for during the famine. He called down fire from heaven on the sacrifices and it happened. He killed 450 false prophets of Baal, and lastly, at his word, after 3 ½ years of no rain he prayed and it rained again. But Elijah lost his fight.

Follow along with me as we read **1 Kings 19:1-16**

“Now Ahab tell Jezebel everything Elijah he had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel send a messenger to Elijah to say, may the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them. Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself when a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. I have had enough, Lord. Take my life, I am no better than my ancestors. Then he laid down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, get up and eat. He looked around, and

there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then laid back down. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you. So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled 40 days and 40 nights until he reached Horeb, The mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spend the night. And the word of the Lord came to him saying, what are you doing here Elijah? He replied, I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me too. The Lord said, go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by. Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and when out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him what are you doing here Elijah? Then he replied, I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too. Then the Lord said to him, go back the way you came and go to the desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat to succeed you as prophet.”

Elijah had been under a lot of strain for three solid years. He had been running and living as a fugitive and living on the meager rest of food, clothing, and shelter. Elijah believed that if the nation saw a great miracle from God, like fire falling from heaven, the nation of Israel would give up their idolatry and turn to God and experience a revival. But that didn't happen because of Ahab and Jezebel. It seemed as if all his efforts were for nothing. Have you ever felt that way before?

Elijah felt alone. He felt like the only person still left serving the Lord. Listen to what he said in his frustration to the Lord, ***“The Israelites have put your prophets to death with a sword. I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me too.”***

The Bible tells us that Elijah ran for his life and was driven by fear until he was absolutely exhausted then collapsed under a broom tree. This strong man of faith, because of discouragement, **lost his fight**. You may feel like giving up the fight today as well. Maybe you feel like you're the only Christian in your family or on your job and your efforts to win others or change the environment may seem like it's impossible and you're discouraged. You may feel as if your prayers have gone unanswered for a long time causing you to lose faith and feel like giving up the fight. I want you to notice something before you give up.....

Notice Elijah didn't stay under that tree. He rebounded.

To rebound means there was a shot taken and a shot missed. In order to take another shot you have to learn how to be OK with missing a few shots. Some feel like every shot they take should hit it's Mark. There is never been a basketball player in all of history who has made every shot they attempted. The same things that cause us to miss our shot on the basketball court also can cause messes in life as well.

Here are a few reasons why shots are missed: **PERSPECTIVE**. In other words, when you took your shot you may have come up short, maybe you shot it too long, or too hard or even too soft. But somewhere their perspective of the goal was off.

OPPOSITION:

Another reason for a missed shot is because the opposing team is in a players face. It's the job of the opposing team to wave their hands in the shooters face and obstruct your view. In other words, they want to distract you as much as possible from making a good shot.

By the way, the way you respond to a missed shot matters. Don't walk off the court, quit the game, blame it on someone else, or throw in the towel because you missed a shot. A good player will always go back up for the ball and take another shot.

So let's look how God helped Elijah get his fight back.

1. **Rest.** When Elijah ran for his life he was exhausted, fell under a tree and went to sleep. Did you know sleep deprivation does affect decision-

making? 60% of patients with depression have reported that they have sleep deprivation.

- Get plenty of rest for your body and your mind during stressful times. Don't fill it with activities or constantly seeking everyone's advice because I promise you it will leave you more confused and frustrated than when you first started.

2. Heavenly bread or a.k.a. The Word.

- Matthew 4:4 says ***"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the father."***
- Learned the discipline of searching the word of God for truth and balance in your life. If we truly believe the word of God, then we will seek after the truth of the word of God and hold on to its promises when everything else seems to be unsure.

3. And lastly, **Remember**: In other words, remember his faithfulness. We tend to forget that when we're too busy running away.

- Elijah went to the mountain of God. Where do you go when you're in trouble? Do you reach for the bottle or for the Bible? Sometimes people eat food to combat stress. You know how to call the prayer chain but do you pray?
- It's good to call your pastor but there's no substitute for getting along with God yourself and getting back into the fight.
- Being quiet and still, and taking the time to remember God's faithfulness in your life and all the things that he has done for you will encourage you and remind you that in your current position God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all we could ask or think of because our God is faithful.

When you do these things God will give you a new vision and restore your fight to you. Let's get back to our story. Notice it says, ***"And behold, the Lord passed by."*** Elijah drew near to the presence of God. Church, God manifests himself when we seek him. ***Jeremiah 29:13 says, "you shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart."***

He heard God's voice. God's voice wasn't in what most would think it would be in. It wasn't in the hurricane wind or the earthquake or even in the consuming fire. You won't find him in big crowds, but in the solitary places alone and secluded.

Notice God came as a still small voice. Elijah covered his face and recognized that it was God. It wasn't the burning bush which caused Moses to kneel, it was the voice coming from the bush that caused him to kneel.

We need to hear from God! We must get past all the noise, outside pressures, and you're inside pressures, before you will get quiet enough to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. **Let me illustrate this point for you:**

The story of a man who lost his pocket watch in the hay of an ice house. Everyone searched for an hour and could not find it. They all gave up and went to lunch. When they came back a young man stood at the door holding the pocket watch. The guy asked, how in the world did you find it? Easy, I waited until everyone left and it was quiet. Then I lay down in the hay and listen for the ticking. The sound led me right to it.

That's how it is when we get quiet before God, then we can hear the still small voice of the Lord speaking life into us once again and restoring our fight back to us. We all want God's voice to thunder through the air with the answers to our problems, but I am convinced if we get alone in a quiet place with our hearts tuned into the voice of the father, his voice will come through clearly to a heart that is prepared to hear his voice.

He is speaking to us today as well. To some he is speaking salvation. To others he is speaking about your commitments and still to others your busyness. Whatever he is speaking to you today don't miss your opportunity to respond.

If you need your fight back this morning, then start by being still and listening. Everything you need can be found when we lean in to listen to that still small voice.