

A House Divided

1 Kings 19
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Web description: This message about the ancient prophet Elijah takes us back through the stories of God's faithfulness and reminds us that God is still with us today – even when have real doubts.

1. Welcome
 - a. We have new Bibles in worship today, and I'd like to help you follow along in them if you'd like. So if you'd like to use one to follow along, ushers are coming up the aisles right now to pass some out.
 - b. We're going to be reading the story of Elijah this morning. We'll get back to the story in a few minutes, but if you want to find your place ahead of time we'll be on p. 499. That's in the book of 1 Kings chapter 19.
2. Before we get there, let me ask you a question. Have you ever been in a place in life where you wondered if God was really there? Has something in your life gone so wrong that you wondered what on earth God was doing – if he was doing anything at all? Or maybe, on a different note, have you ever looked around and felt like you were all alone in your belief in God and wondered what on earth you were doing?
3. I'd like to introduce you to someone who's been there too. His name is Elijah. He lived a really long time ago, about 2800 or 2900 years ago to be specific. He was a prophet in ancient Israel and so you might not expect this, but he had times of real doubt about God and times when he totally reached the end of his rope and was ready to give up on life because he didn't know if he could handle anymore and if God still cared. Maybe you've been there.
 - a. Funny thing about Elijah is that he had definitely seen God work in his life before. In fact, one of his periods of deepest doubt and deepest discouragement came right after seeing God work with great power just shortly before. But that's not unusual, is it? We might say, "I felt God in my life once, but I just don't know if he's there anymore."
 - b. That's where Elijah was, and he went and sat down under a tree and prayed. And he said, "That's it, God. I can't take it anymore. Just kill me now." If you have one of the pew Bibles, I'll show you how to find this. It's on page 499, which is the page for 1 Kings 19, and it's in the middle of the page in the white area on the page. All the blue area on the sides and the bottom are notes to help answer questions you may have. But in the middle of the white area in chapter 19, verse 4, starting kind of in the middle of the verse it says "**He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, LORD,' he said. 'Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.**" 1 Kings 19:4-5 He probably that that was the end of his story. Maybe he hoped it was the end of his story.
4. But Elijah's story doesn't end there, no matter what he thought, and I want to tell you the rest of his story, but first let's shift gears for a minute. See, I think Elijah

was wrong about something here. He was all depressed about his situation, and he was all depressed about his ancestors. “They were all terrible, and now I’m in that same terrible place. God has given up on us all.” And Elijah was right that some the people who had gone before him had wandered pretty far from God. But there’s a lot more to the story than that. For the last 10 weeks, we’ve been reading the Big God Story, the story of the Bible and the story of us. Let’s do a little review of what Elijah may have forgotten...

- a. **Adam and Eve, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, David, Solomon, Elijah** (Keep reading these through the 5 acts, thus finish with a look ahead)
 - b. Themes to emphasize in the review: God is committed to his creation. He refuses to give up. The whole world will live under his blessing. And (what Elijah might not have known yet) the future of the story is even better than its past.
 - c. Now I want to get back to Elijah, but before we get there, let’s do this review one more time, this time on video. This particular video doesn’t get quite as far as we just did, but hang on tight anyway, it goes kind of fast. **SUMMARY VIDEO**
5. Cool story, isn’t it? But it’s not just a story. It’s not even just Elijah’s story. It’s your story. This is our God, who will not give up on you and won’t let you give up either.
- a. Elijah laid down under that tree to die. He was all done. But God sent a messenger to Elijah, an angel. And that messenger brought Elijah some food. Which is not much use if you’re going to die. But Elijah wasn’t going to die. God was strengthening Elijah for the next step of his journey.
 - b. And he gave Elijah two more things: He gave Elijah himself. He appeared to Elijah and spoke to him to reassure him that He was still there. He could have tested Elijah’s memory and gotten Elijah to remember his previous experiences of God. Or he might have reminded Elijah of this long history. And that helps. In fact, there are times in the Bible that do exactly that. Some of the Psalms in the OT are a recounting of Israel’s history, meant to encourage them with the stories of God’s faithfulness. And that helps. We need to know the story...but we also need to know the Author. And so God himself appeared to Elijah to give him strength. And then he also told Elijah that he was not alone among people either. Elijah thought he was the only one still trying to follow God. But God said, there are still 7,000 more people in Israel with you who have not given up either. And so he strengthened Elijah for the next step in his journey.
 - c. And until God takes you home, you’ve got a next journey too. And that journey may seem hard sometimes. It may even fill you with doubt. You

may feel like you're at the end and can't go any farther, and you're ready to sit down under a tree and quit. But God has not left you alone. He will never quit on you, and you don't have to quit either. You are going on this journey with the God who has written this whole story, who promises to right everything that's wrong in this world, and who still has thousands and millions of other brothers and sisters walking alongside you. May God give you strength.