



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Discovery Digs Series, Lesson 5

Lesson Title: Elijah under the Juniper Tree

Take Home Point: Stop feeling sorry for yourself, let God help you.

Warm-Up:

"Just get over it." I can't tell you how many times I have heard that statement during times of difficulty and sadness in my life. Occasionally I heard it because the person was frustrated or irritated that I continued to have feelings of loss and sadness beyond their preference. More often I was told, "just get over it" by people who were well meaning but misguided. It was as if I was deliberately trying to remain sad or I could wave a magic wand and the impact of the circumstances would disappear. Worse, sometimes they implied that it was somehow spiritually or emotionally wrong to feel as I did, that to grieve over a loss indicated a weakness or lack of faith in God. Over time I learned that "just get over it" is a dishonest way to deal with the losses and difficulties of life, denying how God made us and pretending to be stronger than we are.

Read: 1 Kings 19:1-18

Observation (What happened?):

Why did Elijah run for his life?

How did God respond to Elijah's running away at both the tree and at Mount Horeb?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think Elijah said, "I have had enough, Lord"?

How do you think God felt when Elijah collapsed under the tree and prayed?

Insight:

This is one of my favorite Bible accounts. Elijah, fresh from a public victory for God, ran away in despair and weariness when threatened by Jezebel. After putting his whole heart and soul into the confrontation with the prophets of Baal, it is understandable that Elijah was exhausted spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. That's not really different from us, is it? Our lives have ups and downs. Pain, difficulty, and loss are all part of life in this fallen world. God knows we grieve and can feel sorry for ourselves. But how does God respond to Elijah? He doesn't chastise or get angry with him; God comes to him and gently cares for him. He lets Elijah sleep, strengthens him with food, and shows his weary prophet that he is still God and in still control. How I need to learn that lesson! My tendency is to consider myself weak or a failure. Probably just like Elijah did. But God is teaching me that I need to let him help me, and let him show himself to me just as he did Elijah. He is just as ready and willing to care for me in my difficult times as he was his greatest prophet.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

What difficulty do you need to bring to the Lord? Are you willing to be open with him about it?

Pray for the children in your small group to accept hard times as part of life and let God care for them during those times.

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