

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

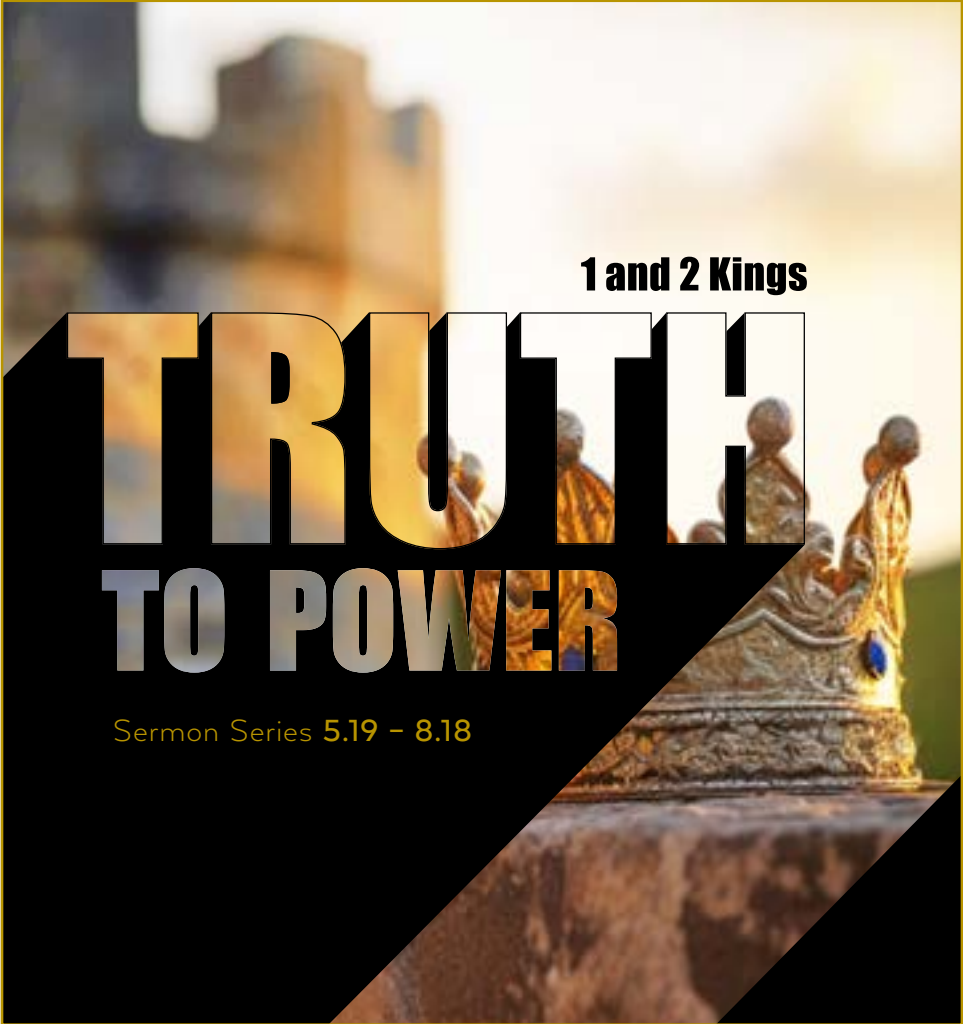
DEVO

JUNE 24 - 28, 2024

1 and 2 Kings

TRUTH TO POWER

Sermon Series 5.19 - 8.18





MONDAY

Read **1 Kings 19**

Never stop giving yourself to God.

Elijah was hiding in a cave. Outside was a great and strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire (1 Kings 19: 11-12). So Elijah put on his robe and came to the cave's entrance to see what all the commotion was about. And God met him there with a whisper. What can we learn from this?

1. Give God your complaints.

Elijah was fed up with being the only one left who loved God after all he had done. But God told him in the whisper that he wasn't the only faithful one. There were 7,000 in Israel devoted to God. Elijah was not alone.

2. Give God your fears.

Elijah was afraid of Jezebel, who wanted to kill him. In the whisper Elijah learned that God was not afraid of Jezebel. In fact, Elijah should pray for her because she was headed for a very sorry end."

3. Never stop giving yourself to God.

Elijah had given God his prayers and his faith. His prayers had prompted God to stop and start the rain. His faith had called down fire from heaven that not only burned up the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, but also licked up the water that had been poured over it into the troughs dug around it. What more did God have in mind for him? In God's whisper was a to-do list: Anoint three people, two for kingship and one for Elijah's replacement, Elisha.

Sometimes people notice us giving ourselves to God. Sometimes they don't. But God always does. And do we notice God giving Himself to us? Because God has and does and will do that—give Himself to us. Let us be alert to look for Him.

QUESTIONS

What is God's whisper saying to you? How can you still give yourself to Him? What unhelpful thing remains unsundered?

PRAYER

Sowing Seeds for Life (SSFL)

Pray for the light of the Lord to shine on the programs of Sowing Seeds for Life and those who provide them. Lord, help the volunteers through the challenging times, personally and professionally, so that they are always able to do good works.



TUESDAY

Read **1 Kings 19:9-18; Matthew 28:16-20**

Jesus makes sense of our disordered world.

Elijah was confused and depressed. The odds were against him, or so it seemed. But were they? The saying is: “God plus one is a majority.” That’s the message Elijah needed to hear; it is the message we need to hear today.

Elijah’s nation was full of idols, and it was being led by despicable people. Where was God? Well, He was there, right next to Elijah, setting him on a path to recovery—recovery for him and recovery for the nation. It started with a whisper—the voice of God (vv. 12-13).

Jesus said, “*My sheep hear My voice; I know them; and they follow Me*” (John 10:27). It’s amazing what that voice (that whisper) can do. In the movie *What About Bob?* the advice was “Baby steps, baby steps.” What are the baby steps God asked Elijah to take? We saw God’s to-do list for Elijah yesterday: anoint three people. What are the baby steps that God is asking us to take?

Jesus told us to “*love your enemies*” (Matthew 5:44). Is that so hard to do? Very hard. Maybe impossible. But step one is to pray for those who persecute you, those who belittle you. Step two is to not persecute those who persecute you or belittle them back. No. Rather, forgive them. Again, that’s hard to do. But Jesus told

the “Parable of the Unmerciful Servant” (Matthew 18:23-34) to help us see and do this. He said the key to our forgiveness is to reciprocate God’s forgiveness of us by forgiving others. The Lord taught us to pray, “*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us*” (Matthew 6:12). Of course, forgiveness is hard, but unforgiveness is harder.

God’s kingdom is not disordered. And God has been taking steps to order our disordered world ever since the beginning. Jesus’ coming was the biggest step God took. Jesus set in motion the redemption of the world.

QUESTIONS

What is our part in partnering with Jesus in His Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) to us?

PRAYER

Sowing Seeds for Life (SSFL)

Pray for a loving community to step up and share its precious gift of time through volunteerism, from driving a truck to helping at the pantry, so that Sowing Seeds for Life can continue to care for those struggling with hunger and difficulties.



Read [1 Kings 19:12-18](#); [Psalm 107:28-29](#)

God is not the only one whispering in our ear.

Consider not only Elijah, but Job, Samuel, Peter, and others. The Bible is full of examples of God whispering to us. The thing we know for sure is that God will never lie to us. He is the Truth Teller; in fact, He is the Truth.

On the other hand, if Satan used the Scriptures to tempt even Jesus, we must be ready to forgive ourselves and others when we fail to properly discern voices. As Jesus trusted His Father in all circumstances, so can we. We are all learning this lesson.

The gift of discernment is a mighty good gift because there are true prophets and false prophets. And the Bible says even the elect can and will be deceived. How are we going to escape these traps? The Bible helps us, especially when we see how Jesus modeled life for us, taught lessons, and told stories. God's love and grace keep us from being deceived as we focus on Jesus.

In Job's case, we can read what Job did not know in real time. We know in hindsight what was happening behind the scenes. Even when Job didn't know what or why things were happening, Job made some amazingly true statements about God's veracity and redeeming nature. He said, *"I know that my Redeemer lives"* (Job 19:25-27).

In Peter's and Paul's case, their Jewish culture initially hindered their struggle to discover Jesus' Messiahship and God's worldwide plan for people everywhere to be legitimately offered an invitation to see, enter, and live in the Kingdom of God. Jews sometimes look for a different sort of Messiah to save Israel from its enemies. But He came to them, stood and lived in their midst, and invited them repeatedly to join God's Kingdom by walking with Him. The Savior came not to save them from Roman oppression, but from sin's. He continues to offer that to all who would accept Him, turn from sin and follow the Redeemer.

Our challenge is to discern good from evil, embrace the good, and shun the bad, while forgiving those slow to recognize the difference, including ourselves.

QUESTIONS

How have you struggled with questions about God's true nature? How do you feel about other people's struggles in this regard? How do you think that God's plan takes all of this into account? Why?

PRAYER

Sowing Seeds for Life (SSFL)

Pray that Sowing Seeds for Life continues to spread blessings with all the clients who rely upon this ministry throughout the year. Pray that the SSFL programs will be funded for the good of the hearts they serve.



Read **Acts 26**

Consider the costs-to-benefits ratio of following Jesus.

The cost of following Jesus is considerable, but the rewards of God's sure victory are out of this world. Jesus' obedience to the Father cost His life. Following Jesus cost Stephen his life (Acts 7:59-70); it cost the Apostle James his life (Acts 12:2). Being obedient to the LORD brought Micaiah to prison (2 Chronicles 18:25-27); obedience caused Jeremiah to be thrown into a pit (Jeremiah 38:6-13). Because Peter followed Jesus, he was put in prison (Acts 12:3-10); Paul was put in chains and had a resume of suffering.

During Paul's self-defense in front of Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, and those gathered at Caesarea, he spoke of his encounter with a voice from heaven on the Road to Damascus years earlier. The voice said, "*It is hard to kick against the goads*" (Acts 26:14). In other words, it is hard to go against the grain of God's Kingdom, against God's very will. It is hard to go against the current of a strong river or to fly into a strong headwind. It is hard to stroke a pet's fur the wrong way.

Paul's encounter with Jesus was one of the greatest course corrections in history. In recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, Paul's zeal for the God of Israel was redirected from being persecutor of Jesus' followers, to being persecuted as one of Jesus' followers.

Being turned around, Paul turned his world around. Jesus isn't just the Messiah for Israel; He is the Messiah for the whole world. He is not only the "*Son of David*" (Luke 18:38), but also the "*Son of Man*" (Matthew 20:28).

God's words through Paul ring true. Weakness is no fun, but "*[God's] power is made perfect in [our] weakness*" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Owning our weakness, our need for God and salvation in Christ, is foundational to spiritual rebirth. God's still small voice strengthened Elijah in his weakness; it can do the same for us.

God's "*gentle whisper*" to Elijah (1 Kings 19:12) is clear and His words are precious—"*sweeter than honey*" (Psalm 19:10-11). When God whispers words to you, treasure them; dwell on them.

QUESTIONS

What words from God have strengthened you in your life? What "*whisper*" of guidance, reassurance or direction do you need to hear from God right now?

PRAYER

Sowing Seeds for Life (SSFL)

Pray for the clients of Sowing Seeds for Life—from the babies to the seniors, from the students to the veterans, and every heart that the volunteers touch. Pray for the hungry to be nourished in every way possible through the many gifts of the Lord.



FRIDAY

Read [John 15:1-11](#); [Psalm 1:1-3](#)

Hearing God's voice is God's grace; obeying God's voice yields good fruit.

Elijah not only heard God's whisper, he believed it and obeyed it.

As hard as it is to discern God's voice, it can be harder to obey it. But the fruit of faithfulness is worth everything, worth dying for. And Jesus did. Jesus said people are known by their fruit. He said His disciples would be known by their love (John 13:35), and love is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Good fruit is one of the things God aims to prompt via His whisper (John 15:8). The key to bearing such fruit is to abide in Jesus (John 15:5).

How does one do that? Luke 12:28-32 (*The Message*) tells us what this looks like in Jesus' own words: "What I'm trying to say here is get you to relax. People who don't know God and the ways He works fuss over these things, but you know God and how He works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find your everyday human concerns will be met. Don't be afraid of missing out. You're My dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself."

Look at Paul's life, for example. It was a very hard life, but it yielded very good fruit. Paul's obedience to God's voice is still producing fruit today. The Bible is full of these examples, starting with Jesus Himself. He obeyed His Father's whispers, and look where we are today. Our lives are far, far better because of it. And so is the world. Yes, bearing good fruit can be hard to do, but the results are remarkable!

God's story is still unfolding in places and circumstances where we might not consider looking. Hear the whispers of what God is doing around the world right now. It is happening today!

For example, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* is the textbook for a 15-week course by the same name. This course has informed many people about the gospel message all around the world. Read the latest issue of *Mission Frontiers* magazine (Issue 46:3-4 May/August 2024) to learn what God is doing around the world today. Additionally, Adriana Carranca's book titled *Soul by Soul: The Evangelical Mission to Spread the Gospel to Muslims* tells of Brazilian missionaries in contemporary Jordan, Afghanistan, Egypt, and Southern California doing just that—spreading the gospel to Muslims!

QUESTIONS

When have you experienced God's love fruit?

PRAYER

Sowing Seeds for Life (SSFL)

Pray for every person touched by Sowing Seeds for Life that they receive the strength of the Lord to sustain them throughout all difficulties and to raise them up to meet the challenges they face.



Sources

- Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, Eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2009).
- *Mission Frontiers Magazine*, Issue 46:3-4 May/August 2024 (Published by Frontier Ventures in Pasadena, CA). This can be accessed online at <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/current>.
- Adriana Carranca, *Soul by Soul: The Evangelical Mission to Spread the Gospel to Muslims* (New York: Columbia Global Reports, 2024).

These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org. If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.

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