

1 Kings 19 - Seeing the Invisible - How do we see as God sees?

Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church – Yerevan - 7 September 2014

Hook – Pastor Garik asked me to preach at the young adult service last night and afterwards asked if I would give the same sermon today, or whatever else The Lord commanded. This morning I was in prayer and The Lord told me that your pastor knows his church better than anyone, and that I should do what he requested.

Pastor Garik asked us to pray for you because of these challenges yesterday afternoon - The daunting task - Persecution of Christians throughout the world (atheist Europe, Muslims, non-believers claiming to be Christians, believers divided and faith shaking).

How many of us wish that God would manifest Himself in a powerful way in our world? How many of us feel discouraged in our lives, and in our Christian life? How many of us feel alone?

Against these obstacles, it is hard to see how the Church, the assembly of all believers for all time, be victorious. Also, how can we win in our own lives?

God promises that both will happen (Romans 8:28), but to see that we need to sometimes see the invisible.

1. Example of Elisha and his servant (2 Kings 6:17).
2. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

Consider the power of God, and not only that of man

Consider that God is with us always, both in His Spirit and through our brethren in Christ.

How do we see the invisible, to see as God sees?

Care for our physical and our spiritual needs, and those of others
Consider that God always has another mission for us.

Book - 1 Kings 19:1-18 - Pastor Garik read in Armenian.

Look

Consider the power of God, and not only that of man

What Elijah saw - His life in danger (19:1-3) - He considered only the power of the government and those people around him and not the power of The Lord. Perhaps he felt resentful that he had done so much for God and was still suffering.

What we see - Many Christians in the world see their very lives in danger (example of Iranian believers) others see their livelihoods in danger (example of Egyptian believers). Still others see their families and freedoms endangered).

The French infidel Voltaire said that within 100 years, Christianity would vanish from the earth. Fifty years later his house was used to print Bibles.

By the power of man, Christ was crucified. By the power of God, Christ was raised.

Illustration

Discussion Questions/Application

Care for our physical and our spiritual needs, and those of others

What Elijah saw - His energy spent (19:4) - He was hungry, tired, and thirsty - his physical needs were not met

What we see - Many Christians do not have their physical needs met (not sleeping, not taking care of our bodies) and do not meet the physical needs of others (James 2:15-16).

How many of you are married? For the wives, does your husband get grumpy some times? What do you do when he does? My wife feeds me, gives me dessert, rubs me, and invites me to take a nap. God did the same for Elijah.

We see starvation in Asia, the ebola epidemic in Africa, and poverty all over the world. Who is responsible to care for the hungry, the poor, and the sick? Us.

Illustration "PICTURES"

Discussion Questions/Application

Consider that God is with us always, both in His Spirit and through our brethren in Christ.

What Elijah saw - God far from him (19:11-12) - God was not far away from Elijah, but He was in the cave with him.

He was looking for the spectacular, wanting to find God in the wind, the fire, or the earthquake. Only such great power could break the power of Jezebel.

1. Perhaps Elijah wanted a tornado that could blow a tower down in Ahab's fortress
2. Perhaps he wanted an earthquake that could flatten the palace and drop a stone on Jezebel's head.
3. Perhaps he wanted a fire that would consume his enemies and everything that they had.

What we see - Many of us do not feel the constant presence of God (too busy, too much noise) - Story of Rachel's friend losing her iPhone for three weeks and hating it because she had too much time to think.

1. When we are in the cave of discouragement, God is with us.
2. When we are in the cave of fear, God is with us.
3. When we are in the cave of confusion, God is with us.
4. When we are in the cave of loneliness, God is with us.

We look for the spectacular and fail to see His work in the ordinary. We pray for healing and when it occurs through natural or medical means, fail to give God the credit.

How many of us want a wind, an earthquake, or a fire that will destroy those who oppose us? How many of us know exactly who we would use that power against?

We don't see the presence of God in those believers around us:

Hebrews 12:1 says that we have a great cloud of witnesses in the race of life, cheering us on. Who are these people?

Those who have gone before us, like the saints mentioned in Hebrews 11. Though we do not see them, they still speak to us through their words and lives (11:4).

Those who are alive with us now - we somehow expect God to send super saints and forget that He does His work through ordinary, weak, inconsistent, confused, sinful people.

Those who will come after us - Though we do not see them yet, they will learn from our words and actions as they try to discover The Lord and live their lives for Him.

Illustration "PICTURES"

Discussion Questions/Application

Consider that God always has another mission for us.

What Elijah saw - His mission complete (19:4). Later in the chapter God gave him a mission. Part of it was OK, but part he didn't want. He was to anoint Hazael as King of Syria. but Hazael would invade Israel and kill many of Elijah's people.

What we see - Our mission impossible, undesirable, or complete

What God saw

1. Elijah's life to be saved (19:8) - For a short time on earth and forever with Him
2. Elijah's energy renewed (19:5-7) - For a short time on earth and forever with Him
3. God close to Elijah (19:11-13) - in the person of His Spirit and through other believers (19:18)
4. Elijah's ongoing mission, as undesirable as it was from Elijah's point of view.

Why don't we see what God sees? for the same reasons that Elijah did not see what God saw at this time in his life.

Illustration "PICTURES"

Discussion Questions/Application

Took

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Verdict – What do you want them to DO as a result of the truths they have just received?

When I teach medical students, I expect them to change their practice as a result of what they have learned. When anyone preaches the gospel, God expects them to change their lives as a result of what they have learned.

1. Consider the power of God, and not only that of man - Consider a problem that you have and think and pray about how God's power will change that problem. Do the same for someone else in your life.
2. Consider our physical and our spiritual needs, and those of others - God will meet our physical needs and renew our strength (Isaiah 40:29-31). Similarly, we must meet the physical and spiritual needs of others (James 2:15-16). The Church must feed the hungry, heal the sick, care for the widow and the orphan, and visit the prisoner.
3. Consider that God is with us always (Matthew 28:20), both in His Spirit and through our brethren in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-14) - How can we live our lives better from the words and examples of those who came before us? How can we help those we walk with through life today? How can we leave a better legacy, a better testimony, for those who will come behind us?
4. Consider that God always has another mission for us. Whatever it is, we must do it.

Closing prayer