

Don't Stop Now, Let's Move Forward In God

By Mary Bernice

In 1 Kings is the story of Elijah the prophet of YHWH who ran from Jezebel, a Baal worshiper. Some may have come away with the idea that Elijah was giving up on life because of a fear of Jezebel. However, it appears that, upon further inspection, Elijah was instead giving up because he realized that he had sinned when he ran from Jezebel, which was a demonstration of lack of faith in the God he served to deliver him, even from Jezebel. To Elijah, his action of unbelief was reminiscent of the forefathers. Elijah was disappointed in himself and his behavior.

Elijah's initial response was in fear of Jezebel's threat, positioning him a day's journey into the wilderness, having fled there in fear of Jezebel. However, the Scripture reveals that Elijah, having settled into his spot under a juniper tree, realizes something about his action and is no longer in fear. 1 Kings 19:4: "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers" (NAS). Elijah realized that his current fear was no different than the fear demonstrated by his fathers when they were faced with enemies as recorded when Caleb and Joshua spoke to them in Numbers 14:9 "Only do not rebel against the Lord, and do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection has turned aside from them, but the Lord is with us. Do not fear them!". It dawns on Elijah that God is all-knowing and would not have allowed Jezebel to destroy him. Having recently performed such a great feat recorded in 1 Kings 18, he was now humbled recognizing this unbelief and in humility Elijah goes as far as to tell the Lord to let him die. Not because of fear of Jezebel but because he had reacted in distrust of God, evidenced in his running away in fear. It reminded him of the lack of faith of his fathers who did not trust God. Yet, God is so compassionate! God sent an angel to minister to Elijah to keep him alive (1 Kings 19:5-8).

Although not exactly the same, I was once on what one might refer to as a see-saw relationship with God. When things were good, I was so very busy and I had little time to give to the Lord. When things were not so good, I made time and put forth the effort to "seek first the Kingdom of God" and to spend time in His presence in order for Him to get me out of trouble. That is what He instructed us to do in Matthew 6:33, right? **[Note: insert image of see-saws somewhere around this area]** This went on for a while. Time after time, up for a while, then down again. I would ask for forgiveness, and God in His faithfulness to His Word would get me out of my predicament. One particular time, as had become the usual, something happened with my finances, and again I was needing the Lord's help. I prayed to the Lord but this time, I realized that I was not trusting God's Word in this area of putting Him first; enough to be consistent with a daily commitment to Him. A commitment that reflected me loving the Lord with all my heart... (Matthew 22:37), and a commitment to not have any God before Him (Exodus 20:3), which at the time I was placing MY very busy days before Him. I was humbled. Perhaps I was a little embarrassed that I kept getting caught in this cycle. I told God that if I was Him, I wouldn't even forgive me. This behavior of mine was ridiculous! Thank God, like in

Elijah's case, He did not take my advice. He forgave me, yet again. However, this time, I was fed up and asked God how I could get out of this revolving-door type behavior. He showed me how and I have not had that in my life since. Back to Elijah.

This was not the greatest time for Elijah, realizing his unnecessary cowardice. He then answers God's question "What are you doing here?" by informing God that he (Elijah) is the only prophet left after Israel's forsaking of the covenant and killing off the prophets (1 Kings 19:10 & 14). Elijah is eventually instructed to anoint Elisha to succeed him, however, Elijah's ministry was not over. Just because one has a rough time with your commitment to the Lord, does not mean God's compassion and Covenant mercy or His plan for you has ended. Sometime later in 1 Kings 21:28 we witness that God continues to use Elijah, "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying..." Also, during the reign of Ahab's son, Elijah was still prophesying (2 Kings 1:3). Praise God! Elijah received the Love of God, forgave himself, and moved forward with trust in God. **[Note: insert photo of flaming chariot here]**

Then, if that is not enough, we see Elijah once again, but this time in the New Testament conversing with Jesus: "Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus" (Matthew 17:3). God is Good!! Don't give up on God or His plan for you because He has not given up on you.