

## **Sermon: Reaching the Next**

**Speaker: Jake Thurston**

1 Kings 19

"May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." (1 Kings 19:2)

"I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." (1 Kings 19:4)

"What are you doing here, Elijah?" 14 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." (1 Kings 19:13-14)

"One reason is that we live in a time and a place characterized by rampant skepticism about Christianity and the Bible. Hyperrationalism and pop-culture atheism undercut belief. A majority of non-Christian youth and young adults are jaded to the appeal of following Jesus. They reject organized religion altogether, especially claims of an exclusive faith like Christianity. Many view the Bible as a book of oppression that is harmful to the minds of its devoted readers. In some influential places, young Christians encounter condescension or downright hostility from their peers, their instructors, and social elites." - Faith For Exiles by David Kinnaman

(1 Kings 19:15-16)

The Lord said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, DO THESE THREE THINGS

1. anoint Hazael king over Aram.
2. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and
3. anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.

<sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. <sup>18</sup> Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him." (1 Kings 19:17-18)

## **God's plan to purge his people's sin depended on the next generation**

<sup>19</sup> So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. <sup>20</sup> Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye,” he said, “and then I will come with you.”

“Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?”

<sup>21</sup> So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant. (1 Kings 19:19-21)

## **Sometimes, God's means to purifying society is through the current generation reaching the next generation**

Resilient Disciples 10% of the 18-29-year-old Christ-followers who:

1. Attend church at least monthly and engage with their church more than just attending worship services
2. Trust firmly in the authority of the Bible
3. Are committed to Jesus personally and affirm he was crucified and raised from the dead to conquer sin and death
4. Express desire to transform the broader society as an outcome of their faith

### **Statistics of Resilient Disciples**

89% – My relationship with Jesus brings me deep joy and satisfaction

70% – In my church, I regularly receive wisdom for how to live faithfully in a secular world

88% – The church is a place where I feel I belong

77% – When growing up, I had close personal friends who were adults from my church, parish, or faith community

72% – My church does a good job of helping me understand how to live out my faith in the workplace

90% – I want others to see Jesus reflected in me through my words and actions

What if... the greatest "Jezebel" turning people away from the faith, is the church itself? What if we are our own Jezebel's?

The next generation's allegiance to Christ heavily depends on our current allegiance to Christ.

Elijah: "What can I do for you before I am taken from you?"

Elisha: "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit."

Psalm 78:4

<sup>4</sup>We will not hide these truths from our children;  
we will tell the next generation  
about the glorious deeds of the Lord,  
about his power and his mighty wonders.