

BELPRES CHURCH

Sermon Title: How To Be Restored

Icebreaker Question: Would you rather have a pause or a rewind button in your life?

Opening Question: Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

This week's scripture:
1 Kings 19:1-18

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "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."

³ Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." ⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

⁷ The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "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."

¹⁵ The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read 1 Kings 19:1-18 (1 Kings 18 for background) together and discuss the following:

- What is the point of God's three "false starts" (vs 11-12; see Exodus 19:9,16-19)? What is God's message when he finally does speak?
- Compare verses 12-14 and 9-10. What does Elijah's unchanged answer imply?
- What does Elijah need most?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- Share about a time when you felt discouraged and just wanted to run away like Elijah did. Reflecting on the sermon, can you think of a way that God restored you that was different than you anticipated or expected?
- How might a weekly sabbath practice bring restoration to your life? What barriers do you foresee and how can you prepare so that a day set apart to stop, rest, delight and worship is possible?

Closing Question and Application: Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

Closing group prayer: Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Take the challenging parts of your conversation to Jesus. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.

This week's Sabbath practices:

- Last week you identified your Sabbath day, where you need to create margin to make room for Sabbath, and named some of the people you'd like to invite into Sabbath with you. If you haven't done that yet, start with these. As you've processed this or prayed about this the past week, has God prompted you further in any of this?
- Prepare to start practicing Sabbath next week (we'll be adding more building blocks each week, but for now plan to set that day apart from your regular routine). Create an invitation and extend it to those you want to invite to Sabbath with you next week.
- As a family or a household, decide one thing each family member will do to help prepare this week for sabbath (a chore, etc...)