

September 3, 2023

Supply Lines: Preparing for the Storms (1 Kings 19)

Plan for crisis before it comes.

On the Rise (3min)

- Greetings (and online), notes (and app), get CARD.
- Thank you for the encouragement on this series and the BOOK.
- New study showed that in the last three years, anxiety rose 74% and depression 32%. Spending on mental health has risen 54%.
- Supply Lines help you when the storms come – and they help prevent many problems, too.
 - o Five Supply Lines – key relationships you need to flourish.
 - o Soul Sharpeners, Vision Casters, Encouraging Tail Kickers, Friends and Heart Healers, Strategic Thinkers (will cover next week).
- Today – preparing for the storm. Looking at Elijah in 1 Kings 19.

Prayer

Elijah (12-15min)

● *1 Kings 19 (p.300)

- Background
 - o Reign of Ahab and Jezebel one of the most economically prosperous but spiritually corrupt periods in Israel's history.
 - o Elijah was a prophet, and he had a showdown with the prophets of Baal. They could not bring rain or fire, but the Lord brought both, and the people turned against the false prophets and killed them.

¹ When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ² So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them."

³ Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. ⁴ Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."

- **Elijah went on...ALONE.**

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- *Our lowest moments often occur after the greatest victories.
 - Elijah may have imagined Carmel to be the turning point.
 - Lament doesn't need to make sense – be honest.
 - God just showed up – why are you afraid?
 - Nothing left in the tank...
 - Elijah was honest – and we can be too.
 - Long list of lamenting in the Bible.
 - Moses wanted to quit (Num 11)
 - Habakkuk questioned God's justice (Hab 1)
 - John the Baptist in prison began to doubt if Jesus was the Messiah (Matt 11:3).
 - Job complained to God in his suffering
 - Jonah was angry with God over his calling to wicked people
 - Jeremiah felt betrayed by God
 - Mary and Martha questioned Christ's timing when their brother died.
 - The psalms are filled with lament, complaint, and questioning, using words most of us are too afraid to pray.
 - Jesus himself prayed Psalm 22 in agony on the cross.
 - Scripture grants us permission to lament and gives us the guide for going through the lowest moments of life and faith.

⁵ Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" ⁶ He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

⁷ Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you."

⁸ So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he came to a cave, where he spent the night.

But the Lord said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too."

- *God listens to our lament and calls us forward.
 - Sometimes we just need a nap!
 - God cares for our practical needs – sleep, food – and calls us on a pilgrimage of faith...Sinai.
 - The Lord listens to your lament – don't worry about making it perfect.
 - I found myself wanting to "be real" with people – and oversharing and missing a filter. Then I would pray and say my "perfect prayers" to God.
 - Have a filter with people – that is always needed!

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- You don't need to hide from the Savior – He already knows what you are thinking and feeling. Say it out loud, get it out, let the Lord listen.
- When I changed this, it changed me. I pray before I spill to people – that allows me to share unfiltered with the Lord and share wisely with others.

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¹¹ “Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

- *The Lord points to Himself as the true goal of life.

- Elijah's lament – not enough results, the “transaction” is not worth it.
- God doesn't point to results – but to Himself.
- He is not in the mighty earthquake, wind, or fire – but in the gentle whisper...
- The real goal of our existence is not the power, spectacle, fame, wealth, achievement – but to find ourselves in the love of our Creator...

And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁴ He replied again, “I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.”

¹⁵ Then the Lord told him, “Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram. ¹⁶ Then anoint Jehu grandson of Nimshi to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet. ¹⁷ Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha! ¹⁸ Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!”

- It may seem like Elijah didn't get it because he repeated the same lament.
- But he was changed – he followed the Lord's commands but left behind his results oriented transactionalism.
 - When the Lord spared evil King Ahab's life, after Elijah had predicted it, Elijah was not upset – he was merely the Lord's messenger (21:20-28).
 - When it was time for Elijah to depart, passing the mantle to Elisha, his focus was not on results or numbers but on dwelling in the house of the Lord (2 Kings 2).

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*Plan for Crisis Before It Comes (7min)

• Story – Rattlesnake

- Years ago, I decided to take a last-minute camping trip with two of my small kids. I grabbed a tent, some food, three sleeping bags, and out the door we went. It did not take long for me to realize I was woefully underprepared. We were in the mountains, and as it got cold I realized that I had not packed jackets for the kids. That's fine, I figured, we could just bundle up in sleeping bags as we sat in our chairs and ate dinner. As I prepared dinner, it became apparent that I had not packed enough food. No problem – the next day's lunch became part of dinner. I was having a great time in nature with my kids, but it was clear that I was not prepared. And danger was waiting.
- We were camping in a location with no one else around us. As I was packing up the campsite, the kids were playing on a couple of boulders nearby. Soon I heard my daughter whining at her brother. She was only two years old at the time, and she could not climb on the boulder her brother was on. Her hands could reach a ledge (about three feet up), but she could not climb up. I went over to help, and that is when I saw it. On top of the boulder, under a bush – there was a rattlesnake. It was not rattling or coiled, but it was looking directly at my little daughter. I stepped in front of her, grabbed her hand, and slowly stepped back. All three of us walked away, loaded the car, and headed home.
- My first thought was, "Should I tell this story to my wife?" I did, of course – it was the right thing to do (and I figured my kids would tell on me anyway). But my bigger question was, "What would I have done if my daughter was bitten?" I had not packed any first aid, didn't know where the closest hospital was, and had no cell phone reception. We had narrowly avoided a serious crisis. I was not prepared.
- Barns are best filled before the famine.

• CARD – did you fill yours out?

• *5 Crises (or types of burnout)

- Emptiness – God is gone.
- Burnout (apathy) – no dream remains.
- Despair – the problems are too big.
- Isolation – I am alone.
- Chaos – everything is out of control.

• Five Supply Lines in Crisis

- Crises take time (as we all know) – this is a process and worth the time.
 - Leave margin in your life – it is naïve to think nothing will ever happen.
 - In fact, a life with no margin increases your chances of crisis.
- Crisis support requires greater expertise.
 - Don't avoid support – seek stronger support.
 - Wrong thinking – this problem is bigger than my regular support...so I will go alone (no!)
 - *Tweet by @TaraBull808, sent to me a few weeks ago...At the world championships in Budapest, USA's Anita Alvarez sank to the bottom of the pool. Her coach Andrea Fuentes noticed she was under too long. She dove in, fully clothed, and pulled Anita to safety. Anita had fallen unconscious – if her coach had not noticed, she would have drowned.
 - I know you would do this for others...
 - Who are the people you have allowed to be your coaches and mentors—that you meet with regularly—who know when to dive in after you?
- *Spiritual crisis (emptiness) – pastor or spiritual director
- Vision crisis (burnout) – high level leader or visionary, guided retreat
- Motivation crisis (despair) – leadership (or life) coach

- Relationship crisis (isolation) – therapist
- Strategic crisis (chaos) – consultant
- Connect before crisis comes.
- ***Spare Tire story (or just analogy)**
 - Analogy – Cars include a spare tire because car makers know a flat will happen. It still takes time with the Supply Line – but it takes way less time. No one wants a flat, but it is part of driving.
 - Young man got a flat in front of offices, I went to help him, didn't know how – time to learn! Got spare out, put it on, and the spare was flat!
 - You can reach out to professionals in crisis – even if it is the first time.
 - But if you have a relationship already – the support is much stronger.

The Wall (Dark Night) (3-8min)

- The journey of life and faith will lead us to a Wall – where the simple answers won't work anymore. God can use the crises to crack through our stubborn hearts – and transform us. Some people get stuck here for years – some for the rest of their lives. We try to break that Wall, but the only way through is to be broken...and not all of the pieces of who we were make it through.
- We are different on the other side of the Wall, and we view God differently.
- ***The Journey**
 - Greater **awareness** of our shadow sides and lies we have believed about ourselves.
 - Deep **forgiveness** for ourselves and others – knowing that our lives are not the way we thought they should be.
 - Powerful **acceptance** of ourselves, including the fallen aspects of who we are – we bring those to Jesus rather than denying them and allowing them control.
 - Overflowing **love** for ourselves, others, and God – rooted in awareness, forgiveness, and acceptance.
- Going through the Wall can happen multiple times, and it always transforms us.
- I talked with multiple church planters who let go of evaluating their worth on numbers, and the desire to endlessly please people. “I was broken, literally on my face in the carpet before God. After talking with a Spiritual Director, I realized my pace of life was destroying my family, the church, and my soul. I made the commitment to pray for an hour every morning, whatever the result was to the church. And the church did better! I am a healthier leader, and my church is a healthier church, and I finally enjoy the life I live.”
- *Be prepared for – not derailed by – the crises that will come.*
 - Plan for them with Supply Lines. Pray through them and see how the Lord will transform you.

Prayer

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Benediction – Col 2:7

- Life Groups – 175 people – good job!!!
- Fight Hunger