

The Cry for Prophetic Power

by Ian Paisley

Elijah's characteristics of being a struggling man, a separate man, and a standing man are examples for us to follow in standing up for God and His truth.

Duration: 38:40

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:1, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Ephesians 5:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20, James 4:7, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Prophetic Ministry", "Spiritual Empowerment"

Description

In this sermon, delivered by Dr. Ian Paisley at a Bible conference service in 1967, he focuses on the characteristics of the prophet Elijah. He emphasizes the importance of not being indifferent to the word of God and the need to stand against opposition. Dr. Paisley shares a personal anecdote about being in prison and the welcome home meeting he attended afterwards. He encourages the audience to be equipped with God's power and wisdom in order to be effective ministers in their generation.

Transcript

Speakers who have challenged you for years come to you now on the series, The Chapel Platform, originating from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. These servants of God, presented on The Chapel Platform, have delivered Biblical truth to help prepare Christians to serve the Lord. Here now is the pastor of Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Dr. Ian Paisley.

He gave this message at a Bible Conference service on Friday, March 31st, 1967. His text is 1 Kings chapter 17, verse 1. His sermon is a message of deep insight titled, The Characteristics of Elijah. We're turning to the 17th chapter of the first book of Kings.

The first book of Kings, chapter 17. This series of messages I call Lessons of Revival Gleaned from the Life of Elijah, the man of God. This message I would entitle, The Characteristics of the Prophet's Person.

And we're going to have a look at the person of the prophet Elijah. Let's read just the first verse of this chapter, chapter 17 of 1 Kings. And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be Jews, nor Syrian, these years, but according to my word.

And God shall stand with his own divine approval of this reading from the infallible book. Let's engage in prayer. Heavenly Father, we turn now to thy word.

Thy word is truth. And we pray that thou wouldst help us to expound the truth that lies concealed therein. Help us this afternoon to behold wondrous things out of thy own infallible word.

To this end I take the promised Holy Ghost, the blessed power of Pentecost, to fill me to the uttermost. I take, thank God, he undertakes. And the people of God said, Amen.

Amen. You know, sometimes when we consider the characters of the Old Testament scriptures, we are almost guilty of looking upon them as supernatural beings. When we see the tremendous power that they wielded, when we look upon the impact that they made upon their day and generation, when we see the evident dynamic of their most fruitful and powerful ministry, we may almost become guilty of putting them upon a non-attainable pedestal.

We see Elijah, his tremendous, uncompromising personality. We see the power that he had in a day of apostasy. We see him rebuking the idolatrous king.

We see him swaying the whole nation under his challenge at Mount Carmel. We see apostasy smashed and swept away as a result of his unfeeling testimony. And we are apt to ask ourselves the question, What manner of man is this? Let me say this afternoon, we can take encouragement from every character of the Old Testament.

These were but men. Their power was not a power that we cannot enjoy ourselves. This power is available to all of the people of God.

And so we are going to consider this man Elijah, and we are going to notice some of the characteristics that made up his tremendous personality and laid the tremendous power to his testimony and ministry. I'd like to refer you, first of all, to a New Testament scripture, a scripture that has been the means of great encouragement to my own soul. It's found over in the epistle to James, James epistle, chapter 5, and verse 17.

And I want to bring my first point, I want to underline the first characteristic of Elijah's personality from this text. Elias was a man. He wasn't an angel.

He was a man. He wasn't a divine being. He was a man.

He was flesh, bones, and blood like ourselves. But you know, the text goes on and it says he was a man subject, used to underline that word, subject to like passions as we are. You know, when I read that text, I say, hallelujah, there's hope for me.

Yes. The first thing about Elijah was this. He was a struggling man.

He was down in the arena of life's conflicts just like me. He faced all the individual temptations that are common to humanity. He had all the individual weaknesses and imperfections that are characteristic of a fallen race.

And here he is, a piece of weak humanity, characterized by his own struggle against temptation, against weaknesses, against sin. And this very imperfect man, this man subject to like passions as us all, was God's man for his generation. I'm glad God doesn't take the great things.

I'm glad God doesn't take the mighty things. I'm glad God doesn't take the honored things. But praise God, the divine principle says He takes the things that are not.

So there's hope for me and for you, friend. We're just nothing, but God takes the nothings for His glory. May God encourage us this afternoon.

There is potential in this meeting to move the world. There is potential in this meeting to see of the new world and to see of the old world. God just wants you, my friend, as you are.

Poor old Elijah, with all the struggles of his heart, with all the aspirations that never achieved the summit or apex, with all the weaknesses, with all the feelings, with all the struggles, Elijah was the man that God took to confound the enemy and to deliver the nation. May the Lord write this upon our hearts, that He can take you, my friend. You say, as I look preacher at my life, I know its weaknesses only too well.

I know its feelings only too well. What one of us does not mourn in the secret place are weaknesses, are imperfections, are subjections to the like passions common to the realist. But praise God, God can take us this afternoon and He can mold us in the mold of His own will.

And He can lay hold upon us with the power of the Holy Ghost. And He can send us across the nation to the instruments in His hand to sweep away the apostasy, to confound the idolaters and to save this generation from the gospel of Jesus Christ. May God get this into our souls.

God wants to do something in our lives today. He wants to equip us with a vice-like grip of His omnipotence. He wants to equip us with the blessing of a wisdom that is divine.

He wants to fill us with all the holy, celestial, unquenching fire of His power. And He wants to release us as flames of fire in this generation. Thank God He makes His ministers flames of fire.

God grant that this fire will burn in all our souls this afternoon. So He was a struggling man. The second thing I want you to notice about Elijah, his second characteristic was this.

He was a separate man. If you look carefully at this first verse of chapter 17, you will discover three things about Elijah. You will discover his name.

You will discover something else related to his generation. And you will discover the place from which he came. He is called Elijah.

He is called the Tespite. And he came from the inhabitants of Gilead. Now, I want to take those three things this afternoon, because they give us the key to the separation position that Elijah took.

First of all, Elijah was separated from false religion. That's the first of the separation. This is found in his name.

Elijah means, my God is Jehovah. So I want you to get the setting of Elijah's day. It was a day of idolatry.

It was a day when they were preaching the theology that Jehovah is dead and Baal is alive. And in this day of Baal worship, in this day of idolatry, in this day when every valley and every hill had its shrines to deal, there was a man walked through the country, and his very name was a living testimony that my God is Jehovah. Don't you see it, friends? Everywhere he went, when they called his name, it was synonymous with separation from false religion.

Thank God this great university's name is synonymous with separation from false religion. And may it always remain like that. I have no trouble in Belfast explaining my doctrinal position.

No trouble whatsoever. They never ask me to serve on a Billy Graham campaign committee. They never invite me.

The invitation never comes to my home. I often say to my wife, I don't think the postman tears them up either. They never get on their way.

If you take your stand, friends, as a separatist for God, you'll have no trouble declaring in the day of crisis where you stand. All Elijah's name was synonymous with separation from false religion. And where there was false religion, Elijah was entirely and completely and absolutely separated and go cold to it.

It's not enough, you know, to separate. You've got to attack the evil thing and expose it. Here's what the book says.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Some Christians will say, Amen. But the text goes on, but rather reprove them.

I've had people come to me and have said, Mr. Paisley, we're behind you. And on a Sunday evening, when I'm engaged in evangelism, they're all there. But on Monday night, when I'm out in the picket line exposing some old half-damned apostate who's visiting the city, I look behind me.

And they're so far behind me, I can't see them. But they tell me they're behind me. Now, my friend, I've not only to be separated unto the Lord, but I've to be a living testimony to that separation.

This was Elijah. His name was synonymous with separation unto the Lord. I want you to notice something else.

He's called the Tishbite. That word means the stranger here. He was not only separated from false religion unto the Lord, but he was separated from the world.

And if ever God's church needed people who were holy, we need them today. This is a day when the line of demarcation between the church and the world is blurred. This is a day when the church is in the world and the world is in the church.

What we need is a race of stranger here. The Bible says, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Tell me, are you a world lover? Or are you separated from the world? Old Elijah's interests were heavenward. Old Elijah sat his affections on things above, not on things beneath. And I am called upon to lay up treasure not on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and thieves break through and steal.

But I am called upon to lay up treasure in heaven. My brethren and sisters in Christ, let us walk in our daily lives the path of separation from the world. Separation from apostasy.

Separation from the world. And then you'll notice something else, that he was of the inhabitants of Gilead. Gilead means rocky.

It was a rough country, the country of Gilead. It wasn't the well-watered plains like Sodom. It was the rough hill country where the men of war were prepared.

And could I say that this separation of Elijah was not only separation from false religion and separation from the world, but it was separation unto the Lord. The great men of valor were Gileadites. I'm thinking of Joshua 17, where you have Jephthah, one of the judges.

He was a Gileadite, a mighty man of valor. I might take a place of separation from apostasy. I might take the place of separation from the world.

But, friend, God hasn't called me to leave Egypt to wander around in the wilderness. God has called me to cross over into a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey. I don't know about your country, but I have found this, that we have many men who at a great price have separated from apostasy and have said goodbye to the world council and all its entanglements.

But when you go to their churches, there is no evangelistic fervor or fire. They're not winning souls for the Lord. There's death there.

We had a great preacher in our country called W.P. Nicholson. And Nicholson said if you brought a bucket of milk in at the door before you got it to the pulpit, it would be ice cream. The place is so cold.

And, friend, that's true of some churches. The Separatist church, friend, should be a soul-living church. The founder of this university, the first time I came here, laid his hand upon my shoulder and he said this.

He said, young man, orthodoxy cannot function without evangelistic function. And neither it can. And, thank God, our churches in Ulster, every one of them are soul-living churches.

Baptist services, men and women, are being sealed. And we need, my friend, to see that our churches are separated unto the Lord. But there would be a terrible danger that we would separate to the party name.

There would be a terrible danger that we would separate on glory in our separation. Let us glory in the Lord and may the Holy Ghost lay hold upon us so that our separation results in a dedication and our dedication in an entire consecration unto the Lord. And here was old Elijah.

He wasn't only a struggling man, but, thank God, he was a separated man. Separated from false religion. His name was Elijah.

Jehovah is my God. Separated from the world, the Tishbite, the stranger here. Of the inhabitants of Gilead, the rocky country where the men of valor were trained for God's service.

Separated unto the Lord. I want you to notice something else about Elijah in this verse. He was a standing man.

He stood up. And I want you to look at this. He says, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand.

He was a standing man. You see, the whole nation were on their knees groveling to idolatry. And here's old Elijah, like a sore thumb, standing up in the middle of the lot of them.

He was a great nonconformist. He was a great dissenter. He was a man that stood against the establishment.

Stood against the majority. Stood against the whole nation. Why? For he was standing up for the Lord.

And men and women today, this is a day when we need to stand. There's a lot of people sitting down today. There's a lot of people not prepared to show what side they're on.

Of course, if you're going to be a man that's going to stand, you're going to be mocked. One man came to me one day and he said to me, Mr. Paisley, do you think that you're right? He said, look at all the people that are on the other side. And he started to tell me about all the great men that were on the other side.

And he said to me, he said, well, I don't think you could be right. I said to him, did you ever hear about a man called Noah? He said, I did. I said, Noah had a wonderful church.

He just had his own family in it. And he had more than his own family. He had his daughter-in-laws.

And I said, that was a miracle when the father-in-law agreed with the daughter-in-laws. That was one miracle he had. And he had them all in this one church.

And that's all he had. And he preached for 120 years. And he never had one more convert.

I said, you would say to him after he preached for 100 years, you're not right, Noah. Something wrong with you, Noah. Could all the world be wrong and you be right? But, friend, Noah was walking with God.

And I want to tell you, friend, that this world is out of step with God. And if I walk with God, I'll be out of step with the world. We have a modernistic preacher.

Well, we have hundreds of them in Ulster. And he got up one day, and there was a big world council meeting in our city. And he said to his congregation, the only person out of step in Belfast is Ian Paisley.

And when I heard it, I said, hallelujah, I'm out of step. All right. God keep me out of step.

I don't want to be in step with the devil. I needn't tell you I don't want to be in step with Papa the Pope either. I don't want to be in step with him.

I don't want to be in step with this old crooked bunch of Bible destroyers and Bible pervaders. I want to be in step with my God in this evil day. And there's not a man in that book, friend, that was laid hold upon by God that wasn't out of step with his generation.

You know, Paul was a great character. He was an extremist, Paul. Really, he was.

He was an extremist. That's what they call us. I suppose they call you that over here.

Their language is the same. They both use the devil's dictionary, whether they're on one side of the ocean or the other. They have the same vocabulary.

They graduated in the same class, under the same professor of languages. These apostates. You know, old Paul went on a missionary journey, and there was a young man called John Mark.

And he said, I'll go with my uncle and Paul, and we'll have a great time. And he got to Cyprus. And, my, when Paul got to Cyprus, he started to turn the heat off.

And John Mark got really frightened. And when Paul looked at that old twister and apostate that tried to turn the governor of Cyprus against the Lord and said, You're a child of the devil! And he struck him with blindness. John Mark longed to be back with Mammy.

Oh, that I could get home to Mammy, he said. And, you know, they took a journey in a boat to Asia Minor. And every day he said, Once this boat lands in Asia Minor, I'm going home.

And once he got to Asia Minor, John Mark went back home. Couldn't stick the pace. Paul was an extremist.

You know, God Almighty says, I would that ye were cold or hot. But because ye are lukewarm, I will skew thee out of my mind. I want to tell you, friend, we need the fire of God upon us in this evil day.

We need to stand up. You know why Elijah stood? I'll tell you, because God got him to it. He says, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand.

It was God that lifted him and made him stand. And if I'm only standing in the power of the flesh, I'll crumble when the battle comes. If I'm only standing when the crowd's with me, I'll go down.

If I'll only stand when my brethren back me, I'll go down. But when God lifts me up, when God supports me, when God's behind me and before me and underneath me and above me, it doesn't matter what the lions and dogs of hell do to me. Praise God, I stand by God's help.

This is what me and Luther stand in, the power of God. And I can say, friend, only for God's power this preacher would have crumbled long ago. I don't know of any other preacher in the British eyes that has been more slandered and more revived than this preacher.

In fact, when I read the newspapers, I learn things about myself I never knew before. Dr. Bob Junior was telling us at the lunch table today about being accused of beating his wife. Well, I had a unique experience, more unique than that.

I went into a home one time and the lady of the home said, Mr. Beasley, I want to apologize to you. I said, what do you want to apologize to me for? Well, she said, I hated you. I said, what did I do on you? Well, she said, I just hated you.

She said, you know, you came to preach a mission here. I was on the mission at the time. And she said, I wouldn't go to the mission.

But my daughter said, I'm going to hear this while back. I'll hear it. And she said that night, God sealed my daughter.

And when she came home and said, Mommy, I've got sealed, it really shook me. She said, I was a Christian, but I hated you. I said, why did you hate me? Well, she said, a prominent Christian lady came to my home and she said, You were a very bad, wicked man.

And that you gave your wife an awful time and you beat her continually. I said, when was this? She mentioned the year. You know, that was three years before I had any wife.

So I was a wife beater before I had a wife. I nearly slipped my tongue and said before I had a wife to beat. They'll say everything about you, friend.

But if you have the blessing of God, you can go on. And I'll tell you this. I'd rather be cursed from one end of the country to be to another than be treated with indifference.

There's one thing, friend, that will break you, and that's just indifference. But if there's violent opposition, you'll get through. You know, when your president was with us.

Well, I had just come out of prison. And of course, I had three months locked away and I was enjoying my liberty. And Dr. Bob Jr. said to me now on Saturday, what's on the program? Well, I said, the three of us, Reverend John Wiley and the Reverend Ivan Foster and myself, the three jailbirds, we have a big welcome home meeting in the city hall of Armagh.

That's the city I was born in. And he said, will anything happen? Oh, I said, it'll just be an ordinary meeting. He said, are you sure nothing will happen? Well, I said, of course, anything could happen.

Well, he proposed to go to Dublin to view the art gallery there in the museum. Of course, I don't go to Dublin. I would never return again.

And if he told him at the border that he was preaching for me, he would never have returned either. But he didn't go to Dublin. He stayed and we went to Armagh.

And we had a great meeting in Armagh. And we had, of course, this tape recorder, this agent of the police in taping the meeting. But when the meeting was over, the police sent in word that it would be dangerous for me to drive my car out directly on the way that it was facing where I parked it, because a great mob of Romanists had gathered on the other side of the street.

So Dr. Bob Jr. went out to view this crowd, and he noticed that the police drove all the Protestants that came out of my meeting against the wall on one side of the roadway. This is the treatment that we get. But these Romanists were allowed to go right over the road and almost block it.

And, of course, when I appeared, they spat and they cursed and they used the most vile of language. Police never did anything to stop them. And then Dr. Bob and myself got into the car and turned the car and they attacked the car.

We had a tremendous time getting away. And, of course, I said, well, we'll have to go to the police station and lodge a complaint at the action of the police. And when we got to the police station, the district inspector, the head of the police, you know what he said? He said, all those people were your supporters, Mr. Pierce, and they weren't cursing you.

They were tearing you. And they weren't kicking the car. They were patting the car.

And they weren't spitting at you. And he looked at me and I said a few things. And then your president said, I would like to say something.

And he looked at Dr. Jones and Dr. Jones said to him, he said, I have traveled around the world, but this is the first time I saw a police chief being an unmitigated liar. He said, I was there. I saw this.

I heard their curses. I saw them spitting. I was in the car.

And this police chief, he was going to arrest us all. My, it became a very interesting situation. And Dr. Jones said, that would be very good.

He said, that would make a great splash in the papers if you arrested them. And we went outside, out in front of the police station, and there was a large car park. And this poor policeman, he ran up and down

like a frightened child, saying all the things he would do to us.

But he never did anything. But I use that to show your friend that if you preach the way you ought to preach, there will be opposition. But God wants you to stand.

Even there are threats upon your life, you've got to stand. My home has been under strict police surveillance for years now. They tell me they're going to kidnap my children.

And I couldn't, my wife and I couldn't live under this constant threat except God strengthened us. And I can go to bed, and my dear wife and family, and we commit ourselves to the Lord, and the Lord protects us. God helps us to stand.

There's another thing I wanted to say about Elijah. He was a supplicating man. He was, first of all, a man of prayer.

He knew how to swing omnipotence to his end. He knew how to carry the key of heaven about in his pocket, for he was a supplicating man. And then, of course, you'll notice he was a single man.

He stood alone. And yet God, through one man, turned the nation. Elijah's God still lives today to take the guilt of sin away.

And when I cry, in Jesus' name, he answers still by fire. May God send his fire upon our souls, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

So write us and send us a check for \$6.50 to Campus Store, Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina, 29614. Be sure to mention the speaker, Dr. Ian Paisley, his message titled, The Characteristics of Elijah, and today's date. Please join us again for The Chapel Platform, sponsored by Bob Jones University.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17324.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ian-paisley/the-cry-for-prophetic-power/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net