

A Journey Too Far

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon 'A Journey Too Far' explores the relentless nature of evil and the importance of unwavering faith in God amidst spiritual battles.

Duration: 43:57

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-8

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by referencing a song chosen by Carol and then asks the audience to turn to the book of 1 Kings in the Bible. The speaker then reads a passage from Matthew 17, describing the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain. The speaker emphasizes the significance of this event, highlighting how Jesus became glorified and appeared with Moses and Elijah. The sermon concludes with Peter's reaction to the overwhelming presence of Moses and Elijah, suggesting that they were on the same level as Jesus.

Transcript

Right now I'm going to ask you to turn to your Bible to the story of Elijah. Carol picked the perfect song for me. Let's turn to 1 Kings, in your Bible please.

If you don't have a Bible, look on with the person next to you. 1 Kings the 18th chapter. Before I read in 1 Kings 18, everybody have it? Before I read there, I want to read to you another portion of Scripture.

Which is more in keeping with Palm Sunday. Because it's a turning point in the life of Jesus. When He began to tell His disciples more openly about His determination to go to Jerusalem.

And give up His life for us as a sacrifice for sins to be our Savior. Listen to these words in Matthew 17. Just listen, don't turn to it.

After six days, Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John, the brother of James. And led them up on a high mountain by themselves. And there He was transfigured before them.

Transfigured, say that word with me. Transfigured. This is the mount of transfiguration.

What was that? Well, Jesus became glorified as it was while He was still alive. Listen to the next verse. His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light.

Imagine, His face was like the sun. His clothes as white as the light. That's light, that's white.

Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish, I will put up three shelters.

One for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah. The appearance of Moses and Elijah from glory overwhelmed Peter. And Peter was thinking foolishly of putting those two men on the level with Jesus.

Building three shelters or booths for them. And while He was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them. And a voice from the cloud said, this is my Son whom I love.

With Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him. Listen to Jesus.

Isn't that amazing? That out of all the people in the Old Testament, only two appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Only two. Moses and who? Elijah.

That's pretty special, wouldn't you say? Out of everybody in the Old Testament, two people appear and are so overwhelming in their presence and reputation that Peter wants to build two tabernacles for them to go along with one for Jesus. Now, think of the people who didn't appear. David, even though Jesus is called the Son of David.

Noah. Nope. Enoch who walked with God and was not because God took him.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. None of them. Daniel.

Joseph. Isaiah. Elisha.

Jeremiah. Think of the people that didn't appear and just two, Moses and Elijah. Elijah is in some very rarefied air here.

He is, you might say to me, Pastor, Elijah, I know about Moses up on Mount Sinai getting the Ten Commandments, a friend of God went into the tent of meeting and talked with God as a friend talks with a friend. Now, Elijah must have been, he must have been something else too. I probably know less about him, maybe you do.

There's certainly a lot less about him in the Bible than about Moses. So, let me set the stage for what I'm going to read to you. Elijah is a prophet, for those of you who aren't that familiar, who appears out of nowhere and goes to one of the wickedest kings of Israel in the history of Israel, King Ahab.

Who had a charming wife by the name of? Yes. He never took the marriage preparation course. He just jumped into that one.

Well, with his lovely wife, they were ruining Israel. And he was connected to Baal worship and his wife was connected to something filthier yet, which was the worship of Asherah, who was a hideous God, whose worship, the things they did when they worshipped Asherah could not be mentioned in polite company. But let it be said that the Asherah pole was in the shape of the male sex organ, so you can just take it from there, what that whole thing was about.

And King Ahab and Jezebel were wrapped into this, and out of nowhere comes Elijah who says, It's not going to rain until I give the word. And sure enough, there's no rain and a drought ensues. And then Ahab

gets so angry with this Elijah guy, that he goes looking for him, can't find him.

God protects Elijah. And suddenly, after a couple of years go by, Elijah appears, walks up to King Ahab, and when Ahab sees him says, Hello, you troublemaker. And Elijah, being a bold prophetess, says, I'm not the troublemaker, you're the troublemaker.

You've led Israel into sin, into idolatry, with your Baal worship and your charming wife with her Asherah worship and all of that. So, Elijah does the unthinkable. He calls for a challenge, like a boxing match, like a WWF championship bout.

He says, Gather together the 450 prophets of Baal and get the 400 prophets of Asherah that your wife is so enamored by and get them together and meet me on Mount Carmel and call of Israel, call all of Israel there and let's get this thing on and see who the real God is. Ahab goes along with it, thinking that just your numbers will overwhelm Elijah, but he's going to learn something about Elijah and the God of Elijah. Elijah is there and he confronts the prophets, but before he confronts the prophets, he says, make way here just for a second please, before he confronts the prophets, thanks, he says to the people, how long are you going to halt and go back between two opinions? God is sick and tired of your one minute you're serving God, then the next minute you're for Baal, then the next minute back to God, then your next minute mentioning Baal.

So, how long will you waver between these two opinions? You know, that's a real problem with we human beings. We waver, we don't get set with one or the other. So, he says, choose today who you're going to serve.

If God is God, serve Him. If Baal is God, serve Baal. But let's get this on.

Stop going between two opinions. Just like my new friend here, Brother Ed, he's somewhere here in the building. I just met him for the first time before the meeting.

He's someone who God has really laid on my heart. God's going to do something great in his life. He said to me, because he's on something like methadone, but it's not called methadone, and he's on it, and he's battled with drugs, but he wants to be clean, and he wants his family to be visited by God and to be blessed.

And he said to me, you know, Pastor, I'm willing to do anything because you know what? I can't serve God with this junk in my system. I can't serve the devil and I can't serve God at the same time. That's pretty good.

Let me say amen. Very good, Ed. So, Elijah whirls and he turns on the prophets of Baal, and he says, OK, do this.

Get two bulls. Pick whichever one you want. Get two sacrificial animals, two bulls.

So they get one and they lay them on an altar. He gets one and he lays them on another altar someplace over there. He says, you go first.

Lay the bull on the altar, put wood underneath it, but don't light the fire. And early in the morning at the time of sacrifice, he says to them, you pray to Baal and tell Baal to send fire down. If he's so bad, if he's such a powerful God, then you tell him to send fire down and start the wood and let it consume the

sacrifice.

Whatever God answers by fire, that's the true God. So he challenges them. So they start praying at the time of the sacrifice, and they start yelling and making noise and praying, Oh, Baal, Baal, answer, Baal.

You see, you're being challenged. Almost high, Baal. Come down and send fire.

And they go on for hours, all of them. There's 450 of them. They're chanting and carrying on, making a ruckus.

Around lunchtime, around noontime, Elijah starts to play with them and starts to just get in their face and mess with them, and he says, You know, you guys, nothing's happening. You should yell louder. Maybe he's out of town.

Maybe he's, you know, on the computer working, doing email, doing email surfing the net. Who knows, you know, yell a little louder. Could be out of town on a trip, business trip.

So they start yelling even louder, and the Bible says they start going into such a frenzy that they start cutting themselves. Whenever somebody is supposedly worshiping God and is doing harm to themselves or is out of control, it's never the worship of the true God. Always remember that.

That's the powers of darkness. That has nothing to do with God. So they go all the way to the evening sacrifice, and there's nada, nothing, no answer.

So then, Elijah steps on up to the plate, and in 1 Kings 18, read with me in verse 36, Elijah says this. At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed, O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac in Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Look at me here just for a second.

That's a very interesting point to make. Nothing to do with my sermon. By the way, when we serve communion on Tuesday, I'm going to pick up on this story of Elijah because God, I think, has laid something else in my heart, but we'll share that, the Lord willing, as we wait on the Lord and pray on Tuesday night.

But notice this. He said he didn't make these things up. Nobody can just call for water to stop coming down from the sky, and nobody can just do things with the prophets of Baal on his own and then say, now God, back me up.

Everything he did, he says, God, let them know I've done all these things at your command. Somewhere in his communion with God, God led him to do all these things. Think of how he walked with God.

God told him to do all of these daring exploits. Answer me, O God. Answer me so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God and that you are turning their hearts back again.

Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. He had put a trench and filled it with water around his sacrifice. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, The Lord, he is God.

The Lord, he is God. But the Lord there is the word Jehovah. Jehovah, he is God.

Jehovah, he is God. There is no God but Jehovah. There is no God.

That's how that song started. It was a big song back then. Well, it turned the people for a while back.

But that was the whole problem with the prophets. They could only get the people to turn back superficially. They would all the time drift back.

But anyway, from that, this stunning event, all the prophets are destroyed, the false prophets. And Elijah has done something that is unheard of in all of the Old Testament books. Call fire down from heaven.

He is using the book of James as an example of someone who really prayed. Later he tells Ahab, get ready, a storm is coming. And he goes and puts his head between his knees and begins to send a servant to look for clouds.

Elijah is the man. Right after that, read chapter 19 with me, verse 1. Now Ahab told Jezebel, now Ahab, the king, told Jezebel, his wife, everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 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 one of them.

In other words, look up here for a second. In other words, by tomorrow I will kill you. I will kill you by tomorrow.

Verse 3. Wait a minute. This must be a misprint. Maybe I got a bad Bible here.

You know, sometimes when they publish these things, they don't come out right. Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. No, that can't be right.

The man who appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? No, that must be. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree and he sat down under it and he prayed that he might die.

Blessed be the God of Heaven. No, I've had enough, O Lord. Take my life.

I am no better than my ancestors. Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. And all at once an angel touched him and said, Get up and eat.

And he looked around and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and then lay down again. And 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.

So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled 40 days and 40 nights until he reached Horeb at the mountain of God. And there he went into a cave and spent the night.

Look at me. Tomorrow, Tuesday, when we serve communion, the Lord willing, I will pick it up from there and what happened between him and God. But the name of this message, which you can get in a tape at the end of the service, is the name of this tape is called A Journey Too Far.

A Journey Too Far. A Journey Too Far. I want you to notice first through the personification of Jezebel, she being the personification of evil, how real evil is and how persistent it is and how unfazed evil and Satan is no matter what ever happens in your life.

Especially since 9-11, even moral relativists who don't believe in evil or didn't believe in evil, after 9-11, a lot of people are singing a different tune and are saying, You know what? There is evil. There is such a thing as evil. Of course, if we know our Bibles, we know that evil exists.

Amen? God and good and righteousness exist and God is holy, but Satan and evil, pure evil exists. And we sometimes forget that because with all the preaching in churches or keep it light, keep it positive, don't mention negative things, people won't come back to the church. But the Bible tells us to preach the whole counsel of God, so we have to touch on this when we run into it in the Bible.

Notice that even though Elijah had done the most incredible act of power, Jezebel is like, Nothing. I'm going to kill you. So if you ever think you like have a meeting with God and you really get close to God, and that's good.

Let's really get close to God. But if you think that's going to alter anything about the devil, you're totally mistaken. The devil is relentless.

You could have the most spectacular blessing from God. You could meet God in a beautiful way in the Word. You could be in a service where you feel you're transported to heaven.

The next day, you better watch out because the devil can still come for you. He's relentless. Jezebel is the personification of it.

You would think Jezebel would say, Yo, look at Elijah, called down fire, killed 450 prophets, probably the other 400 too. This guy, I'm just going to leave him alone. You think she cares about that? She's, I'll kill you tomorrow.

I'll kill you tomorrow. So you've got to understand here who we're dealing with because we are involved in wrestling not against flesh and blood, but against who? Principalities and what? Powers. We're talking about the devil here.

And he's relentless. The example that came to me this morning at 9 and 12 are like those, I always forget the name of those animals, those hyenas in Africa. You know how hyenas get people? First of all, hyenas are vicious.

They're nasty. They're ugly. They're very strong in their neck.

And they rob prey from leopards and cheetahs and other animals because what they'll do is these leopards, which are not like lions or tigers, these leopards will pull an animal down and they need food for their offspring. And what will happen is that these animals will come around them and will start sniping. What's their name again? Thank you.

I told you I have a problem. Hi, hi, hi, hi, hyenas. And what they'll do is the leopard will try to be eating its prey and these hyenas will come and just snap and snap.

The leopard could take any one of them. Of course he could. But there's not one, there's 14.

And when he says, two come from behind just trying to get them down. And if you run, they'll run with you. Animals that they take down themselves, they will take down some animals like a small impala or a large impala.

An impala will run for miles. And they can't run as fast, but they'll just keep after it. And when the impala runs out and goes, there they are, just biting.

And if they can just knock them off balance, once he's down, it's all over because they go right there. And they have a grab like a pit bull. Tremendously strong, these long, odd necks that they have.

Persistent. You know how they get a lot of their prey? They just wear people down. They just wear animals down.

I saw once in the Nature Channel, they cornered a female lion, an old female lion. They cornered a lion. There's 12, 13, 14 of them.

They're playing with a lion. And the lion got cornered, and you see the lion going like that, and they back away. But just for a second, just for a second, they're going to come back.

And if the lion made a move, two of them, three of them would back up. But then the others would come. Jezebel, that's the personification of evil.

We face an enemy who is absolutely persistent. How many know even since you've been serving the Lord, the devil still messes with you and tries to get in? Come on, lift your hand if you know what I'm talking about. We all have personal battles that only God and God know about.

Right? So just when you think it's, you know, you've broken through, he's always there sniping. And this female lion just got away. But I mean, this is a female lion, though.

A female lion is the lion who hunts. The female lions are the ones that go out and hunt. The male lion just sits at home and just, Hey, come on, woman, bring me that food.

That's... Male lions don't do a thing. I'm not joking. That's the way male lions are.

They don't hunt. Female lions go out there, and then the minute they kill an animal, the male lion just trots up, the females all run away, and the male eats. There are men like that today here, even in America.

Send their wives out, they kill themselves, and they're hanging out. Very tragic. Very sad.

But let's not go there, okay? That's not the message. So, this lion just got away, this female lion. But these hyenas, they're just... This is the way Jezebel was.

And why I'm bringing it out is, you've got to remember that there never will be a day that you're living here on earth where the devil will not challenge you. Hello, everybody? Come on, how many are willing to face that? Lift up your hand. Every day, we have to resist the devil, and what? He will... But he will come back.

You're not going to bind the devil. Don't listen to that nonsense. You're going to bind the devil, and he'll never face you.

He challenged Jesus. You don't think he's going to come for you. And when he left Jesus, he waited for a more convenient season.

This is why Paul, at the end of his life, said, I have fought a good what? Fight. We're in a fight. If you're a Christian, you're in a fight.

And sometimes we have a hard time explaining that or sharing it with other people because we don't want them to think we're living in sin or there's something wrong with our lives, but we're in a fight. The devil has attacked my wife. The devil has attacked me.

The devil has attacked my wife and I. And let me be very, very frank because these young guys, I don't know if I'm going to see or hear from them again or be able to talk to these guys from Boston. Let me tell you something. Just like God has a plan for your life, the devil has a plan for your life.

Just like God has a plan for Esther and Chevy, the devil has a plan for Esther and Chevy. And if you don't think, if you think he has any feelings or if you think he would never break up somebody, my wife and I would be in a divorce court within six months if the devil could have his way. That's just the way it is.

I was counseling with somebody this week and in the office, I could feel the presence of Satan and I got so angry inside. Not at either of them, but I just started to say, You devil. You devil.

It's not about her. It's not about him. It's about the devil.

Accusing, messing, misrepresenting, lying. Listen, evil exists and it can exist anywhere. This thing going on in the Catholic Church with these predators and these little children.

Don't tell me evil doesn't exist. Don't tell me it can't come in anywhere. If things like that can be done near an altar in a church, to harmless children, children, to children, to be a predator with children.

Now the thing about this persistence, hyena-like evil quality of Jezebel who personifies Satan, you've got to understand the effect that it had on Elijah. The Elijah who talked with Jesus as in the days of Elijah. Elijah, when he heard it, revealed to us how fragile and how weak human nature is.

Even for mighty men and women of God. If you have any heroes that you think are like great men and women of God, trust me, it's purely the grace of God that they do anything. If they're less of themselves, for ten seconds they'll be under a broom tree and want to die.

So if you have some, you know, and we're always looking for that. They're immature. I've watched this since I was a kid.

They're immature Christians now who are in their 40s and 50s and 60s. They're looking for the man and woman of God that they can talk about because they're so special and there is nobody special but Jesus. Come on, do I get a witness? There is nobody special but... Amen, let's put our hands together and thank God for the specialness of Jesus.

No one, no one you know did miracles like Elijah. No one ever called down fire for heaven. But at a moment of weakness, being worn down, he gets afraid and runs.

Well, I thought men of God just stand on the word and say I... Yeah, when they're in faith and they're strong inside they do that. But if you catch a man or a woman, a Christian, a man or a woman of God at the wrong time, they can get afraid and run. And we won't say amen to that but we know it's true because we've all wanted to run.

You know the old Elijah syndrome? If you run around, you run down and then you want to run away. Have you ever had that happen to you? You run around, you don't get fed proper spiritual food, you get weak inside emotionally and physically sometimes drained, your nerves are a mess and the next thing you know

some very weird suggestions are coming to you. And you don't have to say amen.

This happened to everybody who ever lived and ever served God. That's why God has this in the Bible. Elijah, this mighty man of God, got afraid and ran and ended up a tree where he prayed an amazing prayer when you think of what he prayed the chapter before.

In chapter 18 he says, God, send down fire and show them who you are. In chapter 19 he prays, Lord, kill me. I can't go on.

It's the only place in the Bible that I find the words, I've had enough. But if you've lived for a while, you can have enough. Feel you've had enough.

Can't take it. By the way, this happened right after one of his high moments, one of the high moments in the whole Old Testament, which shows us that right after a tremendous blessing or after God uses us, we have to be very careful because Satan can attack right after that moment. Also, number two, when your nerves and your emotions and your physical strength is expended in an extreme way, your emotions and your nerves and your physical body condition can have a great effect on your spirit.

When you get very tired and you're very drained, you become more susceptible to nasty suggestions in your mind. That's why, as Warren Wiersbe said, sometimes the greatest thing a Christian can do is take a nap. Sometimes the best thing you can do is take a nap.

Lay down and take a rest. Sometimes just an hour of sleep makes you look at the whole world different. How many know what I'm talking about? Oh, yes.

But when you get drained, when life wears you down, when temptations you see, the thing about the devil is, and guys, remember this, you battle and you get a victory and what gets you is that he's on you again in just a different area. And then you break through here and you believe God and you say, Thank you, Lord. My child has come back that I was praying for.

Then the other one starts to backslide. You go, wait, wait. What happened over here? This one was praying for their sibling and now this one's backsliding.

Where does this end? When can I just quit? When do I go on R&R? When do I take a spiritual hiatus? When can I just relax? That's what... It was too much for Elijah because he was made of flesh and blood. Boy, what an encouragement. The man who appeared with Jesus once prayed to have his life taken from him.

Doesn't that encourage you that God could do something with you and me? If it could happen to Elijah, it could happen to us. So we learn that evil is real and persistent and we learn that human nature is very fragile. And especially when you get older, there's less things you can take.

I babysat my two grandchildren for one hour and 20 minutes this week. A two-year-old and a four-year-old. When my daughter came back, I had both of them with their coats on ready to just leave.

Here, take them. They are yours. Here's your Lukie.

Here's your little Claire. Bye. Regards.

Have a great time. Right, Carol? When you're younger, you can handle children. When you get older... And spiritually, we have to be very careful because these hyenas that attacked Elijah... This is in the Bible.

Great man of God. Got afraid and ran. Ended up under a broom tree.

Asked to die. I wonder how many people here... Elijah's gone farther than a lot of us. How many people I hear wonder have ever asked God to kill them? Probably not too many.

He did. Had enough. Listen now as we close.

He falls asleep as the musicians play. An angel wakes him up. You see, when you're depleted spiritually, you need help from heaven.

When your faith is weak, when your inner man, inner woman has become fragile and has lost faith and is intimidated. Oh, the intimidation of Jezebel. By the way, can I just say one thing here as a little side note.

Can you imagine the unreasonableness of people and the unreasonableness of people when evil fills them? Did you notice that little sentence? Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and she still said, I'm going to kill you. What if somebody came home to you and imagine the scene. Jezebel, sit down.

Elijah had it out with all the prophets. Your prophets and my prophets. And here's what he did.

And he put the two bulls and all that and he had them pray and he got in their face and said, yo, why don't you pray louder and all that. And then he just said one sentence and fire came down from heaven. What? Fire came down from heaven and it consumed not only the animal but the wood and the stones and the water that he had dumped on it.

Now, if anybody was open to truth, don't you think a woman would say or a man would say, you know what? Bye bye Asherah. Bye bye Baal. There is no God but Jehovah.

No. And that's what you have to be careful of anybody here who's not serving the Lord. You can get so unreasonable.

God has shown you a thousand times that he's real and you're still not serving him. Look how unreasonable that is. He sent his son.

His son died. His son rose again from the dead. All kinds of people saw him and gave their lives later rather than deny that they saw him.

And he's changed millions of people for two thousand years. He's changed me. Changed you, right? Has changed you.

Has changed you. Changed you. John, changed your life.

Wendy, changed your life. Think of all the things Jesus has done and some of you are so unreasonable. You're still not serving him the way you should.

That's the spirit of Jezebel. Even though she heard blow by blow what Elijah did, she still said, I'm sticking by my gods. I'll kill them.

Think how closed you can be. How self-willed and stubborn. Well, an angel wakes up Elijah and says, eat.

And Elijah looks around. He has no food. But suddenly there's fresh water and some hot bread.

And he eats it. Listen. And he goes back to sleep.

A second time the angel comes and says to him, and I close now, eat some more because the journey is too much for you. In other words, you haven't eaten enough. You're not going to make it.

Give me your Bible, brother. Now that bread and that water, of course, is symbolic. It was the food that kept Elijah going on to Mount Horeb.

And notice this. Before God gave him instructions, and he does have instructions for Elijah. You will hear about it Tuesday night.

Before he even questions him like, what are you doing praying to die? Before he does anything, he gets Elijah back strengthened so that he can function spiritually and in this case, physically too. Now, God doesn't have hot bread for us to eat because physical things do not help you when Satan is tearing at you like a hyena. But there is a bread, the bread of life.

You know what you have to do? You have to eat this bread. You have to chew it. You got to get it in your heart every single day.

You got to wait and rest in the Lord and get this word in you because it brings strength to you. Thy words were found and I did eat them and they became unto me the joy and the rejoicing of my soul, Jeremiah said. In other words, you can't just read the Bible.

Hey guys, you got to read it and meditate on it and chew because faith comes by hearing and hearing by what? But notice, not faith doesn't come by reading. Faith comes by, the word has to be heard in your heart by the Holy Spirit. You have to read it and then wait before the Lord and say, oh God, speak this into my heart.

Make this real to me. Otherwise, I just, I'm reading the Bible for no profit and I've done that many times. This is the bread God has for you to keep you going and Satan, that jackal, that hyena, that fiend, he'll do everything he can to keep you from this because if he can separate you from strength, he'll wait till you're weak and make all kinds of threats and intimidations against you.

And there's a water that God has for us, the water of the Holy Spirit that as we spend time in God every single day, we can say, Lord, whether I feel it or not, by faith, I receive into my heart rivers of living water. Now, let them flow in me. God, feed me your bread and let me drink of your water, the living water.

That'll sustain you no matter what you go through. Now, I didn't want to preach this message. I wanted to preach something about Jesus coming into Jerusalem, a nice Palm Sunday message, and God would not relent with me.

So I have to believe, as I said at 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock, I have to believe that God brought people in here who needed to hear this, who are, maybe their hands are getting like this and they're getting so tired because you've got to keep fighting. This guy, Ed, that I talked with him, he boxed professionally for a while and he'll tell you, some boxers you can beat, but what they do is they just wear you down and wait you out and by the seventh or eighth round when you're just a little tired and fatigued, they're coming and taking shots at you. That's what Satan does.

He tries to wear us down. He gets us to run around then to run down and the next thing you know, oh, I can't take this anymore, Pastor. I'm leaving the choir.

I'm getting out of ushering. You know, I can't take it anymore. I've seen this so many times.

I know this like the back of my hand because Satan's attacked me that way. I've wanted to run. Oh, but thank God He can hold us and He can feed us.

Would you close your eyes with me? Bow your heads with me. Lord, I thank you for your word today. I really do thank you for your words.

Oh God, as I've been preaching this all day today, I've been so encouraged in my own heart, Lord. First of all, we know that Satan is real and his attacks are real and oh God, how I'm reminded now that if Elijah could get afraid and run, how fragile we are. We have this treasure at earthen vessels, Lord.

Without you, we can do nothing. We confess that today and we've touched on this truth before but today, Lord, you must have people who needed to hear this because their arms are getting tired and they're getting discouraged and they have to be strengthened by you, Lord because we need that shield of faith. We need that word of God dwelling in us richly and we need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

We need you, Lord. I don't care if two people or 200 stand if you're here today and would say, I'm so glad you preached that because right now, I'm feeling spiritually fatigued. I love the Lord but I just, I'm getting worn down by the tears of life, by the attacks of those hyenas, of evil, snapping.

Satan won't give me rest. I'm going to let God feed me today. Strengthen me because I'm not going to go under, I'm going to go over.

I'm greater as He that's in me than the one that's on Christ and His word. But I want Him to strengthen me. I want that bread and the water that the angel brought to Elijah.

Remember, this Elijah who appeared with Jesus, he knew what it was to face problems but Jesus knows even better how we feel. Jesus knows that the devil is real. He faced the devil.

He was tempted by the devil. He knows what we go through when we're tempted. Jesus knows how weak we are.

You don't have to explain to anyone. Jesus knows everything about you. He knows where you've been failed.

Make up some story. Exactly how you feel. Food for you.

He has water for you. He can make you strong today. He can keep you keeping on.

Don't give place to the devil. Listen to me. Don't be unreasonable.

Don't give place to the devil. But if you need prayer, we're going to pray for you. We have no altar call but I would like to pray for people.

If you're here today and would like us just to lift you up to God before we leave the building, just stand up and say, Pastor Simple, that's for me. I love the Lord but I need Him to strengthen me. I'm being attacked

and discouraged in so many ways.

Me today like He did Elijah and give me strength. Just stand up where you are. I don't care if you're behind me.

I don't care if you're visiting me. Sweep over my soul.

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