

## FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY

(1 Kings 19:4-8)

Intro: Whenever I travel any great distance.  
-I like to take along something to eat.

Whether it's:  
-Long car trip.  
-Airplane flight.  
-Overseas tour.  
#I like to have something to nibble on.

That way, if:  
-We have difficulty finding a place to eat.  
-Airline food isn't so good.  
#If you even get airline food any more.  
-Tour bus is late arriving at a restaurant.  
#I have something to snack on to tide me through.  
#Although after the events of last Thursday.  
\*That could be harder to do on an airplane.

My preferred travel food.  
-Bag of strawberry Twizzlers.  
#They're perfect.  
\*They're easy to carry.  
\*They won't crumble.  
\*They won't spoil.  
\*They won't melt.  
\*You can eat.  
+As many.  
+As few.  
=As you want.  
-Twizzlers are my food for the journey.

### I. Elijah Needed Food For The Journey.

- A. Elijah Had Been Involved In A Duel With The Prophets Of Baal.
    - 1. There had been a drought in the Land of Israel.
      - a. Not just a couple of months without rain.
      - b. But a couple of years without:
        - Dew.
        - Rain.
- #1 Kings 17:1

2. In the third year of the drought.
  - a. God decided to send rain.
    - I Kings 18:1.
  - b. At first it was just a little storm cloud.
    - 1 Kings 19:44.
  - b. In time there was a full-fledged "gully washer."
    - 1 Kings 19:45.
3. But there was a difference of opinion about who controlled the rain.
  - a. Yahweh.
    - The Lord God.
    - The God of Israel.
  - b. Baal.
    - Canaanite fertility god.
    - #Symbolized by a bull.
    - \*Reminiscent of the golden calf.
    - +Exodus 32.
    - #Who was thought by some to control:
      - \*Rain.
      - \*Crop growth.
4. So there was a contest on Mount Carmel to demonstrate whose God was the true God (1 Kings 18:19-40).
  - a. Elijah.
    - Whose name means "Yahweh is my God."
    - #Representing Yahweh.
    - \*The Lord God.
  - b. 450 prophets of Baal.
  - c. 400 prophets of Asherah.
    - Baal's consort.
    - #Representing the Baal cult.
    - \*1 Kings 18:19.
5. Two altars were built.
  - a. One for the prophets of Baal.
  - b. One for Elijah.
6. Two bulls were killed.
  - a. One for the altar of the prophets of Baal.
  - b. One for the altar of Elijah.
7. Each in their turn.
  - a. Called upon their god.
  - b. To send down fire from heaven.
  - c. To burn up the sacrifice.
    - Offered on the altar.
    - To demonstrate whose God was for real.
8. Prophets of Baal went first.
  - a. They prayed.
  - b. They danced.
    - But nothing happened.

- c. Elijah made fun of them.
    - He said:
      - # "Pray louder."
      - # "Maybe your god is:"
        - \* Sleeping.
        - \* Day dreaming.
        - \* On vacation.
        - \* Going to the bathroom.
      - # "He can't hear you."
  - d. Prophets of Baal.
    - Prayed louder.
    - # Ranting.
    - # Raving.
    - Mutilating themselves.
    - # For another three hours.
    - Nothing happened.
9. Then it was Elijah's turn.
- a. But first he dug a little trench around his altar.
  - b. He had his sacrifice drenched with water.
    - Three different times.
    - So that his little moat was filled with water.
  - c. When Elijah called upon the name of the Lord God.
    - God sent down fire.
    - # Burned up the sacrifice.
    - # Melted the altar.
    - # Dried up every drop of water in Elijah's ditch.
      - \* This was no common:
        - + Bon fire.
        - + Wiener roast.
10. When the crowds saw what had happened.
- a. They acknowledged that Yahweh was God.
  - b. They joined Elijah.
    - Killing all the prophets of Baal.
- B. But Instead Of A Victory Parade, Elijah Was Soon Running For His Life.
- 1. Queen Jezebel was ticked.
    - a. Jezebel was the Phoenician princess.
      - Married the Israelite king, Ahab.
      - # To forge a political alliance.
      - \* Between their two countries.
    - Introduced the Baal cult.
      - # Into Israelite culture.
  - b. When she heard what had happened to her prophets.
    - She wanted revenge.
    - She wanted Elijah's head.

2. So Elijah ran.
  - a. From Mount Carmel.
    - In the North.
  - b. To Beersheba.
    - In the South.
  - c. Then a day's journey into the Negev.
    - The wilderness of the Sinai peninsula.
3. There Elijah collapsed under a single, solitary broom tree.
  - a. He felt like giving up.
    - He was afraid to go back.
      - #There was an angry queen and her army.
      - \*On his tail.
    - He didn't have the strength to go on.
      - #He wanted to get to:
        - \*Mount Horeb.
        - \*Mount Sinai.
          - +To have a talk with the Lord.
      - #But there was 200 miles.
        - \*Desert.
        - \*Mountains.
          - +Ahead of him.
  - b. He wanted to die.
    - He said:
      - #"I'm no better off than my ancestors."
      - #"I wish I were dead."
  - c. What would we call this?
    - Burnout?
    - Clinical depression?
    - Suicidal ideation?
4. If we were to read on.
  - a. We would find out that Elijah was concerned.
    - Not only for his own life.
    - But for the covenant God had made with the people of Israel.
  - b. He believed that he was the last of God's prophets.
    - So that not only was Elijah's life in danger.
    - But God's word was in danger.
      - #Of being silenced forever.
5. Feeling crushed by all of this.
  - a. Threats from behind.
  - b. Unknown challenges ahead.
    - Little wonder that Elijah felt like giving up.

C. God Gave Elijah Food For The Journey.

1. It wasn't much.
  - a. Bread.
  - b. Water.

2. But it was enough.
  - a. It gave him strength for his journey.
    - 40 days and 40 nights.
    - #Through the wilderness.
    - Reminding us perhaps.
    - #Jesus.
      - \*Temptation in the wilderness.
      - +For 40 days and 40 nights.
      - =Matthew 4:1-2.
      - =Luke 4:1-2.
    - #People of Israel.
      - \*Wandering in the wilderness.
      - +For 40 years.
      - =Numbers 14:34.
      - \*With only the food that God provided for the journey.
  - b. Elijah made it all the way to Mt. Horeb/Mount Sinai.
    - Where God had made his covenant with:
      - #Moses.
      - #People of Israel.
    - Where God would renew his commitment to that covenant with Elijah.
      - #Promising him a helper and a successor.
      - \*Elisha.
      - #Reminding him that he was not alone.
      - \*There were 7000 people in Israel.
        - +Had not bowed the knee to Baal.
        - +Or kissed his idol.
        - =1 Kings 19:18.
3. Elijah had received food for the journey.

## II. What About Our Journey?

- A. Are There Times When We Feel Like Giving Up?
  1. Month or so ago I met one of our members.
    - a. Hadn't been in church for years and years and years.
    - b. I went to visit him in an assisted living facility.
      - He welcomed me.
      - But he was in pretty rough shape.
      - #He was almost blind.
      - #He couldn't sit up without assistance.
      - #He had fallen the night before.
      - \*Cut himself.
      - \*Had been taken to the hospital.
      - +To get patched up.

- He was tired.
  - #Tired of hurting.
  - #Tired of the journey.
- I took him food for his journey.
  - #It wasn't much.
    - \*Bread.
    - \*Wine.
  - #Yet it was a banquet.
    - \*Foretaste of the feast to come.
  - #Meal to strengthen him for his journey.
    - \*To the mountaintop.
- c. His journey didn't take 40 days.
  - Less than two weeks later.
    - #His earthly journey came to an end.
  - But God had fed him one last time.
    - #With the bread of life.
- 2. Do we as a congregation sometimes feel like Elijah?
  - a. I sometimes hear about the "good old days" at Ascension.
    - "We used to have this many members."
    - "This pastor did this."
    - "That pastor did that."
    - "Our Christian Education Director did thus and so."
    - "Our choir did that and more."
  - b. I hear.
    - Not only nostalgia for days gone by.
    - Grief for things lost.
    - Fear about an unknown and uncertain future.
  - c. Dear, dear people, I'm here to tell you.
    - I hear you.
      - #Hurt.
    - There's no rewind button on life.
      - #There's no going back.
        - \*Any more than the people of Israel.
          - +Could go back to Egypt.
            - =Where there was meat and vegetables.
            - Instead of manna in the wilderness.
          - +Exodus 16:3.
            - =OT Lesson from last week.
        - \*Any more than Elijah could go back.
      - There's no fast-forward button, either.
        - #To zip us through the wilderness.
      - There's food for the journey.

B. Where Will We Find Food For The Journey?

1. Spiritual food.
  - a. That can take us through the wilderness.
    - Pain.
    - Grief.
    - Fear.
  - b. That can bring us to a renewed experience:
    - Presence.
    - Purpose. #Of God.
  - c. That can bring us at last.
    - To God's holy mountain.
2. We find it in the bread of life.
  - a. Bread of life come down from heaven.
    - John 6:50-51.
  - b. Bread of life raised up.
    - In death on the cross.
    - In resurrection on the third day.
    - In ascension after 40 days.
    - #To raise us up.
      - \*In body.
      - \*In mind.
      - \*In spirit.
3. You know where to find that bread of life.
  - a. That's why you've come this morning.
    - I hope.
    - I trust.
  - b. You know where to come for breakfast.
    - Here is food for the journey.
  - c. When you come to the altar in a few minutes.
    - To eat this bread of life.
    - #Look around you.
    - #Look at the line that forms.
    - \*You are not alone on the journey.

Concl: You know how the Elijah story ends, don't you (2 Kings 2)?

Have you paid attention lately to the Ascension logo?

- Chi rho.
  - #First two Greek letters of Christ.
  - \*Who overcame death and ascended.
- Chariot.
  - #"Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Coming for to carry me home."
  - #It came for Elijah.
    - \*Who never did die.
    - \*But who ascended.
- That's where we're headed, with food for the journey.

