

## Small Group News

Services are ONLINE ONLY ([sunrisechurch.org](http://sunrisechurch.org))

Serving Opportunity: National Days at the Food Pantry (12-3pm)

Monday 8/10 = S'mores Day & Friday 8/28 = Cherry Turnover Day

Email [need@sunrisechurch.org](mailto:need@sunrisechurch.org) for anyone who needs assistance

Prayer: Wisdom for Leaders; Fall Ministry Plans; Back to School

## Small Group Questions

For week of August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Strong in the Struggle

I Kings 18

### INTRODUCTION

If 2020 had a slogan it would be: The Struggle is Real. Nothing like a worldwide Pandemic, social injustice, and a pending Presidential election to increase the stress in our lives. Some are facing unimaginable battles with grief, loss of income, and family crisis that make the struggle all the more vivid. Some may even ask, "where is God?" But what if God is still at work in the struggle? This month we explore how to react to struggle by discussing the life of Elijah. Our first reaction is to give in to panic, anxiety, and faith crushing doubt. But, as we will discover, we can remain strong in the struggle because God still provides victories, help, justice, and hope; even in the darkest of times.

The focus of the week: Victory over Trials

### QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time, or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

### MY STORY

1. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit? Explain.
2. Would you rather visit the doctor or the dentist?

### DIGGING DEEPER

1. Israel had an ongoing battle with idolatry in the Old Testament. It is easy for us to think that worshipping statues is merely an ancient practice but idolatry remains strong today. In fact, Jesus warned against it as well as the apostles. Where else does the Bible address idolatry?
  - **Read: Acts 17:16-21; Psalm 135:15-18; 1 John 5:20-21; Matthew 6:21-24**
    - Name some idols people have today that have no shrines or statues?
    - Give some examples of good things that can become idols when we allow them.
    - Why is it so difficult to acknowledge that we have elevated false gods in our hearts?
    - In your life, what comes closest to fighting with God for supremacy in your heart (success, family, desire for a family or for a spouse, recognition, control, beauty, etc.)? Discuss.
    - Is there any drought, test, or crisis in your life right now that God might be using? If so, what do you think He is trying to do?
    - How might we become progressively and destructively more attached to our idols and addictions when they repeatedly fail us? Have you ever experienced that yourself?
    - Share a victory of any kind that you had in your life. What led to that victory?

2. You heard this week about the relationship between Elijah and King Ahab. Ahab's view of Elijah was consistent with his view of God. Where else do we see the importance of responding to God?
  - **Read: 1 Kings 16:29-33 & 18:17-18; 2 Samuel 12:1-15 & Psalm 51**
    - Discuss the difference between King Ahab and King David's response to the messengers God sent to each.
    - How do you typically respond when you fail God?
    - What can you learn about King David's heart from Psalm 51 about the right response when we sin? What does it teach you about God's response to our sin?
    - How did their sin affect those around them? How did their reactions to their sins?
    - What insights can you take from these stories for your current life situation?
3. Read **Acts 17:22-31**. Paul addresses men who were "very religious" but who were still distant from God. As you wrap up the conversation, consider the following:
  - Why are so many willing to give God rituals but reluctant to give Him their whole heart?
  - Since potential idols are everywhere and unavoidable, how do we strengthen and protect ourselves from worshipping them?

## TAKE IT HOME

**What is an idol?** *"It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living... An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, 'If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure.' There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship."* – Counterfeit Gods by Timothy Keller

As you read the quote above answer the following questions (consider journaling your responses):

- Is anything in my life more important than God?
- Does anything absorb my heart and imagination more than God?
- Am I relying on anything or anyone else for something only God can give me?
- Are there things I can't live without or that I think would complete my life if I had them?
- Am I searching for meaning, value, significance, or security in anything besides God?

Be honest with yourself and God. Sometimes good things can become idols.

Now ask yourself, "Am I ready to let go of any idols in my life?" If so, pray and consider a plan of action that starts with repenting (agreeing with God that it's time to let go) and will include new habits, bible reading, and the help of others (Pastors, your small group, godly friends and family) to position your heart on God and instead of things that have become objects of worship for you.

Remember, some idols can be good things in our lives when viewed properly (like money or ambition); but they can also become distorted and disrupt our walk with God if we are not vigilant. As painful as this process can be, it will be profitable if you stick with it and are honest with yourself and God.

## GROUP PRAYER