

The Story
GETTING OUR ATTENTION
1 Kings 18
January 26, 2014

INTRODUCTION

a. Listen for a moment and tell me what these three sounds have in common

1. Play the “warning sounds” audio clip

2. **These are all warning sounds.** They are used to get our attention and to make us aware of potential danger

b. Have you ever been in a place where you were trying to get someone’s attention to warn them of danger – What did you do?

1. Yell, scream or holler

2. Run and grab a person

3. Set off an alarm of some kind

c. When the girls were little Becky had taken them to Oglebay Park to see the fountain light show one evening. I was in a meeting at the church. As Becky and Bethany were out of the van and as Sarah was about to get out the van began to roll down an embankment toward a crowd of people. Sarah jumped out and Becky tried to scream but nothing came out. A man we did not know got in front of the van and began to yell to get people out of the way. The van went over a 15 foot cliff, crashed but no one was hurt. It was because of the warning given by the unknown stranger that saved some lives that night.

d. Today we come in the Story to the place where God sends warning messages to the people through men known as prophets.

1. There is a message of judgment if the people continue their faithless and evil ways.

e. If you have your timeline with you here is where we are.

I. GOD’S WARNING CALLS

a. **For over 200 years God sent his messengers**, called prophets, to the king and people to warn them of the coming judgment if they continued their evil ways

b. **The Prophets Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea** were sent by God to call the people back to Him but the people and kings ignored their warnings and judgment finally came

c. The 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom were taken captive by Assyria

d. As you read their Stories you can almost see them with a bullhorn shouting, “Warning, Stop what you are doing and return to the God of Israel.”

1. Loud and pointed but ignored

e. Today we are going to consider Elijah and his attempt to reach the people – In the small groups you will be hearing about Hosea

II. ELIJAH’S STORY

a. **Ahab is now the king and he is continuing in the vein of Jeroboam** by doing evil and worshipping foreign gods and encouraging the people to do the same.

b. Elijah comes to Ahab and confronts the evil and tells him that the punishment will be that there will be no dew or rain for the next few years unless Elijah gives the word.

c. **For three years the land has been without rain** when God sends Elijah to the king to announce the coming of rain.

d. When Ahab see Elijah he calls him a “troubler of Israel”

1. Elijah responds by turning the table on Ahab and laying the blame on Ahab and his family and the evil they have done by abandoning the God of Israel in favor of the Baals

e. Elijah tells Ahab to call all the people of Israel together along with the 450 prophets of Baal and to meet at Mt. Carmel

f. When they are all gathered Elijah challenges them with these words:

"How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing. **1 Kings 18:21 (NIV)**

g. **Elijah proposes a contest between Baal and God**, between the 450 prophets of Baal and himself, the lone prophet of Jehovah

1. Each group will prepare a sacrifice and the God who answers with fire will be the God they follow

2. People agreed and the contest was begun

3. Elijah tell the Baal prophets to go first since there are more of them - They prepare their sacrifice and begin to pray - nothing happens - all morning they pray - nothing

4. Elijah begins to have some fun by mocking them

a. Maybe Baal is on vacation or the phone or in the outhouse

5. They then begin to cut themselves to purify themselves - still nothing

6. **Elijah begins to prepare for the evening sacrifice** - He builds an altar from twelve stones, digs a trench around it and places the sacrifice on it - Then has the servants douse it with water three times with the four jars that were there

7. He then begins to pray - God answers and consumes the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and laps up the water in the trench

8. The people then follow Elijah in worshipping God and they kill the 450 prophets of Baal.

h. **You think that God has their attention and they will finally heed His warning but Ahab's wife Jezebel is having nothing of it.**

1. She threatens Elijah and he runs for his life and ends up hiding in a cave

2. God comes and asks Elijah what he is doing in the cave. Think about his great victory and now he is running in fear

3. In the midst of his pity party, God tells Elijah to come out of the cave He wants to meet with him. **1 Kings 19:11-13 (NIV)**

The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

i. **The Lord then tells Elijah what else He wants him to do and Elijah does it**

III. LESSONS FROM THE STORY

a. **When God sends warning messages we need to listen and act**

1. Sometimes He uses people

2. Sometimes He uses circumstances

3. Sometimes He uses events

4. Question is are you listening and taking action or are you ignoring the message

b. **Faith is a moment by moment decision**

1. Much like Joshua, Elijah tells the people to decide who they will follow - Cannot follow

both

a. No decision is a "No" decision

2. **As powerful as faith can be in one moment - it can be lost in another**

a. Elijah was triumphant one moment and running for his life the next

3. **Faith is a decision you make every moment you live**

a. **There are three kinds of faith** - only one is effective

1. **Passive** faith - The people demonstrated this - Let others do the work and show us, then we will believe - No real personal commitment - but whatever is popular - These follow the crowd and the easy way

2. **Active** faith - The prophets of Baal demonstrated this - They did all they knew to do even to the point of self-mutilation - Whatever it took to please Baal they were willing to do

3. **Daring** faith - Elijah here put God on the spot - or maybe I should say God had Elijah on the spot - He could do nothing but trust God to act

c. The object of faith is more important than amount of faith

1. The people were divided between two objects (Baal and Jehovah) - The prophets of Baal had one ineffective object - Elijah had one effective object of faith

2. Where you place your faith is more important than how much faith you have - Jesus said - "Faith the size of a mustard seed could move mountains"

d. God wants us to complete the task he has set before us even if our faith has failed

IV. WHAT WILL YOU DO TODAY

a. Have you heard a warning signal? You must decide who you will serve

b. Ask God for the daring faith that will put you on the spot and reveal His great power to you

1. *The crowds gathered as a tightrope walker strung the rope across Niagara Falls. They were amazed when the man made his first trip across. He then took a wheelbarrow and pushed it across. Then he asked if the crowd believed he could push a man across the rope in the wheelbarrow – The crowd began to scream “Yes, we believe you can!” He then asked for a volunteer to get into the wheelbarrow.*

c. God has called to you time and again - It is now time for you to respond in faith to Him

1. Give yourself to him for the first time - become a Christian

2. Renew your commitment to Him - may have seen God act in great ways before but are now like Elijah in the cave afraid and alone - Never alone - God says get up and get out and listen closely for that gentle whisper

3. May want to make this your church home - Bible teaches by principle that you should be active in a local church - If you live and worship in Charlotte then your membership should be in a church in Charlotte - I ask that you give prayerful consideration to this local fellowship of faith known as First Baptist Church and follow Jesus with us today

4. The path to membership here at First Baptist begins with our Membership Class. The class is an introduction to First Baptist, our core beliefs, structure and ministries. We will offer this class on February 9th beginning at 3:00pm

How long will you halt between two opinions?

If God is God then serve Him and Him alone

BOW WITH ME IN PRAYER

8:30 #408 "HAVE FAITH IN GOD"

11:00 "HE WILL COME AND SAVE YOU"