1 Kings 19:14, 18: 14He said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of Armies, but the people of Israel have abandoned your covenant. They have torn down your altars and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking to take my life.”… 18But I have preserved in Israel seven thousand whose knees have not bent to Baal and whose lips have not kissed him.”

Do you know what some of the most dangerous thoughts in the world are? It is those thoughts, those words where we express proud ignorance of the facts of something. Now, it’s bad enough when we don’t know the truth about something or the reality of a matter, but it is quite another thing when we don’t know and we stubbornly refuse to learn or even hear the truth. That’s the issue I speak of.

Let me give you some examples of what I mean. Recently a discussion broke out on social media. It broke out because the original statement made was very anti-religious. When I made a comment, and in my comment simply asked if this person had thought out the complete implications of what was said, that person and a number of others immediately jumped in and it was clear they were hostile to Christianity. During that tirade against the Christian faith one comment was basically on how Christians foolishly followed a book that had been edited, changed, and rewritten over the years. Yet, in truth, there is not a solid evidence that such is true about the Bible. We have the original Hebrew and Greek of the Bible, and then we have numerous copies of the Bible, more so than any other ancient book, like 50 times more so.

What has happened? Well, somewhere in the lives of these people they had some sort of comparative religion course that gave absolutely false information about the Bible and they simply believe that. What is worse, is that there is nothing, absolutely nothing you and I could ever do to change their mind. They think they know the truth and they will defend their ignorance of that truth to the end. Now, make no mistake, they will accuse me of the very same problem. Except that I know what they were taught and why and they have no idea, nor are they willing to ask about what I know and was taught. There is the difference.

Or how about this similar classic: “As long as I know the truth, that’s all that counts.” This is most often applied to the issue of religion, especially to the Christian religion and I understand the confusion because Satan has done a marvelous job of confusing God’s truths. Did you catch that? God’s truths. The Christian faith isn’t about just one truth. It is hundreds of truths that fit together to make a complete picture of God.

Here’s a fact, I am a Pastor. I spent a great deal of time in school and my life surrounded by God’s Word and working at what it says and reveals. I find I have to constantly work to keep the truths of God’s Word free from error. Do we forget Jesus’ warning about the little bit of leaven? That warning was given so that we would keep away from error, even a little bitty, teensy weensy error. What has happened with so many is that the little bit of error gets in and before you know it the truths of God’s Word are affected. Worse yet, it is often such a slow process that the person doesn’t realize that the truth they think they know has been affected. That truth they used to know has now been changed to a lie. Yep, they believe a lie now.

Ask yourself this, “How is it that there are so many church bodies today that so easily deny basic truths of Scripture?” My favorite passage in this regard is 2 Tim. 4:3-4 **“For there will come a time when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, because they have itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in line with their own desires. They will also turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”** Seriously, there are churches out there, many, many churches that deny such things as: the existence of sin, the facts of creation, the physical resurrection of Jesus, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, that the Bible is God’s Word or that there really even is a God. People, I am talking about Christian churches, those who are supposed to teach the wonder and truth of God! Knowing the truth and keeping the truth alive and well is what we constantly need to do.

Then there is the dangerous statement found in today’s text. **“I alone am left.”** Here is the excuse that Elijah used in order to give up on what the Lord had told him. It is an excuse that provides a remarkable lesson. Let’s consider our text under this theme: **A LESSON ON FAITH.**

Do you know what Elijah’s problem was in this instance? His problem was that he was all wrapped up in himself rather than focusing on what God wanted and what God had recently accomplished. That this is evident is seen in the circumstances that surround our text. Circumstances that show the foolishness of Elijah’s thinking.

What had happened recently in Elijah’s life? Elijah had recently spent his time eating from jars of flour and oil that did not run out! Three years of time. Elijah had recently raised the widow of Zarephath’s son from death. Elijah, at the Lord’s command, ended the drought over the land of Israel. Next Elijah had taken on 450 prophets of Baal, the challenge to call down fire from the sky. Elijah won that showdown with an awesome display of the Lord’s power. Elijah then ran ahead of the chariot of King Ahab on the way to Jezreel. Such are the things that have recently gone on in Elijah’s life. Clearly the hand of the Lord, the wonder and power of God were on display in his life.

Now you would think that with such wonders behind him that Elijah would be as bold as brass and stand firm and sure in what God wanted him to do. But when Queen Jezebel threatens to kill Elijah, he runs like a scared rabbit. Instead of trusting that the Lord was with him, that God could and would be on his side and help him through this scary threat to this life, he runs. I personally think that the Lord had given Elijah some clear directions on what he was to do, but he ran. That’s why he’s in the wilderness. Not only does he run but even when the Angel of the Lord appears to Elijah and strengthens him with food, Elijah still wants to complain and quit. Not exactly what one would expect of a man who has just achieved some tremendous victories, especially when those victories show clearly that the Lord is on your side!

Again, I maintain that Elijah’s problem was that he was all wrapped up in himself. He was concerned with how Elijah felt, with what Elijah wanted, with how Elijah thought things should go. Elijah was hung up on Elijah. No wonder he comes up with this incredible excuse that ends: **“I alone am left.”**

We still find this excuse in today’s world. Tell your kid they can’t do what all the others are doing and what will you hear? “Everybody else gets to!” People, that is the same as saying, “I’m the only one who can’t!” In our religious world we do the same. When it comes to the practice of fellowship or simply standing up for the importance of God’s teachings we don’t, we become afraid and say to ourselves, “I’d be the only one against everyone else. I can’t!” God tells us parents to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to stand firm in demonstrating and practicing faith but we don’t and often our excuse is, “None of the other families I hang with do that, I don’t want my children to be the only ones!” Same excuse, different circumstances. But in truth it is really us not trusting, not following, not grasping that God is with us and loves us so wonderfully and deeply. In other words, it is a moment or moments of weak faith. That was Elijah’s problem! Things didn’t happen the way he thought they should and he simply let his human doubts and fears take over.

Elijah had a tremendous lesson to learn. Faith is not based on what you think or feel rather it is based on what God reveals and says. Elijah learned just how wrong he was when he said he was the only one. God told Elijah he didn’t know what he was talking about. God told him there were still 7,000 true believers in the land. Elijah didn’t know the real facts. I essence, God was telling Elijah to quit complaining and get on with his work, with his faith.

Sometimes that is exactly what we need to be told. Quit complaining and get on with the work. Quit thinking you know better than the Lord or have a better way to do things than what He has allowed. We need people who humbly realize that God does know what he is doing. That what is going on is indeed God’s plan for your eternal soul’s sake. That the trial and tribulations you have in your life are for your good and the good of others. To remember that God is with you and watching over you, that God is working to save you, to draw you to Him, to remind you to have faith and trust in Him. Faith trusts God. Faith follows what God says even when it is painful or troublesome or even when it makes you feel all alone in his truth and wonder.

I want you to grasp how God brought Elijah around. First, God sent his Angel to feed and strengthen Elijah and send him on his way to Horeb. At Mt. Horeb God is patient and gentle with Elijah. Grasp the lesson of how God works. God was not in the wind. God was not in the earthquake or the fire that followed. God was in the gentle, the soft whispering voice. In other words, God is a God of love and grace, care and compassion for his people.

Here is the truth of God. He invites and shares his love. For those people who think God only threatens and punishes, it’s not true. God does share the consequences of not believing, more a reminder of the reality than a threat and then God shows exactly why you would want to believe in him. God shows his love. That love is, of course, most graciously shown in Jesus. God sent Jesus to live the perfect lives we could not. God had Jesus go to the cross, there to suffer His wrath and anger against sin, a task Jesus willing took on out of love for us. Jesus paid for our sins. Jesus gave his life for ours in atoning sacrifice. And then, so we would know the wonder of this, Jesus was raised from the dead as proof of who He is and what he has done. That’s the gentle whisper of God’s love in Jesus. That’s the wonder of the Gospel. Since God’s Son has given his life for us, what is there for us to fear or worry about?

What I suspect is that many don’t hear that gentle whisper of God’s love. They are still looking at the wind, earthquakes, fires and other signs of God’s power that they think is God. Instead of hearing in their churches how God forgave in Jesus, they hear how they must live, what they must do, how they must be in order to demonstrate their love for God. In Elijah we are reminded of how God works. We fail. We have moments of weakness and doubt. We forget the wonder and joy of our salvation and we focus only on the here and now. And there is the Lord our God, not the violent wind, not the earthquake, not the fire, but the gentle whisper of grace and mercy that chases our fears, our doubts and failings away. The God of grace and love. The God who has done it all for us. And all that God asks is that we believe. We trust in Him and His Son Jesus.

You do know the end result of all of this. Elijah is strengthened and renewed. Elijah gets out and about to the tasks that God had given him. To appoint this person and that to various kingships and rule so that God’s purpose and God’s plans can be fulfilled. Included in his renewed work is the appointment of Elisha, who will now replace Elijah. In other words, God understood that Elijah was worn down. God understood Elijah’s trouble and heart and God was indeed going to grant his wish to bring him home to God’s eternal rest and grace. And again, if you know how all of this ends, you will know that in the very near future, Elijah is going to get taken to heaven in a whirlwind, all because of the grace and mercy of God.

So though troubled at this point, God’s wonder gives Elijah the means to a renewed and strong faith. God renews him to keep serving the Lord. He gets those tasks done. He once again, boldly goes forth in the business of the Lord and it all ends up making Elijah look pretty good and faithful.

That’s why we still talk about him today. We still speak of his faith and his wonderful service to God. Oh, he had his problems and troubles, but the Lord helped him through and the Lord in the end granted Elijah the wonderful gift of eternal life. And remember, Elijah is one of only three taken directly to heaven: Enoch and Moses being the other two.

I believe the lesson is clear. Trust in the Lord God. Trust that He does know what is going on and that He does care deeply for you in everything. Trust that God loves you and that His Son Jesus is your Savior, who grants the forgiveness of sins and eternal life just because of the faith God has given you. And trust that God, as He did for Elijah, and Elisha, and so many others, including Jesus, will cause your life to be one of service and honor to Him. So, as God leads us in our lives, let us be filled with marvel. Let us continue to hear that still, small voice of the Lord. Because that still small voice is always heard for us in the written revelation of God. Everything we need to know. Everything we need to believe. Everything for the assurance of our salvation is revealed in God’s Holy Word, especially in the beautiful and awesome gospel message of Jesus. It is still the whisper of God for our lives. Still the whisper of his grace and love that we so desperately need.

Oh, and lest we forget, God really does cause Elijah to come to Him. That’s how he ends up in that cave on Mt. Horeb. God knew exactly what Elijah needed. That’s why God keeps encouraging us to his Word and marvel. So that we can get and find exactly what we need for our soul’s sake. Sometimes, even those we think the strongest, they need the help and love of God given to them. Dear people, your church is your Mt. Horeb where you can hear that quiet and strengthening whisper of God. I pray that you stay in God’s Word. That you grasp that God does and will meet your needs as you come to him. Then strengthened, we go out and simply serve the Lord. That’s what happens when faith is put in God and not in ourselves. Keep whispering Lord. Keep us strong and sure in you. Amen.