



Are we called to be comfortable?

READ 1 KINGS 17:1-16

Ahab was an evil king. Under his leadership the nation of Israel strayed far from God. God sent the prophet Elijah to tell Ahab that it will not rain until Ahab changes his ways.

God tells Elijah to flee to the Jordan River, where ravens will feed him. When the brook that's sustaining him dries up from the drought, God sends him to a small village to ask a poor widow for help. Elijah finds her and asks for food and water, even though she's certain her family will soon starve. Elijah assures her that her small jars of meal and oil will not run out. Miraculously, the jars do continue to be replenished, and each day she has enough.

REMEMBER: 1 Kings 17:12a

*"I swear, as surely as your God lives,
I don't have so much as a biscuit."*

MORE TO CONSIDER: Patterns

As you read these stories, notice the repeating patterns – things that happen over and over again. They often reveal important truths about God and us. Notice how often the characters in these stories are forced to let go of what's familiar in order to embrace a deeper trust in God:

Adam and Eve leave the garden to make their way in the world. Abraham and Sarah leave their home and journey toward a land that God hasn't revealed to them yet. Joseph is forced from his home and into slavery in Egypt. Moses leaves his pastures to confront Pharaoh. The Israelites leave the familiarity of Egyptian slavery and wander through the wilderness. In every story, the people leave the familiar behind and find themselves in God's hands in a way that deepens their faith. Is that true in your story? Will it be true if you let go of your comfort zone? How? And what is holding you back?

! SURPRISE

DAY 1: What does it mean to confront corrupt power and speak the truth, like Elijah does to Ahab? How do you know that your "truth" is the right one?

➔ PROGRESS

DAY 2: Do a lot of or conflicts today, both personal and political, stem from the idea that one viewpoint is more true than another? How can we read this story in a world that's flooded with gray areas, nuance, and complexity?

➔ PROGRESS

DAY 3: Why does the "truth" lead Elijah into uncomfortable, unfamiliar and unsafe territory? Is it possible to confront the "truth" and then settle right back into an ordinary, comfortable, uneventful life? Why, or why not?

➔ PROGRESS

DAY 4: Think about climate change. Think about the way some human lives are valued differently than others around the world, and even here in our own country. Think about the economic struggles that are fueling this election, and the severe financial hardships faced every day both by people who look like you and people who do not. No questions yet; just take time to really consider and discuss those topics from every angle you can imagine.

! SURPRISE

DAY 5: Now, where is the truth in the struggles you considered? How do you know if your truth is the "real" truth? Is there only one truth? How will you ever find out? Consider your tv remote, your comfy couch and a nice snack ... and then consider your front door opening to a wide, uncertain world. Where does this story call you? Why are we reading it still, after all these years?

? WONDER

DAY 6: Does God provide for Elijah and the widow? Will God provide for you? How do you know? What do you make of stories that end badly, without any divine intervention?

👤 RELATIONSHIP

DAY 7: Are situations like these our invitation to become a miracle? When God promises to provide for all of us, is God counting on our help? Can we be the light in someone else's darkness, the miracle in their desperation, if we refuse to step out of our comfort zone?