



#2 In the Spirit of Elijah
When the Fire Fades
Forest Park Church

October 19th 2025

By Jason Corder

There are few scenes in Scripture as electrifying as what happens on Mount Carmel. Elijah stands alone against 450 prophets of Baal, the sky heavy with tension after three years of drought.

- He rebuilds the altar, drenches it with water, and prays a simple prayer — and God answers with fire.
- The flames consume the sacrifice, the stones, even the water in the trench.
- The people fall on their faces, crying, “The Lord, He is God!” It’s the kind of spiritual victory moment we all dream about — the visible proof that God is real, powerful, and with us.

Then, as the crowd scatters, Elijah climbs to the top of the mountain and prays again — this time, not for fire, but for rain.

- After years of drought, the heavens finally open.
- Dark clouds roll in, wind howls, and heavy rain pours over the land.
- And in one of Scripture’s most cinematic moments, Elijah tucks his cloak into his belt and *runs* ahead of Ahab’s chariot all the way to Jezreel.

It’s adrenaline, victory, and divine energy all at once — the mountaintop moment every believer longs for.

Jezebel’s threat sends him fleeing into the wilderness, collapsing under a broom tree, exhausted and ready to quit. One minute he’s calling down fire and outrunning chariots; the next, he’s begging God to take his life. How does that happen? How do you go from the highest peak of spiritual victory to the lowest pit of despair so quickly?

But just one chapter later, that same Elijah is running again — this time not in triumph, but in terror.

- One minute he's calling down fire from heaven, the next he's hiding under a broom tree, burned out, afraid, and convinced he's alone.
- How does that happen? How do you go from the mountaintop of victory to the cave of despair so quickly?

The truth is — it happens to a lot of us. After the big win comes the crash.

- After the answered prayer comes the silence.
- After the adrenaline of obedience comes the emptiness of exhaustion.
- Elijah's story reminds us that even the strongest men, even the most faithful believers, can hit the wall.
- And when we do, God doesn't meet us with a lecture — He meets us with a whisper.

And that's where we meet Elijah in 1 Kings 19.

1 Kings 19:1–4

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." ³ Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

I. When the Fire Fades, Fear Fills the Gap

Even after the most powerful victories, discouragement can creep in when our focus shifts from God's power to our problems.

Elijah has just seen fire fall from heaven.

- He's stood toe to toe with 450 false prophets, called down the storm, and watched revival sweep through the crowd.
- He's outrun chariots in the rain.
- If there were ever a time for confidence, this was it.

But chapter 19 opens with something we don't expect: fear.

Jezebel sends a single threat, and the same prophet who faced down an army now runs for his life into the wilderness. How does that happen? How does the man who just saw God's fire and rain suddenly forget His power?

Think of a soldier who's just come home from deployment.

- Months of tension, alertness, and mission focus—and then suddenly, it's quiet.
- The adrenaline fades.
- The fight is over, but his body and mind are still in survival mode.

The same man who faced danger without flinching now lies awake at night battling his own thoughts.

- That's Elijah. The spiritual battle is over, but the emotional war has just begun.

Or think of the professional athlete after the championship win.

- For months, every ounce of effort went toward that one goal.
- The confetti falls, the crowd roars—and then what?
- The lights go off, the noise fades, and a strange emptiness sets in.

The human heart isn't built to live only on adrenaline—it needs something deeper.

That's what happens spiritually, too. When the fire fades, we can forget that the God of the mountain is also the God of the valley.

James 5:17–18

James tells us, *“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.”*

He prayed, and heaven moved—but he was still human.

- He knew fatigue, fear, and doubt.

That’s the beauty of this text: Scripture doesn’t airbrush Elijah’s story.

- It reminds us that the same man who called down fire could also run scared.
- The same heart that trusted God on the mountain trembled at a queen’s threat in the desert.

Why does that matter? Because it tells us that *spiritual strength doesn’t make you immune to weakness*. It means you’re still human—and God still meets you there.

The temptation is to think that burnout or discouragement means something’s wrong with our faith.

- But often, it just means we’ve been running on empty.
- You can win the battle and still need healing.
- You can stand firm on the mountain and still stumble in the valley.

That’s why Paul warns,

1 Corinthians 10:12

Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Confidence in your strength is dangerous; confidence in God’s presence is secure.

The psalmist asks, in **Psalms 42:5**. *“Why are you cast down, O my soul?”*

That’s not a question of theology—it’s a cry from someone who knows what it’s like to feel empty after doing everything right.

Elijah's story gives men permission to be honest about that. To admit that fatigue, fear, or disappointment don't disqualify you from God's presence—they're often what lead you back to it.

A: Your heart needs rest.

- Fear thrives where gratitude fades.
- Don't mistake exhaustion for failure.
- Instead of asking, *"What's wrong with me?"* ask, *"Where can I meet God next?"*

B: God doesn't just show up on the mountain top.

- He meets us when the adrenaline fades,
- when the cave feels cold,
- when we're too tired to run anymore.

I Kings 19:5–8

And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." ⁶ And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." ⁸ And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

II. The Lord Provides Strength

Elijah collapses under a broom tree.

- He's physically drained, emotionally empty, and spiritually numb.
- He's not asking for direction anymore — he's asking for it all to stop.
"It is enough; now, O Lord, take my life."

And what does God do? He doesn't rebuke Elijah. He doesn't say, "Get up and do better." He doesn't question his faith or scold him for running. God sends an angel with breakfast and a nap. Twice.

When Elijah hit the wall, God didn't demand productivity — He provided recovery.

- Before God restored Elijah's calling, He restored his strength.

Think of a coach who knows his player has nothing left in the tank. The athletes been going hard, playing both sides of the ball, taking hits, carrying the team. They're spent.

- A good coach doesn't scream at him to hustle harder
- He pulls him off the field, hands him water, and says, "Sit for a minute. I need you strong for the rest of the game."

That's what God does for Elijah. He calls a timeout. "Get some rest, eat something, because the journey ahead is too great for you."

- Picture a father watching his son come home from a brutal workday.
- The son's frustrated, discouraged, and quiet.
- The father doesn't lecture him about perseverance — he throws a steak on the grill, they share a meal and just sits with him.

That's the heart of God in this passage. He meets His man in weakness and says, *"You're still Mine. Let Me take care of you."*

This is not an isolated moment — it's God's consistent pattern.

- **Psalm 23:2–3** — *"He makes me lie down in green pastures; He restores my soul."* Notice: sometimes God *makes* us lie down. If you won't stop, He'll stop you — not to punish you, but to restore you.
- **Mark 6:31** — Jesus told His disciples, *"Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while."* Even the Son of God said, "Take a break."
- **Matthew 11:28–30** — *"Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* Jesus doesn't say, "Work harder." He says, "Come closer."

Even in creation, God models this. Six days of work. One day of rest. The rhythm of rest isn't laziness — it's obedience.

For a lot of us, this is hard to hear.

We're wired to push through, to grind it out, to believe that if we just work harder, things will get better.

But God built limits into our design.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do isn't to serve more, give more, or run faster — it's to slow down. Eat something. Sleep. Breathe.

Reconnect with the power source.

Maybe what you need isn't another mountain to climb — maybe it's permission to rest under a tree. Because even in that place, God is still near.

Folks exhaustion isn't weakness — it's a signal. A dashboard warning light telling you that you've gone too long without fuel.

Or maybe you've seen a firefighter come out of a blaze. Soot on his face, lungs heaving, eyes burning. He's brave, but he's exhausted. You don't hand him another hose — you hand him a bottle of water and a place to sit. That's compassion with purpose.

God was reminding Elijah that *"The journey is too great for you... but not for Me."*

1 Kings 19:9–13

There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"¹⁰ He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."¹¹ And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in

the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.^[a] ¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

III. When the Fire Fades, God Speaks in the Stillness

Elijah reaches Mount Horeb — the same mountain where Moses met God generations earlier.

- He’s spent, frustrated, and alone.
- He’s poured out everything he has in the fight for God’s name, and now all he feels is silence.
- So he hides in a cave.

And then God tells him to stand on the mountain because He’s about to pass by.

- The wind comes — strong enough to tear rocks apart — but God’s not in the wind.
- Then an earthquake shakes the mountain — but God’s not in the earthquake.
- Then a fire blazes — but God’s not in the fire either.

Finally, there’s the sound of a *low whisper*.

And Elijah covers his face, because this time, he knows — *this is Him*.

The voice that rebuilds you isn’t in the chaos — it’s in the calm.

We often expect God to show up in the spectacular

- in the victories,
- the big moments,
- the adrenaline.

But here's the truth: God does His deepest work, not in the noise of success or struggle, but in the stillness after the storm.

Picture a father kneeling next to his son after a hard loss — maybe after the game where the kid missed the final shot or dropped the ball. The crowd's gone, the noise has faded, and the boy's hanging his head. The dad doesn't bark orders or list what went wrong. He leans in close, puts a hand on his shoulder, and quietly says, "I'm proud of you. You're still my son."

That's the moment Elijah is living. He's done fighting. He's out of gas. And the Father comes close, not to scold him for his weakness, but to steady him with a whisper.

Think about how noise works in your life.

- Your phone pings,
- the news blares,
- work emails pile up,

Even the good things — ministry, goals, success — create a hum of constant motion.

Then you wonder why you can't hear God.

It's like trying to listen to your GPS with the windows down and the stereo blasting — the voice is still speaking, but the noise has drowned it out.

A: God's whisper is not weakness — it's a call to focus.

- Psalm 46:10 — "Be still, and know that I am God." Stillness isn't inactivity; it's intentional trust.
- John 10:27 — "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." You can't follow someone you don't listen to.
- Isaiah 30:15 — "In quietness and trust shall be your strength." God ties strength directly to stillness — not noise, not motion, not performance.

Even Jesus modeled this. Before the cross, after long days of teaching, He often "*withdrew to lonely places and prayed.*" (Luke 5:16) The Son of God carved out silence to hear the Father's voice and refocus.

B: Do we know how to be still?

Our world calls us to action, to the visible signs of success.

The question is: *Do you know how to be still?*

- Elijah had seen God's power, but now God was showing him His heart.
- Because fire can prove God's strength, but only a whisper reveals His closeness.

Some of us are addicted to noise

- the rush of busyness,
- the pull of productivity,
- the illusion that movement equals meaning.

But God's whisper often comes when you've run out of gas, when you've stopped talking, when there's finally space to listen.

You'll never hear God's voice if you're always chasing the next fire.

- Slow down.
- Turn off the noise.
- Step away from the chaos long enough to refocus on His plan for you.

The whisper doesn't mean God is far — it means He's close enough to speak softly.

The God who shouted on Mount Carmel now leans in on Mount Horeb and says, "I'm still here."

1 Kings 19:14–18

He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹⁵ And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over

Syria. ¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.

IV. When the Fire Fades, God Rekindles Your Purpose

God doesn't let Elijah quit — He redirects him to the next assignment.

When Elijah says, "I'm done," God says, "No, you're not." He sends him back to anoint new kings and a successor, Elisha. And He reminds him, *"I still have 7,000 in Israel who haven't bowed to Baal."*

Elijah thought the story was over — but God was already writing the next chapter.

God never wastes a wilderness.

The time Elijah spent under the broom tree and in the cave wasn't lost — it was preparation.

When the fire fades, God uses the silence to reset your soul and refocus your calling.

- Philippians 1:6 — *"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion."* The God who started the fire in you will finish what He began.
- Isaiah 40:31 — *"They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles."* Waiting isn't wasting — it's refueling.

Even Jesus modeled this principle. After His resurrection, He didn't rebuke the disciples who fled in fear — He restored them and sent them out again with purpose. That's what God does for weary men. He rebuilds, refocuses, and re-commissions.

This morning you might be having a broom-tree moment.

- You've looked at your marriage, your career, or your ministry and thought, *"I can't do this anymore."*

You may feel like your best days are behind you, but often, your most significant work happens after your greatest burnout. **Because now you know dependence, humility, and grace in a way you didn't before.**

Burnout is not the end — it's often the pause before God's next chapter in your story.

God isn't finished.

- He's forging something deeper in you — endurance, wisdom, empathy.
- He's preparing you not to make a name, but to make a difference.

Elijah went from fire on a mountain to a whisper in a cave — and from that whisper came a mission that would outlive him.

Conclusion:

Elijah's story began on a mountain where fire fell from heaven — power, victory, proof that God was real. But it didn't end there. Because as powerful as fire is, it can't sustain a soul.

- After the blaze comes the burnout.
- After the mountaintop comes the valley.
- And that's where Elijah found himself — exhausted, fearful, and convinced it was over.

But the God who sent the fire also sent the whisper.

- He met Elijah under a broom tree, not to lecture him, but to feed him.
- He came to him in a cave, not to shout him down, but to speak him back to life.
- And when Elijah was ready to quit, God reignited his calling — reminding him that there was still work to do, still people to reach, and still a mission worth living for.

Picture a campfire after the night's gone long. The flames are gone, but underneath the ashes are glowing embers. Most people would walk away — but the one who knows what he's doing kneels down, breathes gently, and stirs the coals. Slowly, warmth returns. The fire wasn't gone — it just needed oxygen.

Maybe that's you right now. You've been fighting the good fight — for your family, your faith, your future — and you're drained. The fire that once burned bright has dimmed. You're not sure what's next.

Hear this today: God isn't finished with you. The same God who met Elijah in the wilderness is here to meet you in yours. He knows what you need. He's not shouting. He's whispering. And that whisper still carries power.

- If you're weary, this is your moment to stop running and let Him restore you.
- If you've felt forgotten, this is your reminder that He still has a purpose for you.
- And if your heart has cooled, this is your invitation to let the breath of God stir those coals again.