

Using Elijah's Coat

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon (Family Meeting)
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 25th September 2011

Intro-

- Few weeks ago I asked the adults who they were most like- the good guy Elijah who paid attention to God or the bad guy Ahab who ignored God.
- I told them how Ahab had worshipped a terrible made-up god called Baal, who he believed was in charge of sending rain. Urged on by his evil wife Jezebel (sssss) he had tried to kill anyone who worshipped the real God.
- Elijah proved that Baal didn't really send the rain by doing a miracle where he prayed it would not rain, and it didn't- for 3.5 years! During this time God looked after Elijah bringing him food and drink.

Scene 1- You are not alone

- At the end of 3.5 years Elijah challenged the worshippers of Baal to a contest. If Baal was real and really in charge of the weather then he could send lightning down surely? He gave them plenty of time for Baal to make it happen, but nothing did. Then Elijah prayed and fire came down from the sky and burnt up some meat he had them put out.
- When Jezebel heard about this she was furious and set out to kill Elijah. Elijah got really scared and ran away- over 200 miles, to a famous mountain- Mount Sinai.
- God spoke to him there in a calm, quiet voice- 'Elijah why are you here?'
- Elijah told God that he was the only one left who worshipped the true God and now they were trying to kill him.
- God responded by saying that even though he thought he was the only one left, actually there were 7000 who hadn't worshipped Baal.
- God also said to Elijah that 3 young people were going to become leaders and between them they would, each in different ways, get rid of Baal worship.

Application:

- Do you feel sometimes like Elijah?
- Maybe there is a situation right now that you don't want to face and you need to hear God speaking calm, reassuring words to you- 'it's going to be okay'- God will help you to face your fears. God is with you always. Listen for His quiet voice- may not be audible, loud, but a gentle reassuring prompt- God wants to speak to you, don't give way to fear. Elijah ran to Sinai because it was far enough away from the problem and it was a place he thought he could find God. Where is that place for you?
- Do you sometimes feel that you are the only person following God? Maybe at school you are the only Christian, or in your workplace. Maybe the other Christians you do know are not really obeying God in the way they should. Take courage- all over the world there are people of your age truly following God in difficult situations- it won't always be this hard- just as Elijah did not know the full extent of people's hearts there may well be people around you who's lives God is working in- He wants to use you to bring them further on- Jesus said 'look for someone who is worthy, a man of peace and stay with them'- i.e. find someone who is at least open to God and work from there.
- Do you, like Elijah sometimes feel that if you were not there everything would fall apart? God shifted Elijah's gaze from himself to the next generation- God was able to achieve more through the next generation than he could accomplish himself. Who will you pass the baton on to? Are you willing to pass on the baton? Are you

willing to train a young person up?

Scene 2- Get training

- We are just going to look at 1 of the 3 young people that were going to become leaders and kick out Baal worship. We will look at a boy called Elisha.
- Elisha was working on a farm doing plowing. Elijah went up to him and did a strange thing- he put his coat on him (no it wasn't raining). Elijah did this as a way of saying- 'come alongside me and I will train you to be like me'- to hear God like I do. It was a way of saying 'I will be your teacher'.
- Elisha said goodbye to his family and then left everything to follow Elijah. He became Elijah's servant in order to become more like him.

Application:

- Elisha was very serious about following Elijah to become like him. In the same way Jesus' disciples left everything to be with Jesus all the time. In the Bible Paul makes it clear that we don't have to all become full-time Christian workers to truly follow Christ ('let everyone remain in the state in which he was called')- God wants us to serve Him in many different ways. However, there is still a cost to following Jesus- He is to be first in our lives.
- What are the things which tend to cause you to stop following Jesus? What do you need to do to put it right?
- Elisha followed Elijah- what Christians have influenced you over the years- who is currently inspiring you to follow Jesus more closely? What books have influenced you? Are you still being inspired?
- Elijah was willing to invest not only quality time, but his very life into training up the next generation. Who are you inspiring to follow Jesus?

Scene 3- Do something new

- Elisha had spend quite some time with Elijah and had not only seen Elijah say things from God which came true, but also do amazing miracles. He had dreaded the day that God would take him away, but God had revealed to him that 'today is the day'.
- Everywhere they went it seemed there were prophets (those who specialise in hearing God) telling him that today was the day God would take his teacher away from him.
- Elijah at one point took his coat off and hit the river Jordan with it- instantly a cool miracle happened and the water parted so they could both walk on dry ground (just like the parting of the Red Sea under Moses and the parting of the Jordan under Joshua).
- Elijah asked if there was anything he could give to him as a going away present. What would you ask for? Elisha basically asked for everything Elijah had- especially the power of God's Spirit to do the impossible. Elijah knew that it was only God who could give this, but if Elisha saw him as he was taken away it would be his.
- Suddenly a whirlwind came and angelic chariots of fire flashed by and Elisha saw Elijah being whisked up to Heaven. All that remained was Elijah's coat. What would you do? That's just what Elisha did- he picked up the coat and went to the river Jordan and used it as a light-sabre saying 'Where is the God of Elijah?' What do you think happened? The Jordan opened up!

Application:

- Elisha did not want to lose his teacher as he had grown so fond of him. Sometimes God takes people out of our lives when we don't feel ready to lose them. Sometimes we wonder how we are ever going to manage without them. We don't always understand what God does, but one thing is sure- He knows what He is

doing. Elijah had served out his time on earth and was going to be with his wonderful Lord- now it was Elisha's turn to shine. Are you locked in the past, fearful to move on, or are you looking to what God has in the future for you? Paul said 'forgetting what is behind I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me'.

- When was the last time you did something for the first time? We will never see the amazing things God will do through us if we are not prepared to 'have a go'. Would you have picked up Elijah's coat? Would you have used it? What is your 'Elijah's coat'? What is God calling you right now to do for the first time?
- Ram Babu is an Indian Christian today greatly used in signs and wonders. I was at one of his healing meetings when he visited Manchester. We saw many words of knowledge and healings. In a teaching meeting he did he explained that one of the keys to Spiritual gifts is courage. Are you full of courage today? Why not take some courage and put it in; be 'en'-courage by little old Elisha. Elisha went on to do more recorded miracles than Elijah. Jesus gave us a challenge. He said 'He who has faith in me will do greater things than these' (speaking of His own miracles). Are you ready for the challenge? Let's go!

Summary

- **You are not alone**
- **Get training**
- **Do something new**

Song: Lord I come to You