

Stealing Baal's Thunder

I Kings 18:1-40

Introduction

I invite your attention today, to the showdown on Mount Carmel. It is the moment that marks the biography of Elijah. Nearly everyone who knows anything about Elijah, knows about the prophets of Baal and the fire from heaven.

However, since the word has already informed us that Elijah was a man just like us, I am led to believe that courage was part of the package. That would be a needed quality which would allow Elijah to stand before his bitter enemies and declare war!

When it comes to that kind of courage, perhaps we identify best with Lucky Eddie. I like reading *Hagar the Horrible*, a cartoon in the comic strip section of the Sunday newspaper. Hagar is a rough Viking warrior who is, on one occasion, talking to his men before an ensuing battle. He says, "Men, this will be a dangerous mission, but anyone who refuses to go with me will be forever branded a weak, cowardly, gutless, soft, faint-hearted, cringing, trembling wimp."

Then Hagar's little friend, Lucky Eddie, softly says, "Uh, I can live with that."

It is hard to find help when facing a dangerous crisis.

I recently read a funny little story of a four-engine propeller airplane that was flying over Kansas. Three of the engines "conked out". Immediately, the cabin door opened and the pilot appeared with the only parachute in the plane strapped to his back. He opened the airplane door and, just before he jumped, said to the passengers, "Keep calm, folks, don't panic. I'm going for help."

Well, during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, nearly every God fearing person in Israel had already baled out. As far as they were concerned, the plane was going down and being a weak, gutless spiritual coward was something they had decided they could live with.

Everyone, that is, except one. We have observed that one man by the brook Cherith, where he was told to hide, and then, in the village of Zarephath, where he was told to go. His name was Elijah.

For three years, the king and queen have been searching in vain for Elijah. They have searched not only in Israel, but in surrounding nations, which they forced to take an oath that they were not hiding him. Jezebel has wanted nothing more than to get her grimy little hands around the neck of the man who has caused so much trouble for her national and religious ambitions. For three years, he has been a royal embarrassment to her. Elijah has stopped the very thing that her god was supposed to control – rain. Her question has been, "Where is that man?"

For over a year, the prophet Elijah has been tucked away, undiscovered, in a widow's hut. The widow was located, of all places, in Jezebel's own hometown, the kingdom of Phoenicia!

Countdown to a Showdown!

Now we arrive at I Kings, chapter 18. Look at verses 1 and 2.

Now it happened after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth." So Elijah went to show himself to

Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.

Three things occur in rapid succession, as the countdown to a showdown begins to tick away.

Elijah has a command for Obadiah

1. First, Elijah meets King Ahab's man, Obadiah, and has a command for him.

Look at verse 7a.

Now as Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him . . .

As Elijah makes his way to the capital, his path intersects the path of Obadiah, King Ahab's "right hand man". Obadiah had been sent by Ahab to find some grass for the horses and mules.

By the way, at the very time when the king should have been searching for forgiveness, he is instead, foraging for food; when he should have been looking for God, he is instead, looking for grass.

Elijah has a command for Obadiah, in verse 8.

He said to him, "It is I. Go, say to your master [Ahab], 'Behold, Elijah is here.'"

Notice Obadiah's response in verses 9 through 11.

He said, "What sin have I committed, that you are giving your servant into the hand of Ahab to put me to death? As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to search for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he made the kingdom or nation swear that they could not find you. And now you are saying, 'Go, and say to your master, 'Behold, Elijah is here.'"

So, what is the big problem with Obadiah? Continue to verse 12.

It will come about when I leave you that the Spirit of the Lord will carry you where I do not know; so when I come and tell Ahab and he cannot find you, he will kill me . . .

In other words, Obadiah cannot believe that Elijah is really going to face Ahab. In other words, "You mean you're actually going to wait right here and I'm to go and get the same king who wants to cut your throat? Right! And if I bring him back here and you're not here, what am I supposed to say? 'Aw rats, Ahab, he was here an hour ago.' Ahab will chop my head off!"

So, Elijah had to give his oath that he would not disappear into thin air, in verse 15.

Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him today."

Elijah has a condemnation for Ahab

2. The second scene in this countdown to a showdown occurs when Elijah confronts Ahab with a condemnation.

Look at verse 17.

When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is this you, you troubler of Israel?"

This, remember, is the first face to face confrontation between Elijah and Ahab in over three years. And, Ahab says, "There you are, you trouble maker!"

Is that not classic human depravity?! When in sin, find someone else to blame. So, Ahab blames Elijah, saying, "Elijah, you've made life in Israel miserable! Look what you've done!"

How blind Ahab is! Elijah, however, removes the blinders from Ahab's eyes as best he can with this condemnation in verse 18.

He said, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and you have followed the Baals."

Now you would think that Elijah would spend quite a long time dealing with Ahab, but instead, he wants only to use Ahab as a messenger boy to call the entire nation together. He does not really deal with Ahab because he knows that Ahab is a pawn in the hands of Jezebel, and that Jezebel is merely a pawn in the hands of Satan, the creator of Baalism. This is a spiritual conflict and the nation Israel is at stake, so he utters an incredible command to the king, in verse 19.

Now then send and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.

Imagine volunteering to get in the middle of that crowd of his bitterest enemies!

He was thinking like General Abrams was during the Second World War, when he found himself and his troops surrounded on all sides. His response to his officers rallied their courage as he said, "Gentlemen,

for the first time in the history of this campaign, we are finally in a position to attack the enemy in any direction we want.”

Elijah would literally be surrounded by the enemy. This chapter could be subtitled, “Elijah, against the world!” And, to any onlooker that day, Elijah was as good as dead!

Wilson Harrel told of his days in the Second World War. He wrote,

Being called upon to “face fire” has a way of changing men. From ordinary men into leaders; because leadership, is forged in combat.

In World War II, I was a combat fighter pilot flying a P38, giving “close support” to General Patton in his march through France. One day, my flight unit of four planes was ordered to take out a German airfield one hundred miles behind their lines. We zoomed out, made our run and survived the anti-aircraft fire. As we pulled up, I saw in the distance what looked like a big flock of buzzards. Then I realized, “Those aren’t buzzards. Those are airplanes . . . German airplanes!”

They turned out to be sixty seven enemy fighters – the dreaded Herman Goering yellow-nose fighters that Goering had personally brought together with the best pilots into one invincible unit. They had never before been challenged. I got on the intercom and called in to my leader, Jerry Gardner. In a voice two octaves above high C, I yelled, “Jerry, there are bogey’s at 10 o’clock!”

Jerry looked up at them. After a moment of silence, he said calmly, “Let’s go get ‘em.”

Now there is one sacred rule in the Air Force, “Always keep formation”. The only way to survive air-to-air combat is to stay together. Of course, in this situation, that certainly wouldn’t help. Just before our four planes reached those sixty seven enemy fighter planes, Jerry came back over the airwaves and uttered some immortal words, “Every man for himself.”

We zoomed into the middle of their formation. I ended up on the tail of a German general leading the group with his

three wingmen. Nobody behind me could shoot at me for fear of hitting the general. I shot down the three wingmen without even getting shot at. Then the general and I had ourselves quite a dogfight. He probably flew into my fire, since from the beginning, I was squeezing every trigger in the cockpit. He went down. The next second, every German that wasn’t shooting at Jerry and my other two buddies opened up on me. My plane and I caught fire. I bailed out, pulled my rip cord and looked up. My chute was on fire. Luckily, I was so low that my chute hung together until I hit the ground, although I was severely burned. The French underground picked me up. Eleven days later, Patton sent in a squadron of tanks to get me out.

The day of our fight, forty seven yellow-nose fighters were shot down. All four of us survived and earned Presidential citations.

This is Elijah, only different – he is alone and he has called for combat with the prophets of Baal and Ahab and the entire nation.

He is surrounded and it looks hopeless, but he knows what they have forgotten:

one ordinary person + God = an invincible army.

Elijah has a challenge for the people of Israel

3. Now notice, in this countdown to a showdown, Elijah’s challenge to the people of Israel.

Look at verse 21.

Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” . . .

Elijah asks, “How long will you falter, or hesitate, between two opinions?”

The word translated “hesitate” could be rendered, “limp or stagger”. It gives us the picture of people walking as if they are intoxicated; swaggering from side to side, unable to keep a straight course.

Indecisiveness on spiritual matters of faith in God creates a spiritual imbalance. You cannot walk straight unless you have made up your mind that God

is the only true God and He rules as sovereign in your life.

The same picture occurs in James, chapter 1, verse 8, when he writes,

. . . a double-minded man, [is] unstable in all his ways.

When you live only halfway for Jesus Christ, instead of making a decision to live fully for Him, you will stagger through life. You may have decided to live an honest life, but then, telling a lie or two covers your business tracks, so you slide into dishonesty. You decide to live a pure life, yet temptation comes along and you cannot resist the lure, so you lower your morals to, once again, pay the penalty for your promiscuity. Your conscience rages within you and guilt washes over your mind and heart. You stagger from one half-hearted attempt at righteousness to yet another shady deal, dishonest report, or immoral date out on the town.

Notice the peoples' response in the last part of verse 21 of I Kings, chapter 18.

. . . But the people did not answer him a word.

The people were silenced before the word from God. That silence, by the way, was a good sign. A bad sign would have been for them to respond with debate and argument.

Contest on Mt. Carmel!

With that interchange completed, Elijah turns his attention to the prophets of Baal; the arch enemies of God and the nation of God.

The rules are spelled out by Elijah

1. In this life or death contest on Mt. Carmel, Elijah spells out the rules.

Look at verses 23 and 24.

“Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, He is God.” And all the people said, “That is a good idea.”

And why not?! The calling card of Baal was fire; fire was one of his specialties. Baal was the one who generated the storm that brought thunder and lightning. One crack of thunder and one bolt of lightning from Baal would light the sky of Samaria and enflame the sacrifice.

A discovery, written in Ugaritic, tells it all, “Baal throws flashes of lightning to the earth.”

But, wait a second! Why fire? Why not rain? Aren't they hot enough? Aren't they tired of the scorching sun and the burning wind? That is what Elijah's God seemed to be holding back and that is the chief specialty of Baal. That is what everyone needed. Why not call for rain and, as it fell from whichever god sent it, the grateful people could stand and worship him with their parched lips open in joy as they drank in the refreshing downpour?

Walter Kaiser Jr., a professor of Old Testament studies at Trinity Seminary, provided an answer in his good book on Elijah. He wrote,

The answer to this most proper question, uncovers the heart of the theological matter at hand. Not only would the flaming descent of fire show the power of God, but, more importantly at this point, it would clearly announce the fact that there had to be a sacrifice to intervene before there could be any blessing.

Why did Elijah come up with the idea of an altar and an oxen and calling for fire? He has something else in mind, doesn't he? There was even more to it than that.

The fire must come of itself from heaven and therefore, signify that God had been propitiated, or satisfied. Indeed, the sacrifice itself would speak of a substitute that would bear the sins of the idolatrous people and thereby, make it possible for forgiveness and blessing from God. God could not forgive without someone paying for the sin of the people. It is impossible to forgive anyone without someone paying, even on the human level. In this case, Elijah placed the bull on the altar and waited for heaven itself to be the officiating priest.

Do you see what is happening? Elijah is not just coming up with some contest, thinking, “Oh, let's see, what do I have? Uh, hail. Uh, wind, hurricane, tornado . . . Uh, fire, I'll go with fire.”

Elijah does not just want to smash the competition, he wants to launch a revival among the people! So, he calls them back to a sacrifice and a substitute animal, so that when God moves, He will, in a sense, burn the sacrifice and pardon the sins of forthcoming repentant people.

The religious prophets are mocked by Elijah

2. As the contest on Mt. Carmel begins, Elijah will mock the religious prophets of Baal.

The prophets of Baal get to go first, as we are told in verse 26.

Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon [three hours] saying, “O Baal, answer us.” . . .

Imagine these dignified prophets chanting their liturgy, with their expensive robes flowing and their golden medallions swinging about their necks and reflecting the rays of the sun brilliantly. They repeatedly say, “Oh Baal, answer us. . . . Oh Baal, answer us. . . . Oh Baal, answer us.”

Now notice the response in the last part of verse 26.

. . . But there was no voice and no one answered. . . .

Note that phrase. It will appear again in verse 29.

So the prophets of Baal move to phase two, according to the last part of verse 26.

. . . And they leaped about the altar which they made.

In other words, “Okay, let’s step it up a notch or two, men.”

So, they gathered up their fancy robes and began to leap around the altar and on top of it, saying, “Oh Baal, hear us! Oh Baal, hear us!!!!”

Now, if you are not convinced that God has a sense of humor, hang on to your hat and continue to verse 27.

It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them . . .

The word does not tell us what Elijah has been doing for three hours. I can see him sitting against some nearby rock, chewing on a piece of straw. Now, he has gotten up and moved a little closer and he is going to rub a little mud in their face.

“Hey fellas,” continue to verse 27b,

. . . Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god . . .

In other words, “He is a busy deity; he has got a lot of things to administrate. You need to call a little louder.”

. . . he [might be] occupied . . .

The word “occupied” means, “deep in thought”. So, Elijah is saying, “He has got a lot of things on his mind; like this drought and thinking, ‘How did I make the rain fall?!’”

Then Elijah really gets going and says, further in verse 27,

. . . or [perhaps he has] gone aside . . .

That phrase “gone aside” is an interesting phrase. There is some debate as to its exact meaning. However, the same phrase is used elsewhere to refer to someone who has gone to the bathroom.

Don’t look at me, I didn’t write it!

Can you imagine? “Hey fellas, call louder. Baal must be in the bathroom. He just got a new J. C. Penney catalog and he’s thumbing through the pages.”

Others believe this phrase means, “to go hunting,” but that is not as much fun!

Continue in verse 27,

. . . or [he] is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.

“He is taking a nap, guys, cry louder.”

This really “stokes” these prophets of Baal. Look at verses 28 and 29.

So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; . . .

(some of the saddest words in all of scripture for everyone who has placed their faith in some god other than the God of Israel, occur next)

. . . but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

Jeremiah, the prophet, is writing this account, and his prophets blood is stirred. He says the same thing in three different ways. He wants every generation to get the message,

. . . *there was no voice, no one answered, no one paid attention.*

That, ladies and gentlemen, is the tragic outcome of every other religion and every other faith. Ultimately, at the judgment of the great white throne, where all who have ever lived and died without believing in the God of Israel are judged, there will be no other god to hear, no other god to answer, and no other god to pay attention.

The righteous prophet, Elijah, prays

3. As the Mt. Carmel contest continues and Elijah has a turn, the righteous prophet prays.

Look at verses 30 and 31.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob . . .

Skip to verses 32 through 35.

So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it a third time. The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water.

Now, the critics say, "Stop right there. There is a three year drought on, remember? Just where can Elijah get barrels of water from?"

Well, if you remember your Holy Land geography, the base of Mount Carmel stands by the Mediterranean Sea. Salt water is lousy for drinking, but it is great for putting on altars.

Picture, in your mind, these old stones. There are twelve of them, crudely piled up. On top of them is a pile of wood, with an oxen prepared for sacrifice on top of that. There is a small trench around the altar and it is now brimming with water. In fact, the entire altar is drenched. Twelve barrels full of water have

immersed this altar. This is Elijah's way of saying, "There are no tricks here."

Still, liberal scholars have written numerous theses suggesting such ideas as: the fire was the result of spontaneous combustion from the sparks created by the swords that the Baal prophets had used, or Elijah placed a mirror on the altar and the reflection created enough heat to light the dry kindling wood. Frankly, their theories are all wet! Literally!

The altar, the wood, and the sacrifice are dripping wet. In fact, Elijah seems to imply, "I'll make it as difficult as possible for God to ignite this sacrifice."

There are no tricks up Elijah's sleeve. There is no hidden fire and no secret spark. There is just a dripping wet altar that only a miracle from God could ignite.

By the way, you do not have to make things easy for God. Just do what He says, and then step back and watch His power work.

Continue to verses 35 through 39.

At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, O Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again." Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God."

(In Hebrew, they are saying, "Yahweh is Elohim." Continue to verse 40.)

Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape." So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Was this cruel? There was cancer in the camp, and Elijah removed the tumor. This was an act of purifying judgment.

Perhaps subtle symbolism is seen in the fact that the brook Kishon that flowed at the base of Carmel, ultimately, flowed toward Phoenicia, the kingdom of

EthBaal, the father of Jezebel. It was as if to imply that the blood of the false prophets flowed back to where it belonged.

Truths for Today

This passage presents some rather powerful, practical truths for the believer today.

In matters of religion and worship, the majority opinion can be dead wrong

1. First, in matters of religion and worship, the majority opinion can be dead wrong.

In this day, Baalism:

- was the politically correct jargon;
- had the blessing of the king and queen;
- had a dedicated following of millions of people;
- had a religious system of pomp and circumstance, of priests and prophets;
- had a history and background that was centuries old.

There could easily have been testimony meetings with stories confirming that Baal's control of the weather abounded! The stories might be, "I planted my garden and needed rain. I went to the priest and offered an extra gift to Baal. The priest prayed and the next day, it rained."

Then they all break into singing, "Baal answers prayer."

It had everything but the truth. It had a body without life. It was dead wrong.

There was an article in the local newspaper about a Hindu god, named Ganesh, who supposedly sipped milk given to it from a worshipper. The news created a fervor in India and the temples were packed with people, including some who live in this town, who tried to repeat the miracle at their own shrines. The article went on to tell that the worshippers at the nearby Hindu temple, daily bathe their three foot high marble images with a damp cloth and place food offerings before them. The article quoted a Hindu priest as saying, "The lord Ganesh wanted to tell the world, 'I'm here. I'm alive. I have power.'"

Ladies and gentlemen, is it possible for Hinduism to be true? Is it possible for Christianity to be true? Yes, but both cannot be true. Do you know what the

tragedy is? To be wrong in the matter of faith is to be wrong for eternity.

You might say, "But, Stephen, these people are so sincere."

Yes, they are. But, if sincerity is the determinative characteristic of true religion, then the prophets of Baal should have won the day. Elijah did not pray for six hours; he did not cut his body to prove his deep loyalty to his god. The prophets of Baal were deeply sincere, and they all died. And, for all eternity, no voice will defend them, no one will answer, no one will pay attention.

The majority opinion of Elijah's day was tragically wrong.

When you understand the claims of God and His word, you discover it is impossible to remain neutral

2. The second truth for today is that when you understand the claims of God and His word, you discover it is impossible to remain neutral.

The moment in which you say, "God is God and Baal is false," you have taken sides. The moment in which you say, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through," then money ceases to become your passion and focus; promotion, prestige, popularity, and sensuality cease to become your gods. You are captivated by Christ!

The word "neutral" in the English language is a word that is composed of the two smaller roots "ne" and "uter". These two roots literally mean, "not either"!

That is another way of saying that you have both feet firmly planted in mid-air! One person gives their opinion and another gives their opinion and they then ask you, "How do you feel?"

You answer, "I feel strongly both ways!"

Elijah called to the people of Israel, "How long will you play neutral? If God be God, then follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him."

Elisabeth Elliot published a statement that her husband, Jim, made before his death at the hand of the Auca Indians that he was trying to reach in Ecuador. He said,

Father, make of me a crisis man. Bring those I contact to decision. Let me not be a

milepost on a single road; make me a fork, that men must turn one way or another on facing Christ in me.

What the church of Jesus Christ needs today are men and women who despise neutrality and who challenge others to make their choice for God.

Whenever you are used by God in some marvelous way, make sure you give Him all the credit

3. Thirdly, whenever you are used by God in some marvelous way, make sure you give Him all the credit.

You find that a prayer has been answered and God has worked wonders to behold, and someone says, "Say what's that I heard about?"

Then, you take five minutes to tell them how long you prayed, how bad it was, how you decided to do thus and so, and, at the end, you take ten seconds to tell them, God answered.

My friend, if we could interview Elijah in person today, and say, "Elijah, tell us about Mt. Carmel."

Do you think, for a moment, he would say, "Well, let me explain all the nuances behind why I rebuilt the altar. No, let me tell you how I came up with the idea of dousing the altar with water and why I decided on four barrels, three times. And, let me tell you what I was thinking about during those six hours I waited. . . ."

If he did, he would resemble the average modern day believer, who, like Charles Spurgeon wrote of a hundred years ago, "Considers himself a mighty warrior, who if he so much as kills a mouse, publishes the news in the Sunday School Gazette."

Did you notice the reaction of the crowd as the fire fell? In verse 39, you do not read, "When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'Elijah the great prophet.'" The crowd said, "The Lord, He is God."

Whenever a Christian or a church demands that God receive all the glory for whatever He does, that individual or that church, will see God work in marvelous ways.

Remember, victories on Mount Carmel usually follow years of quiet training and preparation

4. Fourthly, remember, victories on Mount Carmel usually follow years of quiet training and preparation.

Elijah was standing at this magnificent display of God's power only after going through three and a half years of lonely testing and private pain.

If we could choose, we would move in our Christian experience to Mount Carmel. But was Mount Carmel an immediate answer to prayer? No! It was an answer to years of prayer.

We would choose to celebrate with Nehemiah as the ribbon is cut to celebrate the newly constructed walls around Jerusalem. All other attempts had failed, but Nehemiah had succeeded.

We would love to join Daniel as he spent the night in the lion's den, using the soft belly of one for a pillow and the mane of another for a blanket.

Are we willing to go through the agony of desolation and isolation and instruction of an Elijah? Are we willing to endure the personal attack and criticism of a Nehemiah? Are we willing to live a lonely life in exile, far from our homeland for seventy five years, like a Daniel?

We will take the fire of divine triumph on the altar, but will we accept the fire of divine tribulation and purification on our own lives?

Elijah would. And only afterward, does God send the fire of triumph.

Well, for those of you who are willing to join Elijah by the brook, and in the widow's house, who will patiently wait on the word of the Lord, for years if necessary, I want to encourage you with one final thought.

God is capable of establishing truth and displaying His power through the life of just one surrendered person

5. Finally, God is capable of establishing truth and displaying His power through the life of just one surrendered person.

Size does not determine significance in the body of Christ. God does not need powerful people, noble people, mighty or wealthy people. Elijah was a man just like us. He was an ordinary man, used in an extra-ordinary way!

Elijah was one voice, one life that established the truth in God's name. By the way, you do nothing

short of that when you declare to your world that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ!

I want to close by reading to you a piece of anonymous prose,

I am part of the Fellowship of the Unashamed. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tame visions, mundane talking, chintzy giving and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions or popularity. I don't have to be right, first,

tops, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded. I now lean by faith, love by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power. My pace is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, deterred, lured away, turned back, or delayed. I will not hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, back up, let up until I prayed up, stored up and stayed up the cause of Christ. I must go until Heaven returns, give until I drop, work until He comes. And when He comes to get His own, He will have no problem recognizing me. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.

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