

Pity Parties

“I am the only one left and now they are trying to kill me also.”

1 Kings 19:14

Life seemed to be a mess for the prophet Elijah when he spoke the words of our verse. His complaint was that he had served the Lord zealously. But now, as he looked back on all his work, it appeared that he alone was still faithful to God. This situation obviously upset him greatly. Even worse, he was of the opinion that the godless people were now seeking his life.

Many of us can identify with Elijah. We look at the past and wonder what good has come from following the Lord. Like Elijah we are sorrowful that our lives have not counted for more. Also we are fearful of our future—as was Elijah.

Often, when people find themselves having a pity party, they tend to exaggerate the realities of the situation. For example, Elijah said that he was the only one still faithful to the Lord. God corrected this error by telling Elijah that there were still 7,000 people who had not begun to worship the false god Baal.

Believe it or not, sometimes we do not wish to hear good

news when we are feeling sorry for ourselves. We find ourselves refusing to be comforted by hearing an encouraging word. Elijah wisely listened to God’s counsel to him and went and did what the Lord commanded him.

Elijah had feared if he went back to the nation Israel, there would be someone plotting his death. When God told him to go back and face the nation he wisely obeyed in spite of his fear of death. In this instance the fears of the man of God were unfounded. He remained safe as he continued serving the Lord.

History and the Bible tell us that in every generation there are people of God who suffer death for their faith. John 16:1-3 records our Lord’s teaching on the matter of martyrdom. Jesus made it clear that there would be martyrs among His followers.

Missionaries who are about to go out with a mission to a dangerous country are warned ahead of time that—if they are caught by rebel forces—the mission will not pay a ransom for their release. In order to

curtail this way for rebel forces to “cash in” the missions have wisely implemented this difficult policy.

Some missionaries have paid with their lives for this policy. Some have paid with their lives just because they are foreigners. Following Jesus in this life can be very dangerous. Counting the cost of following our Lord is important. However, we will lose our lives someday, regardless of how long we might live. Why not follow Jesus in order to gain what you cannot lose—eternal life—because we shall all leave this world sooner or later?

However lonely you may be today because of circumstances, you know that you are not the only one in such a sad situation. However, the followers of Jesus will ultimately be victorious over the temptation to have a pity party.

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” Jim Elliot (1927-1956)

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