

# The Testing of True Confidence in God

Tim Dubberly, December 31, 2000

Text: I Kings 18:20-40 Read (20-24)

## Introduction:

Many times in life we are challenged by the world to show where our true confidence lies. What are we trusting in? What is our source of strength? Have you ever stopped to consider the need for us to be the one who does the challenging? We should challenge the world that the God who answers let him be God.

In this text we see Elijah, the prophet of God, walking into the camp at Mount Carmel. He has called Ahab, the wicked king, to come and bring all Israel with him. He also called for the prophets of Baal and the prophets of Asherah who ate at Jezebel's table. There he offered a challenge to them to see whose God was truly God.

Many times in life we are challenged and put to the test. We sometimes hold on to things to the very last that we have to let go of to really trust the Lord.

g One night, an inquirer, long under deep conviction, but still unsaved, dreamed that he was walking along the edge of a terrible precipice, and fell over it into a horrible abyss. As he was falling he grasped a little branch of some bush that was growing halfway down. There he hung, and cried for help. He could feel the branch giving away. He looked into the dark yawning gulf beneath, and again cried out for help. Looking up, he saw, in his dream, Christ standing on the edge, and saying, "Let go of the twig and I will save you." Looking at the terrible abyss below, he could not. He cried again; and again came the same answer. Finally, he felt the branch slipping, and in the utter desperateness of despair, he let go of the branch, and instantly the arms of Jesus were about him, and he was safe. He awoke. It was only a dream of the night; yet, from the vividness and instruction of its imagery, he was enabled to let go every false confidence, and rely only on the true.

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True confidence in God gives us tremendous abilities. It also affects a person in ways the world cannot help but see. Here are a few of the "affects" produced in Elijah's life by his confidence in God.

- I. True confidence produces faith to overcome the odds. (20-23)
  - A. Elijah was one prophet who was challenging the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. He was also defying the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who was the wife of Baal in Canaanite mythology.
  - B. Elijah stood before the false prophets and the people of Israel and issued his challenge. He said, *“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him.”* However, the people were silent.
  - C. Many times in life we are outnumbered like Elijah, or outsized like David, or overcome like Peter on the water, but the truth is the God we serve is still bigger, stronger, and able to take care of us. Remember who sent Elijah!
  
- II. True confidence creates the belief in the unbelievable. (24-26)
  - A. Elijah stated the terms of the challenge when he said, “Then you will call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.”
  - B. His challenge of God answering by fire shows us his faith in the supernatural power of God. He was not seeking an easy answer or demonstration; he was seeking the appearance of God in person through a manifestation of power.
  - C. Each time we come to church or call upon the Lord, we should be looking for God to show up in a manifestation of power. I remember the Apostle Paul’s words when he told a certain group that he did not come to them with enticing words of man’s wisdom but in a demonstration of the power of God.

III. True confidence eliminates the fear of failure. (27-29)

- A. Elijah's confidence in God removed any fear, which he might have had. He began to feel the need to antagonize the false prophets.
- B. Elijah began to tease the prophets, he said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, for he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."
- C. It is truly comforting to know that God is always available. He never slumbers or sleeps. The Bible tells us that His eyes run to and fro in the earth seeking for those who are weak so that he may show Himself strong on their behalf.

IV. True confidence calls for personal participation. (30-33)

- A. Elijah showed his confidence; he did not just talk about it. He repaired the altar; he took the twelve stones; he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar.
- B. How many times have I wondered, when I hear people sing that old song "We got the power" if they really believe it? The truth is like the song "God of the Mountain," which tells us how faith is easy on the mountain but hard in the valley.
- C. Our confidence should be shown. We should do more than talk about our faith in God we should show it.

V. True confidence challenges the unbeliever to believe. (34-35)

- A. Elijah called for them to believe. He told them to fill the barrels and pour it over the sacrifice. They filled four barrels and obey him. He required it to be done three times, till the trench was filled up.
- B. Many times we like to stand and watch. We become spectators instead of participators. God is calling for people to believe.
- C. Our confidence should cause people to want to know who we know.

VI. True confidence causes hearts to be guided back to god. (36-40)

- A. Elijah first showed the people, at the evening offering that a man can personally know God. His prayer was personal.
- B. He then showed them through his obedience that a man could move the hand of God. He said, "let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and I have done all these things at Your word."
- C. After his sixty-three-word prayer the fire fell. It consumed the sacrifice, wood, stones, dust, and licked up the water in the trench. Then the people fell on their faces and cried out to God. They said, "The Lord, He is God!"

Conclusion:

The eyes of the people of Israel had been opened. They began to cry to the living God and obeyed Elijah's voice when he told them to carry the prophets of Baal down to the Brook Kishon and execute them.

Confidence can be a very strong motivator. When we believe God and His word like Elisha did, then we too can know in our heart that it is as good as done.

A school teacher gave to three of his pupils a difficult problem. "You will find it very hard to solve," he said, "but there is a way." After repeated attempts, one of them gave up in despair.

"There is no way!" he declared. The second pupil had not succeeded, yet he was smiling and unconcerned.

"I know it can be explained, because I have seen it done."

The third worked on, long after the rest had given up. His head ached and his brain was in a whirl. Yet, as he went over it again and again, he said without faltering, "I know there is a way, because the master has said it."

Here is faith--that confidence that rests not upon what it has seen, but upon the promises of God.

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We just need to put our trust in God. He will never let us down, and confidence is something that we wear like an attitude. Confidence really shines when persecution arises. We can have the same "affects" on our life if we just believe in God.

## References

May, Steve (1999) 1001 Contemporary Illustrations. Raleigh, North Carolina: Heaven Word Inc.