The Fire of Elijah

My son had a basketball game earlier this week. Our family loves the sport—watching it, playing it, coaching it. He's also a lefty, and as I watched him play as a young pre-teen I saw him struggle with his dominant left-handedness and the right-handed drills and work of his peers. A bit clumsy. A bit unsure. A bit ambidextrous, even? What drills could we practice with him to help him gain confidence? Because when most of the people around you are right-handed—your teammates, your coaches, and even Steph Curry—it's hard to be confident in your own abilities and practice the way you need to. Maybe even the way you were intended to all along.

Fun fact! My son's name also just happens to be Alijah.

In Marty and Reed's book, *The Gospel of Being Human*, they provide a powerful contrast of this right- versus left-handed power idea:

> *What this all reveals is that what we are most used to thinking of as power is actually nothing of the sort. The time-outs, the threats, the bombs, the consequences, the control—it's all shenanigans. It gets results, but can never change Ahab's heart.*
>
> *How very unlike the fire of Elijah is the cross of Christ.*

"How very unlike the fire of Elijah is the cross of Christ."

Elijah had all the passion in the world, and he used that passion to bind God to his promises with a right-handed looking power. However, in his mind, God had to look more like the power of the world, didn't He? Was this type of power the only kind Elijah had experienced himself? Rulers and pharaohs and kings throughout history rose and fell thanks to their powerful reputations. They had to prove themselves with their statues and towers and cities and armies—through a show of force, wealth, control, etc. Even the kings of Israel fell to this trope of power as force.

Even the kings of Israel fell to this trope of power as force.

I wonder if this is all that Elijah had known?

Was Elijah like *my* Alijah, seeing everyone around him with their right-handed power to the point where that is all that seemed to work, all that made sense to compete with everyone else playing the game well?

What's funny (and funny may not be the right word) is that at my son's last game he fell and sprained his wrist—his left wrist. Trying so hard to battle with the pull of left or right he fell, and is now having to be extra cautious to use his dominant hand the correct way, with intention, thoughtfulness, and even help.

God doesn't just tell Elijah that He is different, He shows him.

I love that God doesn't just tell Elijah that He is different, He shows him. He is not in the wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper.

And that whisper? I imagine it's like the first words one says after taking a deep, long breath. Try it.

A voice that not only made Elijah pay attention, but grounded him in the place he was to truly fear, or was it *feel*, the power of God. Even having just experienced the power of God the way he thought he should on Mt. Carmel, this still, small voice must have been the most inviting sound he had ever heard.

For to hear or experience the *softness* of something so great as our God, that is the type of power I want to experience. That is the type of power our world needs. That is the type of power that invites people into the Kingdom on Earth.

…that is the type of power I want to experience.

PRAYER

Most days it is easier to sling judgement
than it is to embrace love. Forgive us.
But may we be a people who look
beyond the storming winds, after the earth quakes,
and as the embers fade,
for the gentle whisper of Your voice breaking the silence.
May we be grounded and calm enough to listen.
May we bind ourselves to a power like Yours,
that does not teach love with fire,
but invites us all into His loving arms each day.

Amen

EPISODE 42 (SESSION 2)

THE FOUR PILLARS



BEMA Discipleship is built on four pillars; a **Four-Pillared Perspective** to help us remember **to elevate the words of God** (not ours) and help us identify the principles that we see recurring in the story of God's people.

Here are some applications for this episode echoing the ideas of the four pillars:

I

TEXT

Read through the stories of Elijah. Where do you see evidence of God's right- and left-handed power? What might you memorize or meditate over more deeply?

II

COMMUNITY

How are you, or your community, choosing to lead others? What sort of power comes more naturally to you? To the leaders around you? How can you live out Christ's definition?

III

DISCIPLESHIP

Who are you modeling this kind of use of power for? One of invitation and warmth over coercion and force. How can you bring people alongside you as Elijah did with Elisha?

IV

WRESTLING

What are you wrestling with in this story? Elijah binding God to His Word? The differing perspectives of power? What are you left wondering about Elijah?

Spotify

Are you a music listener?

Listen along to our BEMA Music Playlists on Spotify.

Song suggestions? Send them to bemabesorah@gmail.com.

BEMA SESSION 2

MEDITATION & PRAYER

REFLECTION, APPLICATION & IMPACT

There are three emphases that we are always thinking about in terms of application at BEMA. These may be stated explicitly at times, but often we will want you to do the work of finding ways to connect the dots to the things we are learning. Much of this is what makes the work of BEMA distinct as a ministry of Impact Campus Ministries.

CREATING A SPACE
SPIRITUAL FORMATION

True success is developing intimacy with God. In Session 1, we encountered the idea of "Creating Space for God" in our lives. We believe that ***if we do our part of creating that space, God will fill it*** *as He desires. You're already doing this as you dive into the Text and jump into a place to discuss. God will meet you in these places! Look for places the Holy Spirit can do work in and through you as you go about your everyday life.*

CONSIDERING CAMPUS
YOUNG PEOPLE FOCUS

We believe that young adults are shaping the future of this world. *Jesus modeled a ministry of discipling young adults, and that approach has and will work. If you are a college student who is listening, we want this material to be directly helpful to your pursuits. If you are not a college student, we want to challenge you to come alongside one and work together.*

SACRED STATION
THEOLOGY OF WORK

This isn't only for church or Bible study; this is about what we do every day. How we do our job and how it may take advantage of or bring life to others is something God says is central to our presence in the world. Justice is very much something God cares about. Does our physical work (our 9–5 job) bring shalom or chaos? Does it exploit creation? The way we manage our employees, interact with customers or coworkers, care for our children, or create products can provide relief to others. ***The work we do every day is sacred and matters!***

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