

# Life Group Lesson

Hope-God Makes Sense out of Nonsense • Week of May 10

Are you feeling out of control these days – do you fear for your health, the stability of your income, the safety of your family, the future of this world? We are learning that God makes sense out of nonsense. God’s Word is filled with real-life stories (eyewitness accounts) of men and women who struggle like we do. We see how at the moment of utter weakness, these men and women who humbled themselves and surrendered, were the very ones to encounter the presence of God. And when *the Almighty* shows up, everything else must bow!

Today’s lesson takes us to both the Old and New Testaments as we look at (1) Nicodemus – how a respected member of the Jewish high council (the Sanhedrin) sought straight answers from this ‘Rabbi’ from Nazareth. And (2) Elijah – his encounter with God in the wilderness. Why did this prophet of God run in fear after a great victory on Mt. Carmel? When we feel out-of-control, bad thoughts can take over. What will keep us from spiraling into a pit of anxiety, fear, depression, and isolation? Like Nicodemus, we may need to come face-to-face with Jesus in the dark of night. Like Elijah, we may need God to stand before us and say, “Get up!”

## Read John 3:1-21

After dark one evening, Nicodemus came to speak with Jesus: “Rabbi, we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you” (v2). Some say Nicodemus came to Jesus at night because he was afraid to be seen with Him. Others say it was because he simply wanted a private audience with the Lord when no one else was around. The important thing is Nicodemus showed up with his questions.

1. Do you know that you can come to the Lord with your deepest fears and questions? If you could have a private audience with Jesus right now, what would you say – what would you ask Him?

Nicodemus only asks three questions (two questions in v4 and one in v9). Jesus did most of the talking (and Jesus says a lot in these verses!) Take some time to look closely at what the Lord says in vv5-8, in vv10-15, and then in vv16-21. Name one thing that stands out to you in each section?

It is interesting that Jesus says, “All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed” (John 3:20) and that is exactly what happens in the Old Testament reading. Ahab and Jezebel have problems with the prophet Elijah (they hate Elijah) because he keeps bringing bad news. Elijah keeps bringing bad news because he is simply truth-telling, exposing the darkness in Israel at that time. *The truth is that Ahab and Jezebel were driven by fear as they were afraid they might lose control, they might lose their power and throne. So their fear instilled fear in the hearts of the people.* Elijah calls for a contest on Mt. Carmel – a battle between the gods of Baal and the living God of Israel. The true God shows up.

## Read 1 Kings 18:22-40, 19:1-9

2. After the victory, Elijah fled because of Jezebel’s threats. Think of a time you had a mighty mountain-top experience that soon after, plummeted into a dark spiritual valley. Perhaps you are in a personal battle with darkness now. What did you learn from that experience? What do you need to ask the Lord about today?

Be encouraged. Jesus experienced mountain-top highs that plummeted into valleys of doubt and faithlessness. For example, see Mark 9:1-10, 14-29. From the following Scriptures, what can we learn about how Jesus battled darkness and spoke against it:

Matthew 26:36-46 (particularly v41)     Luke 4:1-13     Matthew 10:26-31  
John 8:12-20

## Read 1 Kings 19:9-18

3. The Lord does not want us to live in isolation. We should not sit around all day in the house. What did God ask Elijah in v9b?

Elijah had allowed the fear to close in and cause him to think ‘I am the only one left’ – even though the gods of Baal, by whom Jezebel made her threats (v2), never showed up at Mt. Carmel. The LORD God alone is powerful, sovereign and in control – even when, *especially when*, we feel out-of-control. What fear is causing you to ‘hide under a solitary broom tree and pray to die’ like Elijah (v4)? Name it \_\_\_\_\_. Come clean. Give it to the Lord now.

## Four Remedies for Anxiety, Worry and Control:

- A. Adequate Rest
- B. Eating Right - Proper food and nourishment. Also, proper spiritual nourishment – daily personal time in God’s Word and prayer, spending time (at least via screen) with friends, worship, Life Group participation
- C. Work – Get up and get to work
- D. Mission – Live for something beyond yourself

Two important quotes need to be discussed in closing: A) “The battle on Mt. Carmel was a showdown between God and evil. Yet the battle in the wilderness was personal, between Elijah and evil.” Each of us must do battle with evil (or we have surrendered to evil). So how are you fighting evil personally? How are you standing for what is right, good and Godly?

B) Plain Truth: “You have victory over control when you surrender your soul.” We have chaos when we surrender to evil, but we have victory when we surrender to Christ—Salvation is personal. How do we surrender to Jesus each day? Go back over the Four Remedies and discuss which remedy speaks to you today.

# Hope

God Makes Sense out of Nonsense

**Text: John 3:1-6, John 12:42-43,  
I Kings 18:22-27, 36-40, I Kings 19:5-18**

## Plain Truth

\_\_\_\_\_ over control comes by  
\_\_\_\_\_ of your soul.

### One Year Bible Reading

May 10: 1 Samuel 8:1-9:27, John 6:22-42, Psalm 106:32-48, Proverbs 14:34-35  
May 11: 1 Samuel 10:1-11:15, John 6:43-71, Psalm 107:1-43, Proverbs 15:1-3  
May 12: 1 Samuel 12:1-13:23, John 7:1-30, Psalm 108:1-13, Proverbs 15:4  
May 13: 1 Samuel 14:1-52, John 7:31-53, Psalm 109:1-31, Proverbs 15:5-7  
May 14: 1 Samuel 15:1-16:23, John 8:1-20, Psalm 110:1-7, Proverbs 15:8-10  
May 15: 1 Samuel 17:1-18:4, John 8:21-30, Psalm 111:1-10, Proverbs 15:11  
May 16: 1 Samuel 18:5-19:24, John 8:31-59, Psalm 112:1-10, Proverbs 15:12-14

**May 9 & 10, 2020**