

Prophets and Kings Discussion Questions 5.8.16

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. What is one of the scariest risks you've ever taken?
2. Share a story of a time when you were in a situation that seemed impossible, but God provided a way out?
3. When have you been directed by God to do something that seemed crazy, but in the end turned out to be an amazing blessing?

Background

Where we find ourselves in the story of the 1 Kings is the country is now divided with the northern 10 tribes living under the kingship of the decedents of Jeroboam and the southern 2 tribes still living under the kingship of the decedents of David. There have been a series of kings in the north and none of them have followed the Lord; in fact it seems the kings just keep getting worse. We pick up the story while King Ahab and his wife Jezebel are on the throne and Elijah is the prophet called by God to confront them. This part of the story begins with Elijah announcing that God is going to cause a drought in the land. God then tells Elijah to go out to an area east of Jordan and hide there. It is such a desolate place, apart from the brook there is no food, so the Lord (who commands every living thing) has ravens bring Elijah bread and meat twice a day and the brook provides his water. This entire section is about contrasting the gods of Baal with the the God of Israel. In Canaanite religion Baal controlled the rain and yet the drought makes it clear that the God of Israel is more powerful than Baal.

When the brook dries up (the drought has gone on so long) God tells Elijah to go to Sidon and stay with a widow who lives there. The action moves to the very heart of the area "controlled" by Baal and yet the God of Israel has no trouble exerting his power there. Not only does God provide food and shelter for Elijah, but the widow and her son also have an inexhaustible supply of the raw ingredients needed to make bread. When the widow's son gets sick and dies the God of Israel responds to the prayer of Elijah and brings the boy back to life. Thus demonstrating once again that no only does the God of Israel have the power to control rain he also has power of death itself.

Read 1 Kings 17

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. Have everyone close their Bibles. Then invite the group to retell the story together as well as possible.
2. Name the different locations that pop up in this story. What is the significance of each location?

3. What was the widow's response to Elijah's request for water and bread? What does this tell us about the widow?
4. How did Elijah respond when the widow's son died? What does this tell us about Elijah?
5. What are all the different actions that God does in this story? What do these tell us about God?
6. What other things/gods were the people in this time tempted to trust in?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. Have you ever known anyone who took huge risks for God like Elijah and the widow did? What was it? How did it turn out?
2. Have you ever seen God provide for people in unexpected ways? What was it?
3. Does this story remind you of any events from your own life?
4. How would this story challenge the notions of God that many in our world have today?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. What risk do you sense God inviting you to take in the next 6 months that scares you?
2. When is a time in the past that you radically trusted in God to take care of you?
3. How might you need to radically trust God in your current season of life?
4. How do we cultivate a spirit of trust within our community that allows us to see God as the only true God who has no limit to his power?
5. How does this story challenge your notions of who God is and what He can do?

Closing

Take time to pray for one another that we would recognize the ways that we have narrowed what we think God is able and willing to do in the world. Also pray that once we recognize this way of thinking that we would change it. That the story of Elijah would remind us that our God is without limitation; there is no boundary he cannot cross.

Reminder: We are called to live in such a way that those around us recognize that we are patterning our lives after someone who is different. When we choose the world over our compassionate God we are on a path that leads us nowhere good. Even then, our God chooses to pursue us with love and call us back to relationship with him.