

Lessons from the Roller Coaster

Part 2

I Kings 19

Robert Morris ---- July 28, 2024

Welcome—good morning, Grace. Glad you're here. I'm excited about our time in the Word today. Sorry to kill all that fun we were having.

One of the prevailing themes around my house—and it has been for the last couple of years—is this thought: *Robert, when are you going to learn that you're over forty now?* Most of the time this comes from my wife, who (if I put positive moments on that) wants me to live a long life and to be relatively safe, or maybe she just wants to hear me complain a lot less when I'm sore all the time. Whatever it is, we're still working it out. Whatever it is, I'm still trying to use this body the Lord's given me. I still love doing all that I can, playing athletics, all that kind of stuff. And in my head, here's the problem. I'm still the young, spry, quasi-athletic guy from about fifteen to twenty years ago. And if you fact check that, that's not the case anymore. Yeah. I know there's coming a day when I'm going to break myself doing something rather mundane like sneezing too hard or stepping out of the shower or sleeping with my left leg two inches this way instead of this way or changing a pillowcase. And so, while I have it, I'm trying to kind of use it.

Now I do think I've calmed some and mellowed some over the years. But there are times when my lizard brain takes over. And one of those happened a couple of years ago. You see, I still resonate with the words of the late Toby Keith: "I'm not as good as I once was, but I'm as good once as I ever was ..." Right? And so, two or three years ago I was playing slow-pitch softball with some buddies of mine, and I'm in the outfield and there is a line drive hit to the gap, and I take off. I mean, I've got a good jump on this ball. And in those next few seconds, here's what happened. First, no rational thought happened—none whatsoever. There was nothing on the line in this game, only maybe some pride, maybe a cheap t-shirt that said we were league champions. I remember in this specific game—I don't even know that we were that close so that there was a play that just had to be made so that we could win the game. There was no thought given to my age or my station in life. I just took off.

And the theme from *Chariots of Fire* is playing in my head, and I am running in slow motion after this thing, and I am going to get there. I sold out, friends. There were no half-measures. I dove as hard and as far and as horizontal as I possibly could to try and catch this ball.

And that's the last time I remember diving for a catch. Here's what happened. I was moving so fast—and another fact you may know is that the ground doesn't move. I found that out—the whole ground thing. There are only a few geothermal issues that cause it to move every now and then. And my body bounced off the ground so hard, and the ground was so unforgiving.

Now let it be known, I caught the ball. No, no, no ... did you guys think I was really going to share a story where I didn't catch the ball? Come on.

I caught the ball, but I paid for it for a week and a half. In my attempt to channel some bygone era of sports glory, I jarred myself so hard that, although I didn't realize it in the moment, I hit the ground with such great force and such great violence that I gave myself and my neck a pretty significant case of whiplash. And I was sore for a solid week and a half.

If you've never experienced whiplash, it's this phenomenon where your body is going one direction and then your head and neck go in completely another direction.

Many of you have experienced this. If you have, it's been in a rear-end vehicle collision where you are jarred significantly. Now, you may not have experienced what whiplash feels like in your physical life. But I would venture to say that many of us have experienced what I'll call today "spiritual whiplash." Everything is going well, you and the Lord are in a good spot, and then something happens. You're moving in one direction, and then all of a sudden, out of the blue, something abruptly and violently sends you into another direction. And it leaves you hurting.

Today in our continuation of Elijah's roller coaster ride of faith, he has this same phenomenon of spiritual whiplash. It happens to Elijah. He's headed one direction, things are going really well, and then, all of a sudden, they are NOT going well. And it's going to leave him hurting. And it's going to leave him wondering what just happened. And we find this great prophet of God who we met in chapter 18 not acting like the same guy that he was in chapter 18.

Last week we introduced this concept of the spiritual roller coaster that we will ride when Elijah goes on this ride. And he experiences the highest of highs. And today, we're going to see him at the very bottom, the lowest of lows. And there are lessons for you and me in both places. There are lessons from the roller coaster that we need to learn. Because this journey of walking

with God, this life with Christ, becoming like Him in all of life, has its significant ups and downs. And if we aren't ready for them, we may relegate ourselves to a safer, more pedestrian, and ultimately, not-as-thrilling life with God.

And so, here's what I'm hoping we see today. One, I do want to take a brief moment to try and figure out how Elijah experienced this whiplash. How did he end up in the ditch so far, so fast, and so quickly? I want to try and understand how he ended up there. But more than that, I desperately want you this morning, my church family, to see how the God of the universe interacts with a broken man who's at his lowest possible moment; the moment when he's hurt and in despair and discouraged. Because these down swings, these downsides of the roller coaster, come for you and me as well.

So, if you have your Bibles and you want to follow along, we're going to be in the Book of 1 Kings, and we're going to be in chapter 19 this morning. Just a quick reminder to help remind us where we are in the story—last week we talked about how Elijah has just faced down 450 prophets of the false god Baal. And he's seen God perform a miracle. God has vindicated himself as the one true God of Israel. And Elijah got to play a significant part in that. Because of his courage and his concern for people, God allowed him to be a part of something incredible in his generation. And it hadn't rained in three years, and now there's a thundercloud coming, and there's a storm moving in for this parched and weary land. And because the Bible says at the very end of chapter 18 that the hand of the Lord is on Elijah, he has now just miraculously run ahead of a chariot to the capital of Jezreel, because he wants to be in the capital city when news hits the palace. He is at the spiritual mountain top, friends.

But we're going to see in chapter 19 that the scene shifts. And it shifts rather ominously and rather quickly, just like when you're riding that roller coaster, and the first cart goes over the edge, and you know that something is about to happen. And all it's going to take is one sentence from one person, and the fall begins.

We see in verse 1 that it says this: *“Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.”* The implication is that Ahab is now telling the real boss what happened. *And the real boss would like to have a word with you, Elijah.* Jezebel—her name literally means “Where is my prince, Baal?” She's invested in this thing. And throughout the Book of 1 Kings, you'll see that she is the epitome of evil. There's a reason, even if you're not that familiar with the Bible, that you know this name. In the words of the great poet

Taylor Swift, “She’s a nightmare dressed as a daydream.” (Sorry, I had to sneak that one in there. That was the price my daughter wanted paid for using her as an illustration last week. Sorry. I got it—challenge accepted.) Jezebel says, *I’m a nightmare, and I’m coming for you, Elijah*. Verse 2: “Then, Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, ‘So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.’” *Twenty-four hours, Elijah ... the clock starts now. I’m coming for you*. When Elijah gets this message, the Bible says in verse 3, “Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life.” He was afraid, and he ran for his life.

So, what’s happening here? Why this spiritual whiplash? Why is the guy who just faced down 450 prophets of Baal on their turf, who’s seen a miraculous move of God that is a no-doubt, powerful demonstration of God’s power, afraid now and running for his life?

If you remember, at the end of chapter 18, Elijah is running to the capital city. And this only makes sense, the marked man that he is, because he expects something to happen in this moment. In the late Tim Keller’s message on this topic, he says that Elijah probably expects one of two things to happen. Either Ahab and Jezebel are going to repent ... they have seen a literal, undeniable work of God ... surely now they’re going to come to their senses. Or, two, he expects the people to revolt and cast out this wicked leadership team. *Our leaders have led us astray, it’s time for new leaders*. In many ways, he’s expecting a national revival. He’s hoping, I think, for this great culmination of his life’s spiritual work. And instead, he’s greeted with the feeling that nothing has really changed.

And so, here comes the whiplash. Elijah is going this one direction ... *I thought it was headed this way, I had all these hopes, I had all these dreams, I had all these expectations, and nothing has changed. Did any of this really matter?* He had done everything he possibly could do, and Jezebel is still in charge, and she still wants him dead. So, there’s this deep and profound disappointment that comes to Elijah. And for some reason, I think it just hits differently this time.

And so, he runs from the far north in Jezreel to the southern border of Israel and Beersheba. He runs for his life.

And I do think it’s okay at this point for us to ask how this happened. *Elijah, man, you were our hero. We don’t like seeing our heroes like this.*

Because the rest of chapter 19, you're going to see Elijah as he is running in fear, full of self-doubt and depression, even having thoughts of suicide. And he's struggling throughout this chapter, friends. And he's struggling with this potent concoction of disappointment with God, broken expectations, bitterness, fatigue, and uncertainty about the future. And friends, that is a recipe for a descent to the bottom of the rollercoaster. And that's where Elijah goes.

He struggles with this disappointment with God. I can put myself in Elijah's shoes. He must be thinking, *I did everything. I followed the formula, God. I did all the things, and here it is again, and it doesn't matter. This isn't what I signed up for.* I can put myself in Elijah's shoes. He's getting toward the end of his life, maybe, he's getting older. He's had a lifetime of serving the Lord. Maybe he thought this Mt. Carmel thing was it, that it was the last event. *It should be all easy from here.* And he's met with the realization that it's NOT going to be easy from here. And so, he says, *I think I'd rather just check out, Lord. Would you please kill me so that Jezebel doesn't get to?*

Friends, there is no craftier trick of the enemy, in my estimation, than the kind of deep discouragement and despair and despondency that can sneak in on us at the tail end of a season of success or spiritual vitality. There's a sense in which there is a particular kind of discouragement and despair that is crushing because it's on the heels of a miracle. It's on the heels of an answered prayer. It's on the heels of a dream coming true. And we get this spiritual whiplash effect.

So, I don't know where you find yourself today. I don't know if you're feeling like you're on top of the mountain right now, or if you're the lowest you've ever been. Most of us are probably somewhere in between. But we're also smart enough to know that we'll be there again. And these dips, these bottoms of the roller coaster, come for us in life. And they come in all kinds of shapes and sizes. Sometimes it's the death of someone close to us. Sometimes it's a relationship that didn't work out. Sometimes it's some kind of personal attack. Maybe it's a job that was providing you too much safety and security. You put too much hope into it, and it's yanked out from underneath you. Maybe your spouse experiences something and all of a sudden you're a caregiver long before you thought you were going to be caregiver. There's a diagnosis from the doctor's office. And those aren't even the ones that we do to ourselves. Many times, we put ourselves at the bottom of the roller coaster because of our own actions. Our own foolish decisions bring us to a point where these metaphorical bills are due, or our own refusal to

confront our flaws and our character and our brokenness has left us all alone, pushing people away. It could be all those things. But Elijah finds the bottom of the roller coaster. And if it can happen to Elijah, we know it can happen to us.

And so, the big idea today, and where I want us to spend the rest of our time this morning ... I do want to see ... I do know how Elijah got to this point. I mean, I resonate with him. I've lived long enough to understand how a servant of God could get to this point where they want to give up and be done.

But as I read this chapter for our time together, as I prepared, there's just one big theme that jumps off the page to me. And it isn't about Elijah. It's about how God responds to those who are at the bottom. It doesn't matter whether you're in a dip of your own making, or a dip of the circumstances of the broken world we live in. Regardless of how you find yourself there, I want you, my church family, today, to pay attention. Pay very close attention to how God interacts with a man at the bottom. I want you to see a picture of this kind of God.

And the overarching theme you're going to see is that God is patient and kind with Elijah in this moment. He does not say, "Didn't I show you enough already?" There's no cynical accusation from God. There are no folded arms. "Wasn't that whole fire-from-the-sky thing enough for you, Elijah, to sustain you in your spiritual health?"

Instead, what you'll see is this tender loving-kindness of God. God demonstrates what the Bible says to be true about Him in Psalm 145 where it says, "[The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.](#)"

So, as I read this chapter, I was struck by four things that God does in this lowest-of-the-low moments with Elijah. And I believe they're going to provide a model for you and me of what we need to be on the lookout for when we find ourselves in those bottoms of our lives; how we might need to respond if we're going to find ourselves there, either now or sometime in the future. And there are these lessons we can learn, because sometimes you can only learn them from the bottom.

So, here's what we'll see—four things.

Lesson #1: God Restores Him Physically

The first: at the dip of the roller coaster, God restores him physically. That's the first thing we see. God restores him physically. After about a hundred or so miles on the run for his

life, he's weary and worn out from years and years of serving the Lord—physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted. And it says in verse 5 of chapter 19, “[And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, ‘Arise and eat.’ And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the lord came again a second time and touched him and said, ‘Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.’”](#)”

I love it that God says, *Hey, I'm going to send an angel of the Lord to provide food and sleep for you.* I love the idea that in his lowest moments crashing all around him, the Lord in His essence says, *Hey, before we get to this other stuff, you may need to take a nap and eat a meal. You're going to need to be physically prepared for what's coming next. And you're not ready for this journey yet.*

I don't know if you remember those great Snickers commercials from a number of years ago. Here's one of my favorites.

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Snickers commercial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVXiZoQsvEs>

Aretha Franklin in back seat: Can we turn the AC up? I'm dying back here.

Guy in passenger seat: It's on, can't you feel it?

Aretha: [*Hits passenger seat guy in the head*] Can you feel that?

Guy in back seat: Oh, eat a Snickers. Please? [*offers Aretha a Snickers bar*]

Aretha: Why?

Guy in back seat: Jeff, every time you get hungry you turn into a diva. Just eat it so we can all coexist ...

Aretha: Oh, so I turn into a diva.

Guy in back seat: Umm hmmm.

Guy in passenger seat: Get it in your system, cranky pants.

Aretha: Okay. [*eats Snickers*]

Guy in passenger seat: Thank you.

Guy in back seat: Better?

Jeff: [*Aretha has become Jeff*] Better.

Guy in front seat, who has changed to Liza Minelli: Will you get your knees out of the back of my seat?

Guy in back seat: Oh ho!

Voiceover: You're not you when you're hungry. Snickers satisfies.

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You're acting like a diva. There's a reason we laugh at this stuff, right? The tag line is great: You are not yourself when you're hungry. There's a reason this resonates with us. There's a reason we've invented this word in our modern lexicon. We call it "hangry." We're fragile creatures with fragile bodies, and even though God has created us to be able to do some awesome things physically, you'll reach your limit if you ignore your physical condition.

Application

So, down in the bottom of the roller coaster, sometimes God's solution for you, the best gift He gives you, is you need to eat, you need to sleep, you need to restore yourself physically, so that you might be able to better recognize and understand what's happening around you. Because down at the bottom you don't always see clearly what's happening. You don't see things as clearly as you might need to see them.

I love that God provides food and sleep and protection for Elijah in this moment. His physical condition needed attention first.

So, as I thought about how I might apply this finding ... if you're in the dip, if you're in despair, if you're at the bottom of the roller coaster, you may need to ask yourself, *Is there some way I need to take care of my physical condition right now?* Maybe you're running hot, and the dashboard lights of life are going off right now. You may be able to run like that for a while. You may be able to run like that longer than the average person. But you can't run like that forever. The lights are going off for a reason. And you may need to slow down and take a nap, have a good meal, maybe talk to your physician. Restore yourself physically.

The godliest thing you might need to do in a season of deep despair and discouragement, or spiritual hurt, is to just rest. I know that for me, most of my sleeplessness is caused by anxiety. It's caused by my desire to control things that I cannot control. And many times, I'll tax my body

and stress it in unnatural ways. And [Psalm 127](#) says, “... He gives His beloved sleep.” And sleep is God’s gift to us. Because in that moment once a day—hopefully, at least once a day—we get to cease striving and know that He’s God. And it’s this great trust exercise. Because you have to trust to sleep. God, I trust that You can handle all of this while I rest. [D. A. Carson](#) put it this way: “... perhaps the godliest thing you can do in the universe is get a good night’s sleep.”

A couple of weeks ago Kevin gave a great message on Sabbath, learning to rest and trust in God, to slow down when we need to slow down.

Lesson #2: God Takes Him to the Past

So, we see that the first thing that God does for Elijah in his bottom-of-the-pit moment is that He restores him physically. The next thing we see is that God takes him to the past. God takes him back to the past.

Now, with this restored physical condition, he leads him to a new place on this great journey. He goes back to the past. It says in verse 8, “[And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.](#)”

This mountain is the place where God first instituted His covenant with the people of Israel. And the author is trying to make this parallel—it’s unmistakable—that Elijah and Moses are walking similar paths. And He takes him back to the same place, and many scholars believe it may have been the same cave or the same cleft of the rock that Moses round himself in.

He takes him back to the place of spiritual victory. He takes him back to this sacred place of God’s self-disclosure. And it’s there that He begins a conversation with Elijah. And it starts with this question: “[Elijah, what are you doing here?](#)” *What are you doing here?*

And Elijah responds, *These people haven’t learned anything, God. It’s their fault.* “[He said, ‘I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I am the only one left, and now they’re trying to kill me too.’](#)” There are a lot of ‘I’s in there.

Instead of being the man from chapter 18 who is concerned for his people, Elijah is, all of a sudden, using first-person pronouns a lot. He’s down in the valley. He’s down in a dip. All he can see is, *Oh, man, I’m the only one left. I’m the only one serving you, Lord.*

I think God takes him back to this place because He wants to remind him, *No, I'm still in charge of this covenant. I'm still the one who made those promises. And I'm keeping my promises.*

And as I thought about how to apply this idea that God takes him back to the past, maybe if you're in a dip, if you're in the bottom of the roller coaster, and you're discouraged and in despair, you may need to do a little bit of remembering. Maybe you need to go back and get a history lesson. You may need to remind yourself of God's faithfulness to you over your lifetime, over the last few years. See, our tendency when we're at the bottom of the roller coaster is to have a what-have-you-done-for-me-lately kind of mentality. And God takes Elijah on a little bit of a history lesson.

The command to remember or to not forget is plastered all over the Bible. And it's because our ability to remember, our ability to recount the faithfulness of God, is often the fuel we need for future obedience towards Him. And so, He takes him back to an anchor in his history.

Application

One of the best things you might be able to do as a disciple of Jesus, to apply this idea, is that you've got to figure out some way to catalog God's goodness to you. There are plenty of ways you could do that. We don't have time for all the ideas, but you've got to fill your life with the reminders of God's faithfulness and goodness to you. Because you're going to need them when you're at the bottom.

Lesson #3: God Speaks to Him Gently

So, Elijah, in this dip of the roller coaster, is experiencing this great spiritual whiplash moment. God takes him back to the same place he took Moses and reminds him of His covenant promises. And then, God speaks to him gently.

Elijah goes out of the cave, and it says there's a great earthquake and a great fire and a great wind. But in verses 12 and 13, it says this: "[And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.](#)" Some of your translations there might say "a gentle whisper." "And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak

and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’”

How’d you get here? How’d you end up at the bottom of the rollercoaster, Elijah?

And I think God gives Elijah exactly what he needs. He’s already seen God’s power. It’s not that long ago that he saw fire fall from heaven. But in this moment, He comes to him in a gentle whisper. God speaks gently to Elijah. Of all the ways that God could have interacted with Elijah in that moment, He does not use angry dad voice or exasperated mom voice. He comes in and speaks to him gently and says, *Hey, what are you doing here, Elijah? What’s going on?*

This verse always reminds me of the hymn I sang as a young boy, “Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling ...” Softly and tenderly ...

Application

Have you found yourself in the pit lately in one of those seasons of discouragement? Maybe the application for us is, if we’re going to listen to the gentle whisper, if we’re going to hear that, we’re going to have to quiet the noise somehow. We’re going to have to quiet the noise of life. God can break through in power and overcome the noise of our life—we have stories like that. But many times, He speaks to us in that still, small voice, the gentle whisper, when we slow down, and we quiet ourselves and we find time to listen.

And friends, it’s hard to be silent sometimes. It’s hard to be quiet. And one of the reasons it’s hard is because there are many times when there’s nothing, just silence, we’re met with the internal monologues that we have in our head, the soundtracks of our lives that don’t help us at all.

I remember a particular season in my own life when I spent almost six months to a year not being able to sleep without the TV or the radio on. I was in such despair and so emotionally exhausted, that even though I was physically and emotionally exhausted, I could not sleep unless I could distract myself from what was going on in my heart and my life and the struggles that I was in. But often times I wonder, *Hey, what did I miss in that six months to a year? How many gentle whispers did I miss because I could not quiet the noise?*

And our world does not do us any favors, dear friends. We’ve got a four-inch thing in our pocket to keep us distracted as long as we want to keep distracted. And we’ve got headphones

and we've got podcasts and we've got music, and we've got just the noise of life. You can't hear the gentle whisper if you don't quiet the noise sometimes.

Application

So, the application for you today may be to find out how you can quiet the noise, to find moments in your life when you can just turn it all off and just listen. He's there, speaking gently to us, especially in the pit of discouragement.

Lesson #4: God reminds him that he's not alone and gives him a new assignment

So, we see that the Lord restores him physically, gives him a history lesson, tells him that he needs to remember some things. He speaks to him gently. And the last thing we see in this chapter for Elijah is He reminds him that he's not alone, and He gives him a new assignment.

The question that comes back in this gentle whisper is the same one, right? *What are you doing here? What are you doing here, Elijah?* And Elijah comes back with the same old response: *I've been doing my part, God. It's these people. They're the problem. And I'm the only one left, and now they want to kill me too.*

And in the Lord's final response in verses 15 through 18, there are two big things he says. *First, You are not alone, Elijah. And second, I still have things left for you to do.*

It's in this last part of the conversation that God says to Elijah, *Elijah, I still have 7,000 people who have never bent the knee to Baal. You are not alone, friend. You are not by yourself. You got a little myopic on me down in the pit of despair. No, you're not alone.*

Application

I think one of the answers to this dip of discouragement, one of the things you might be able to apply, one of the things that I've just committed to in my life, is to be part of a local church. I've committed to being part of a church. One of the huge benefits, I think, of a church, is that every seven days, in this every seven-day rhythm, I show up and I get the reminder that it's not just me. I'm not alone. It's not just me. When I hear you praising God, either behind me or in front of me, and when I talk to many of you in the lobby and I hear about your top-of-the-

mountain moments and your bottom-of-the-roller-coaster moments, I am reminded that I am not alone. I have people.

There's a loneliness epidemic in our world. Wise social scientists are pointing to this now. And I think part of this answer is the faith family. We're just prone to loneliness more and more and more and are sinking further and further and further in on ourselves. But I know that when I walk through those doors each and every Sunday, I will get the reminder that there are still hundreds and hundreds of you who have not bent the knee. I'll get the reminder that there are still thousands who are still serving the Lord alongside me. I am not alone.

And God reminds Elijah, *You are not alone, Elijah*. And then He gives him a fresh vision for what needs to be done. He says, *I still have work for you, Elijah. There are still things that need to be done*. And so, you'll see, He says, *I need you to appoint a new king. I've got your successor lined up and I need you to go talk to him. I have things for you. Let's get you out of this valley. I'm not done with you yet, Elijah. You still have purpose*.

I love that God's last words at the bottom of Elijah's roller coaster are these: *You aren't alone, and you still have purpose*.

Friends, what a picture of God that we get in these lessons from the roller coaster. Because whether you're there now or you'll be there soon or you've been there before, it is never fun at the bottom of the roller coaster. If you've experienced the kind of spiritual whiplash that's left you hurting, friends, I want you to understand what's happening in chapter 19 here. Elijah goes to the depths of despair. He's wondering if it's all worth it. And he is NOT met by a god with folded arms saying, *You should have known better*, a god with folded arms saying, *Haven't I done enough?* He's NOT met by a god who says, *Hey, why are you so weak in this moment?* Instead, he's met by a God who is gracious and patient, a God who does these four things, who restores him physically, gives him a history lesson, speaks gently to him, and then tells him, *Hey, you're not alone. I still have work for us, so why don't we keep doing some scary stuff together?*

Is this the God that you imagine at the bottom of the roller coaster? Or are many of still holding on to this harsh image of God, who looks down on those at the bottom of the roller coaster and says, *Hey, why can't you get yourself out of it?*

People of Grace, I want you to see this God. I want you to fall in love with the God of 1 Kings 19—the God who is patient, kind, generous, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

And I want you to be on the lookout the next time you're in a moment when you're at the bottom of the roller coaster or you're walking alongside somebody who's at the bottom of the roller coaster. I want you to remember these four things. I want you to remember to be on the lookout for a God who will provide for you physically, a God who wants to remind you of His past faithfulness to you, a God who will speak gently to you, and when He speaks gently to you, He will remind you that you're not alone, that you still have work to do. *Let's get you out of this dip.*

I love that in verse 19, to Elijah's credit, it says this: "[So Elijah went up from there ...](#)" How could you not with a God like that?

The Lord is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. I want you to see His faithfulness, on Mt. Carmel and in the depths of despair.

Friends, this spiritual roller coaster ride we're going to go on is going to have its ups and downs. And it's real, and many times it's going to be thrilling and joyful. And there are other times when it's going to be terrifying and difficult. And we're going to need to be ready for it.

You'll want to go on this ride. It will not be easy, but with this kind of God in the seat next to you, I keep saying, I keep finding myself compelled to say, *Let's go for another ride. I'm ready.*

Let me pray for us this morning.

O Father in heaven, we come to You this morning, God, and I am grateful for Your Word, and I am especially grateful for this passage of scripture that demonstrates so clearly that You are a God who is near to the broken-hearted. You are near to those who find themselves at the bottom of the roller coaster. You are near to those who are hurting from the spiritual whiplash that can be so common to our human condition on this earth, God. You are near to those who don't feel like they know which way is up and can't make sense of what's going on.

God, I want to thank You for the way You treated Elijah. I want to thank You for the way You've treated me and how You've reminded me, how You've provided for me physically and You've reminded me of Your goodness. You have spoken gently to me, God, and You've reminded me so often that I'm alone and I still have purpose.

God, would You satisfy our hearts this morning, and would You help us see Your goodness, the goodness of our God? And we ask these things in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

