SEA CHANGE CHURCH

THE CURRENT

Elijah: From Drought to Downpour · S2E1

Cave Time

A 7-Day Study

"Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 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.' Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, 'It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.' 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.' 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."

1 Kings 19:1–8 ESV

Pastor Adam Stadtmiller · August 23, 2026

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

Psalm 46:10

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each week, The Current walks through a piece of Sunday's passage: a short verse study, encouragement, journal questions, and a daily prayer.

Take one day at a time. There's no need to rush.

DAY 1

Fear After the Fire

> **1 KINGS 19:1-3 ESV**
>
> *"Then he was afraid, and he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there."*

VERSE STUDY

Elijah had just watched fire fall from heaven. He had stood in front of hundreds of prophets of Baal, called down God's power in front of the whole nation, and won. Then Jezebel sent one messenger with one sentence, a threat on his life by the next day, and the man who had not flinched on Mount Carmel got up and ran. Pastor Adam pointed out that the fear did not wait for a second miracle before it moved in.

It is easy to assume a mountaintop win should make the next threat easier to face. Elijah's story says otherwise. Great spiritual highs do not automatically build immunity to fear, exhaustion, or discouragement. Sometimes the opposite is true: a lot of great failure happens right after great success, once the adrenaline of the win wears off and the body and soul realize how much they just gave.

Notice what Elijah did with his fear. He did not stand and fight Jezebel. He ran across a border, out of Israel's territory and into Judah, and left his servant behind in Beersheba before going even further alone into the wilderness. He was looking for a safe place, somewhere Jezebel's reach could not follow, even if he could not yet see where that place would lead.

If you have ever wondered how someone who just experienced a clear win from God could turn around and be gripped by fear days or even hours later, this is that story. It is in the Bible on purpose.

TAKE HEART

If fear has caught up with you right after a season of real breakthrough, you are not the first person this has happened to, and you are in good company. Elijah's fear did not disqualify him. It was simply the next honest thing that needed to be brought to God.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Has fear or discouragement ever shown up for you right after a season of victory or answered prayer? What did that feel like?
2. When you are afraid, is your first instinct to run toward God or away from Him? What might it look like to run toward Him instead?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, You saw Elijah's fear the moment it hit him, and You see mine too. I don't always understand why fear shows up right after You have clearly moved in my life, but I know it doesn't surprise You. Help me bring my fear to You honestly instead of running from it or hiding it. Remind me that a moment of fear does not erase everything You have already done. Meet me in this place, however far I have run. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Name one fear you are currently carrying. Write it down as a short prayer, telling God exactly what you are afraid of.

NOTES

DAY 2

Under the Broom Tree

> **1 KINGS 19:4 ESV**
>
> *"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, 'It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.'"*

VERSE STUDY

Elijah did not stop at Beersheba. He went a full day's journey further into the wilderness, alone, until he finally sat down under a broom tree, a scrubby desert shrub that barely offers shade. There, the man who had just called fire down from heaven asked God to let him die. Pastor Adam was direct about what this is: Elijah had suicidal ideation. This is how far the fear and exhaustion had taken him.

It can be jarring to see this kind of despair sitting right next to one of the greatest miracles in the Old Testament. But that is exactly the point Scripture is making. Spiritual highs do not make anyone immune to burnout, and burnout can hit hardest right after the biggest output. Elijah had just given everything he had at Carmel. Under the broom tree, there was nothing left to give.

Elijah's prayer is honest in a way many of us are taught to avoid in church. He did not pretend to be fine. He told God exactly where he was, even the darkest part of it. And God did not scold him for it. What comes next in this story is not correction. It is care.

If you have ever felt like Elijah under that tree, worn out past the point of pretending, this passage is not asking you to perform strength you don't have. It is showing you a prophet who told God the truth and was met there.

TAKE HEART

You do not have to earn your way out of exhaustion by pretending it isn't there. Elijah's honesty under the broom tree did not push God away. It was the beginning of God meeting him exactly where he was.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you were honest with God about how worn out or discouraged you actually were?
2. What would it look like this week to tell God the truth about where you are, instead of the version you think you're supposed to say?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, some days I feel more like Elijah under the broom tree than like a person who has seen You move. I don't always want to admit how tired or discouraged I am, even to You. Thank You that You are not waiting for me to clean myself up before You will listen. Meet me in my honest, unfiltered exhaustion the way You met Elijah in his. Give me the courage to tell You the truth today. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Find a quiet five minutes today and tell God, out loud or in writing, exactly how tired or discouraged you actually are. No editing.

NOTES

DAY 3

Arise and Eat

> **1 KINGS 19:5-8 ESV**
> *"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."*

VERSE STUDY

Here is what Pastor Adam highlighted as one of the best parts of this whole story: instead of chastising Elijah for running in fear, God sent an angel to touch him. Not a rebuke. Not a lecture about wasted potential after Mount Carmel. Just gentle, physical care: wake up, eat, rest, and when he wakes again, eat a second time.

It would have been easy for this story to go a different way, with God asking Elijah why he ran when he had just seen fire fall from the sky. Instead, God met Elijah's failure with grace before a single word of correction. This lines up with what Paul later writes in Romans: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God does not wait for the cleaned up version of us before He shows up.

It is worth noticing what God gave Elijah in that moment. Not a pep talk, not an assignment, just food and rest, twice over. Sometimes what we need most from God is not more instruction but simple, physical care for a body and soul that has been running on empty. Elijah ate the food God gave him instead of reaching for a distraction, and that food carried him forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

We often disqualify ourselves the moment we feel like we have failed, assuming God has stepped back until we get it together. This passage says the opposite. God sent an angel to touch a prophet who had just asked to die. Grace showed up before the comeback did.

TAKE HEART

Whatever you think your failure or fear has cost you with God, this passage says otherwise. God's first response to Elijah's collapse was not correction, it was care. He is just as willing to meet you where you are.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where in your life have you assumed God is waiting for you to fix yourself before He'll draw near?
2. What would it look like to receive God's care right now, in whatever state you're actually in, instead of the state you wish you were in?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, thank You that You did not wait for Elijah to have it together before You sent an angel to care for him, and You are not waiting for me either. I confess I often act like I need to earn Your attention by fixing myself first. Teach me to receive Your grace before I've cleaned anything up. Give me the humility to accept rest and care from You instead of trying to push through in my own strength. Meet me the way You met Elijah, gently and without condition. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Do one simple thing today that is just physical care for yourself, sleep, a real meal, a walk, and receive it as something God cares about too.

NOTES

DAY 4

What's Poisoning Your Well

> **1 KINGS 17:2-4 ESV**
>
> *"And the word of the LORD came to him: 'Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.'"*

VERSE STUDY

Before the fear and the broom tree, God had already led Elijah into solitude once before, at the brook Cherith, where ravens fed him. Pastor Adam pointed out that this was not a punishment. God intentionally led Elijah away, into a hidden season of being cared for, long before the public showdown at Carmel ever happened. The fire came at the altar, but the furnace that shaped Elijah was found at Cherith.

Everybody is drinking from some brook. Everybody is being fed by something, whether it's relationships, work, a health routine, or a phone. Some of those things are genuinely good. But Pastor Adam asked a harder question: how much of what you're drinking from is actually poisoning the well? He described his own experiment of stepping away from headlines for a few days, then opening them again and feeling an actual dopamine rush, evidence of just how much that input had been shaping him without his notice.

This is not a call to disconnect from the world forever. It's an invitation to ask what you're regularly feeding on, and whether it's bringing life or quietly bringing toxicity. The Spirit wants to lead you into your own Cherith, a place set apart, the same way He led Elijah, so you can abide with Jesus the way John 14 describes: just sitting with Him, without needing to check anything else.

Where is your Cherith? Where is the brook you drink from, and where is the noise you need to walk away from in order to hear it clearly?

TAKE HEART

Whatever is currently occupying the space where solitude with God could be, you are allowed to set it down. God led Elijah away before the crisis, not just after it, and He wants to lead you the same way.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. What is genuinely poisoning the well you drink from right now, whether it's a habit, an app, or a pattern of thinking?
2. Where could your Cherith be this week, a specific time and place you could set aside to be fed by God instead?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, I want to know what I'm actually drinking from every day and whether it's bringing me life or slowly poisoning me. Lead me the way You led Elijah to Cherith, intentionally and with care, not as punishment but as provision. Help me notice the noise I've gotten used to and give me the courage to step away from it. Teach me to abide with You the way John 14 describes, simply sitting in Your presence without an agenda. Feed me from a clean well this week. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Identify one specific input, an app, a habit, a headline scroll, and take a 48 hour break from it, noticing what comes up in the silence.

NOTES

DAY 5

The Same Rhythm as Jesus

> **LUKE 5:15-16 ESV**
>
> *"But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray."*

VERSE STUDY

Jesus's ministry was growing. Crowds were gathering, people were being healed, and by every modern measure of success, He should have leaned further into the momentum. Instead, Luke tells us He withdrew to desolate places and prayed. Pastor Adam noted how different this is from how we usually think about ministry and influence today: Jesus was not chasing the crowd, and He regularly walked away from it.

This was not a one time retreat. Jesus practiced this rhythm regularly, the same rhythm God had already established for Elijah at Cherith. Withdrawal was not a sign of weakness or a lack of commitment to the mission. It was the source that made the mission sustainable. The furnace that shaped both Elijah and Jesus was found away from the crowd, not in the middle of it.

It is worth sitting with how counter to our instincts this is. When something is working, when people are responding, when the crowd is growing, the natural pull is to do more, produce more, show up more. Jesus shows a different way: withdraw more, precisely when the crowd is growing, because that's when the pull toward performance and away from the Father is strongest.

If your life or your ministry or your family has crowds of its own, deadlines, demands, people who need you, this passage is not asking you to abandon them. It's showing you that even Jesus needed desolate places and prayer to sustain what He was carrying.

TAKE HEART

You do not have to choose between being faithful to what God has called you to and stepping away to be with Him. Jesus modeled both, and the withdrawal is what made the calling sustainable.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the 'crowds' in your life right now, the demands and responsibilities that make it hardest to withdraw and pray?
2. What would it look like this week to follow Jesus's rhythm and withdraw to a desolate place, even briefly, before the crowd pulls you further in?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, Jesus, You had every reason to keep leaning into the crowd, and instead You regularly withdrew to desolate places to pray. Teach me that same rhythm. Help me see withdrawal not as neglecting what You've called me to, but as the very thing that sustains it. When the demands on my life grow loudest, remind me that is exactly when I need to step away and be with You. Give me the discipline to choose desolate places over constant availability. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Block off twenty minutes this week, phone away, with no agenda except being with God, the same rhythm Jesus practiced before the crowds grew.

NOTES

DAY 6

Be Still and Know

> **PSALM 46:10 ESV**
>
> *"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"*

VERSE STUDY

Pastor Adam pointed out that after Elijah's greatest public win, he stopped producing entirely. No one would have blamed him for going after another mountain the way he'd taken Mount Carmel. Instead, he ran and sat under a tree. It looked like failure. But Pastor Adam framed it a different way: spiritual activity is not the same as spiritual health. Elijah's stillness, even in collapse, was the beginning of his healing, not a detour from it.

It's easy to build an identity out of output, what you produce, how much you get done, how many people you serve or reach. Pastor Adam was honest about how tempting this is even in ministry, where it's easy to measure success by numbers rather than by whether people are actually being formed to look more like Jesus. Psalm 46:10 pushes against that entirely. It doesn't say be productive and know that I am God. It says be still.

There's a theological weight to this stillness that goes beyond rest. Words about God always have a limit, you can only understand as much as language can carry. But silence has no such limit. Sitting still before God is the one place where knowing Him is not capped by what can be explained or produced. That's why the enemy's main strategy is distraction, keeping you moving, engaged, entertained, anything but still.

Notice what the verse promises after the stillness: 'I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.' The impact was never meant to come from constant motion. It comes from a life that has actually stopped long enough to know God first.

TAKE HEART

Your worth was never meant to rest on your output. The same God who told a burned out prophet to be still is inviting you to the same rest, and He is still the one who gets the glory in the end.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where in your life have you measured your worth by what you produce rather than by who you're becoming?
2. What does it look like, practically, for you to 'be still' this week rather than just adding one more spiritual activity to your schedule?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, I confess how easily I measure my worth by what I get done instead of by simply knowing You. Teach me that spiritual activity is not the same as spiritual health, and that stillness before You is not wasted time. Help me trust that You are the one who is exalted, not my output or my busyness. Give me the courage to stop producing long enough to actually be still and know that You are God. Settle my soul in Your presence today. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Set a timer for ten minutes today, sit still with no task, no phone, no agenda, and simply let the phrase 'be still and know that I am God' repeat in your mind.

NOTES

DAY 7

Find Your Cave

> **1 KINGS 19:8 ESV**
>
> *"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."*

VERSE STUDY

Elijah's story doesn't end at the broom tree. Strengthened by what God provided, he walked forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God, the very place Moses had met with God generations earlier. What began as a desperate flight from Jezebel became a journey back to the source. Pastor Adam's challenge from this whole passage comes down to one simple, practical instruction: find your cave.

This week's takeaway is deliberately small and doable. Thirty minutes, alone, no phone, no music, no podcast, no agenda. Not a retreat, not a formula, just a set apart space to be still and know that God is God. Pastor Adam was honest that even he had recently reset his own prayer life down to three minutes a day, at the direction of a spiritual director, because performance had crept into something that was supposed to be about presence.

It's worth naming what tends to surface in that kind of silence. Distractions exist because we don't want to face what's difficult, and thirty minutes without noise will likely bring some of that to the surface. That's not a sign the exercise failed. It's the beginning of the same honesty Elijah practiced under the broom tree, brought into the light instead of run from.

Before Elijah was a man of fire, he was a man of solitude. Season one of this series ended with fire falling on Mount Carmel. Season two begins in silence, at a cave, with a God who meets people in hidden places before He ever sends them back out.

TAKE HEART

You don't need a mountain top experience to meet with God this week. You need a cave, thirty minutes, and the willingness to be still. That's where Elijah was formed, and it's where you will be formed too.

JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Where could your literal 'cave' be this week, a specific place and time for thirty minutes alone with God?
2. What do you hope God would form in you if solitude and silence became a regular rhythm in your life, not just a one time exercise?

DAILY PRAYER

Before you pray, spend a few quiet minutes with today's verse: read it slowly once more, or simply sit in silence and let it settle. Then, when you're ready, pray this over your day:

Lord, before Elijah was a man of fire, he was a man of solitude, and I want that to be true of me too. Thank You for the strength You provide when I finally stop running and sit still with You. Show me where my cave is this week, a real place and a real thirty minutes set apart for You alone. Meet me there the way You met Elijah, with grace instead of correction and provision instead of demand. Form me in the hidden place before You send me back out. Amen.

ACTION CHALLENGE

Schedule thirty minutes this week, phone off, no music, no podcast, no agenda, and go find your cave.

NOTES

MEMORY VERSE

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Psalm 46:10

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