



Sermon Outline: The Jesus Way Through Elijah

Psalm 32:1-11

I. Introduction: The Crisis of Story

- The Israelites have *“traded the living God for cultural convenience... replaced covenant with consumerism... exchanged truth for spectacle.”*
- To follow Jesus, we must stand in God’s true story—even when the world stands in another.

Questions: What “story” do I find myself living in most days—God’s or the world’s?

Where has convenience or performance shaped my faith more than covenant?

Application

- Practice a daily pause to ask: *“Whose story is shaping my decisions right now?”*

II. The Crisis: Competing Stories

- The greatest danger to faith is **idolatry**, not atheism.
- Idolatry = living by a story that is not God’s.
- Israel’s Baal-story: productivity, control, rain on demand, shortcuts.
- *“Baal promised results. Yahweh promised relationship.”*
- According to a study from Lifeway Research, more than half of U.S. Protestant pastors believe comfort (67%), control or security (56%), money (55%) and approval (51%) are idols that have significant influence on their congregations.

Questions: Where do I seek “results” instead of relationship with God?

What shortcuts tempt me in my spiritual life?

Application: Identify one “Baal-story” in your life (success, productivity, fear, scarcity).

Replace it with one Jesus-story practice (grace, presence, surrender).

III. Elijah: The Prophet Who Stands in Reality

1. Elijah Stands Before God, Not Culture

- Elijah’s orientation: *“As the LORD lives, before whom I stand.” “He begins by locating himself in the right story.” (1 Kings 17:1)*
- Courage is born from presence, not performance.

Questions: Whose presence shapes me—God’s, culture’s, or people’s expectations?

What practices help me stand “before God” daily?

Application: Begin prayer by acknowledging God’s presence: **“Lord, I stand before You.”**

2. Elijah Refuses the Illusion of Control

- Elijah announces drought to expose Baal’s lie.
- *“God often dismantles our illusions so we can return to reality.”*

Questions: Where am I clinging to control?

Application: Release one area of control this week through prayer or conversation.

Practice surrender by praying: **“Lord, I trust Your timing more than my techniques.”**

3. Elijah Learns Dependence in Hidden Places

- Before Carmel, Elijah is formed at Cherith.
- *“The Jesus Way is slow, hidden, and deeply relational.”*

Questions: What “hidden places” is God using to form me right now?

Application: Choose one spiritual discipline to practice quietly (journaling, silence, Scripture meditation). Embrace obscurity: serve in one unseen way this week.

4. Elijah Confronts Falsehood with Holy Courage

- On Carmel, Elijah refuses theatrics. *“He simply prays.”*
- God does not need performance—He needs obedience.

Questions: What does obedience look like in my current season?

Application: Replace one “performance” habit (trying to impress, overexplaining, striving) with simple obedience. Pray Elijah’s prayer: **“Lord, let it be known that You are God.”**

IV. The Jesus Way Through Elijah

Elijah foreshadows Jesus: confronts false stories/exposes illusions/refuses shortcuts/stands in the Father’s presence/calls people back to reality/Elijah is a prophet of **truthful presence**, not spectacle.

Questions: How does Jesus invite me to walk the slow, truthful, relational way?

What shortcuts do I need to renounce to follow Jesus more faithfully?

Life Application: Choose one Jesus Way practice to embody this week:

Truthfulness/presence/surrender/relational depth/obedience

V. The Invitation: Stand in the True Story

- Competing cultural stories: success, productivity, self-creation, fear, scarcity, performance.
- Jesus invites us into: grace, covenant, truth, presence, surrender, love.
- *“I will live in Your story, not the world’s.”*

Questions: Which cultural story has the strongest pull on my heart?

What would it look like to live fully in Jesus’ story this week?

Application: Write a personal declaration of the story you choose to live in.

Share it with a trusted friend or small group for accountability.

VI. Closing Prayer

- Ask God to strip illusions, expose false stories, and give Elijah’s courage.
- Pray for formation in the Jesus Way—slow, truthful, relational, holy, rooted in presence.