Devotion #239

**Keep Getting Up**

**1 Kings 19:7-8 (NASB)** *“The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, ‘Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you.’So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God*.”

I remember a story someone told me a few years ago that has stuck with me. It is about a recruiter for college football who goes to watch a young man who has all the makings of being the next great star. As the recruiter watched the young man, every play he would flatten his opponent on the other side of the line. And every time the young man who was knocked down kept getting back up. When practice was over, the coach came to the recruiter to ask what he thought about his star player. The recruiter said he was certainly impressed by the strength of the young man, but what he really wanted to know was who the other player was who kept getting back up after being knocked down.

Let’s be honest, life is very difficult. It seems that most days we are like the player who keeps getting knocked down. But the difference is, we often get to a place where we don’t want to keep getting up. It’s just too hard to keep taking the pounding day after day.

The verses for today come from an interesting story about the prophet Elijah. In the previous chapter he had watched God perform an amazing miracle against those who worshiped Baal, the manmade false god, and the woman, Jezebeel. She was the leader of the demonic worshippers and a very ruthless woman - so ruthless that when she heard about how God had used Elijah to destroy all her demon prophets, she threatened Elijah with his own life. So, Elijah ran. He fled from her, but not only was he fleeing from her to save his own life, he was fleeing because he was overwhelmed with being the only one who was left as a prophet for God, or so he thought. (1 Kings 18:22) We later learn that God tells Elijah there are 7,000 people who have not bowed to Baal.

But before Elijah hears that word from the Lord, he wants God to take his life. He wants to die. He can’t take it anymore. (1 Kings 19:4) Evidently, life had gotten too overwhelming for him. His work for God didn’t seem to be paying off like he thought. No doubt he was exhausted physically, and he was hungry, neither of which helped his situation. He probably was weary from everything he had to do and all the challenges of life. But God was not finished with Elijah. The story goes in 1 Kings 19, that Elijah fell to sleep and was then awakened by an angel who provided water and bread for him to eat. And that happens twice. After the second meal, Elijah regained his strength, and we are told that he was able to continue on the food for forty days and nights.

You may ask what is the point of this as a devotion? To answer that, lets go back to the young man on the football team who kept getting knocked down but continued to get back up. I’m sure that young man was exhausted. I’m sure he was getting frustrated and was pretty sure that the next play and the next play and the next play he would be doing the same thing, getting up. But he must have had something that pushed him to continue on. Maybe it was genetic or he was just mentally determined. We will never know. But what we do know is that this illustration teaches us that life is also like getting knocked down over and over and over. Satan is relentless. He never stops, not only knocking us down but also kicking us while we are down.

We have the example from Elijah. He was a man greatly used by God, who got knocked down by fear, uncertainty, frustration, and even a lack of knowledge or at least incorrect knowledge. And it was God who put him back on track. If it were up to Elijah I’m sure he would have stayed right there under the juniper tree until he died. But God came to his rescue and set his body and mind straight.

You and I need to remember in the times we continue to get knocked down that we will never make it in our strength. We must look to God every time we feel the pressure of life kicking us and slamming us to the floor. And when we do, He will be gracious to help us get back on our feet. So, trust God when life is tough and just keep getting back up. As you do, He will sustain you.