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Where is God

when all you can see is GRAPE POPSICLES?

3 **God's tremendous power**

1 Kings 17:1 – 19:8

The mountaintop of provision

The mountaintop of power

4 **The mountaintop of provision**

- Elijah tells widow of Zarephath not to be afraid (1 Kings 17:13)
 - *And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.*
 - God miraculously provided for the widow, her son, and Elijah during a time of famine.

5 **The mountaintop of power**

- 1 Kings 18 -- Elijah defeats 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Ashtoreth ("the groves" –18:19) in a contest on Mount Carmel
 - The 850 prophets of false gods exhaust themselves and even endure Elijah's taunting
 - God miraculously devours Elijah's thoroughly wet sacrifice by fire
 - The false prophets are put to death

6 **Victory can be exhausting**

- Sometimes all you want to do after a great effort is yawn and sleep
- Even though God did the real work on Mt. Carmel, Elijah left exhausted
 - He built the altar
 - He put his faith on the line
 - He was the lone voice on the mountain representing the God of Israel
 - "Courage is fear that has said its prayers."

7 **Great threatening promise**

1 Kings 19:1-2

8 **1 Kings 19:1-2**

- *And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.* (19:1-2)
 - What could one woman do that 850 prophets could not?

9 **Great tormenting popsicles!**

10 **The power of intimidation**

- Elijah had dealt an effective blow to Jezebel's religion.
- She sends a messenger to Elijah with her promise to kill him.
 - Why not just kill him? She wanted him to despair, or to run for his life.

- Results?
 - Runs 80 miles to Judah and into greater danger where Ahab's daughter was reigning with Jehoram (2 Kings 8:16-18).
 - Sits down under a tree and prays for death.

11 **The problem of isolation**

- Elijah thought he was alone.
 - 1 Kings 18:4 says that Jezebel killed the Lord's prophets but that Obadiah took 100 prophets and hid them in 2 separate caves.
 - 1 Kings 19:18 says there were still 7000 men in Israel that had not worshiped Baal.
 - The apostle Paul quotes Elijah's prayer for death in Romans 11:3 but makes the point that Elijah was not truly alone.
- The devil makes us think we struggle alone.

12 **The pain of ignorance**

- Elijah ignored crucial reminders.
 - Beersheba is the place where God made an oath to Abraham (Genesis 21:31). He should have remembered that God both makes and keeps oaths.
 - Elijah forgot the lessons of Zarephath, and Carmel.
 - Zarephath – God provided for Elijah, a widow, and her son in the "place of refining."
 - Carmel – God conquered 850 prophets in a pyrotechnic display unlike any other.

13 **The plan of irrationality**

- Goes deeper into the isolation of the Negev
- Sits down under juniper tree
 - Not a comfortable place
 - Punishing himself for failure
 - Angry at himself and Jezebel
- Prays for death
 - Doesn't believe life can get any better

14 **The pestering of incompleteness**

- 1 Kings 19:4 finds it Elijah complaining that he is no better than his fathers.
 - He is saying that, like his ancestors, he left incomplete the mission to cast Baal worship out of Israel.
 - He has just been part of a tremendous victory over 850 false prophets.
 - He did not know that he was just one part of God's plan. God would use his successor, Elisha, to finally bring about the fall of Ahab and Jezebel.

15 **The pride of insubordination**

- 1 Kings 19:10 finds Elijah arrogantly proclaiming that he is better than the rest of Israel who has forsaken God.
- God tells Elijah to stand on the top of Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:11).
 - Elijah never does. He stays in the cave.
 - This is why 19:13 shows that "went out and stood in the entrance of the cave."
 - This prophet went from doing all that God asked to doing nothing that God asked!

16 **Have you ever been there?**

- Life hits you with a tragic obstacle
 - Death of a relationship
 - Child rebels and leaves home
 - Spouse commits adultery and leaves
 - Respected authority does something that leaves them no longer worthy of respect
 - Loss of health
 - Loss of a loved one
 - Loss of income
 - Any other confusing and misleading GRAPE POPSICLE that just doesn't make sense

17 **Did you ever experience this?**

- A desire to just give up
 - Feeling like you just want to sit down and fold your hands in despair and quit life
 - Praying for death or contemplating suicide because it seemed there was no other way out (4 kinds of suicide)
 - Moral suicide = immorality
 - Intellectual suicide = give up on God; get into worldly philosophy
 - Spiritual suicide = false religions or deliberately disobeying God
 - Physical suicide

18 **Why did Elijah fail?**

- Physical: He is exhausted from the efforts of Mt. Carmel
- Spiritual:
 - Forgot the lessons of Zarephath and Carmel
 - Focused on Jezebel
 - Focused on what he HAD done instead of what God was DOING.
 - Previously he did nothing without hearing first from God (1 Kings 17:2, 8; 18:1, 36)
 - Now his fear leads to impatience and his impatience leads to disobedience.

19 **Isaiah 28:16**

*Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD,
Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone,
A tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation:
He that believeth shall not make haste.*

20 **God's treatment plan**

21 **Wait here with me!**

- God knew Elijah needed rest and nourishment.
 - Elijah sleeps
 - An angel wakes him up to warm bread and cool water
 - Elijah returns to sleep
 - Angel wakes him up again with the same meal
 - In all of this, there is no hint that Elijah repented of his sin. He had just given up!

22 **Walk with me!**

- Elijah begins a journey to Mount Horeb
 - Should have taken 14 days (200 miles)
 - Took 40 days and retraced much of the journey taken by Israel when they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years
 - God often allows us detours in life to teach us lessons we will not learn any other way
 - Difficult circumstances are just part of the journey
- Elijah's journey was supernatural – he went in the power of angel food cake for 40 days and nights!

23 **Watch me!**

- God did another amazing display of his power
 - Wind that could break rocks
 - Earthquakes that caused a mountain-slide
 - A fire that could melt the earth
 - Lessons:
 - Elijah, I can use many tools to do my bidding – not just you!
 - The forces of nature always obey God, but it is the nature of man to be disobedient.

24 **Listen to me!**

- A still small voice is where Elijah finally heard God
- Lessons:
 - God's work is not always done in big, noisy ways
 - We are not to dictate to God how to work; we must simply trust and obey
 - A lasting spiritual work in a nation must be accomplished by the Word of God working quietly in the heart of the people

25 **Answer my question!**

- *What are you doing here, Elijah?*
 - Elijah began the journey to this cave without God's direction
 - Elijah reacted in fear and haste instead of in faith and waiting on God
 - Elijah decided he was alone after he had just stood alone with God
 - Elijah ran from 1 woman after just defeating 850 prophets
- Fear causes us to only see THE DARK SIDE

26 **Get going again!**

- God told Elijah to anoint:
 - Hazael to be king over Syria
 - Jehu to be king over Israel
 - Elisha to succeed Elijah
- God revealed to him that there were 7000 others in Israel who had not bowed down to Baal
- It is OK to rest, but wrong to give up!

27 **Now watch me use others!**

- God chooses Elisha to carry on Elijah's ministry

- Elijah passes on his mantle to Elisha after a period of time where they ministered together
- In the dark times of your life, God will use others to bless and encourage you and to carry on His work.

28 **Conclusion**

29 **Common sense for crippling circumstances**

1. Get adequate rest
2. Get good nutrition; no caffeine of any kind
3. Don't make ANY hasty or major decisions while you are depressed – they will be BAD!
4. Walk under a blue sky for at least 20 minutes each day
5. Fill up your own bucket instead of constantly pouring out to others

30 **My prayer for you**

- May God grant you a wonderful and blessed 2014
- If, however, 2014 turns into "your year" for GRAPE POPSICLES:
 - Slow down; make no decisions without God's clear leading
 - Listen to Him and take care of yourself
 - Allow others to minister to you and with you
 - Realize that this isn't the end; it is just part of the journey
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