

I. Introduction

- A. The last time the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, the Ottoman Empire was still in existence. The Wright Brothers were still flying airplanes. The President of the United States was named William Howard Taft. The number of states in the United States was 46. And a gallon of gas cost 20 cents. The year was 1908, and in that year, the Cubs won it all.
- B. My birthday is in early April, and that's when the baseball season starts. For my birthday, for several years, my mom and dad let me skip school and go see the opening home game of the Cubs at Wrigley field. In Chicago, the weather is pretty unpredictable in April. So for most of those games I nearly froze to death, and for some of them, it was snowing. But so what if I lost a toe or two, I got to skip school. Besides, I had extra toes anyway.
- C. My grandpa was a fan of the Chicago Cubs.
- D. My dad was a lifelong fan of the Chicago Cubs.
- E. I am a lifelong fan of the Chicago Cubs.
- F. And no matter how many years have come and gone, there's this little voice inside my heart that says this year is going to be our year.
- G. The human heart is wired for hope. And hope means clinging to the possibilities of future good. Confident expectation in future good. Hope.
- H. Hope is the inner voice that tells you tomorrow is going to be a better day.
- I. But what happens when that inner voice is silent? What happens if better days never seem to come? What happens if you look to the horizon, and all you can see is giant problems on the way?
- J. What happens when hope is gone, and you're depressed, and you're ready to call it quits?
- K. When you're ready to call it quits, God comes in, and God performs a Grit Reset. That's what I want to talk about today.

II. G.R.I.T.

- A. This is part 8 in our summer series called GRIT. We're talking about toughness, and about courage, about a quality that never quits. Grit.
- B. G.R.I.T.
- C. *Grace Revealed in Trials*
 - 1. *G.R.I.T. is the spiritual toughness to face the tyrants that would steal your dominion and the faith to crush them with supernatural weapons of grace.*
- D. Today, the hero of our story gets depressed. And God breaks in to help him out. I hope you realize that the Bible has wisdom for everything in your life.
- E. Let's pick up the story where we left off last time. I'll backfill stuff you need to know as we go.

III. *When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel what Elijah had done and that he had slaughtered the prophets of Baal. So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods also kill me if by this time tomorrow I have failed to take your life like those whom you killed." (1 Kings 19:1, 2, NLT)*

- A. So this is the set up. Ahab is the king. Jezebel is the queen, Ahab's wife. They're evil. She's a mean girl on steroids. He's a bully on steroids.
- B. Jezebel is out of her mind with anger. Baal was the false god of Jezebel's home country. When she became queen, she led the people of the true God into the worship of this false God. She also had 450 priests of Baal.
- C. In the last section of the story, we saw an incredible contest of the gods. The invisible God of heaven vs. the idol god called Baal. Each side prepared a sacrificial animal. Each side called for their God to send fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice.
- D. The priests of Baal went crazy trying to get Baal to send down fire from heaven. They prayed. They sang. They danced. They screamed. They went into a frenzied, wild, out of control fire dance. Nothing happened. They pulled out knives and started cutting themselves till the blood gushed out of them, all to try to make Baal hear them.
- E. But nothing happened. That's because any god you carve out of wood or stone in the morning isn't worth worshipping in the evening.
- F. So then it was Elijah's turn. First, he built a stone altar, and laid a sacrifice on it. Then, just to make it harder, he poured water over the whole thing several times till it was dripping wet. Then he knelt down and offered a simple prayer. And bam, the fire of the Lord fell from heaven, like a lightning bolt. It burned up the sacrifice. It burned up the wood. It burned up the rocks, and the dirt, and the water.
- G. And all the people realized that the only true God is the invisible creator God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- H. And in that nation, and at that time, and according to their laws, they executed the priests of Baal. 450 priests of an evil God executed. And they were Jezebel's priests.
- I. This was a huge victory for God. For Good. For the nation. And for Elijah.
- J. And this was a huge defeat for Jezebel.
- K. What does Queen Jezebel do? She loses it. She throws a queenly fit.
- L. She goes behind the curtain and she releases the flying monkeys. Jezebel, the wicked queen, sends a message to Elijah. She swears an oath to make Elijah's corpse as much a rotting pile of flesh as the stinking corpses of the 450 priests of Baal.
- M. Hey Elijah, you're dead meat.
- N. From Elijah's perspective, this is what we call really bad news. One minute, he's on the mountain top, and all the people are praising God... the next minute, he's in the pits.
- O. Look at the next verse.

IV. *Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. (1 Kings 19:3, NLT)*

- A. He is tough. He is strong. He's been hiding for three and a half years. He loves God, and God loves him.
- B. Now, he's running for his life.
- C. Hey Elijah, who are you running from?

- D. A woman.
 - E. How far does he run? Far enough to get out of Jezebel's jurisdiction, out of Israel and into Judah.
 - F. Why's he running?
 - G. Because he's afraid and his life is on the line, and he's had it.
- V. *Then he went on alone into the desert, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." (1 Kings 19:4, NLT)*
- A. God, I just want to die. That's what he says. That's what he prays. Take my life, Lord. I'm a nobody. I'm from a long line of nobodies.
 - B. There was a great Christian leader. He lived in the 1400s in Germany. His name was Martin Luther. When most of Christianity had forgotten the goodness of Jesus and his Cross, it was Luther who stood against the religious establishment and restored the teaching of salvation by faith.
 - C. He was a great leader. But he suffered a lot of depression. He'd been moping around for so long that one day, he came out for breakfast, and his wife, Katie was wearing a black armband. That's what they did when someone died.
 - D. Luther asked, "Who died?"
 - E. Katie said, "God died."
 - F. "That's impossible," Luther said. "God can't die. God can't cease being because then he wouldn't be God. God didn't die."
 - G. "Well judging by the look on your face, he must have died."
 - H. Probably the greatest preacher ever in the English language was named Charles H. Spurgeon. He lived in London maybe a 100 years ago. He routinely suffered from depression. He wrote, "Fits of depression come over the most of us..." So he wrote about it so that younger people would not imagine "that something strange was happening when they were for a season possessed by depression."
 - I. I've been a Christian for a very long time, and I've been a pastor for a very long time.
 - J. And I can tell you that depression, and discouragement, are a pretty common part of my life. Pretty much every other week, I'm looking for a way to quit. Don't worry; it's been that way for 20 years!
 - K. I've been where Elijah has been... Lord, I can't take it any longer. Take me home to heaven. I'm a nobody from a long line of nobodies.
 - L. Maybe you've been there too.
 - M. I want to outline a couple of lessons for you and me and all of us who feel really depressed every so often.
 - N. So let me set this up, and then we'll see what God does for Elijah.
 - 1. *1. Being depressed does not make you a bad person.*
 - a) You are in very good company. All the great heroes of the faith were depressed at one point or another. Even Jesus cried out, asking God why he had forsaken him.
 - 2. *2. You can be doing everything right with God, and still have stuff go bad in your life. It's not your fault.*
 - a) I know the students have not heard me say this, but it's a really important principle: *this fallen world is a morally broken pain machine.* Picture a giant machine with gears and pulleys and knobs and teeth and all that, churning along, and devouring everything in its path. That's our world. It's under a curse. Yes, there are many beautiful things, because God created us this way.
 - b) But bad stuff happens in this world, and it's not always going to be your fault.
 - c) You can be obeying God, praying to God, worshipping God, and serving God, and have everything go wrong, just like Elijah running for his life.
 - d) Depression is not a sign that you've done something wrong.
 - (1) And you shouldn't judge people who are having bad things happen to them. And you shouldn't ignore them either. God put you in their lives to say a kind word. To offer help. To come alongside, and be a friend, and not say anything.
 - e) Depression is not a sign that you've done something wrong.
 - f) It's a sign that the world is a giant pain machine, and you're stuck in it.
 - 3. *3. God has a tender heart for you when you feel discouraged and depressed.*
 - a) "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart" (Psalm 34:18).
 - b) "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).
 - c) Jesus said he came "to heal the brokenhearted" (Luke 4:18).
 - d) God loves you all the time, but he is especially tender and compassionate when your heart is broken, and you're discouraged, or depressed, or ready to quit.
 - (1) Many students have just gone back to school. Maybe you got bad news this summer. Or maybe you're new in your school and feel all alone. It could be you've never fit in, and the kids don't seem to like you, and it's wearing you down day after day.
 - (2) Maybe there's no teacher that's taken an interest in you. Or it seems like nobody cares.
 - (3) Maybe you've gotten bad news. Or maybe you're just tired of working all the time, and nobody appreciates you.
 - (4) Maybe you've lost your home or your job. Maybe your business has failed. Or your husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend dumped you.
 - (5) Or maybe you're depressed and you can't point to anything that caused it. There's no specific trigger. It doesn't matter.
 - (6) When you're discouraged, God draws near to you in a special way.
 - 4. What does he do then?
 - a) *4. When you're at your lowest, God is ready to give you a GRIT Reset.*

5. Let's pick up Elijah's story.
- VI. *Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" He looked around and saw some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, for there is a long journey ahead of you." So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. (1 Kings 19:5-8, NLT).*
- A. I want to call what God does here a GRIT RESET.
 - B. He's been tough. He's been full of faith. He has stuck his neck out. If anybody has Grit, it's Elijah.
 - C. But now, he's just out of fuel. And that happens. You can be a brave person, a decent person, a good person, and just run out of gas.
 1. So that's when a person who's normally brave turns and runs.
 2. That's when a person who's normally happy can't find a smile.
 3. That's when a person who's normally full of Grit suddenly seems like a wimp.
 4. And that's when God, who loves you, comes down and performs a GRIT RESET.
 - D. The Bible has a whole lot to say about human nature. God created us, and he knows best what's inside us. If you like getting technical, this topic is called biblical anthropology, what the Bible has to say about how you're put together. God's wisdom on human nature.
 - E. You have three parts, and I'd like to diagram them for you.
 1. You have a BODY. This is the physical part of you. This is the part that interfaces with the world around you. The part You can see.
 2. You have a SOUL. This is your personality. Your emotions. Your psychology. Your style. Your tastes. Your mind. Your will. Your emotions. This is the part of you that thinks, and decides, and feels, and it is invisible.
 3. You have a SPIRIT. This is the part of you that interfaces with God. It's the part of you that deals with deep truth, found in the Bible. It's the connecting point between you and God, and heaven, and prayer, and God's Word. Your spirit is also invisible, just like your soul.
 - a) (See 1 Thes 5:23: "may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.")
 - F. So these are your three parts, body, soul, and spirit. They're all interconnected. Each part affects each other part. You are a union of the three parts. Get that so far?
 - G. When God plugs you back into his giant battery charger, he resets all three parts of you.
 - a) Question: which part of you is affected when you feel depressed?
 - b) Answer: all the parts of you.
 - H. So what does God do when Elijah feels depressed?
 - I. God puts him down for a nap, and then he feeds him a sandwich.
 1. Salami. Mortadella. Pepperoni. Provolone. Asiago. A little Italian dressing. A little honey mustard. On toasted ciabatta.
 - J. This is for the BODY. It's about sleep and nutrition and exercise. And sometimes doctors and medicine and hormones and natural therapies and all of the above.
 - K. I always tell anybody who struggles with depression they need to get a checkup. When God comes down to help Elijah's depression, he helps his whole person. Not just his spirit, and not just his soul, but his body too.
 - L. When I'm talking to a friend who's overwhelmed with life, this is where I start. Sleep. Nutrition. Exercise. Repeat.
 - M. Sometimes, what looks like a spiritual problem is really a physical problem, and you need a nap.
 - N. Especially if you have little kids in the house. Or high school kids. Or a new puppy.
 - O. Because God cares about your whole person, and that means your body. And that means what you're smoking, drinking, injecting, eating, and putting into your body too. He wants what's best for you — for every part of you — and so when he moves in to heal Elijah's depression, he starts with a nap and a sandwich.
 - P. Then what happens?
- VII. *There he came to a cave, where he spent the night. But the LORD said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I alone am left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." (1 Kings 19:9, 10, NLT)*
- A. Elijah vents, and God listens.
 - B. This part deals with his SOUL. God asks him, "What are you doing here?" Don't you think God already knew the answer? Yes.
 - C. But now he wants to let Elijah vent. No judging. No correcting. Just listening.
 1. His emotions come out.
 2. His thinking comes out.
 3. His choices come out.
 - a) This part is about the soul. The psychology. The emotions. The heart.
 - D. One of the best things you can do for a person you care about is take time to listen. It's a huge gift. Don't cut them off. Don't go interrupting with your own story. Don't steal the attention. Just care enough to listen, to accept, to embrace your discouraged friend.
 - E. To heal the body, it's about nutrition, sleep, rest, exercise.
 - F. To heal the soul, it's about counseling, wisdom, friendship, instruction, emotion, venting, connecting, listening, talking, making good choices, love.
 1. That's why God says to love one another, care for one another, help one another, serve one another.
 2. He cares about your soul. About how you feel.

- G. Elijah is physically tired. But he's emotionally tired too. He hasn't had a break for 3 and a half years. And, he's just had this absolutely fantastic victory over the priests of Baal. He's been on a total adrenaline rush.
 - H. But then Jezebel threatens to kill him, and the bottom drops out.
 - I. I've been a pastor for a really long time, and Monday has been my day off. I'm not saying my job is harder than anyone else's, because it's not. I don't feel sorry for myself, so when I tell this story, that's not what it's about.
 - J. Anyway, I've been a pastor for a long time, and my main day off is Monday. I used to preach four times on a weekend, and now I preach three — thank God for video technology.
 - K. But after church is over, I feel pretty drained. Emotionally wiped out. It takes a couple days to recover emotionally. It's not that I'm depressed, it's just that I'm drained. An old time pastor named Paul Edwardson told me it was about adrenaline.
 - L. I remember talking with a really famous pastor once. I asked him if he took Monday's off. He looked at me like I was crazy, and said, "I don't want to feel that bad on my day off." I'm on this spiritual mountaintop every weekend, and I have this energy and adrenaline going, and then the bottom drops out. And I'm in a deep valley for a while, just like Elijah.
 - M. So God comes down, and gives him what he needs to heal in his body and to heal in his soul. And now he heals his spirit.
- VIII. *Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. (1 Kings 19:11, 12, NKJV).*
- A. Here God deals with his SPIRIT. The most important thing you can do is to understand God. And the only way to really understand him is to encounter him in the pages of your Bible. There is no other way.
 - B. Some people look for signs and wonders. For a great and strong wind creating clouds and glory and wonders.
 - C. But the Lord is not in the wind.
 - D. Some people look for an earthquake. Or an earthquake of emotion. Or something intense.
 - E. But the Lord was not in the earthquake.
 - F. Or a fire, or a tunnel of fire, or any kind of fiery display.
 - G. But the Lord was not in the fire.
 - H. What was the Lord in?
 - I. A still small voice. Unimpressive. Easy to overlook.
 - J. The voice of the Holy Spirit on the pages of Scripture.
 - K. When was in high school, school started at 8:00 am. It took me over an hour to get to school on Chicago public transportation. I had to take a bus, and a train, and a bus each way.
 - L. But I got up early, and every morning I studied my Bible.
 - M. Why?
 - N. Because it's the best antidote to depression in the world. It's not the only thing, but it's the main thing.
 - O. And I want to say this especially to our students: the best thing you can do in your life is to read your Bible and pray.
 - P. Because that is the only way to feed your SPIRIT... which is the part of you that touches God.
 - Q. God gave Elijah a new vision of himself. God gave him a new vision of stuff God was doing that Elijah had no idea of. God gave him a renewed sense of purpose and mission and a reason to keep moving on.
 - R. And that is what God will do for you if you pay as much attention to your spirit as you do to your soul and your body.
 - S. When God does a GRIT RESET, he strengthens every part of you, body, soul, and spirit.
- IX. *GRIT basic training*
- A. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever. (Psalms 23:4-6, NKJV).*