

ROAD RULES - 1 Kings 19:14-21

Isaiah 48:17

This is what the LORD says--your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow."

And the Bible leads us on those paths with principles to live by as we follow... Road Rules.
"Break the Circuit" // "Don't Neglect the Middle of Nowhere" // "Thou Shalt Not Road Rage"

"Don't Take Rainbow Road" = the standards and accountability we adopt to keep us on track. Guardrails keep you on the path. Tonight I want to take it a step further and talk about the people who help us stay on the path. The folks that ride shotgun and tell us when to make the turn and where to head... *(before our phones did it for us)*

The church has a lot of travel agents. They'll tell you what to do and where to go. They just don't go with you. They'll give you two cents but no real investment.

The real difference between a travel agent and a tour guide is simple. **One goes with you.** But we need more than a travel agent. We need tour guides that go with us. We need mentors. A mentor: **one who enables us to finish our race well.**

Road Rule #5 - "**Get a Tour Guide, not a Travel Agent**" / *Everyone Needs a Gandalf*

1 Kings 19:3 – *Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went alone into the wilderness, travelling 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 who have already died."*

Anxiety and depression has hit Elijah like a rogue wave of raw emotion.

The church has often been silent, or at least guarded, on depression—not for lack of caring, but for lack of understanding.

I'm so thankful that God doesn't dodge the issue. God's Word tackles it again and again.

Much like spiritual health, mental health is an ongoing need for every human being.

There's no mic drop, slam dunk solution.

But praise God the Bible addresses it... here's what we see in **1 Kings 19**

God sends an angel while he passed out and prepares him for a 40 day journey to Mount Sinai. The 1st takeaway for us if we wrestle with depression or anxiety? **Take a nap and eat a snack.**

Elijah no doubt was discouraged by his drive to see revival and the utter lack of results. He felt anxiety due to the weight he placed on himself. Yet God was there when he was unconscious and was doing nothing. God was working.

Even when we sleep, he's at work. There's a calming peace in that.

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America encourages those suffering from depression- both circumstantial depression and clinical depression- to get additional sleep and to

eat well-balanced meals, both of which enable the body to push through the draining symptoms of depression. God knew what he was doing in offering Elijah a chance to rest and be nourished.

In this journey to Mt Sinai we see a second step – **carve out quiet time**.

This 40 day journey to Sinai wasn't loaded with him listening to music and podcasts on his iPhone. It was a quiet time. And when he got the mountain God didn't reveal himself in the storm or the fire—it was in the silence. *This ties so deeply into road rule #3 – don't neglect the middle of nowhere! – sometimes its just what the Dr. ordered.*

This is where we arrive in 1 Kings 19:14... *(this is immediately after the famous passage where God's presence comes after the winds and fire and other elements and is found in silence... he then asks Elijah "what's up")*

1 KINGS 19:14-21 (READ)

One of the first things God does after this dose of quiet time with Him is point Elijah to people. He encourages him in the fact that he's not alone. He's just isolated.

Verse 3 – *Before Elijah really hit rock bottom... Elijah had left his servant behind.*

Elijah - "I'm all alone."

God - *"Actually... there's 7000 just like you!"*

As Wendell Berry asserts in *The Art of the Commonplace*, "**Healing is impossible in loneliness; it is the opposite of loneliness. Conviviality [hospitality] is healing.**"

Richard Foster – *"Solitude is inner fulfillment. Loneliness is inner emptiness."*

Solitude is good in doses. But isolation – stripping ourselves from community- is a bad state to settle into. We find out what God knew with the very first man- it's not good for man to be alone.

The Mental Health Foundation confirms what God calls us to: connection and its benefits. People with stronger connections to their families and communities, including communities of faith, are less vulnerable to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

Elijah was in touch with his feelings. He felt alone.

But he was out of touch with reality. *There were 7000 others.*

He was in touch with his feelings. He felt isolated.

He was out of touch with community. *There were 7000 others!*

One of God's prescribed solutions: get a new focus

Elijah - **"I am no better than my fathers"**

Elijah was swimming deep in *self pity*.

God says your focus is broken... let's go get you an Elisha.

“Everyone Needs a Gandalf”

Heroes are made and not born. And for every hero, there’s almost always a hero maker.

Frodo and Gandalf.

Obi Wan and Luke.

Harry Potter and Dumbledore.

Rocky and Mickey.

Haymitch and Katniss.

Daredevil and Stick... etc etc...

In literary circles it’s known as **the hero’s journey**. Joseph in his book “The Hero with a Thousand Faces” breaks down the typical hero’s journey in 12 stages. It’s early on in the 4th stage where the hero meets his mentor. The hero realizes he’s ill-equipped for all that lies ahead but meets a mentor or helper who offers wisdom, tools, and the courage needed for the journey.

Individuals who accomplish great things rarely accomplish them alone.

We’ve been misled to think that if there’s truly greatness in us, then we don’t need people to step into that greatness. It’s within us. Our sense of this “greatness” leads us to diminish the value of other people. Whether life is a sprint or a marathon, we’re the only runner that matters.

But a common cause of living beneath our capacity is choosing run alone rather than run together.

There is no journey to God that doesn’t intersect us with and bring us alongside each other.

Often – as He surrounds us with wisdom- it’s on us to tap into it and receive the gift.

Sometimes the greatest gift is introducing the emerging hero to a greater cause, a bigger dream, or a more significant battle.

Obi Wan didn’t just train Luke to use the force. He prepared him to topple the Empire.

Dumbledore didn’t just teach Harry Potter magic. He taught him how to confront Voldemort.

Haymitch didn’t just train Katniss how to survive the Hunger Games. He taught her how to lead a revolution against the Capitol’s oppression.

A little heavy on the pop culture references...

This is present throughout scripture as well:

Moses trained Joshua.

Naomi raised Ruth.

Mordecai mentored Esther.

Jesus poured into his disciples.

The church has a lot of travel guides. They’ll tell you what to do and where to go.

They just don’t go with you. Why? Because it’s easy to give people a piece of advice and say “*good luck with that.*”

But we need more than that. We need tour guides that go with us. We need mentors.

A mentor: ***one who equips us to finish our race well.***

Harvard Business Review interviewed hundreds of successful CEOs and found only one common thread. It was the title of the article: *“Everyone Who Makes It Has a Mentor.”* Business leaders have executive coaches.

Athletes have physical trainers.

Why do we so often try to run the race alone?

VIDEO - Derek Redmond

He was favored to medal. 150 meters into the 400 meter race he felt a searing pain- it was his hamstring tearing. But he didn't want it to end on the ground in a heap... so he got up and started hopping along. Who knows if he could have hobbled that distance alone. We didn't have to find out. We see the reckless love of a good father pushing his way past security to get to his son.

What did he whisper in his ear?

“We started this thing together. Now we are going to finish this thing together.”

We all need people in our lives who will say that to us.

The faith walk is not for the faint hearted. And it's a long haul.

We need fathers. They don't need to be biological. They just need to love us like one.

1 Corinthians 4:14-16 - *I'm not writing all this as a neighborhood scold just to make you feel rotten. I'm writing as a father to you, my children. I love you and want you to grow up well, not spoiled. There are a lot of people around who can't wait to tell you what you've done wrong, but there aren't many fathers willing to take the time and effort to help you grow up. It was as Jesus helped me proclaim God's Message to you that I became your father. I'm not, you know, asking you to do anything I'm not already doing myself.*

Like we walked about last week. The church has plenty of neighborhood scolds.

People who are eager to call people for FOR their sin.

But aren't willing to do life with them and call them FROM their sin. Jonahs.

And we have plenty that will pass on information. Fathers pour out their lives.

We need people around us who will tell us

“We are going to finish this thing together.”

But to stop there would be to miss the point.

Elijah's joy is restored not by receiving a mentor, but by being one... By sowing into Elisha.

“Everyone needs a mentor” = *Yeah I know I sure could have somebody help me finish the race...*

No... “EVERYone needs a mentor.”

We're content to live it out.

God calls us to pass it on. To see past self.

Let's rewind:

Elijah: “I am no better than my fathers”

Elijah was swimming deep in *self pity*.

God's prescription: He says your focus is broken... let's take it from your navel gazing and back out toward others again. That will revive you.

One of the greatest sources of life for ourselves is being a source of life for OTHERS.

One of my favorite images for this is present here in this passage. **The Sea of Galilee.**
Elijad had to travel to the wilderness of Damascus, which is just east of the Sea of Galilee.

Sea of Galilee vs. Dead Sea

Dead Sea – 10x saltier than the ocean. People float on it with ease.

- but all that saltiness also means marine life can't live in it.

Sea of Galilee – just north of the Dead Sea.

- like the Dead Sea, it receives water from the Jordan River
- but the Sea of Galilee is full of rich marine life and plants. It's home to dozens of fishes, and enough to support an entire trade of fishing...

WHY? Same region. Same climate. Same Jordan River feeding it...

The Jordan River flows into the Sea of Galilee & *then out of it*. This keeps it healthy and vibrant.

The Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea... but there's no outlet. It's so far beneath sea level nothing flows out. And it becomes too full of minerals and unfit for life.

The Dead Sea just takes in...

But the Sea of Galilee inhales and exhales.

One of the greatest sources of life for ourselves is being a source for OTHERS.

JOHN 7:37-38 *Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'*

If we've truly come to Christ, there will be an overflow that effects others.

Curry Blake– *If your gospel isn't touching others then it hasn't touched you.*

God doesn't just want us to survive and grow. He wants us to multiply.

He wants us to not just be the hero in some story... he wants us to be hero makers and mentors.

Who are you touching?

Who is your one?

Who is waiting on you?

HOW?

THE CALL OF ELISHA

We live in a Call-out Culture.

In a recent article looking at this culture on social media, one student lamented the fact she held back on many things she would normally say or do because of fear of being called out...

"People won't call you out because your opinion is wrong. People will call you out for literally anything. On Twitter today I came across someone making fun a girl who made a video talking about how much she loved God and how she was praying for everyone. There were hundreds of comments, rude comments, below the video. It was to the point that they weren't even making fun of what she was standing for. They were picking apart everything. Her eyebrows, the way her mouth moves, her voice, the way her hair was parted. Ridiculous. I am not the kind of person to be able to brush off insults like that. Hence why I avoid any situation that could put me in that position. And that's sad."

The impulse in a call out culture?
Stay timid. Walk on eggshells. Don't shine too bright.

We need to counter that with a culture of "calling forth"

Romans 4:17- *"God who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist."*

The word *callet* has two meanings; 1) to bid to come forth, as when Jesus called the dead Lazarus to come forth in John 11:43, and 2) to call as in referring to, as when the messenger of God in Judges 6:12 spoke to a fearful, cowering Gideon and called him a mighty man of valor.

The Church needs to be a place of calling forth.

In a culture of Calling out.

We need to be a people of Calling forth.

The call to community can be scary.
Opening yourself up means you can be hurt.

#ChurchHurt on Twitter was a trending topic. The hurt is real. But so is the solution.
Jackie Hill Perry – *"Do you know who God used to heal me of my church hurt? The church."*

If you're living isolated, take the next step into community.
Consistent attendance. Events. Life groups.

Who are you pouring into? Who is pouring into you?
We're so good with peers and activity friends because it's often effortless. Even passive.
But take the steps to be an Elijah to an Elisha, and an Elisha to an Elijah!