

God Beats the Odds

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1 Kings 18

Good evening PC! We're continuing tonight in our series called "*Days of Elijah.*"

- We've been **talking** about **living on mission**...and tonight I want to talk to you about the topic of **living on mission when the odds are stacked against you.**
- Living on **mission** when your **chances of victory**...when your **likelihood** of **success**...seems **low**.

And as I was **thinking** about that...I **remembered** a time when the **odds** were **stacked against me**.

- This was back around **2007**...we had **returned** from **Zimbabwe**...it was **Christmas time** and my **family** was **all gathered together**...
- When my **Brother in Law Dan** (who **does** things like this)...**suggested** that **he**... and **I**...and the **boys** (meaning **Calvin** and his **3 cousins** who were in **HS** and **College**)... Dan suggested we should **all** have an **Airsoft Battle**.

Now...if you've never **heard** of **Airsoft**...it's **not** a **boardgame**...it's **basically** like...a **glorified** version of **paintball**!

- **It's like**...these **guns** that shoot **plastic pellets** about the **size of a pea**.
 - And there's a **wide variety** of **guns**: *You have everything from single shot pistols...where the bullet basically comes out of the barrel like a rainbow...*
 - *To...like...machine guns...that shoot more than 500 rounds per minute, and shoot the bullet at about 300 m.p.h.*
- Now, it's **just a game**, but let me say for the **life of me**, I **don't** know why they call it *airsoft*... because there's **nothing** "**soft**" about it. *It hurts!*
- I **know**...because I **shot myself** with a **pistol** to **test** it, and I had a **welt** for a **week**!

Anyway...**Dan** wanted to have this **battle** in the **woods** behind my **parents' house**...

And I thought "*OK...I'm coming back from the wilds of Africa...I'm the Great White Hunter...my team will probably do OK*"...So I said "*Let's do this!*"

- But I **immediately regretted it**...as I watched **Dan** let the **other team** completely **stack the odds against my team**!
- **First**...Dan said "*who do you think the teams should be?*" The **cousins** said "how about the **4 of us** against you **2 old men**?"
 - I said "*that's not fair*"...**Dan** said "*OK*".
- Then he said "*which guns do you want?*" (He had bought several guns). They **proceeded** to take all the **machine guns**...and leave **us** with...like...the **rainbow pistols**.
 - I said "*no way!*" Dan said "*OK*"

- **Then** he said “*who do you think should hide first?*” They said “*we should.*”
 - **Now...at that...I about lost it.**
 - Because **anyone** who’s **ever tried** to **ambush anyone** or **anything** knows that **rule #1** of **ambushing** is “*whoever is hidden in place first has a huge advantage!*”
 - You do **not** want to be the person **wandering around in full sight!**
 - But **Dan** said “*OK...we’ll wait in the garage for 15 min. while you hide.*”

As the cousins **walked away whooping** and **giggling**...I had **one thought**: “*Maybe I should just take my little rainbow plastic pellet pistol...and just shoot Dan!*”

- Just kidding! But he had **given away every advantage**: numbers...weapons...order...to the **other team!** The **odds** were now **firmly stacked against us.**
- But **Dan**...looked like he was **OK** with it. As I looked into his eyes...I could **tell he knew something** that the **rest of us didn’t know.**
- And **I’ll tell you what that was**...later on in the sermon!
- But it was a **time**...when the **odds** seemed **stacked against us.**

You know...like we’ve been **saying** in this series...**each** and **every one** of us has a **mission from God.**

- If you **belong** to the **God** of the **Bible**...there are **things** that he wants you to **accomplish.**
- Things he wants you to **accomplish today**...and things he wants you to **accomplish overall** with your **life.** We **all** have a **mission.**

And if you live your **life** on **mission** for **God**—*if you try to accomplish what he wants you to accomplish*— I can **guarantee** you **one thing**:

- There will come a **time** when the **odds seem** to be **stacked against you**:
- And I’m not talking about **silly things**...like an **Airsoft battle**...I’m talking about the **real thing.**
- If you live your **life** on **mission** for **God**: *Kids...High Schoolers...Sem Students...Singles...Couples...Parents*—if you live your **life** on **mission** for **God**...there will come a **time** when the **odds** seem **very much stacked against you.**

It may be a **time** when you face an **Adversary** that seems **too powerful** for you:

- *Maybe you’re going to face an addiction...maybe a sin you can’t overcome.*
- *Maybe it will be a bully at school...or a boss who has it in for you.*
- Maybe it will be an **Adversary.**

Or it may be a time when you face a **Task** that seems **too great** for you:

- *Maybe getting funding for a company you’ve given to God...maybe resources for your ministry...or finding space for your church (*that’s a thing*) but it’s a **big task.***

Or maybe it will be an **actual Physical Threat**:

- *Maybe it will be Covid...or Cancer...or some other danger.*

Maybe it will be **Discrimination**: *Maybe the odds will be stacked against you because of the color of your skin...or because of your gender...or because of your faith.*

- Maybe it will be a **Challenge**: *A disability...or injury...or limitation.*

Well, **whatever it is**...we're **all** going to face **moments** when the **odds** seem to be **stacked against us**.

- So **here's the question**: *How do you face that moment...with courage?*
- *How do you stand up to that moment believing—against all odds—that you can succeed—that you can fulfill the mission God has for you?*

Well...today we are going to look at a **story about that**.

- This is **another story** from **Elijah's ministry**...it's a kind of **well-known Bible story** about *Elijah and the Prophets of Baal*...
- some of you might have **heard** this in **SS**. Let me say, if you **didn't**...you're in for a **treat!** This is one of my **favorite stories** in the **Bible!**

BUT...this is a **long story! 46 vs!** So if it's **OK** with you...we **won't** go through it **verse by verse**

- **Rather**...I'm just going to **tell you this story in 3 steps**: *The **Challenge**...the **Contest**...and the **Consequences**...and we'll read the vs. in your worship guide along the way.*
- And then we'll **talk** about **how this relates to you and me**, and the **challenges** we **face** when we try to **fulfill God's mission**.

Let's Pray.

- *So...we said we were going to tell you our story today in 3 steps...and the first step is **The Challenge. Elijah challenges the Prophets of Baal to a Contest where the Odds seem Stacked Against him (X2).***

So...our story begins with the **drought** that **Elijah** had **called down on Israel**.

- If you've joined us the **last couple of weeks**...you'll **remember** that **because** of *wicked King Ahab*...Israel had been **worshipping a false god...a storm god...a rain god** named **Baal**.
- **Ahab** and his **evil wife Jezebel**...had **led Israel astray**...so that **instead** of worshipping **Yahweh—the true God of the Bible**—Israel had been **bowing down to Baal**...thinking **Baal** could give them **rain and good crops**.

Well...this made the **Lord very unhappy**. So he sent a **prophet** named **Elijah** to go to **King Ahab** and say "*Ahab...what you've done is wrong. And to teach you that there is only one God...and that HE is in charge of the rain...here's what God is going to do:*

- *There will be NO RAIN: No showers...no storms...no sprinkles...not even dew on the grass...not a single drop of rain...until God tells me that the drought will end.*

That happened **3 years** before today's story. And for **3 years** there had been **no rain**.

- **Now...King Ahab** was **furious** about this. He **hated** Elijah...but he **needed** **Elijah** to **call off** the **drought**...so he had been **looking** for him for **3 solid years**.
- God had been **protecting** **Elijah** this **whole time**, and **hiding** him from **Ahab**.
- But there **came a time** after **3 years**...that God **sent** **Elijah** to Ahab **once again**... because **God** was going to **settle** this **debate** over **who** was the **true God** (*Baal or Yahweh*) **once for all**...and **then** he was going to **bless his people** with **rain**.

So **Elijah** (who was always on **mission**) obeyed God...he went **back to Israel**...and he **called** **Ahab** to a **meeting**...and **this** is how it **went**. **Look at v.17**

- ¹⁷ *When Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"*
- Now I **have to say**...**Ahab** was the **worst!** He was what we might call **WEAKED**.
 - Because he was **wicked** and **devious**...but he was also **weak** and **whiny!**
 - **I mean**...if this was a **movie**...**Ahab** would be played by **Alan Rickman**. And I don't mean like "**Harry Potter**" Alan Rickman...I mean like "**Quigley Down Under**" Alan Rickman...or "**Robin Hood prince of Thieves**" Alan Rickman.
- He was the **worst!** He was "**weaked**" And he **accuses** **Elijah** of **troubling** **Israel!**

Now...in the **next verse**...Elijah **informs** **Ahab** that "*Oh no...no no...it's not me that's troubling Israel...it's you and your **Baal** worship that's causing the problem.*"

- And then Elijah **tells** **Ahab** why he's **come** to him. **Look at v.19. Elijah says...**
- ¹⁹ *Now **summon** the people from all over Israel to meet me on **Mount Carmel**. And bring the **450 prophets of Baal** and the **400 prophets of Asherah**, who eat at **Jezebel's table**.*

Elijah is **proposing** some kind of **challenge**...some kind of **showdown** between **himself**...and all those **prophets of Baal**...and **Baal's girlfriend** god **Asherah**.

Now...**think** about what **Elijah** is proposing: The **odds** are **not** in his **favor**:

- **I mean**...the **numbers** are kind of **against** him: *It's 850 (450 Prophets of Baal + 400 Prophets of Asherah) **against one***. So the **numbers** **don't look good!**
- **And**...we **modern readers** don't **know** this...but the **location** is against Elijah:
 - *He says we'll have this contest at **Mt. Carmel**. **Mt. Carmel** was a place on the **Mediterranean coast** that was **literally** called "**the Mountain of Baal!**"*
- So the **numbers** are against Elijah...and the **location** is against Elijah.

Ahab likes these **odds**. He **knows** **Elijah** is **coming** to this **contest** with **one hand tied behind his back** (he's at a **disadvantage**) so Ahab **agrees** to the **challenge**.

BUT! We're **not done** with the challenge yet! When Elijah goes to Mt. Carmel and meets the actual **prophets of Baal**...not only is it like he has **one hand** tied behind his **back**...It's like Elijah **ties his other hand behind his back** as well!

- *Let me show you what I mean: So...Ahab has agreed to this showdown...he has gathered the 850 Prophets of Baal and Asherah...he has gathered thousands of Israelites...they're all waiting on Mt. Carmel...*
- Elijah tells the Israelites to **stop wavering**—literally to **stop limping or dancing** between **2 opinions**...and **choose a God**.
 - *He says "if Baal is God...follow him...with all your heart."*
 - *But he says "If Yahweh is God...follow him with all your heart...and stop worshipping Baal!"*

Elijah tells them to **do that**...and then in vv.22-24...He tells Israel the challenge he has in mind. Here's how they are going to **decide** who the **real God is**:

- ²² *Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the Lord's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. ²³ Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."*

OK...now **think** about this: it's like **Elijah already has one hand tied behind his back**:

- The **numbers** are already **against** him
- And the **location** is **against** him...
- **OK**...but **now** it's like Elijah **proceeds** to tie his **other hand** behind his back!
 - He says "you can go first...you choose the **Bull** you want. Pick the one that looks like it will catch fire the easiest...with the most ignitable hair..."
 - In **other words**... "you choose the **flama-bull**" (I didn't even get that on the internet...that was my own creation!)
- But **they** get to go first...that's "**advantage Baal!**"

And...notice the **nature of the contest**: *Whichever God sends fire from the sky wins.*

- Let me ask you: what **kind of God** was **Baal**? He's a **storm god**...he's supposed to be in **charge of rain** and what? **Lightning!**
- This is **right up** his **alley**. *This should be a slow pitch for Baal...a 2" putt.*

So guys...**numbers**...**location**...*who goes first*...the **nature of the contest**...these **all** seem to be **against Elijah!**

- See what I mean when I say "*Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to a contest where the odds are against him.*"?
- But **Elijah** has **incredible confidence**, *doesn't he?* In fact... he's the one who set the **whole thing up** this way:

- He's **very confident**, even though the **odds** are **against** him... *Kind of like my brother-in-law Dan...* it's like **Elijah knows something** that **no one else knows**.
- *What is the source of his confidence?*
- *Well that is the challenge...now the 2nd step in our story is...*

The Contest: The Prophets of Baal Lose, and Elijah wins, despite the Odds (X2).

So the stage is all set: **now the contest begins in verse 26:**

- ²⁶ *So they (POB) took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.*

So the **Prophets of Baal** set up their **offering**... and they begin to **call out** "*Oh Baal, please hear us...please answer us!*" They **whoop** and **holler**...they **carry on** and **pray**...and they get **no answer**.

- **Now**...at **first**...this **probably** didn't seem like a **big problem** to the **Prophets of Baal**...**I mean**...they were used to doing this **every year**.
- **Every time** they had a **dry season** (which was every yr from **May-October**) they thought that **Baal had died** and was in the **underworld**...and had to be **brought back**.
- And this was a **3-yr dry season**...so they probably didn't **expect** fire **right away**.

But after a **few hours**...they begin to **wonder what is going on!**

- They started to **dance**: *They started swaying back and forth*—the writer uses the **same word** for their **dancing** that he used for **Israel wavering** between **Baal** and the **true God**—the idea is that they are going **back and forth** in **confusion**...
- **But no one answers.**

Finally...about **noon**...**Elijah** decides he needs to **spice things up**...so he starts to give the **POB a hard time**: **Look at v.27**

- ²⁷ *At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened."*

You've got to **love Elijah!** He gives these guys **several helpful suggestions**:

- **First**...he says "*try shouting louder...maybe the **thunder** has damaged his hearing!*"
- Then he says "*wait!...He's a god...maybe he's thinking...*"
- "**Or**"...he says "*He's gone aside.*" In Hebrew when you say someone's "**gone aside**" it's a **euphemism**...a **figure of speech**.
 - *It's like saying they've gone to **pick strawberries*** (if you know what I mean)...
 - In **other words**...**Elijah** is saying "*maybe **Baal** is in the **men's room***"
- **Or**...*Elijah says... "maybe he's on vacation. Maybe he really **enjoys the underworld**, and he doesn't want to **come back**...or maybe he's asleep."*

Elijah doesn't show these guys **any respect**. He doesn't **cut them any slack!**

- **Despite** the fact that the **odds** are **against** him...**Despite** the fact that he is taking his **life** into his **own hands** by **doing** this...**he taunts them**.
- And he **drives them** into a **useless frenzy**: Look at vv.28-29
- ²⁸ *So they **shouted louder** and **slashed themselves** with **swords** and **spears**, as was their **custom**, until their **blood flowed**.* ²⁹ *Midday passed, and they **continued** their **frantic prophesying** until the time for the **evening sacrifice**. But there was **no response**, **no one answered**, **no one paid attention**. **No one answers!***

Because **Baal** is "**no one**." He **doesn't really exist**. The prophets of Baal lose. **Big time**. They go down in **flames**...or rather...they go down in the **absence of flames**.

Meanwhile...as the **evening** begins to **fall**...it's **Elijah's turn**.

- He calls Israel over to him. He repairs the altar of the **true God**—which is in ruins... He prepares his sacrifice-- **cutting up** the **bull**, and **placing** it on the **wood**...
- And then **Elijah** does something that is **very, very strange**:
- Now that he's got **both hands tied behind his back**...It's like he puts on a **blindfold!** Not literally...but he makes it **even harder on himself!**
- He digs a trench around the base of the **altar**... and then he pours gallon after gallon of water over his **offering**... until the **bull**... And the **wood**... and the **stones**... are **completely soaked**. So there's **no way** this thing can **catch fire**.

Now... **think** with me for a **minute** about **all the advantages** that the **POB** have:

- They have the numbers: **850 total prophets to 1**.
- They have the location: **the mountain of bail**
- They have the choice of animals: **they chose first**
- They have the nature of the challenge: **fire from the sky**
- **And now**... Elijah is up against a soggy sacrifice. *And this is all Elijah's doing!*

How on earth can he be so confident? How can he be so sure of himself?

- **Simple**: he's like my **brother-in-law Dan**: Elijah **knows something** that **no one else knows**. He knows he has **resources** they **haven't thought of**.
- *In the case of my brother in law...he had stockpiled us with gear:*
- I mean...not only did we have our little rainbow pistols...
- But as **soon** as the boys **disappeared around the corner**... **Dan** broke out the ghillie suits: *The special forces camouflage, that he had ordered online, that basically turns you into a tree. And makes you invisible.*
- And he broke out our real airsoft guns: *sniper rifles with real scopes that shot twice as hard as their little machine guns did... and could fire 750 rounds per minute.*

That's what Dan had up his sleeve. And the **rest of the story...as they say...is history.**

- See...Dan **didn't care** about all their **little advantages...** Because he **knew** we had an **advantage** that **overpowered** them all. An advantage that **completely changed** the **landscape** of the **battle: We had the gear!**

And listen...like Dan...Elijah knows something that Ahab...and Israel... And the POB have no clue about: Something that changes the landscape of the battle completely.

- Something that **assures** him of **success: Elijah knows the greatness of his God.**

He **knows** this is the **God** who controls the **rain**. This is the God who **controls Ravens**. And **this God...** Is the **God** who **controls resurrection**. He can overcome **anything...even death itself.**

- Elijah **knows** that **Baal isn't even real.** And he knows that **Yahweh is.**
- And **Elijah knows something else:** he knows that even though the **POB** might **call Baal a storm God...his God...** the **true God...**the only God...is the **God of fire.**
 - When **Aaron** built the first altar in the **Tabernacle...**the Bible tells us: "**fire went out from God's presence and consumed the sacrifice.** (Lev. 9:24).
 - When **David** built an **altar...**the Bible **tells us** in **1 Chron. 21:** "**fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice**" (1 Chron. 21:26).
 - When **Solomon** constructed the **temple...** and **finished praying:** "**fire came down from heaven... And consumed the offering and the sacrifices**" (2 Chron. 7:1).

Elijah **knew** that **fire from the sky** doesn't belong to **Baal...**it belongs to **Yahweh.**

- **Mt. Carmel** doesn't belong to **Baal...***Yahweh already had an altar there.*
- The **numbers** don't belong to **Baal...***Yahweh had thousands upon thousands of angels ready to do his bidding in an instant.*
- The **point of all this** is that **Elijah can afford** to be **confident.**
- Because once you take the **greatness of Elijah's God** into **account...**the **deck is stacked not against him, but for him.** There's **no way** he can **lose!**

And **because of that...**Elijah prays a **very simple prayer** over his **offering...** where the **true God** is the **focus. Look at v.38**

- ³⁶ *Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that **I** am your servant and have done **all these things** at your command. 37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so **these people** will **know that you, O Lord, are God,** and that you are turning their hearts back again."*

And in **response** to the **simple prayer...**here's what the **Bible said happened:**

- ³⁸ *Then the **fire of the Lord** fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.*

- **Wow! Elijah wins.** And we can see that because of the **greatness** of **Elijah's God...**the odds were **never truly against him** in the first place.
 - *So...we've looked at The Challenge: Elijah challenges the Prophets of Baal to a Contest where the Odds Seem Stacked Against Him.*
 - *And we've looked at The Contest: The Prophets of Baal Lose, and Elijah wins, despite the Odds.*
 - *Now there's **one more piece** to our story...and that's the consequences.*
- The consequences: Are swift and powerful (X2).**

The **responses** to this **awesome display** of **God's power** are **immediate...**and they are **drastic!**

The **first consequence** is with regards to the **People**.

- The writer **tells us** that when **fire fell** from the **sky...**the **Israelites** who had **gathered** at **Mt. Carmel** **responded** the way **you or I** probably would have **responded**:
- They **fell to the ground...** and shouted "*the Lord, he is God... the Lord, he is God.*"

For **those people** that were **gathered** at **Mt. Carmel...** the **question** was **settled**.

- They **now knew...** beyond a **shadow of a doubt...** that **Yahweh**—the God of **Israel** was **not just the most powerful God...**they knew he was the **only God**.
- They knew that **Baal** was **nothing**. That he **didn't exist...**that he **wasn't** to be **feared**.
- It **wasn't** that **Baal** answered with a **smaller fire**—*it wasn't that his power wasn't quite as great*—the passage tells us that **no one answered** when they **prayed** to Baal.
- *They didn't need to fear Baal...or pray to Baal... or worship Baal any longer, because he wasn't real.* The **people** turn their **hearts toward the true God**.

The 2nd consequence related to the Prophets of Baal...

- the **prophets** that had **led Israel** away from the **Lord**, and into a **religion** that involved **immorality** and **human sacrifice**.
 - The **prophets of Baal** were **rounded up** and **judged**.
 - They were **executed** by **Elijah** and the **people...**and **not one** escaped.
- *The people repented...the POB were judged. Now the last consequence related to the Land. God sent rain on the Land (X2).*

After **3 years** of **drought...**3 years *without storms...without showers...without sprinkles...without even dew on the grass...* God **blessed** the **land** with **rain**.

- And **you know...**that was **God's purpose all along**.
- If you read **v.1** of our passage...before **any** of this **happened**—*before the challenge...before the fire...before the judgment of the POB*—the **Lord** told **Elijah** "*I want you to go to Ahab because I want to bless my people with rain.*"

- The Lord **didn't** do this **miracle** because he wanted to **judge the POB**...he **didn't** do it because he wanted to **frighten his people**...or **show off his power**...
- The Lord **did this**—*first and foremost*—because he wanted to **bless his people with rain**. He wanted to **bless the land**.
- But **before** he could **do that**...he needed to **make it clear** that **he**—not **Baal**—was the **one sending the rain**.
- He needed to make that **clear** for his people's **own good**...so that they **didn't fall into deeper confusion**.

So...That's the challenge...and the contest...and the consequences of Elijah's showdown with the prophets of Baal. Now...what does this have to do with you and me?

Well...it's very simple: **We serve the same God that Elijah served (X2)**

We are on **mission** for the **very same God!**

- And that **doesn't** mean that we should *take on 850 False prophets on our own...or that we should try to call down fire from heaven*...
- That was **Elijah's particular mission**...he says in the **passage** that the Lord **specifically told him to do all those things**.

So it **doesn't** mean that we do **exactly** what **Elijah** did. That's **not** the **message**.

- **Rather**...the **message** is that we **serve the same God** that **Elijah did!**
- And **because of that**...we can **pursue our mission**—the **task** God has for us—*the little tasks he wants us to accomplish right now today...and the big tasks he wants us to accomplish with our whole life*—
- we can **pursue our mission** for God...with the **same confidence** that **Elijah** had.

And if we **serve our God** in the way that **Elijah did**...*if we are concerned not just about our own reputation...but about God's glory...his Lordship...his praise...if we make our true concern that his name be revered in our lives and in our community*...

- **We will not fail in our mission**. We will accomplish **everything** God has for us to **accomplish**.
- Whether it's **hard or easy**...whether it looks like the **deck is stacked against us or not**.

God has **limitless resources** at his **disposal**: And he can **help us** and **enable us** to **succeed** in his **mission**...no matter **what our challenge is**.

- If it's an **Adversary** that seems **too powerful**...*God can bring about justice. Our God specializes in bringing justice about in the most expected ways.*
- If it's a **task** that seems **too great**: *God can strengthen us. 1 Pet. 4 says "if anyone serves, let him serve with the strength God supplies."*

- *He will give you his strength...and it will be enough.*
- If it's a **physical threat**...God can **protect** you. *I had a missionary friend who always used to say "God's servants are immortal until their work is done."*
- If it's **discrimination**...God is the God with whom there is **no favoritism**. *He looks at the heart...and he can grant you the favor you need to accomplish his mission...even when others are judging you for no reason.*
- If it's a **Challenge**: A **physical limitation**...or a **disability**. *Some of God's most amazing servants...are people that others consider disabled. But God helps them not just overcome that disability...but overcome because of that disability!*

Look guys...the point is that God is the true God. He's the real God. He's the same God that Elijah served. And because of that...we can live our lives on mission.

- Without **fear**...**without** hesitation. Even when the **odds** seem stacked against us.

You know...in less than 24 hours, we'll be on a plane to Africa. And we don't know what challenges we will face: We might face a difficult task...we might face a physical threat...we might even face an adversary...or discrimination.

- *We don't know what challenges we will face.*
- *But whatever we face...we can face it with confidence.*
- *Because we serve the true God...the God of the Bible...God of Elijah.*