



APPNOTES

Date: February 18-22, 2019

Series: Elijah

Galatians 1:13-19 What's the most important thing you've ever done? How did you prepare for it? Doctors prepare for a difficult career by attending three or more years of rigorous training. Soldiers prepare for battle through months of intense boot camp. In Galatians we see that God used three years in the desert to prepare Paul to preach to the Gentiles. Would Paul tell you this time apart was easy? Maybe not. But it was necessary. The trials we face are preparing us for something big, whatever it is God has called us to do. I believe that. But even if we never see the "what" we're preparing for – if nothing else, this is time we can spend with Jesus. Let's cherish that.

Acts 7:30 I love my job. It's not exactly exciting but I think Moses' job was worse. He spent forty boring years leading sheep in the wilderness. No promotions, no vacations. Just forty years of leading helpless sheep from one watering place to another, one green pasture to the next, fighting off lions and bears. But that time wasn't wasted. God was preparing Moses for his next job: lead the Israelites out of Egypt, through the wilderness to the promised land. God was developing skills Moses would need. Knowing Israel's story, I imagine one of these skills was doing a job faithfully without recognition. The Israelites were not exactly grateful. But we're not working for anyone's praise but God's, to hear Him say, "Well done." Whatever you're facing today, piles of paperwork, sweeping up cherrios, or studying for an exam, do it faithfully, knowing that this is preparation for whatever comes next. Work to hear your Father say, "Well done."

2 Corinthians 12:9 You've heard the saying "God never gives us more than we can handle." Not true. Not true at all. "Pain with a purpose" is another catchy Christian phrase, but what purpose? He does give us more than we can handle, so that we will turn to Him and rely on His strength. That's the purpose. Maybe God will use our struggle to encourage others. Maybe it will teach us skills we'll need for whatever is coming next as part of God's plan. Don't miss this: the struggles we face are meant to show us how big and strong and powerful our God is. How much He loves us. How faithful He is to meet every need. We don't know what Paul's affliction or ailment was,

and I don't know yours. But I know God is good, loving, and kind. Trust in that. Trust God with whatever you're facing. He is faithful, and He loves you.

John 15:5 Believe it or not, soon the spring flowers will start to bloom. Crocuses first. Tulips. And forsythia. For the longest time, I didn't know what forsythia were, but I knew I enjoyed the pretty yellow bushes of star-shaped flowers. Some people like to cut the branches and put them in a vase, to bring spring inside. But the second you cut those branches they start to die. You can put them in water, and you may not see it right away, but they will eventually wither and die. You've cut them off from their source of life, the root of the tree. That's what Jesus is describing here. As Christians we need to stay connected to the source of life, Jesus Christ. When we're disconnected from Him, we will start to wither and die. Maybe you won't see that right away but, make no mistake, we need to be connected to Jesus as surely as a flower needs to be connected to its roots.

James 1:2-3 Have you ever run cross country or the 100-yard dash? They're both running, so if you can do one you can do the other, right? Not so. Training for these two events are quite different. If you want to run sprints, you practice running short distances. You want to put all your energy into a short burst that you don't need to maintain for very long. But to run cross country, you need to build up your endurance, retrain your breathing, learn to pace yourself. Endurance in running doesn't happen overnight. A cross country runner knows that there will be hills, twists and turns, and he trains for that. He doesn't only practice on a track. It's the same with the Christian life. This is not a sprint, and we need to prepare for a twisting, turning, uphill race. The trials we face in this life will build up our endurance. Our faith is made stronger, and in this we rejoice

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