

The Still Small Voice
2nd Sunday After Pentecost - Year C - 06/23/2019

Psalm Reading: 43

1st Reading: Gal 3:23-29, 2nd: 1 Kings 19:1-15a

1. Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword.

Background

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow."

Why not just warn him? (no martyrs)

3 Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life,

So Elijah does exactly what Jezebel wants.

and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. 4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness,

Goes so far that he is completely away from civilization.

and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."

Who does this remind you of? ... Jonah

*5 Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat."
6 He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again.*

God saves Elijah in a practical way.

7 The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." 8 He got up, and ate and drank;

So weary!

then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

Significance of Horeb / Sinai

9 At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Caves are common.

God comes to him in a dream.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Good question! - Not because God does not know.

10 He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

Serious problem? Yes! But reply has note of whininess.

11 He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

The presence of God – the reason Elijah came

God always everywhere, but for our own benefit...

Now, one of the most famous scenes in the OT:

Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD,

Describe rocks, power and chaos.

but the LORD was not in the wind;

But answer is not in the wind!

What must Elijah make of this?

and after the wind an earthquake,

In a cave, is the roof going to come down?

Personal story about earthquake in Seattle.

but the LORD was not in the earthquake;

Baffling to Elijah.

12 and after the earthquake a fire,

Another display of massive power ... and chaos.

Controlled and uncontrolled fire.

Forest fires / Automobiles

but the LORD was not in the fire;

Well, where then is the Lord?

and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

The whisper can only be heard in the silence.

Qol (voice) demamah (whisper/silence) daqah

(small/thin) קוֹל דְּמַמָּה דַּקָּה

13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Why a cloak over Elijah's face?

Mouth of cave – Leaving protection of cocoon.

Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

Wait, isn't that the same question we heard before?

14 He answered, “I have been zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.”

And the same answer, too?

Has Elijah not learned anything?

15 Then the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.

Specific instructions about king's anointing.

Choose Elisha as successor.

Two levels:

Chaos vs. quiet – can't hear God until chaos clears.

All these forces controlled by God, all this power and God chooses not to act through that power but through people through us.

God gives us practical advice. Speaks to us through:

Prayer / Meditation / Our Consciences / the Spirit. / The Bible / Other people...

And so, as you face the chaos, the disorder and the problems of this world. Remember that God has given you a mission in the world. To be in relation with others and to

bring God's message into the world. Like Elijah, we may run from our responsibilities, but God will always send us back again. And if we just listen, we will get all of the comfort, love, and instruction we need to continue to be and do all that God would have us be and do.

Please put yourselves into a posture for prayer...

God of Earth, Wind, and Fire, you are the mover of all things. Your power is beyond the scope of our imagining, and so it infuses us with wonder and amazement. But you are also a practical God. You come to us in our tiny lives and when we let you in, you sort out our problems, revealing to us what we must do to live a good, honest, and fulfilling life. Lord, in the chaos that surrounds us we have difficulty clearing that away and making time to listen to your word, to that still small voice that brings us comfort, hope and love.

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