



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

November 7, 2021

1 Kings 19:1-18 Elijah's crisis on the mountain

Elijah had a crisis of faith and purpose. Alone on a mountain, pursued by his enemies, he was emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausted. He had nothing left and wished for death. This is a different kind of Bible story than we are used to. In this passage Elijah is nearly broken, but it comes on the heels of what should have been his great triumph.

Elijah enters the Biblical story to tell King Ahab that his idolatry would be the cause of a great draught. He is the bearer of doom to the King who, guided by his wife Jezebel, has abandoned the worship of Yahweh in favor of her god Ba'al. This is a common temptation to the Israelites. Ba'al is a god of wind, rain, weather, and thus fertility. Ba'al was a popular god in the ancient near east pantheon.

Elijah though warns against such idolatry and after two years of draught has a great showdown with Ahab's 450 prophets of Ba'al. In the end, Elijah shows that only God is god. After showing the prophets of Ba'al to be worshipping a false god, he has them put to death. This should be his great triumph. At first Ahab celebrates the coming of rain as a result. Yet the victory is short lived. At the beginning of this passage we hear that the prize for winning this great 450-to-1 showdown is that Jezebel and Ahab want Elijah dead.

Elijah runs for his life, and suffers a great existential crisis. He feels isolated and alone. God's angels tend to Elijah. They give him bread and water and guide him to the holy place of Mount Sinai. There, he is told that he will encounter God and be restored.

In this moment of deep despair Elijah does not see God in the wind, the fire, or the earthquake. Instead, Elijah knows God in the sound of silence. Thin. Quiet.

Many of us have had dark, dark nights of despair. We have felt alone and isolated. We have felt like our work and our faith has been futile. We are used to finding God in the loud events. In awe-inspiring scenes, or emotional



moments of worship. Instead, Elijah finds God in the simple stillness.

Sometimes it is here—when we feel most alone, that we find God. God's voice comes to Elijah and reminds him that he is not alone. There are 7,000 other faithful people who he should go to. Elijah gets up from this moment finds Elisha, who will be his successor. Out of the silence comes comfort and out of the loneliness comes assurance that Elijah is not alone. The work of the prophet continues. The mission of God must go on.

As the People of God, sometimes it is okay to sit in despair. It is there that God often finds us. Sometimes we need to seek help through therapy and counsel, but sometimes the silence is enough.

Sometimes it is our job to make bread and water and share it with those who are weighed down. Sometimes it is our role to stand up and find the others who are still faithful and can join us. We are called to be faithful, not to be invincible. Like Elijah, sometimes it is in the sound of silence that we find God.