

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth**  
**January 17th, 2021**  
**Worship Leader: Rev. Beryl Orok**

**Call to Worship**

This morning we gather to meet with You Lord.  
 We gather together to listen for words of hope from Your Word; to pray for strength to be obedient and to experience Your Love.  
 As the deer longs for flowing water in the wilderness; so, we long to drink deeply and absorb Your promises for us O Lord.  
 We come this day to renew and refresh our faith: assured by the vision of Christ, whose sacrifice has made a way for us to enter into the holy of holies before You O God.  
 May our voices unite with words of praise and songs of thanksgiving as we celebrate Your redeeming love. **Amen**

**Prayer of Invocation**

God of Love, we come into Your presence with the awareness that Your love for us is from everlasting to everlasting.  
 Your love penetrates to the depth of our souls. There is nothing to compare to such love.  
 You loved us before we were even born, and You will love us throughout our lives and into eternity.  
 Fill us to overflowing with Your loving presence this day, and help us to love others, as we are loved by You. **Amen**

**Hymn #433: "All Creatures of Our God and King"**  
**Prayers of the Saints**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUZD0hgtSgE>

All creatures of our God and King  
 Lift up your voice and with us sing  
 O praise Him, Alleluia  
 Thou burning sun with golden beam  
 Thou silver moon with softer gleam  
 O praise Him, O praise Him  
 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Let all things their Creator bless  
 And worship him in humbleness  
 O praise Him, Alleluia

Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son  
 And praise the Spirit, Three-In-One  
 O praise Him, O praise Him  
 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

All the Redeemed washed by his blood  
 Come and rejoice in his great love  
 O praise Him, Alleluia  
 Christ has defeated every sin  
 Cast all your burdens now on him  
 O praise Him, O praise Him  
 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

He shall return in power to reign  
 Heaven and earth will join to say  
 O praise Him, Alleluia  
 Then who shall fall on bended knee  
 All creatures of our God and King  
 O praise Him, O praise Him  
 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

### **Call to Confession (Psalm 51: 1)**

Let us pray: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your unfailing love, according to Your great compassion blot out our transgressions. Now let us take a few moments in silence to recall our personal sins.

### **Prayer of Confession –Responsive**

Lord of the ages, in our busy lives we do not always make time to love, to pray or to praise you.

#### **Forgive us, O God**

We want to be strong; yet we often feel weak, out of control and buffeted by the winds of change and turmoil around us.

We can become rocked by earthquakes in our relationships, and burned by fires of doubt; wondering if You have forgotten us?

#### **Forgive us O God and renew in us a vision of Your great love and mercy.**

We are in such need of Your grace Lord  
 For You have not forgotten us; but rather You chose to forgive us all our sins.

#### **May the blood of your son, Jesus, cover us and so remove our sins as far as the east is from the west.**

Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. **Amen**

### Assurance of Pardon

God has given ear to our confession today.

The steadfast love of God is with us---yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Whether we turn away in doubt at times; follow timidly or joyfully; we are loved and forgiven in Christ.

Praise be to our God

**Amen.**

### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, Who art in heaven,**

**Hallow'ed is Thy name; Thy kingdom come;**

**Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread and forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.**

**Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from the evil one.**

**For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,**

**Forever and ever. Amen.**

### Responsive Reading

#### Psalm 42: 1-11

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

**My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?**

My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

**These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.**

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

**My soul is downcast within me; therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.**

Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.

**By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.**

I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?"

**My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"**

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

**Hymn #27: "As the Deer Pants for the Water" - Robin Mark (Lyrics)**

<https://youtu.be/FBppKZ0eJIQ>

As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs after you. You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

You alone are my strength my shield. To you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

You're my friend and you are my brother even though you are a king.

I love you more than any other so much more than anything.

You alone are my strength my shield.

To you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs after you.

You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

You alone are my strength my shield.

To you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

You alone are my strength my shield.

To you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

**Scripture Reading:**

**1 Kings 19: 11-18**

[11](#) The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. [12](#) After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. [13](#) When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" [14](#) He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." [15](#) The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. [16](#) Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel

Meholah to succeed you as prophet. [17](#) Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. [18](#) Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Prayer for Illumination**

Holy One, prepare us to receive Your word. As we listen in faith and hope, open our souls to Your quenching water. Free us from our doubts and fears. Enrich our minds with renewed vigor to think as You think and our hearts to love as You love. **Amen**

## **“Why Are You Here?”**

We are now well into the month of January; the first month of 2021, which we are all hoping and praying will bring about the resolve of the pandemic, in the near future. Only God knows.

January is also the month of the year when people typically make resolutions, or at least perhaps take stock of their life over the past year and ask themselves some important questions, such as; are there changes I would like to make in my life this year? What will I need to do to ensure those changes happen? How can I better serve the Lord in the months to come? What is it, God is asking of me in this new season?

A question you might not ask yourself is one that God asked a Prophet named Elijah. “Why are you here?” Or in another translation “What are you doing here?” Of course, context is everything; but today we are going to take a look into the story of Elijah and take note of this very important question.

Elijah; his name means, “The Lord is my God.” The message of his life matched his name. God wonderfully suits us to the work He designs for us, and the times were fit for Elijah and his calling.

The author Chuck Swindoll said “Elijah came plunging full force into the midst of this era of gross evil and wickedness.”

So, let me begin our study this morning by sharing a little history with you, so that, we all have a little refresher about just who Elijah was, what he had

been up to, and how he found himself being asked this question by God. "Why are you here?"

Elijah was one of many important prophets of God, living in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. He was sent to warn the nations of Israel and Judah of their need to return to worship and serve the one true God. Israel, especially, had fallen into idol worship. The prophets of God were not popular people; as prophets often aren't; but especially, during this time in the history of Israel and Judah, when to speak for God, was to go against the Kings and their authority. These prophets did pay the consequences; often with their lives!

1Kings 18: 21 Elijah came near to all the people, and said, "How long will you waver between the two sides? If Yahweh is God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." The people didn't say a word; but their actions spoke volumes.

James 5:17,18 begins to describe Elijah as a person just like us; but then goes on to say that he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three days and six months it did not rain on the earth. And he prayed again and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

When Rob and I were first married we lived, well mostly he lived, in a little place called Palmer Rapids. I say he mostly lived there because I was in nurses training at Kingston General Hospital, so I was only home on weekends.

We got to know some wonderful Polish, Irish and German folks in the area. I went to visit a friend there one day and noticed there was a string of tea bags and a rosary hung on the clothesline. My curiosity got the best of me and I had to ask why there were teabags on the clothesline.

Their elderly Polish grandmother was visiting, because one of her grandsons, my friend's son, was to be married in a few days.

I was told that Grandmother was very superstitious and apparently in Poland there was a tradition; three days prior to a wedding, teas bags and a rosary were hung on the clothesline; so that it would not rain on the day of the wedding. Superstitions can be a powerful hold in people's lives.

Elijah was not superstitious; but rather a person just likes us, who did some remarkable, miraculous things, through his faith in God and prayer.

Now at the same time in history as this famine took place, Ahab was the King of Israel and in Chapter 16 of 1 King's scripture tells us that Ahab did more to provoke the anger of God than any king before him. He was one of the

most evil kings ever; only to be outdone by his wife Jezebel. Theirs was a reign of terror, for the prophets and people of God in Israel, and Jezebel orchestrated great massacres of God's people. She was the toxic power and the driving force behind her husband the King. She kept him stirred up to do all sorts of evil; to her delight. Jezebel had introduced Ahab to idol worship when they married.

They were worshipper's of Baal; a Canaanite god, and demanded their subjects worship Baal and other idols she introduced to the King and kingdom. Ahab had a temple built to Baal in Samaria and wooden idols depicting Baal were prominent all over the land.



In Chapter 17 of 1 Kings, Elijah, distressed by the idolatry he witnessed in Israel, prayed that there would not even be dew in the land, and as a result there was a great famine. All the while; the ravens were bringing food to Elijah; meat and bread twice daily, at the Brook Kidron, where God had instructed him to go during the famine. It is interesting that God sent ravens to feed Elijah; not angels. I believe He chose to show that He can serve His own purposes, through even the creatures; just as effectively as, with the mighty angels. He is Lord of all!

When the brook dried up eventually, the Lord sent Elijah to a widow's house, who He had instructed to care for Elijah. The widow expressed to Elijah that she had only a little flour and oil left to make bread and this is where we read of the miracle of the never ending bag of flour and jar of oil that never went dry.

Elijah was a man who experienced God's provision. First the ravens fed him and then a handful of flour and a little oil miraculously increased to give sustenance.

We have a friend I am reminded of each time I read this story. His name is Jim. Jim is about the roughest, readiest old cattle farmer you'd ever meet. He had little education and he married a very beautiful woman; who was as cultured and educated as Jim was not. Together they made for the most unlikely pair you'd ever meet. Yet their marriage was solid and loving and together, they loved and served God. I always remember Jim telling us about

the pot of chili miracle. They were at a camp for young foster boys, of whom they had taken in over 40 during their days. Evie, his wife, had made chili; but as they were serving, they soon realized that the boys were hungry and the pot was emptying too fast. There was no back up for the meal. So, they and the pastor did what they could, and they prayed. Now as you can imagine, Jim was not a man taken to expressing emotion. But he began to tell Rob and I how the boys just kept on coming and the pot kept on providing. He would weep when he told us that story. Simple prayers of faith. The prayers of a righteous man availed much! God granted to them provision for their need and answered their prayers.

Contained in this section of scripture in 1 Kings we read of the account of Elijah praying for the widow's son to be restored to life.

God was not only working mightily thru Elijah; but he was providing for his needs in every way and blessing those who cared for him.

Then the time came when God sent Elijah to Ahab with a warning.

In the context of this portion of scripture we read about Obadiah, who worked in the palace for Ahab; but secretly served God and had hid 150 prophets of God from Jezebel, in a cave, and was feeding them from the King's provisions. God always has someone in the midst of the worst of situations, doing the best they can to serve Him. Obadiah must have felt very frightened sometimes; but there he was, doing his best in the place God had put him in and the mission God had called him to. Obadiah told Elijah that Ahab had been sending scouts out all over the land to find him. Obadiah was afraid that he would be pressured to tell Ahab that he knew where Elijah was. Elijah was sympathetic to Obadiah's predicament and danger, so he went to present himself to Ahab.

Ahab's greeting to Elijah is interesting Chapter 18:17, "Is that you, o troubler of Israel!"

That accusatory question opened the door for Elijah's rebuke: "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have. You have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals!"

These were very courageous words to speak to the King, and it gets even better!

Then Elijah requests Ahab to gather all the people, the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah, who were Jezebel's cohorts, to meet on Mt. Caramel.

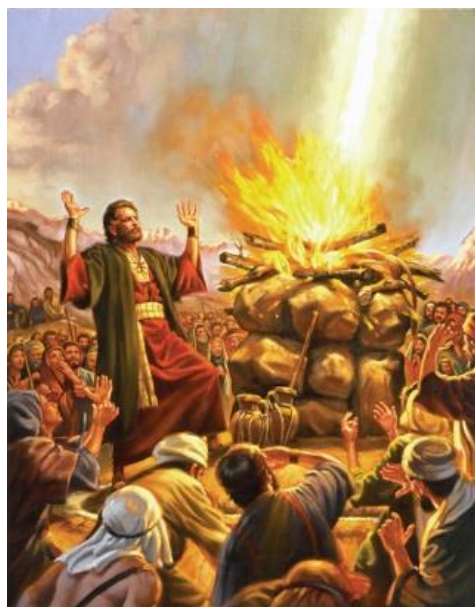


When they had assembled Elijah challenged the people and I paraphrase; “I alone am the prophet of the Lord and there are all these other prophets here. Let’s build a sacrifice of bulls on an altar and you call upon your gods and I will call on the name of the Lord and the God who answers by fire; he is God.” The prophets of Baal prepared a sacrifice of 1 of 2 bulls, cut in pieces, on an altar of wood and began to call upon their god to pour out fire upon the sacrifice. They begged for Baal to answer them, they leapt upon the altar they had made and at noon Elijah was mocking them, “Cry louder: maybe he is meditating, or busy or away on a journey. Maybe he is asleep and needs to be awakened.”

So, they upped the ante; cutting themselves till they bled and prophesied, all to no avail of course. This must have been quite a scene. They finally exhausted themselves and gave up.

Then in the evening Elijah repaired the altar using 12 stones; representing the 12 tribes of Israel, and dug a deep trench around it. He laid the bull on the wood and then doused it all with 4 barrels of water; until it was soaked. He repeated this 3 times and the trench around the altar was filled with water too.

Then Elijah prayed “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel, and that I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things as You instructed me.” v 36.



“Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that this people may know that you are the Lord God, and that You have turned their heart back again.”

Elijah prayed and the outcome was magnificent: fire fell from heaven and not only devoured the sacrifice; but the wooden altar, the stones, the dust, and licked up the water in the trench around the whole business. God never does half a job! The people exclaimed; “The Lord He is God, the Lord He is God.” The 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah were executed at Elijah’s command that day.

Now remember there was a famine in the land, because of the drought that Elijah had prayed for? Well immediately, Elijah began to pray for rain and 7 times he sent his servant to look out to

the sea, as he continued to pray. The seventh time, the servant reported seeing a cloud, the size of a man's hand and then rain began to fall.

Now it seems Ahab was still hanging around observing all of this. The irony is that Baal was supposed to be a god who provided rain and crops and had failed to do so. When the rain began to fall Ahab headed for the palace.

Now Elijah had been very busy for God; wouldn't you say!!!

He was pumped and he had expended great physical, emotional and spiritual energy. So pumped, in fact; that he ran ahead of Ahab to the palace.

What was he expecting to happen there? Did he think Ahab was convinced and was finally going to stand up to Jezebel and restore the kingdom to worshipping the true God? Did he think Jezebel would finally turn her life around and serve the true God? Was he looking for recognition? He was a person just like us after all.

It appears that at the palace court, he was close enough by to hear the conversation of Ahab to Jezebel. When Ahab told Jezebel what happened, she was enraged and made this vow to Elijah. Chapter 19: "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them, by tomorrow about this time"

In other words; Elijah you are a dead man!! There went Elijah's hopes and expectations out the window!

Jezebel's threat rocked Elijah's soul and one of Satan's greatest tools against God's people overtook him---FEAR!

Fear distorted his thinking; so that he lost sight of the power and provision of God. He instantly forgot all the recent miraculous events God had been a part of with him, and he began to run again; for his life this time. He didn't just run away from the palace and stop. He ran 100 miles away to Beersheba, in the land of Judah, where he left his ministry companion, and he ran alone farther into the wilderness, where he finally came to a halt and sat under a broom tree and said in despair—"It is enough. Now Lord take my life, for I am no better than my fathers."

Despite all he had accomplished for God; he could only see his failure to convert Ahab and Jezebel. He had worked so hard, and all he got in return was hatred, and a threat to his life. Elijah was in deep despair and misery; a dark night of the soul: depressed, exhausted and depleted. He had been serving God passionately, and dramatically, with all his being and things had not turned out as he expected. He had expended great physical, emotional

and spiritual energy. Now before we get too judgemental here; because it's easy for us to think, really Elijah?? Look what God just did to those prophets; don't you think He can handle Jezebel!! Where had the bold courageous prophet gone?

I have to say Elijah's response is a very human reaction. This is one of the many things I love about the Bible; it's so real. We learn about the people of God, with all their warts and worries, triumphs and failures, weaknesses and strengths. Just like us! And Elijah was not the only man of God who reacted this way in a disappointing time.

Moses had also asked God to take his life, when his burden seemed too great to carry while he was leading the Israelites.

Numbers 11:11-15 Moses asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant?" What have I done to displease you, that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, "Give us meat to eat!" I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If, this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me; if I have found favor in your eyes, and do not let me face my own ruin."

Likewise, Jonah preferred to die rather than watch the Ninevites repent and be spared by God.

Jeremiah, cursed the day he was born when he was hated for the words God gave him to say. Jer. 20: 14-18 Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed! <sup>15</sup>Cursed be the man who brought my father the news, who made him very glad, saying, "A child is born to you-a son!" <sup>16</sup>May that man be like the towns the Lord overthrew without pity. May he hear wailing in the morning, a battle cry at noon. <sup>17</sup>For he did not kill me in the womb, with my mother as my grave, her womb enlarged forever. <sup>18</sup>Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?

These were all great men of God; but even at their greatest; they were still just men, subject to the frailties of humanity.

This reaction is not uncommon after great expenditures of physical, emotional, and especially, spiritual energy.

Some of the great preachers of all time were subject to like reactions. I have witnessed amazing moves of God's Spirit and a church filling with people;

lives saved and changed by the power of God and on Monday the preacher became so melancholy that he was hardly able to get out of bed.

One man who loves God so deeply and passionately asked me this question, "What is wrong with me?" My answer to him was, "Nothing!!"

He simply needed a time of replenishment and rest.

Word to the wise: be compassionate and patient with your Pastor; especially on Mondays!

But then comes a very moving and inspiring account of God's loving ministry to Elijah. You see, God doesn't just love us when we are on the mountain top and serving Him with gusto; clearly following His direction, but He loves us in the mud and the mire of our lives. He loves us, and we have so little capacity to fathom how great that love is; even though He sent his son Jesus to die for us.

Now God knows where Elijah is under the broom tree and what he needs.

Scripture reminds us in Psalm 139: 7-10 says, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"

If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of dawn you are there.

If I settle on the side of the sea—even there your hand will guide me ---your right hand will hold me fast."

What a wonderful revelation of our God this is.

There, under the broom tree, Elijah was visited by the Angel of the Lord. Christology tells us the Angel of the Lord was the pre-incarnate Christ Himself. No ordinary angel!!! The angel awoke him and instructed him to arise and eat the food that was provided for him. There were no ravens this time; but the hand of God Himself provided a cake baked on coals and a jar of water to nourish Elijah.

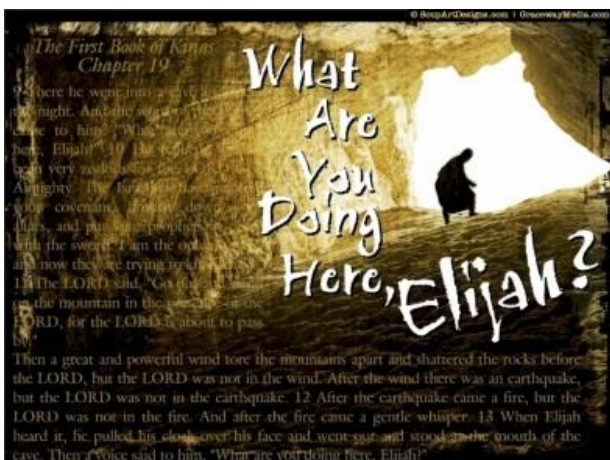
How many times do we read of Jesus in the New Testament; feeding the hungry, ministering to his disciples with a meal He had cooked on the shore for them? Even in the Old Testament, He was ministering in a personal way to people. I think perhaps we tend to see God as the God on the throne; but forget that He is the God who holds our hand.

God made us and knows our needs as humans. Missionaries learned long ago; feed the stomach of the starving first; be God's love extended to them in tangible ways, and then they might be able to listen to the Gospel.

A second time, after Elijah had drifted off to sleep again, the angel awakened him and instructed him to eat, “Come eat some more for the journey ahead is too great for you.” For 40 days and nights, those meals sustained Elijah, as he journeyed to Mt. Horeb; the mountain of God. There he found a cave or perhaps the cleft in the great rock that Moses had hid in during his encounter with God, and it was there he spent the night.

Why Horeb? Why the mountain of God? I believe that no matter how low we get or how lost we feel, we can be led by the Spirit and not even realize it. Perhaps it was the Spirit leading Elijah there or perhaps Elijah had a yearning to find God again; thinking he was lost, because he felt in such despair. Scripture doesn't tell us that Elijah was even thankful for the provisions from the angel. We can become so self-absorbed in our pain and circumstances.

It was in the cave that the presence and grace of God came to Elijah. No angel this time; but the voice of God, presenting a question.



Why are you here Elijah?”

God knew full well why Elijah was there, of course; but the great Counsellor also wanted Elijah to have a chance to tell his story. There is healing in telling our story. It lightens our load to share our story with another and God was listening. God listened to Elijah!!

Elijah opened up to say in 1 Kings 19:10, “I have been zealous for the

Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and now they seek to take my life. “

Remember Obadiah; hiding prophets and the people who had recently made the proclamation at Mt. Caramel, “The Lord He is the God!!”

Elijah seemed to have forgotten all of them. God makes no comment about this statement.

Have you ever tried to talk somebody out of feeling the way they are feeling, or thinking the way they are thinking; only to lose the battle in a debate? Or have the person completely shutting down on you?

We can learn so much from God's example here about dealing with others who are in emotional pain.

God finally says, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord." Now, this was not a fearsome order; but rather a gentle nudge I believe.

But Elijah ignored it. We do that too, when we are so lost in our suffering and self-pity.

The Bible tells us the LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by. "Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face, and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon once in the 1860's and in essence said: "Powerful means may altogether fail to impress some minds-and harsh judgements may only serve to harden the heart towards God. Or men may submit themselves; but in a false way, as displays of power and terror do not win the heart. "

But God always know what is best and how best to get our attention.

Elijah wrapped his face in reverence; perhaps some shame, and listened. That gentle whisper, or that still small voice, as other translations say, brought him out of the cave.

And after the fire had come the STILL SMALL VOICE!!

Elijah heard the still small voice. We are not told what the voice said; but rather the manner in which it was presented. A STILL SMALL VOICE.

The Almighty God, the lover of his soul, spoke to Elijah and he heard it. He covered his face and came out of the cave (in more than one way).

The question is asked again, "Elijah what are you doing here?"

Again, Elijah told his woeful story again; still hurting, still looking back; but he had taken a step of faith, and come out of the cave and God honoured that.

I can almost see God smiling and looking with compassion on His servant, at that point, He knew exactly what Elijah needed.

He needed exactly what Peter had needed; after he had denied three times that he had ever known Jesus; after proclaiming his faithfulness to Jesus

earlier. Peter needed to hear that Jesus still had a plan and a purpose for his life, and that he was forgiven and loved by Jesus; despite his failings.

God recommissioned Elijah: there was no chastisement; just patience, provision and love! Kings 19:15 The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came. Go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael as king over Aram. <sup>16</sup> Also anoint Jehu as king over Israel. He is the son of Nimshi. And anoint Elisha from Abel Meholah as the next prophet after you. He is the son of Shaphat. <sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death anyone who escapes Hazael’s sword. And Elisha will put to death anyone who escapes Jehu’s sword. <sup>18</sup> But I will keep 7,000 people in Israel for myself. They have not bowed down to Baal. And they have not kissed him.”

People of God need to be about their Father’s business; we need to feel useful to God; to have a meaningful outlet for our God given gifts, and a venue in which to express our passion and love of Christ.

It was the same for Elijah. God opened the door for him; revealing to him that he was not alone. There were many others who had not bent their knee to worship Baal. God provided a companion in ministry; Elisha, and that’s another wonderful story!

God’s dealing with Elijah reminds me of Jesus dealing with Peter. Jesus could have said a lot of things to Peter, about his betrayal, but instead; He said, “Feed my sheep.”

Elijah’s fear was gone! He was replenished and restored and recommissioned.

So, this question that is relevant to each of us this morning: “Why are you here? What are you doing here?”

I pray you will study this story of Elijah on your own and listen; listen quietly and expectantly for the still small voice, from the lover of your soul!!

He knows what we have been through in the past, where we have been, where we are right now and what lies in the future for each of us.

Never doubt that He has a plan and a purpose for your life and it may be something even better than you could ever possibly imagine right now.

**Hymn: “Christ Is Mine Forevermore”, City Alight (Lyric Video)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roQovDZeAWE>

1. Mine are days that God has numbered  
I was made to walk with Him  
Yet I look for worldly treasure  
And forsake the King of kings

**Chorus**

But mine is hope in my Redeemer  
Though I fall His love is sure  
For Christ has paid for every failing  
I am His forevermore

2. Mine are tears in times of sorrow  
Darkness not yet understood  
Through the valley I must travel  
Where I see no earthly good

**Chorus 2**

But mine is peace that flows from heaven  
And the strength in times of need  
I know my pain will not be wasted  
Christ completes His work in me

3. Mine are days here as a stranger  
Pilgrim on a narrow way  
One with Christ I will encounter  
Harm and hatred for His name

**Chorus 3**

But mine is armor for this battle  
Strong enough to last the war  
And He has said He will deliver  
safely to the golden shore

**Chorus 4**

And mine are keys to Zion city  
where beside the King I walk  
For there my heart has found its treasure  
Christ is mine forevermore

**Bridge**

Come rejoice now O my soul  
For His love is my reward  
Fear is gone and hope is sure  
Christ is mine forevermore

**Offering**

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3)

**We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer.** This note from our treasurer.



E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. [standrewsperthoffering@gmail.com](mailto:standrewsperthoffering@gmail.com) Please include your Offering Envelope # in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

### **Invitation to Offering:**

God invites us to be “cheerful givers” from the blessings and provision He gives to us. So, at this time let us give thanks and give freely to the work of the Lord.

### **Offertory Prayer**

**Loving God we are grateful to have this opportunity to give back a portion of what You have blessed us with. Let us share who we are as Your church in the world with open hearts and hands. May this offering be an expression of our faith and may it be used for the furtherance of Your kingdom to bring blessing to many. Amen**

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Loving, Eternal, Almighty God: We pray today with the assurance that You hear our prayers and You care about our burdens. Many today have fearful hearts; burdened thoughts concerning the pandemic, which seems so relentless. We ask that we, as Your people, will have words of faith and encouragement to offer to those in such need. We pray at this time, more people will turn to You and we will have opportunity to share the gospel of hope, peace, joy and love, that only Jesus can offer.

We pray for the leaders of our Government at all levels; federal, provincial, and municipal; that You would give them wisdom as to how to best manage this situation. We give thanks for the hope found in the vaccination program; but so many are grieving the loss of loved ones and we ask that You would be the God of comfort to them.

We continue to pray for all those involved in our education system that they would be safe; teachers, students, custodial persons, and parents.

We are mindful of those with connection to our congregation specifically; but all those, who are residing in long term care and senior's residences, who are isolated from their loved ones. May

those who care for them be Your hands extended to them during this difficult time.

We pray for the people of the United States of America that in the upcoming inauguration there would be no violence.

Like never before our world needs you Lord!

For the Leadership of St. Andrew's we pray for discernment, and direction. Thank you for those who labor faithfully in various capacities to ensure the needs of the congregation are best met. May You lead and guide in the search for a Pastor for this assembly.

For all those listed in our Prayers for the People; some with encouraging reports of late; but all seeking healing. We pray especially for Ann Savage and Joanna Savage. Hear our prayer for their healing O God and may the healing virtue of Jesus Christ flow through their bodies. Thank you for their faith and the faith of all these people, which is an example to all of us.

We are forever grateful Lord for Your loving presence in our lives. And so we pray in Jesus Name. **Amen.**

### Hymn #622:

### “Go Now In Peace”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T\\_KSLqIAcM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T_KSLqIAcM)

Go now in peace, never be afraid  
 God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day  
 Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true  
 Know God will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.  
 Reach out to others so all the world can see.  
 God will there, watching from above.  
 Go now in peace, in faith and in love.

*Before I pronounce the Benediction, I would like to express thanks, on behalf of Rob and myself, for the lovely poinsettia and other treats from the congregation here at St. Andrew's. It is such a blessing in our lives, to be made welcome to worship with you and to have been given the opportunity to lead in your worship services.*

*To those who went to such great effort to deliver the Advent Devotional to our home, and to those who made a special trip to deliver other goodies for us to enjoy; please know that we were deeply touched by your love and kindness.*

*Blessings Abundant to each of you and may this new year before us unite and strengthen us as we serve God together.*

**Benediction**

Go now and live in the righteousness that comes from faith.

Delight in seeking the Lord.

Remember what God has done and proclaim the good news of Christ so that all may hear and believe and be saved.

And may the power of the presence of God be with you.

May Christ's word be near to you; on your lips and in your heart.

And may the Holy Spirit give you courage and calm your fears.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord and each other. Amen