



The Church of Scotland

Place for Pause

A WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHURCH AND COUNTRY
17th - 22nd August 2020

WEDNESDAY 19TH AUGUST • LISTENING FOR THE STILL SMALL VOICE

Reading - 1 Kings 19:1-13

Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died." Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, "Get up and eat!" He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again. Then the angel of the Lord came again and touched him and said, "Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God.

There he came to a cave, where he spent the night. The Lord spoke to Elijah. But the Lord said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah replied, "I have zealously served the Lord God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too." "Go out and stand before me on the mountain," the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And a voice said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Reflection

I suppose we always imagine that we'll find God in the mountain top experiences of our lives. In our biblical narratives that is, after all, where God seems to speak.

And yet what our scripture reading says to us this morning is actually the closer reality for most of us.

For God is so often in the small things, in the stillness and even in the silence. So it's up to us in the midst of our own busyness or inner chaos to stop and listen for that still small voice of God.

I hope that somewhere today, you will find time to stop and listen for that still, small voice that is never ever very far away. For that's where so often God is waiting to meet us.

Prayer

We too, caring God, have known fear.
We too have felt like running away when life got too much.
We too, like Elijah, have wanted to say to you, 'I've had enough.'

In the stillness of the morning, hear our cries,
and reassure us that it's ok not always to be ok.

But you have not, and will not, leave us,
though there may be seasons of feeling exactly that.
At our lowest points, somehow you are there -
sending ministering angels, providing daily bread -
just enough to keep us going.

In the stillness of this morning, assure us of your presence.

We too, Loving God, have grown weary, as Elijah was,
of the way in which you have been forgotten
and your name not honoured.
And yet, often in the least likely places,
we see signs of your Kingdom.

In the stillness of this morning,
hear us as cry out for our communities, our countries -
and keep us all the while free of harsh and judgemental spirits.

We too, Lord, have looked for you
in the clatter of thunder and flash of lightning,
in the extraordinary and dramatic.
Today, might we be still enough to hear you in the near-silence of the gentle whisper?
Your still, small voice sounding through the ages - quietly and yet persistently?

In the stillness of this morning, hear us, Lord. Might we be open to hear you.

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He 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 be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
AMEN.

Daily Activity

Find 3

On a walk today look out for 3 things you think are special. (Or do this in your home or garden). Maybe they're beautiful. Maybe they're unusual. Maybe they're things you can take home or things you need to leave where they are.

Pause and think about each thing.

What does it remind you about Jesus?

Maybe you'll choose a big stick. Maybe that reminds you about Jesus' strength and power.

Or maybe it makes you think of a walking stick and it reminds you that he will always help you wherever you go. Maybe you love creatures and you choose a snail. It's home is on its back and maybe that would remind you that Jesus promises us a home in heaven. Talk about your discoveries as a family or with your friends. How does it encourage you today to remember these things about Jesus? Turn your thoughts into a prayer of praise. Start with "Wow Jesus, you ..." and use your thoughts to complete the sentence.

For example, "Wow Jesus, you are strong and powerful. Wow Jesus, you promise us a home in heaven."