

“GOD WHISPERS”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: 1 KINGS 19:1-15(a)

GOD’S WORD: PSALM 42

I – ELIJAH, JEZEBEL, & AHAB:

As you read the Old Testament book of Kings you have to take note of a couple of real winners. The first is Ahab, the king of Israel. He is recorded in the Hebrew history as the worst King that Israel ever had. He gets this distinction mainly because it’s when the Israelites were led to turn away from their God and instead worship the foreign God/idol Baal.

You can’t really blame him. It appears to me as I read the writings about him he was merely a puppet king. His biggest mistake in life was marrying a woman named Jezebel. She was the daughter of a king from another culture and she is the one who brought her religion and worship of Baal to Israel. She appointed and financed 450 prophets for her false God while persecuting the prophets of God. She was a bad person. One commentator describes her as extremely evil. Ahab’s greatest problem is that he was a complete wimp and never once stood up to his wife...but it doesn’t appear that anyone did...except one.

Elijah was a prophet of God who did what God told him to do and said what God told him to speak. He and Jezebel were not on good terms and that led to the events that lead us into today’s Scripture and lesson.

II – 1 KINGS 18:20-40

Elijah decided enough was enough. The people of Israel were wavering between two opinions...follow and worship Baal or follow and worship God. He went and confronted Ahab and then had him summon the 450 prophets of Baal. He instructed the prophets that they and he would set up an altar and sacrifice a bull in honor of their god. Then they would have their god consume the offering with fire, but they weren’t allowed to light it. Their god had to do it.

So the prophets of Baal agreed and they prepared the one bull and put it on the altar and commenced to call on their god Baal to light it up. They called on him from morning until noon.

When he didn't answer they started dancing. Elijah started having fun at their expense suggesting Baal was asleep, or away on a trip, or maybe had to relieve himself. The prophets shouted all the louder and started cutting themselves with knives and swords until blood gushed out to call their god. But fire never consumed the bull.

Next Elijah called the people over to him and they watched as he rebuilt the altar of God which had been torn down. Around the altar he dug a trench. He covered the altar with wood and then cut up the bull and placed it on the wood. He then had water poured over the wood and the offering and filled the trench with water too. He then prayed to God whose fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the offering, the altar, the stones, even the dust and dried up the water in the trench as well.

His next step was to order the people to seize Jezebel's 450 Baal prophets and he took them and killed them all. That leads us into this morning's Scripture with some understanding.

III – TEXT:

1 Kings 19:1-15(a) (NLT)

¹ When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. ² So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them." ³ Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. ⁴ 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." ⁵ 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!" ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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." ⁸ 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. ⁹ There he came to a cave, where he spent the night.

The LORD Speaks to Elijah

But the LORD said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ "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. ¹² 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. ¹³ 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?" ¹⁴ He replied again, "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." ¹⁵ Then the LORD told him, "Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus.

Jezebel was more than a little upset. She sent word to Elijah that within 24 hours he would be a dead man. A man who had been pretty brave earlier suddenly becomes afraid. Elijah had hoped that by doing what he did, Jezebel would get the message, end pagan worship, and turn the people back to God. It didn't work...SHE WANTED HIM DEAD!

So he flees to Beersheba where he left his servant. No sense in him being killed too. He then went out into the wilderness for a while and stops and sits under a tree and tells God to just kill me now. I've had enough. He lays down and goes to sleep. But God isn't done with him yet. He sends an angel who wakes him up and shows him bread and water that God was providing for him. He then got up and walked for 40 days until he came to the mountain of God, the mountain where God had shown himself to Moses. He came to Mount Sinai where he found a cave and spent the night.

Then God decides it's time to have a little chat with his prophet and asks him what he's doing here in the cave. Elijah seems to do a little whining and tells God things he has done for God and now he is the only prophet God still has active now and the people are trying to kill him as they have all the other prophets before him.

God doesn't argue with him but tells him to go out and stand before him on the mountain, and Elijah does. The story says that while he's standing there a mighty windstorm hit the mountain and tore rocks around him loose. After that an earthquake hit and after that a fire storm started. But it says that God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire.

Then it says that there was a gentle whisper and God was in that whisper and it's in this whisper that Elijah conversed with God.

IV – STILL QUIET VOICE:

My point today is found in this story from Elijah. It is especially found in the verses of wind, earth, and fire that concludes in a gentle whisper. As we think of God and the way he communicates with his children, we tend to think and imagine the grandiosity of how that should be done. We want to

think that when God speaks and acts it's more an event of thunder that carries his voice. But God does not always move in the realm of the extraordinary. He speaks to us in mundane ways.

This is the way he calls most of his children to work. The majority of life's service is in a quiet routine. It's in a humble obedience to God's will. I can tell you that I have no doubt in my mind that God has spoken to me in many ways. One was audibly in my head when he told me to start a young adult's class at my home church. I know that he spoke to me, mainly in my heart, when I was called to the ministry. I can tell you stories about being nudged to go places or speak to people where I have been put in a position to show his love. Not once was there a flash of lightning, not once was there a booming voice that others could hear. An angel didn't appear with a trumpet and a scroll to call me to service. It was that whisper of God that spoke to me and led me.

I know of others who have heard this still quiet voice. Most of the stories I hear its God whispering to their heart as he comforts them, consoles them, or calls them. The question for today is, "ARE YOU LISTENING?"

V – WHICH VOICE:

There are so many things clamoring for our attention today that we sometimes are listening to the wrong voice and we can't hear Gods. It's like when I'm in a room full of our preteens or teens teaching confirmation or leading their youth group. My hearing Aides are a wonderful thing when just one of them is talking but we all know that's not the case with those age groups. They are all talking at the same time offering their opinions or a story they have to share and then I can't hear the one talking.

We live in a world where everyone is talking. The TV, the people around you, family, newspapers and more all bring you their side of the story. They all seem to be shouting to get your attention. Even inanimate objects such as your cellphones and computers are clamoring for your attention with texting, tweeting, and messaging. Let's not forget Facebook and snapchat. It is my observation that these things take up an inordinate amount of your time and your attention.

It sure seems like all of these try to speak in a windstorm or earthquake or fire storm...and you listen. All the time God is waiting to hear from you and trying to speak to you but...God Whispers.

You must make the choice if you will listen to the voice of the world, or if you will listen to the voice of God.

AMEN