

Elijah and the Still Small Voice

After his great victory, Elijah flees in fear and despair. God meets him not in wind, earthquake, or fire, but in a gentle whisper.

1 Kings 19:1-18

CHARACTERS: Elijah, Jezebel, God

THEMES: God's gentleness, Depression and hope, God meets us in weakness

WHEN WICKED QUEEN Jezebel heard what Elijah had done to her prophets of Baal, she sent a messenger to him: 'May the gods deal with me if I don't make your life like theirs by this time tomorrow!'

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. After a day's journey into the wilderness, he sat down under a broom bush and prayed that he might die. 'I have had enough, Lord. Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' Then he lay down and fell asleep.

An angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.' There by his head was bread baked over hot coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank, then lay down again.

The angel came back a second time. 'Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.' So he ate and drank and traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

'I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty,' Elijah replied. '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.'

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. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

A voice said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'

Again Elijah poured out his complaint. Again he said he was all alone.

But the Lord had work for him to do—kings to anoint, a successor to appoint. And God corrected Elijah's despair: 'I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal.'

Elijah was not alone. God came to him not in dramatic displays of power, but in a still, small voice. Sometimes that is exactly what a weary soul needs.