



NCFI Cares: The Lord's Presence: A Two-Fold Response to Despair

"...the LORD was not in the wind...the LORD was not in the earthquake...the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire, there was a soft whisper. (1 Kings 19:11-12)"

After Elijah received divine nourishment from the pre-incarnate Christ, he traveled for 40 days and 40 nights to a cave in the mountain Horeb. There he slept. The Lord awakened Elijah with the question, "Why are you here, Elijah?" Elijah once again explains his zealous service. This time, the Lord provided a two-fold response.

The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord. Look, the Lord is ready to pass by (1 Kings 19:11).

First, the LORD sent a powerful wind that caused landslides, earthquake, and fire. God was not in these powerful events. The presence of the LORD was in the soft whisper. Elijah covered his face recognizing the whisper as holy and divine. Bible scholars state the reason for the extreme weather events prior to the soft whisper, was to remind Elijah that God's work is most often in the unseen things – like a changed heart.

Then, the LORD provided Elijah with specific directions for his next steps in ministry.

"Go back the way you came...anoint Hazael king over Syria...anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to take your place as prophet." (1 Kings 19:15-16)

The Lord was clear to Elijah. He was not done. In fact, my personal thought is the Lord had a sense of humor by saying "Go back the way you came....". Repeatedly the Lord has asked Elijah, "Why are you here?" This time, the Lord just sent him back into the ministry.

Elijah's sacrifice and work has not been in vain. There is a future prophet to mentor and 7000 faithful followers needing a leader.

As we conclude our time with Elijah, the Lord has the same two-fold response for us who are weary and are saying "It's enough."

First, God is with us! We have the Holy Spirit within us. He speaks as a soft whisper that we will recognize. We don't need to hide in a cave to hear His voice. We can just open the Scriptures and hear His voice. During the most challenging and difficult time of Elijah's ministry, the Lord reached out with a personal, intimate voice. Himself. Thus, we are assured that out of our suffering comes a deeper intimacy with Christ. A connecting that fills us with joy, grace, and peace (Romans 15:13).

Furthermore, don't become discouraged when we do not witness the fruit of our ministry. God may not eradicate COVID, poverty, nor suffering; God is moving in the hearts of people to achieve a faithful following. Listen for the soft whisper of the Holy Spirit who is working within our clinics and communities. (John 6:37).

Finally, God is not done with us! No matter how discouraged, depressed, or exhausted you may be, you still have work to do! Your ministry is not over. Opening our heart to the work God has called us to will extinguish those arrows of doubt and despair. (Ephesians 6:16)

Blessings,
Carrie

For further study:

Two Articles by J. H. Keathly III

15. The Crisis of Elijah (1 Kings 19:4- 14 <https://bible.org/seriespage/15-crisis-elijah-1-kings-194-14>)

16. The Restoration of Elijah 1 Kings 19:4-18, Keathly III, J. H. <https://bible.org/seriespage/16-restoration-elijah-1-kings-195-18>

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