

**In the name of our Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

<sup>3</sup>Elijah was afraid, and he ran for his life. He went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and he left his servant there. <sup>4</sup>But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. There he sat down under a broom tree, where he prayed that he would die. He said, "I've had enough, LORD. Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers." <sup>5</sup>Then he lay down and went to sleep under the broom tree.

Suddenly an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." <sup>6</sup>Then he looked around, and near his head there was a loaf of bread baking on coals and a jar of water, so he ate and drank, and then he lay down again.

<sup>7</sup>Then the angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, because the journey is too much for you." <sup>8</sup>So he got up and ate and drank. Then, with the strength gained from that food he walked for forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. **This is God's Word.**

**Dear Friends,**

Have you ever had an Elijah moment? What I mean, have you ever gotten to a point where you are overwhelmed by life, or you have been working hard and just don't seem to get anywhere, or things just aren't turning out the way you thought they should and you are getting tired – tired of life in general? Some might call it depression; others might call it burn out but no matter what you call it, what do you do? Elijah had reached that point and so he cried out to the Lord but, **"How Does God Deal with Our Cries of Anguish?"** As we consider the portion of scripture before us this morning, we see that, **"God Patiently Listens,"** and then, **"He Gives Us What We Need."**

**I.** If you know anything about Elijah, you might think that at this point in history he should be riding an emotional high. After all, he had defeated the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, the people had put these prophets to death and then Elijah announced that the rain was coming – in other words, three years of drought was about to end. It seemed that the people had turned back to God and faithfulness to God would be the rule of the land but the influence of wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel was enormous.

As soon as the Queen heard what had happened on Mt. Carmel, she sent a messenger to Elijah vowing to take his life within 24 hours. If she really wanted to kill him she would have sent an assassin but her intent was to scare Elijah so much that he would leave the country and then she wouldn't have to deal with him or his God. Her message had an impact. we are told, **"Elijah was afraid, and he ran for his life. He went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and he left his servant there. <sup>4</sup>But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness."**

Then Elijah poured out his heart to the Lord, **"There he sat down under a broom tree, where he prayed that he would die. He said, "I've had enough, LORD. Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers."** He had had enough. Just like his ancestors, he had proclaimed God's Word and it seemingly had no impact on the people. Evil seemed to win out and it was like things were never going to change. Elijah felt like he had wasted his time and now he was telling God, "I think I have suffered enough. Take me home to heaven. I am ready."

Elijah wasn't the only one of God's messengers that ever felt this way. When Moses was bombarded with complaints from the Children of Israel, it seemed like he would never be able to give them what they wanted and to lead them and so he, too, asked the Lord to take him home to heaven. (Numbers 11:15) And Jonah, when things were not going as he expected also said he had had enough and asked the Lord to end his life (Jonah 4:3,8). I would guess at some point in your lives you might have had similar feelings.

You are overwhelmed and tired by your situation and ready for the Lord to take you home to heaven where you won't have any more worries or cares. Have you ever felt like saying, "Lord, I've done all I can do. I'm tired – take me home?" My grandfather died when I was in high school. Shortly after his funeral my grandmother was ready to die too. They had been married over 50 years and once Grandpa died, she felt life was pretty much over. Over the next twenty years she would lament about why was she still here on this earth? She wondered why hadn't God taken her home to heaven yet? She felt alone, even though she wasn't. But, God does everything in his own time and God's timeline and plans for my grandma were a little different than hers.

That's important for us to remember too. Sometimes we are overwhelmed and/or feel all alone. That's how Elijah felt but if we keep reading, we will come to the part where God assures Elijah that there are 7000 other believers and he is not alone. We are not alone either. We are surrounded by our church family here at Beautiful Savior and even when you are not here, your church family is still concerned about you. You are not alone because God is always with you and watching over you. God knew what Elijah needed and he knows what we need. After all, he has promised to work everything out for our good according to his purpose and so we always want to remember that God hears our cry – even our cries of anguish – he patiently listens to our prayers and he gives us what we need according to his plan and his will for our lives.

**II. The first thing Elijah need was rest and so we are told, “<sup>5</sup>Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.”** God brought Elijah the peaceful sleep he needed but Elijah also needed nourishment and that is why, **“Suddenly an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” <sup>6</sup>Then he looked around, and near his head there was a loaf of bread baking on coals and a jar of water, so he ate and drank, and then he lay down again.”** The Lord wasn't ready to take Elijah home to heaven. There was still work to be done and so, **“<sup>7</sup>Then the angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, because the journey is too much for you.” <sup>8</sup>So he got up and ate and drank. Then, with the strength gained from that food he walked for forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.”**

We believe that Mt Horeb is the back side of Mt Sinai where God made his covenant with his people. God was going to speak to Elijah in this important place and guide him to complete the work the Lord had prepared for him. In this way God was giving him purpose in life and helping Elijah to see what was important.

What is our purpose in life? It is not always clear but the Lord knows. I had a lady who was a shut in and sometimes she would complain that she had lived too long. She couldn't understand why God was keeping her here on this earth. She was almost completely blind, had a hard time

hearing and the only reason she was still in her own home was because her adult daughter lived with her and helped take care of her. This daughter didn't think much of organized religion – she had had some bad experiences with the church but every Sunday this lady and her daughter would sit and listen to our worship services on the radio. There was a reason God did not take this lady home to heaven. She was there for the benefit of her daughter. So that her daughter could hear the gospel on a regular basis with her mom.

We don't always know what God has planned for us and sometimes it isn't always apparent to us, but he has a purpose for our lives. Sometimes he is fulfilling a need we have, sometimes he is using our circumstances to draw us closer to him and sometimes he is using us to reach out to some one else but God has a plan for each one of us.

It began at our baptism when we were called to faith and has continued throughout our lives as God put different people into our lives and put us into the lives of others. Throughout the process we have had our ups and downs but God has come to us with forgiveness and continues to speak to us through his Word. Elijah listened to God and was refreshed by him. We too, want to listen to our Savior as he encourages us and refreshes us through his Word. As our gospel lesson reminds us, he is the Bread of Life and he is the one who brings us true rest for our souls as he nourishes us and guides us.

There are times when we may get depressed and tired and we may cry out to the Lord in frustration. Remember that the Lord hears us and answers us so trust in the Lord; listen to him as he speaks to you through his Word and he will refresh you as he lifts you up and prepares you for whatever he has planned for your future. Amen.