

The Little Big Things #5
Small Voices
June 30, 2024

Before we get started today, I want to define two words: small and voice.

Small: without force or loudness

**Voice: expiration of air with the vocal cords drawn close so as to vibrate audibly
:The right of expression**

I have a question for you;

Have you ever felt like you were the only one...singled-out, the odd person,
the only one that feels a certain way? Isolated...alone?

Turn with me to 1 Samuel 30:1-6

Read.

Here is some background to the story:

The story begins in the ashes of Ziklag. David and his 600 soldiers have just returned from the Philistine war front to find the city in total devastation. A band of Amalekites had swept down from the mountains, and looted the village and had taken the women and children hostage.

God tells David to go after the enemy and reveals that David and his men will most certainly overtake the marauders and rescue their loved ones.

Halfway into their journey, the army stops to refresh themselves at the brook called "Besor".

The soldiers rest their weary bones and soak their swollen feet.

But when it's time to march...Two hundred choose to rest. Or maybe they are too tired to continue. They are exhausted. They have found their "done place".

"You go on without us".

Today I want to share with you that our God, lifts up the weary. Not only the weary but He pursues those who have given up. Those who are not even near a brook Besor. But are in a dry and thirsty land. Does God hear? Does He act and move toward the despairing?

DESPAIR, n.

1. Hopelessness; a hopeless state; a destitution of hope or expectation.

Question: Do you know what despair does to us? It takes our voice

Turn with me to 1 Kings 19:1

(Read)

First Kings 18-19 records Elijah's deadly confrontation with the priests who represented the worship of Ba'al. Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to an ancient version of the OK corral.

My God against yours. Whosever God answers with fire is God. Unfortunately for the prophets of Baal, Baal was blind, deaf and mute that day.

In response to Elijah's prayer, fire fell from heaven, supremely demonstrating Yahweh's power and authority.

An event that was truly unforgettable. Or was it?

After that the false prophets were put to the sword. In doing this, Elijah directly challenged not only the religious system of the state, but also stood directly against the political establishment led by the impotent King Ahab. Ahab was ruled by his wife Jezebel, the true power behind the throne.

After the consuming fire from heaven, Ahab quickly ran to his queen to report on the events. The queen immediately sent a threat to Elijah.

By this time tomorrow, you're a dead man.

(Read vv. 2)

The Septuagint adds a phrase to Jezebel's threat:

"As surely as you are Elijah, and I am Jezebel."

It was as though the queen was pitting her name, meaning "Where is Baal?" against the prophet's name, meaning "Yahweh is God".

Though fearless in the face of the impotent Ahab, Elijah took Jezebel's threat seriously. He wasted no time fleeing to another country that was at least eighty miles away!

He burrowed deep into the desert, expecting to die in the wilderness.

(Read vv. 3-4)

The day before, he was telling the king what to do. Calling down fire from heaven. Standing for Yahweh.

This day, he was done. Finished.

How is it that Elijah, who seemed to act with fearlessness before the false prophets, shifted so quickly to a position of resigned despair?

Remember despair: Hopelessness; a hopeless state; a destitution of hope or expectation.

We don't really know.

Andrew Maclaren wrote of this type of despair "Despair is always color-blind; it can only see the dark tints."

Considering Elijah's sudden change in behavior we do know that Elijah has forgotten something and is remembering something.

Jezebel has gotten Elijah to remember that he is breakable. He can be hurt. He can be killed. He has somehow "forgotten" that it is God who rules and not some puppets on a throne.

And when the prophet forgets, the only future he could see had him in a pine box.

But God...but God...provided a juniper tree...and bread and water...

(Read vv. 8-9)

God prepares Elijah to travel to Horeb. Mount Sinai where Moses saw the "burning bush". It will be the place where Elijah see's God as well.

Our lives seem to be much like Elijah's. How is it that we somehow "forget" what God has done in our lives and regress to old ways of living and remembering.

Even when we know the facts about grace, about our identity as the "beloved", we still often feel ashamed and inadequate. Angry and resentful. We so easily resort to living as broken orphans again.

Write this down: What we forget, and what we remember will shape our choices in our lives. What we forget and what we remember will cause us to despair or to arise.

Yet there is great hope arising in this account.

God goes and finds Elijah in the cave, and asks Elijah a question. A question that draws us into relationship. A question that allows us to tell our story. To tell our fears, frustrations.

(Read vv. 9-10)

"What are you doing here, Elijah? Notice that God calls him by name. notice that Elijah believes that he is alone...despair will do that. You will forget, and you will believe that you are alone.

God is about to challenge that lie.

On the very same mountain where Moses stood and asked to see God's glory...God tells Elijah to stand before Him!

(Read vv. 11-12)

God is calling Elijah to remembrance, of who He is. He is the God who rends the mountains with a tempest. The God who shakes the foundation of the universe...the consuming God...

Yet, He is the God of the Gentle Whisper. That is where He is found. For those that have gone into the wilderness...for those who have forgotten who they are, our God speaks.

That phrase "a gentle blowing" has been translated many ways. "a gentle, little breeze, a sound of thin silence, a light whisper, and my favorite..."a still small voice".

Once God had Elijah's attention by gently calling him out of hiding, He inquires again...
"What are you doing here, Elijah?"

(Read vv. 13)

God then calls Elijah to remember who he is. He also tells Elisha that he is not alone. In fact Elijah was not alone but was one of seven thousand who had remained faithful to Yahweh!

(vv. 15-18)

Our God does the same with us. First, He comes to our deserts and lonely mountain caves. **He asks us questions, sometimes difficult ones, challenging what we remember and what we are to forget.**

His probing sometimes leaves us exhausted, angry and even terrified.

I want you to know that the question "What are you doing here?" is never asked with scorn or to belittle.

The question is asked with the tone of One who is eager for us to remember who we are and Who's we are.

How would our lives change if we spent more time letting God love us, healing us and encouraging us?

Sometimes we have convinced ourselves that we are the only one's left, it makes us isolated, fearful and alone. Elisha was never alone.

I wish for you to know that God will sit with us, encourage us, feed us, give us time to heal, until we realize that we have not been abandoned, we are not alone.

Even when we are not paying attention, God does not cease His pursuit.

He whispers again, inviting us to meet with Him, to wrestle, to complain and to weep.

When we are finished, He will gently ask again, "What are you doing here?"

Each time He asks we will tell our story...differently. Because like Elijah, we must include that experience of hearing a Voice telling us that we are not alone.

We are not alone!!!

And hearing that voice...and remembering that truth, that we are never alone...

"For I will never leave or forsake you".

And in hearing that Voice, that will change what we remember...and we will forget the past....

And that will change the way that we live our future....

**Voice: expiration of air with the vocal cords drawn close so as to vibrate audibly
:The right of expression**

What are you doing here?

Selah.