

Hello everyone; hope you are having a good week. My family and I are getting ready to go to conference, so there will be no sermon next week. Pray for conference, safe travel and my mom. Thank you.

The following Sunday (7-7-13) Patty has been invited to preach at Good Shepherd in Ginghamburg so pray for her too. There will be NO bible study this coming wed. 7-4-13 but please try and come on the 10th.

I have included this weeks call to worship; offeratory statment and benediction. God bless you all and have a great two weeks!

Pastor Don.

From Psalm 28

" To You I will cry, O Lord my Rock: Do not be silent to me, lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. 2 Hear the voice of my supplications When I cry to You, When I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary. Blessed be the Lord, Because He has heard the voice of my supplications! 7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him."

OFFERING:

Ken Jones tells us in his book "When You're All Out Of Noodles" the following story. He arrived at his office one day and saw this object plugged into the wall outlet. He asked the receptionist what it was. She said it was an ambient noise generator. She said some times it is too quite in the office and you can hear people talking in their counseling sessions, so in order to protect peoples privacy, they turn on this little noise maker and it covers the voices. He asked about how loud this noise would have to be; not very came the reply. The consistency of the sound tricks the ear so that longer distinguish what is being said.

Very interesting thought Ken Jones; one kind of noise to cover the sound of another. He began to think and pray. He said no wonder Lord that we have to strain to hear what you are saying to us. All the noise of everyday life, all our fears and attitudes that we have trick our ears and masks your still small voice.

Psalm 46:10 Says "Be still and know that I am God." Listening to God's still small voice means we must be still, that we must shut out all other noises, and in our silence, listen very closely for his voice. We

must focus on it and wait until we hear it. Then we need to obey. Are we listening for and obeying the still small voice of God?

Benediction:

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loves us and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good work and word. Amen.

"Listening For God's Still Small Voice" 1 Kings 19:1-18
6-23-2013

The Pastor was out hunting with a deacon and a parishioner from his church. As a huge buck ran by, they all 3 fired. The buck dropped dead on the ground. Naturally all 3 claimed it was their shot that killed the deer. The game warden came by as they were arguing about whose deer it was. The game warden said he could tell whose shot killed the deer. He examined the carcass and announced it was the pastor's deer. The deacon said now how do you know that. The game warden answered because the bullet that killed the deer went in one ear and out the other.

Surveys show that more and more people are talking to themselves these days. Why? Because they are the only ones who will listen to them. Listening is a very important thing for us to do. It is becoming a lost art. Good listeners are more than just popular, after a while they know something. God thinks listening is twice as important as talking. Why else would He have given us 2 ears & only 1 mouth? Did you know that the inner ear is the body organ that requires the most body energy? Attentive listening can be a draining experience. God has made sure that our ears have the necessary power to complete their task.

5 year old Little Johnny could not wait until his parents would let him answer the phone. One day he got his chance. He had heard his parents many times answer the phone at dinner time. So when the phone rang, mom let him answer it. He said "Hello, no thank you, and good bye." In that order and without giving the person on the other end a chance to say anything. Sometimes we do that to God. We make up our minds how to answer God without really listening to His message. One way God speaks to us through a still small voice. Some call it our conscience. Dennis the Menace says his conscience sounds like his mother. Do we listen to God's still small voice? Call to Worship:

Researchers have found that there are 3 things that make people listen; something that we value, something unusual, or something threatening. The Gospel contains all 3 of these elements. Salvation is of the utmost value. The fact that a Holy God loves sinful people is unusual. And the consequences of rejecting Jesus are very threatening.

A certain ranger at Yellowstone National park was leading a group of hikers to a fire lookout post. He felt the 2 way radio was a distraction from his telling about the foliage and wildlife there were encountering along the way, so he turned it off. Nearing the tower an out of breath ranger ran up to them and said we've been trying to reach you; there is a grizzly bear stalking your group. Their must be something wrong with your radio, we could not reach you to warn you. Every time we tune out God's message to us, we put ourselves at risk; not only us but those around us. It is very important that we never tune out God. We must always be listening for His still small voice. Do we listen for God's still small voice? Paul tells us in Romans 10:17 that Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. We need to listen for God's still small voice as we read His word, as we listen to others, and as we experience life. God does indeed talk to us, the question is do we listen. Are we listening to the still small voice of God today? [PRAY]

[vs.1] Ahab was king of Israel & Jezebel was his wife. Ahab told Jezebel what Elijah had done. So what was it that Elijah, the prophet of God, had done? Elijah had challenged the prophets of the false god Baal to a contest to see which God was true.

The contest was simple; which ever God answered by sending fire down from heaven and consuming the sacrifice each had prepared would win. All day long the 450 prophets of Baal prayed and cut themselves, but of course their false god did not answer. Only the living God can respond when people talk to Him; & respond He did. He sent fire down from heaven & consumed the sacrifice Elijah had prepared. Elijah won the battle of Mount Carmel. The profits of Baal were not only defeated, they were executed as well.

All the people of Israel had gathered to watch. They fell on their faces and cried "The Lord He is God! The Lord He is God!" Ahab is now reporting to his wife the bad news. You see Jezebel was a big Baal worshipper. She was the one mostly responsible for the people following Baal in the first place. She did not take the news very well.

[vs.2] Ahab's news did not make her repent and return to God. No on the contrary, it made her angry. Sometimes those things which should soften & crumble the hard heart of the ungodly, only make them harder. That is why it is very important that we continually pray for lost souls. So that when God's speaks to them through the Holy Spirit they will come to Him in repentance, not further rebellion.

Jezebel became so angry that she sentenced Elijah to death. She sent a messenger to him to tell him so. Elijah knew Jezebel was not bluffing; she had killed God's prophets before. 1 Kings 18:4 tells us that Jezebel

massacred the prophets of the Lord. She only missed 101 of them; Elijah and the 100 hidden in 2 caves of 50 each by Obadiah, Ahab's palace manager. Obadiah was a true believer and had been from his youth. It might seem strange to some that Obadiah, a true follower of God, was governor of Ahab's palace with Ahab being an idolater and all. But a person who is true to their God will be faithful to their prince. Both Daniel and Joseph were made governors of their master's houses. Their honesty, loyalty, integrity, and work ethic made them the best choice for the job. Christians should demonstrate these same qualities at our places of employment. Do we?

[vs3] When Elijah received this death threat from Jezebel, he realized that God's victory on Mount Carmel was not going to bring a fast end to Israel's idol worship. He was very disappointed. He now knew that this great miracle of God would soon be forgotten by the people, as past miracles had been, and the people would soon revert to their old ways.

Christians must be aware that after mountain-top experiences disappointment and depression can soon follow, especially if we have exhausted ourselves climbing up the mountain. Elijah was fatigued, not afraid. He was not afraid of Jezebel; he was not afraid of dieing. He trusted God. Psalm 27:1 says "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Elijah left Israel, not out of fear, but because of disappointment. He felt that this revival would be short lived. He left Israel and went to Beersheba, located at the southern most part of Judah; remember that in Elijah's day, Israel was a divided nation, Israel in the north, Judea in the south. Elijah left his servant, and went alone into the wilderness.

Vs.4 shows us clearly that Elijah was not afraid to die. As a matter of fact, he asked God to let him die. Elijah did not want to die at Jezebels hand. (v4) Elijah was hot, tired, and disappointed. He found a shady comfortable spot and asked God to take him home. He felt he had worked enough for the Lord. No one knows when they have truly done enough. Only God knows His whole plan for our lives.

He does have a plan for each&every one of us. When we have completed His plan for our lives, He will take us home. When we have completed His plan, not ours. They might not always be the same. We won't always understand God's plan; but that is ok. It's not necessarily that we understand God's plan; it is only necessary that we trust, obey& serve Him. Do we trust, obey&serve God? Elijah says he is no better than his fathers. He is just a human being like the rest of us; weak in the flesh, but strong in the Lord. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. (Phil.4:13) What is God calling us to do today?

[vs.5] a broom tree offers good shade and can grow to a height of ten feet. They are abundant in Israel and Judah. Elijah was so tired after he prayed to die, he went to sleep. Perhaps he expected to wake up

in heaven. But he woke up under the same tree in which he went to sleep. He was awakened by an angel and found breakfast ready for him. [vs.6]

After he refreshed himself with nourishment, he returned to his sleep. [Vs.7-8] after he had eaten this meal, he did not eat again for 40 days. Both Jesus and Moses also fasted for 40 days. Elijah had 2 great needs when he laid down under that broom tree; food and rest. God sent an angel to meet those 2 needs; God always meets our needs. It was over 200 miles from where Elijah was camped to Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God. This is Mt. Sinai, the mount where Moses talked with God & received the 10 commandments.

Elijah began his long journey; a 40 day walk and fast through the same wilderness the Israelites had wandered 40 years in. Elijah fasted 1 day for each year they wandered.

[Read vs. 9] Finally he arrived at Mt. Sinai, found a cave and spent the night. Here the word of the Lord came to Elijah. We can not hide from God no matter where we go. We are never out of the reach of God's arm, eye, love, or word. Psalm 139:7 asks us "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?" God is everywhere. We can not flee from Him no matter where we run. Are we running from God this morning? I hope not! It's a useless waste of time because no matter where we go, God is already there. It is best to talk with Him. God asked Elijah what he was doing here. What do we answer when God asks us what we are doing here?

[Read vs. 10] Elijah told God how the children of Israel had forsaken His ways and torn down His alters. He told God how he had been very zealous for Him and how the Israelites had killed all the prophets of God except him. He was the only one left and now they sought to kill him. Israel was in a state of apostasy. Apostasy means that one has abandoned their faith; that they have deserted their principles and are ignoring God's righteousness. Elijah told how they had thrown down God's alters and started worshipping false gods; they were worshipping idols. The Israelites had broken the first 2 commandments; they had other gods before the one true living God & they were making and bowing down to craven images. Christians must always stand against apostasy when ever and where ever we find it; even if we are the only one.

God answers Elijah in vs.11-12 [Read] we generally think of big things like wind, earthquakes and fire representing God's power and might. God does not just reveal Himself to us in spectacular ways. More often than not, He talks to us in a still small voice. Elijah had called down fire from heaven to show the power of God in an effort to bring revival to Israel. We expect God to work in big ways; rallies, conferences, crusades; we can not limit how God can and will work. God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform. We need to always be listening for His still small voice. We need to step back from the noise and busyness of life and listen humbly & quietly for that still small voice of God to guide & instruct us. R we listening for God's still small voice?

[Read 13] Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle; his mantle is his cloak. In v.19 Elijah throws his cloak onto Elisha, a sign that God has chosen Elisha to be his replacement. Wrapping his face in his cloak is a sign of respect; a token of reverence. Isaiah 6:2 tells us the angels also cover their faces in the presence of God. He did not wrap his face when the wind, earthquake and fire happened; this is yet more proof that God was not in them.

The still small voice represents God's mercy toward us. On Mount Sinai, many years before, God gave Moses the Law. The law was like the wind, earthquake and fire; full of terror and judgment. The still small voice is like Jesus; full of mercy and forgiveness. The law pointed to Jesus; Jesus fulfilled the Law and then paid our sin debt. With His precious blood Jesus opened the door for us to receive God's grace and mercy.

Again God asks Elijah what he is doing there.

[Read 14] Elijah gives the same answer as before; he alone is left to fight the apostasy of Israel. And he was just tired of the battle. He was sad and discouraged that Israel has a whole would not repent. Elijah got so depressed that he wanted to just lie down and die. Everyone gets depressed or discouraged once in a while. We need to remember how God handled Elijah when he was depressed. Notice that God did not blame Elijah. He just listened to him. God will listen to us also. We need to remember that God answers prayers in quiet whispers. We must be sure to listen closely to hear the voice of God.

We need to remember that inactivity feeds depression. We must return to work as soon as possible. God gave Elijah a new job to do. [Read 15-18]

First God tells Elijah to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael king of Syria. Syria is a different country. It is not part of Israel. Why would God have his prophet anoint a king of a foreign nation? God is going to use Hazael to punish Israel for its sins. Syria would bring external punishment upon Israel. Israel would eventually be taken over by Assyria in 722 B.C.

Jehu would punish Israel from the inside. 2 Kings Chapters 9-10 tell of his destroying Baal worshippers. He killed Jezebel and all 70 of Ahab's sons, but he did not fully follow God with all his heart and completely wipe out idol worship. Jehu did not lead Israel back to complete obedience to God. Do we follow God with our whole heart?

Then Elijah was to anoint his successor, Elisha. Elisha would use the sword of the spirit to wound the consciences of those who escaped the sword of war which Hazael used and the sword of justice that Jehu used.

Finally Elijah finds out he is not alone after all. There are 7000 others in Israel that have also refused to worship Baal. God will always

have a remnant. Even in the greatest apostasy. There is always a community of faith working faithfully everyday for God. Are we apart of it? We may not always be able to tell who the true Christians are, but nobody can fool God. He sees our hearts. What is He seeing in our hearts this morning?

Are we listening for God's still small voice to communicate to us? Are we sad or discouraged? Do we look for God only in the big things, or do we seek Him in the small ones as well? This week let us strive to hear God's still small voice as He guides us down our life's path.

After the wind was an earthquake, after the earthquake was a fire, and after the fire was a still small voice. Are we listening for God's still small voice? Amen, let's pray!