



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 9, 2020

Silent Assurance

by Garland F. Pierce

1 Kings 19:9-18

19:9 At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

19:10 He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

19:11 He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;

19:12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.

19:13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

19:14 He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

19:15 Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.

19:16 Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.

19:17 Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill.

19:18 Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Socially distant, alone, and filled with fear and despair, this is how we find Elijah, the prophet of God. He has spoken out against the moral corruption of the governmental powers of his day, now retribution has been declared against him. Sounds familiar? He knows that other prophets of the Lord have been destroyed; he hides in fear for his own life. He feels utterly alone!

Even now, many feel alone. Even now, many who have worked and attempted to fight the good fight of a justice and peace-seeking faith are dangerously close to being disheartened. God finds us in our isolation and lamentation and asks Elijah and us who are scared and frustrated, "What are you doing here?"

The winds come as does the earthquake and fire; but, no word from God.

Then...silence...

In it...a word...an assurance, "You are not alone." Assurance is received with marching orders, "Go, return on your way, find, anoint." These anointed ones will take up where you left off.

Recently during the virtual gathering of the Poor Peoples Campaign in June, Bishop William Barber, Co-Chair of the Poor Peoples Campaign, declared, "Do not let anyone tell you that this is the first time people of different races, classes, and educational backgrounds have come together to fight for a common cause. It has always been such a coalition of the faithful that has brought about change in this country — Black, white, and brown; rich and poor; young and old. Everyone is needed; everyone has a part to play and an offering to make."

The good news is that there is always a community, a coalition of the faithful. We are not alone, somewhere there are others ready to fight the good fight with us. We are not alone in our fear. We are not alone in our frustration. We are not alone in our faith walk. Elijah received this assurance in the "sound" of sheer silence. We received the same when our savior declared, "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)—What do you hear God saying to you?

PRAY:

**O God who is greater than the most powerful forces in this world,
enable us to be still and know that You are God.**

**O Lord who answers out of the whirlwind of everyday life,
breathe in us Your Holy Spirit to strengthen, comfort, and guide us in the midst of the storm.**

**O still, small voice, speak to us this hour
that we might become makers of Your peace
in our homes, in our communities, in our world.
We pray all this in the name of the One who calmed the raging sea. Amen.**

adapted from <http://www.myredeemerlives.com/prayers.html>

ACT:

1. Elijah needed to be reminded that he was not alone. Who do you know that may need to be reminded that they are not alone? Reach out to them this week. For those US citizens, here are some practical actions to take: Participate in the current democratic processes (voter registration, voting, completing the 2020 census and encouraging others to do so—See: <http://www.amev-alert.org> and <https://2020census.gov>.) For everyone, practice social distancing as much as possible, wash your hands often, and wear face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19—See: <http://www.amechealth.org>.
2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.
3. Revisit the Psalm 23 Challenge first issued as part of the March 22, 2020 set of resources.

Song:

I've Seen the Lightning Flashing
AMEC Hymnal, #441

1. I've seen the light-ning flash-ing, I've heard the thun-der roll,
I've felt sin's break-ers dash-ing, Which al-most con-quer-ed my soul;
I've heard the voice of my Sav-ior Bid-ding me still to fight on;
He prom-ised nev-er to leave me, Nev-er to leave me a-lone!

Refrain:

*No, nev-er a-lone, no, nev-er a lone; He prom-ised nev-er to leave me,
He'll claim me for His own.*

*No, nev-er a-lone, no, nev-er a-lone; He prom-ised nev-er to leave me, Never
to leave me a-lone.*

2. The world's fierce winds are blow-ing Temp-ta-tions sharp and keen;
I have a peace in know-ing My Sav-ior stands be-tween;
He stands to shield me from dan-ger When earth-ly friends are gone;
He prom-ised nev-er to leave me, Nev-er to leave me a-lone!

Refrain

3. When in af-flic-tion's val-ley I tread the road of care,
My Sav-ior helps me to car-ry The cross so heav-y to bear;
Though all a-round me is dark-ness, Earth-ly joys all flown;

My Sav-ior whis-pers His prom-ise, Nev-er to leave me a-lone!

Refrain

4. He died on Cal-vary's moun-tain, For me they pierced His side,
For me He o-pened that foun-tain, The crim-son, cleans-ing tide;
For me he wait-eth in glo-ry, Seat-ed up-on His throne;
He prom-ised nev-er to leave me, Nev-er to leave me a-lone!

Alternative Song: *Be Still*, Travis Greene <https://youtu.be/ILK2vNeMwQI>

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.