

## WHY DOES GOD WHISPER

In the passage about Elijah the prophet, this holy man of God is fleeing for his life. The Queen of Israel wants him dead and has put a bounty on his head. Yes, Elijah is a prophet who spoke truth to power. But that power was not amused. That power wanted him eliminated. Elijah is all by himself. He is trying to hide from her and her minions. He goes into the mountains and finds a cave to rest in. There are many such caves in Israel—then and now. There are always places to hide. Elijah receives a little prompting from God to step outside the cave. (Do you think the Lord is prompting us to step outside our homes?) There is a huge storm going on. Elijah expects God to show himself in the storm. But no. Then the earth begins to quake. Everything is shaking. God must be here. But no. Then there is a wild fire. But God is not in the fire. God is not IN the earth, IN the wind or IN the fire. Ancient Greek Philosophers thought that God was IN these things. But the Hebrew people believe that God created all these things and was Lord of all these things but was not IN all these things.

And then, when all the exterior storms and noise subsides, there is a whisper. A small whispering sound. And in an instant Elijah knows that there is God—in the whisper. Why does God whisper? Think about that. With all the noise of this world why does God choose to whisper? Because. He wants us to LISTEN. To listen TO Him. To listen FOR his voice. To EXPECT to hear his voice even when we do not see him in the storms all around us. But we must really listen. Choose to listen.

Do you think this applies during this worldwide storm of the deadly coronavirus? As our whole society is experiencing its own kind of cultural and racial earthquakes, as people burn for the birth of true justice for all and while still others set fire to stores and buildings and bibles. I have no doubt that you have been praying through all of this but have you been listening? Listening FOR? Listening TO? EXPECTING the Lord to speak—to you—a word that you can actually hear?

So. Is there a word anywhere in the Scriptural readings for today that might convey a message from Our Lord to us in this moment and for this time? Are we actually listening? Expecting to hear a word from God? If we go to the gospel where Jesus has just miraculously fed over five thousand people. He then dismisses them so he can go up the mountain to pray. Now, in the dead of night. In the dark and stormy night, fresh from his prayer, Jesus comes to his apostles who are struggling because he is not with them. They have no idea what to make of what they are seeing. (Does that sound familiar to us right now? Not being able to make sense of what we

are experiencing?) For Jesus is walking on the water itself. We do not know why. But we do know that humans cannot do this. And yet, there he is.

Does Jesus speak in this scene? Well, actually he does. What does he say? Just a few things.

1) Take courage. 2) Do not be afraid. It is I. 3) Come. 4) Why did you falter? Now given what is going on in our world and our country, in our workplaces, schools and homes, in our families and in our own hearts what quiet, whispering word is he trying to get us to hear? 1) Take courage. 2) Do not be afraid. 3) It is I—I am with you. 4) Come to me. 5) Do not doubt. Do not waver. Do not falter.

The Lord is not yelling at us. He is not challenging us. He is not castigating us. He is being gentle with us. He is being encouraging with us. He is showing us that He believes in us. That He trusts us. Are we listening? I hope we are. But then there is an additional question. Do I believe Him? Do we believe Him? Put our trust in this simple word we hear. Or do we choose to focus on all that is NOT. And flee back into the caves our homes have become? My friends, having listened to his whispering word, let us pray now and then let us trust.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.