

Untitled (11)

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[0:00] Ready? Yep, yep. Always nice. Gotta help the priest all the time here, don't you?

! There is a common saying that we hear.

I will edit it. Life happens! Okay? It does, doesn't it? Now we all came here. Some of us probably had a very wonderful morning and you woke up, you know, had a good breakfast and put some praise music on the rip and you came in. This is great! Wonderful!

Some others might have woke up. Some people wake up and they say, good morning, Lord! Others say, good Lord, it's morning. We are all faced with our different issues during our lives.

But that's what makes life fun, right? Did you know there was a, came across a story about a minister, his name was Kevin.

[1:43] Kevin ministered a very large, very large, successful church. It was one of those churches where there was just a lot that happened. And being in charge, everything fell on Kevin.

And it became a burden. Too much of a burden. The administrative machine just ate him up. And his world kept getting worse and worse and worse and worse, blackening into depression.

At one point, he was so depressed, so crushed, that he hastily wrote a letter to his church board and immediately resigned the office and then wrote a letter and then wrote a letter to his wife and his children saying, I'm out of here.

I will never see you again. Kevin got back in his Buick and drove where everybody who was depressed, where do you go? You go to Newfoundland, right?

That's where he went. Without anybody knowing where he was, he went to Newfoundland and he got a job as a logger. And it was winter, of course.

[3:01] And he lived in a small metal trailer. It was heated by night with a small metal heater. One night when it was about 20 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, the heater stopped working.

The heater stopped working and in a rage, Kevin got up. He bent over the heater. He picked it up with both of his hands and he just threw it out the window. Then realizing that was a really stupid thing to do because it was 20 degrees below zero outside.

He threw himself on the ground and started pounding the floor of his small metal trailer. He was pounding on the floor and yelling up to heaven. He said, I hate you.

I hate you. Get out of my life. I am done with this Christian game. It's over. And he fell down in a fetal position.

Later on, upon reflection, Kevin wrote, he said, I couldn't even cry. cry. I was just too exhausted to cry. And as I laid there, I heard crying in heavy breaths.

[4:21] But they weren't coming from me. Instead, in the bright darkness of faith, Kevin said, I heard Christ crying and heaving away on the cross.

And then I knew the blood was for me, for the Kevin who was the abandoner, the reckless wanderer, the blasphemer of heaven.

And when those words rose up around it, Kevin said, he heard, I am with you and I am for you.

And you will get through this. I promise you. Kevin rose to his feet, got into his car, sped back home. He reconciled with his family and his church and then went on to lead the church again in a very healthy way.

Now, yes, things like that do happen to clergy. Sometimes we get in this idea where we think of clergy or God's servants.

[5:38] Nothing bad can happen to them, can it? No. Uh-uh. But we all have those days, don't we? I'm sure all of you over the past days, weeks, months, have gone through things.

You've had times when you said, why this isn't the way things ought to be. You want to shake your fist at God and argue with God. You want to ask him why.

We forget that as we read the psalmists in those psalms of lamentation, usually the psalmist doesn't ask why. The psalmist asks, how long?

How long? These things are happening and we just don't know and we want to argue with God. You have said, you know, it's okay to argue with God.

You just have to know that you're going to lose the argument when you go into it. But we want to look up and say, how long Lord or why is all this happening? I thought this was going to happen.

[6:49] Boom, boom, boom. I was going to do this and then this would happen and the next thing would happen and the next thing would happen and we would all walk out all happy. You know, we would be like the movies.

Everything always ends nice in those. I recall there was a story that Robert Reed who was the father in the Brady Bunch.

You remember him? He tells a story one time when his daughter came to him and said, Dad, why can't you solve my problem?

You do it every week on television, why can't you solve mine? We kind of feel like that, don't we sometimes with God? When we look up to him and we just want to ask why and we are just having a terrible, terrible time.

And then we hear like our passage from 1 Kings 19. We hear of Elijah. This isn't just any prophet.

[7:57] This is Elijah. Today we look, I mean, Elijah is a very, very important to the Jewish people. and he comes on the scene in 1 Kings 17 and God tells him there's going to be a famine, it's not going to end until you say so and he sends him to Zarephah to meet a widow and through his hand, through God's working through Elijah, her oil lasts, he raises her son from dead.

Those are pretty exciting things, don't you think? He's riding in high. Then he goes, Ahab, the king of the northern kingdom, his wife Jezebel, worshipping Baal, meets with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, and has an encounter against them where the glory of God comes down in fire. And then he sets up a sacrifice, and he says, okay, pour some water on this, go ahead. And he makes it so impossible for any man to start this fire.

And then he looks up, he praises, he prays, and God sends down fire on the sacrifice. And then such a wonderful high moment kills all the prophets of Baal.

Jezebel says, may God or may I end up like them if I don't make you like them within the next day.

[9:49] the man is riding high, this great prophet of Israel, and he runs. He runs. He ran all the way down to Beersheba where God said, stay there, I'll take care of you.

The drought had taken away all the water, sent the ravens to take care of them, and then he kept on running and running and came ultimately to Mount Horeb.

it's difficult for us to really pick this up in our English version of the reading, but if you read the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, and we read that, we really have a sense at this time Elijah is depressed.

The word that's used there when he got to the cave, it's that he just wanted the whole thing to end. Think about this.

Here's this man who has been riding high, raising the dead, miracles, defeating the prophets of Baal, and he runs away.

[11:04] He went a day's journey into the wilderness, he came and sat down under the broom tree, and then he ended up going to the cave on Oreb. By the way, Oreb has another name, the mount has Sinai, which leads us to the first way that God's glory appears to us.

You see, we like glory. When we think of glory, we think of glory in the way that Elijah had experienced beforehand, the fire coming down from heaven and consuming the sacrifice with God providing oil in a miraculous way.

We really like that. We really like glory. We like those times when you're praying for healing for somebody, and boom, God heals them.

You know, if they have shoulder rheumatism or something like that, and you anoint them, suddenly boom, yeah, all the pain is gone, everything is wonderful. We like glory like that.

We like glory that we heard on the Mount of Transfiguration where nice things happen, where they see the glory of God, the cloud comes on, the symbol of God's glory, and they just experience that.

[12:29] We really like that. But now we meet Elijah who is depressed, he's having trouble. If there's really a time when we're feeling down, you've ever felt like that?

You're really feeling down and then suddenly you just say, Lord, do something really nice and big. But he's in the cave and how does God respond?

Elijah, what are you doing here? not really the type of question you want to hear from God? Elijah, what are you doing here?

What are you doing here? Now, for all of you Old Testament scholars, you know this isn't the first time that God has talked to one of his servants on this mountain in this fashion.

Elijah said, I've been very zealous for the Lord of hosts and the people of Israel. I have forsaken your covenant. They have thrown down your altars.

[13 : 33] They've killed the prophets by the sword and even I, only I, am left and they seek to take my life away. He's having a major pity party, isn't he?

He is having a very, very bad day, but we forget that on this very mountain, centuries before, another one of God's prophets, same thing happened.

You remember his name is Moses. He had gone to Mount Sinai at the time they're calling it and he had received the Ten Commandments the handwriting of God and this is great and he gets ready, he goes down the mountain only to find the people of Israel having one bodaciously massive party worshipping a golden image, a golden calf.

And what did Moses do? He said he got down to the camp. They had taken a calf and they burned it and he took the golden calf that they had made and he ground it into powder and put it in and he made him drink it.

He was angry. He was angry. And of course, about that time, Aaron comes up with one of the great excuses of scripture when he said, well, they just gave me all their jewelry and we put it in the fire and pop this calf.

[15 : 13] Really? Okay. Moses went back up the mountain. And what does he do? He looks to God and he says, show me your glory.

Please show me your glory. And God said to him, I will take all my goodness and allow it to pass before you and will proclaim before you my name, but you cannot see my face for no man shall live and see my face.

And while my glory passes by, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. And that's what God did.

You see, God knew what Moses needed. Centuries later, Elijah is in the same situation.

What are you doing here, Elijah? And he said, they just want to kill me. They just want to kill me. So what was it? God's response. The first point of glory that we need to remember about God, the quiet glory of God, is that God does not abandon us in those times.

[16 : 37] His glory does not depend upon what we do or how we feel. His glory depends upon him and who he is.

And he is always there for us. And he does not abandon us. He is not a God who will punish us when we're feeling bad, when we shake our fist at him and we want to argue with him.

He is there for us, leading us, caring for us, speaking to us, and leading us. That is the first point of our glory that we can take from God.

We like the thunder, we like the cloud, we like the bright lights. But the second point that God brings in his glory when God tells Elijah, go to the opening of the cave.

And that we hear that wonderful passage, and behold, the Lord passed by and a great strong wind where the torn mountains broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, and the Lord was not in the wind.

[17 : 44] And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. There's so many times and we want to see all those wonderful things in our lives, but yet God is not in them.

And then Elijah heard the still small voice of the Lord, and he wrapped his face in his cloak, and he went out and stood at the entrance of the cave, where we like to see the brightness and all those wonderful glad things.

At that time, Elijah simply needed something very simple. It was just the voice of God, quiet, simple, speaking to him, speaking to him.

God, not only part of his glory isn't that he won't forsake us, but at the same time, he knows what we need, doesn't he? At this time, Elijah needed to hear the voice of God, quiet, simple, and loving.

that was the glory of God to be real for him. And again, God went to Elijah, again he said, what are you doing here?

[19 : 21] Do this, and then he gave him his assignment of what he needed after Horeb. You see, when it comes to seeing the glory of God, or living in the glory of God, we much prefer to be like issues like the transfiguration.

But often, we just need to be like Elijah, and be quiet, and allow the still, small voice of God to lead us.

Let me tell you that in some respects, this passage is very, very personal for me, for there was a time in my life when I was just seeking, I want to hear from God, I need some guidance, I wanted to hear what he was, and so my wife and I, we went on, in fact, we had gone to a Cursillo weekend, some of you have been on a Cursillo weekend, we went to the Cursillo weekend, and went through the whole weekend, and I was looking for the thunder, the fire, the wind, but nothing, nothing.

But it wasn't until afterwards, when I heard God in that still, small voice, and recognized that was his glory, and that was his guidance for me.

So often in our lives, when we want to shake our fists at him, and we have no idea what's going on, we just need that time.

[20 : 53] Stop looking for the earthquake. Stop looking for the wind. Stop looking for the fire. But listen to God.

Listen. Listen to him, and wait for him. Oh, we can come up with all kinds of excuses.

We can come up with all kinds of problems, and keep on shaking our fist. But I have a pastor friend who is continually reminding me of the truth of scriptures that Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

In 2nd Corinthians chapter 10, when he said, we destroy the arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.

you see, rather than looking for the earthquake, rather than looking for the fire, God calls us to take every thought captive to him, to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us, and be still and know that he is God.

[22 : 33] That, my brothers and sisters, is the glory of God in action. That is not to say that he doesn't come in an earthquake. It doesn't mean that he won't show his fire to us.

What it doesn't mean is when the fire's not there, when the earthquake isn't there, when the wind isn't there, we know for sure that the Holy Spirit is there. And we just need to take captive those thoughts, those feelings, and give it to him.

Because just as Kevin heard the weeping, bleeding Jesus on the cross and recognized him.

So those are the times when we need to remember that all these problems, all these issues, all these things that mount up anger in us, Jesus took on the cross.

Jesus took them. He took the sorrows. He took the hurt. He took the anger. He took the fear, the frustration, all upon him.

[23 : 51] He took the sin, that which is compromising our ability to speak to God. He took it and said, I'm here for you.

I promise you, trust me. Trust me. So where is he right now for you?

Where is it? What is your problem? Yes, life happens. But we know that in that sometimes things can be bad.

and in those nadir points of our walk, he is there living. And we know that he will never forsake us.

Because he has promised that I will be with you always, even to the end of the age.

Doesn't that have to say that it's bad to think, to seek out the fire, the wind, and the earthquake.

[25 : 10] But today, as we remember God's glory, the quiet glory of God abides and leads and guides us.

And it does so when we seek the one who hung on the cross, the one who died for us, dropping his blood on the ground, cleansing our sin, anointing us, and leading us.

So may we today recognize and begin to recognize we always don't need the big glorious time, but allow the quiet Holy Spirit God to move in us.

That is the quiet glory of God. God, and quite often, that is much more glorious for us than any earthquake or wind or fire.

Let us abide with our Lord and become afreshed in his quiet glory. Let us pray.

[26:27] pray. Holy Spirit, breath of God, we cannot know you without your leaving, without hearing your voice.

Come, Holy Spirit, now and fill our hearts. Fill our hearts mightily right now. Fill our lives mightily. fill us, change us to be your people, to proclaim your gospel.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.