

**Alone with the Lord**

- Tell you something: there are times in life when just want be alone. Things at work crazy: you have dozens emails, voicemails, text messages, FB messages to answer – everyone in world (seems) needs talk to you; need you now. You just want be alone. Moms, your kids never stop, do they? Messes, accidents, meals, crying never stop(s); your fam constantly needs you. You love your kids; but sometimes just want be alone. When emotionally exhausted or psychologically stressed, that's when want be alone: like when best friend dies; or when job killing you; or when sweet little child lashes out at you in teenage anger; or when trouble in your relationship; or when so busy! with all demands of life constantly bearing down on you that just need break/vacation, just need some time away from people/problems – those times in life when just want be alone.
- Tell you something else: there are times in life, when feel alone even when not alone: when feel lonely. Loneliness awful feeling. Happens: when people angry at you, blame you for something; when friends aren't acting like your friends, in fact being downright mean to you; when just don't feel like you fit in with everyone else, like you're different, no one else thinks way you think; when you long for camaraderie of companionship, but feels like people around you couldn't care less re you; when just need some love, support from fam, friends, classmates, colleagues, but feels like no one cares. Those are times in life when get lonely, feel all alone.
- Sometimes just need be alone. Other times just feel all alone. That's why every Christian, whether young or old, needs to be alone with the Lord.
- Elijah all alone, although hadn't been alone for very long. Was prophet, preacher; spent lot time with lot people. But even though proclaimed only word of Lord, sometimes his message made him feel all alone. See, Eli lived at time when many turning away from Lord, beginning to worship Baal. In fact, in chapter 18, just before today's lesson is famous incident with Eli & prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel: when 450 prophets of Baal prayed in vain to their false god. But when Eli called on name of Lord, fire fell from heaven, consumed Eli's sacrifice; all prophets of Baal put to death.
- Well, now in chapter 19, Eli feels all alone. **Vs. 1-2.** Death threat! Going to kill you, she said! So **vs. 3a; 4b.** Felt all alone. Feeling lasted long time. Eventually Eli had meal, left broom bush, **vs. 8b.** So now been almost month, half; when Lord speaks to Elijah now, Eli says (not once, twice) **vs. 10.** My ministry failure; my people reject Lord; my colleagues being killed; I think I'm next. Feel all alone.
- What you do when you feel all alone? What do when stress, pressures of life driving you insane, or when heartaches, setbacks of life driving you to despair? What do when just want to be alone, away from your troubles, trials, tears? Or what do when loneliness sets in – when feel empty, without any support (because no one cares); or when alone with guilt (because you know evil you've done, and you know Lord knows evil you've done)? What do? Day will come when you desperately need to be alone; and day will come when you feel absolutely alone. When those days come, what you really need is to be alone with Lord.
- Don't worry; he'll be there. No matter where you are, or what doing, Jesus is always there. He is one reliable in your life. Jesus is one who says, **"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"** (Mt 28:20); **"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand"** (Is 41:10); **"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine"** (Is 43:1); **"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness"** (Jer 31:3). About Jesus that Ps 46 says, **"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress (46:7).** Jesus is always there.
- And little by little the Christian learns that Jesus is their best friend. You may have lot of friends, or only few. But no matter how many you have or how much they love you, they can't do for you what Jesus does. They can love, support you; but can't leave heaven to come earth to bring you heaven. Only Jesus did that. They can forgive your sins when you mess up and aren't friend to them; but can't bear your sins on cross and offer lives for you. Only Jesus did that. They can comfort you when sick;

but can't make you well. They can stand by your bed when dying; but can't raise you to life. They can be with you when lonely; but can't restore to you joy of salvation or uphold you with God's Spirit. Only Jesus can do that. Little by little the Christian learns that Jesus is their best friend who's always there. Ps 73: **"I am always with you [O Lord]; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you"** (73:23-25). That's why every Christian loves to be alone with the Lord.

- When alone with Lord, things are quiet, calm; can hear his whisper. When Eli was still feeling lonely, **vs. 11a**. Then what happened? **Vs. 11b-12a**. See, Lord can demonstrate awesome, terrifying displays of his power, might. But when does that, then you can't hear his whisper. **Vs. 12b-13a**. Now Eli finally alone with Lord; now Eli could finally find healing for heart, because Lord's whisper is his gospel – his quiet, calm, reassuring gospel of sins forgiven and eternal life given as gift out of love by grace through faith. That's the whisper Eli heard; and that's whisper you'll hear when alone with Lord.
- Elijah really never was alone. Felt like only believer left in world, but Lord reassured him: **vs. 18**. Eli wasn't alone; surrounded by God's faithful people. You're not alone, either; you are surrounded by God's faithful people, too. Now, sometimes might need break from people; just need be alone. Other times, even with these people nearby you can still feel all alone. That's why so vital to learn lesson Eli learned on mountain. No matter what's happening to you in your life or how you're feeling about people around you, whether you're feeling stressed out and stretched thin, or empty and alone: Jesus is always with you, and there's nothing more important or heart-healing than being alone with Lord.

## 1 Kings 19:1-18

<sup>1</sup> Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." <sup>3</sup> Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, <sup>4</sup> while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

<sup>5</sup> Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." <sup>6</sup> He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. <sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you."

<sup>8</sup> So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

<sup>9</sup> There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup> He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

<sup>11</sup> The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

<sup>14</sup> He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." <sup>15</sup> The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. <sup>16</sup> Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. <sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu.

<sup>18</sup> Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."