1 Kings 19:14-21 (v 14) He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken 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.”

Yep, here we are back looking at that interesting and very human servant of the Lord Elijah. During Pentecost 3 we heard a sermon brought on by the history of Elijah. The history of his staying with the widow of Zarapheth. Do you remember? How the jar of flour and the jug of oil never ran out! How Elijah was able to bring the widow’s son back to life to call her to faith and foreshadow the work Jesus would do! Well, here we are again with Elijah and the lesson here is so interesting.

Let’s just fill in a bit more background for this text. Elijah had spent three and a half years with the widow and her son because of a drought the Lord had brought on the land. At the end of the time for the drought, the Lord sent Elijah to Ahab, that horrible and wicked King of Israel. The end result of this meeting with Ahab was the great contest between the worshipers, the priests of the false god Baal and the true God.

What happened is so well known. An altar was built and the simple instruction was “get your god to consume what is on the altar.” The Baal priests danced, prayed, danced more, prayed more, began to cut themselves and spent the whole day asking Baal to light their fire. Nothing! Absolutely nothing! And then Elijah builds an altar, puts a sacrifice on it, trenches around it and then thoroughly soaks everything down with water until even the trench was filled. With one simple prayer from Elijah, the Lord sends down fire from heaven and not just the sacrifice, but the altar and everything down to the bottom of the trench was now gone. There was no doubt who was the true God. So powerful was this moment that the people of God gathered together the prophets of Baal and struck down 450 of them in keeping with God’s civil law concerning false prophets.

And then Jezebel heard about it! Wonderfully wicked and horridly evil Jezebel! Jezebel has already been killing the prophets of the Lord and now she turns her full wrath and hatred against Elijah. She made it clear that within a day she wanted Elijah dead! Elijah was afraid! Elijah fled! Not a strong moment of faith for Elijah. He fled to Beersheba where he makes his first complaint like we heard in our text. At Beersheba note that an angel administered to Elijah with food and drink. Then Elijah travels another 40 days until he reaches Horeb, the mountain of God and that’s almost where our text picks up.

I say almost because of what happens immediately before our text. Elijah is at Horeb and the Word of the Lord comes to him. That’s when Elijah voices his complaint, his fears the second time. The Lord tells Elijah to go stand on the mountain because the Lord was about to pass by. There was a powerful wind, but the Lord was not in the wind. There was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. There was a fire but the Lord was not in the fire. Then we are told **“And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”** This was the Lord! The Lord in his gentle whisper says, **“What are you doing here, Elijah?”** Here is where our text picks up. Our theme will be: **A SERVANT’S STRUGGLE. 1st. Servants can struggle. 2nd. We need to get on with the job! 3rd. The Lord knows what He is doing!**

Can you imagine being Elijah? You have just overseen a great victory for the Lord, given the people you serve a tremendous sign of God’s presence and abiding power. You would think that as a prophet of the Lord any threat that came your way especially after this victory would cause you to say, “Bring it on, the Lord is on my side!” But what we find is Elijah fleeing for his life. And though Elijah is twice given signs that the Lord is with Him and that He does care for and will guard Elijah, Elijah seems overwhelmed, overburdened, at his wits end and afraid he was going to lose his life. In other words, it sure seems like Elijah mighty prophet of God Almighty is at this point, Elijah, scaredy cat, weak kneed refugee of the Lord.

I can grasp the point of this moment, weakened, frustrated, feeling all alone and even feeling you are the only believer left. I will tell you that many a servant of God, many a pastor has wrestled with such afflictions and difficulties. We believers know what Elijah was feeling. Here was Elijah who had done great things and now those things seemed as nothing. How often Pastors, faithful and dutiful to the Lord, see and by the standards of the Lord, do great things and yet but a little time later it is as if this amounts to nothing. The Pastor is attacked, chased, and scandalized. Sometimes it seems as if you are the only one who truly believes in the Lord. It has been bad enough in the lives of our pastors that some have resigned, some have gone into a depressive tailspin and some have even ended up with their lives and families destroyed. Yep, I know what Pastor Elijah is going through. He is a Servant of God, a human beings who is sinful just like the rest of us but who has the added weight of being that called and divine servant of God. Many Christians experience this rejection, this pummeling by the world.

And we know what Jesus warns us of. John 15: **“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecute me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.”** I could go on and on with such words of Jesus. Another 9 verses of John reveal the same things. Oh, we know what God’s Word warns us of and still we struggle, still we weak humans can languish with the weight of being a servant of and believer in the Lord.

So what does God do? Notice that the Lord simply commands Elijah to go back the way he came and get a few things accomplished yet. In other words, Elijah get on with your job! You job is to do my peaching and teaching. Your job is to let people know what I want and what I say. It is not your job to be afraid. It is not your job to gripe and complain. It is not your job to count souls. It is not your job to determine how I will act and what I will do. You go do what I want you to!

There is it, a truth for the life of every believer in the Lord. God is in charge. God does know what he is doing. He does not need your help, your wisdom or your anything, but God will and does use you. Elijah was now to go back the same way he came, back through Judah and Israel. Back so the people can see him even though we are not told he is to do any specific preaching. He is to go and anoint people. And do you notice that Elijah really only gets around to calling Elisha to be his replacement. Elijah does not anoint Hazael or Jehu, it will be Elisha who does that. It will be Elisha because in just a short while Elijah is going to be taken to heaven in a whirlwind to be with God forever. Isn’t that interesting? Elijah doesn’t get everything done, he seems to weaken in his faith and yet the Lord in total grace and mercy for him takes him directly to heaven to live forever!

Servants of the Lord, your job is to do your job! Your job is to bring glory and honor to the Lord by being faithful and true to the Word of the Lord. You do your job! You proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of all. You go out and properly preach and teach Law and Gospel, never yielding even one jot or tittle of God’s precious
Word. You stand on the foundation of the Apostle’s with Jesus himself as the Chief Cornerstone. You may get pressured, belittled, scorned, and hated, just do the work of the Lord!

And then did you notice what else God revealed to Elijah? Elijah had stated that “he was the only one left!” The Lord clearly and precisely tells him, **“Yet, I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”** There were believers in the land! There were faithful people who were serving the Lord and bringing Him glory and honor by their lives. Elijah didn’t know about them! It is possible that these believers were known by few and that was just for their own safeties sake. Yet the Lord knew them! The Lord knew their hearts and the Lord was watching over them, taking care of them and pouring his grace and love on them!

Sometimes we forget that the Lord may not and often does not work in the spectacular and big. And sometimes, even when the Lord does act in the spectacular and big the impact of that work is not very longed lived. Such is the way it is in a sinful world. The world is impressed by flash and dash but the problem is they are so impressed by the flash and dash that it really means nothing to them. They are so intent on looking for the next moment of flash and dash that the ones they have already seen mean nothing. That I believe is the lesson of how the Lord approaches Elijah.

Not in the mighty wind. Not in the earthquake! Not in the fire but rather in the still small voice of a whisper. That sweet voice of God, whispering his love and grace. That quiet and yet powerful sound of God’s wisdom accomplishing His desire and achieving the purposes that He wants. Not big and awesome, not in your face but gentle and filled with love. Such is the way of the Lord.

You especially see this truth in the life of our Savior. Did the Son of God come with majesty and riches, born in the finest of palaces and backed by the greatest of armies? Did the Son of God come moving mountains and destroying nations with but the sweep of his eyes? The answer is “No!” The Son of God is born humbly to a poor couple who struggle to make ends meet. His first bed is a manger. And even at a very young age Jesus and his family have to flee because the people he came to save are sending their army after him to kill him. Jesus grows up in good old Nazareth, the “nowheresville” of Israel.

And though Jesus could have moved mountains and in one sweep of his hand healed every single sickness in the world while here, he does not. His power is used quietly and for the good of souls. He does not come to force or beat you into his way, but loves and pours out grace for you, gives his life on the cross and dies for you. And about the one big moment of Jesus life is his resurrection, so important to everything we are. Yet how many today honor that resurrection and believe what it proclaims? Jesus is just like the quiet whisper of God. God Almighty dressed as a man, dying as a man, that He might bring us all the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

All in all, notice that once Elijah gets confronted by that quiet whisper of God he is soon taken home to be with God. Perhaps that’s the most important lesson before us. The quiet whisper of God is everything. The Word of God is everything. Jesus the Living Word is everything and in and through him we, as bad as we are at our jobs, we get called to be a part of his Heavenly kingdom. Lord, as you did in the life of Elijah, call us, administer to us, and touch us with the quiet whisper of your Word that we might be yours now and always. Keep us with your power as your servants to your glory. Amen.