



The Nourishing Vocation Project Engaging the Living Word

[1 Kings 19:1-10](#)

What is this particular text?

- Story
 - Call story
- Promise
- Time in solitude

How does the text function within the scriptural story?

- Contrast to the chapter before where Elijah has a showdown with the priests of Baal
- Quick change from success to struggle and fear
- Text opens with Ahab reporting of Elijah's adventures to Jezebel
 - Jezebel sends a message to scare Elijah...and he runs away
- Things were going pretty well for Elijah, and now things seem to be taking a turn for the worse
- Shows how God responds to Elijah in time of stress
 - He hits rock bottom and wishes to die

How can this text function in the church today?

- Invites church to consider how God might be calling them to respond to times of stress or struggle
- What is the next most faithful step?
- Consider how God sustains us in times of distress

What does the text do to you? How do you react to the text? What feelings does this text engender in you?

- Feelings of discomfort
 - Memories of times when I have felt far away from God
- Sense of wonder of the ways in which God speaks to Elijah

What do you have to say to the text?

- Why angels? Why not speak directly to Elijah?
- Elijah seemed quick to give up at the first sign of fear.
- Persistent responses from angels.
- Appears to be a focus on satisfying physical needs of hunger and thirst before moving on to how he can emotionally persevere.
 - You can't help others if you aren't taking care of yourself first.

What do you see through this text from the story itself?

- God is persistent, even when we feel like giving up.
- May not speak to us directly, but in unexpected ways.

What do you see from within your church/community/world? (2022)

- Congregations often fear the shrinking church and wonder how they will keep going
 - Lower attendance, financial stresses, ect.
 - It can be easy to fall into distress and lose focus on mission
 - But God comes in unexpected voices and ways and can call us to things we were not thinking of
 - We may feel frustrated and exhausted, but God works through that frustration
- There are people in our communities who have lost hope. How can we show up and provide encouragement in times of distress?
 - Sometimes, that means providing basic needs. (Ex: Meals for families after losing a loved one, clothes and school supplies for families who cannot afford them)
- Crises of our current time
 - Divided societies where people spew hate and threats to one another
 - Mental health crises
 - Food insecurities

What do you see within yourself?

- Times when I have felt frightened or overwhelmed with the task at hand
- Times when want to give up
- Times when people have helped me in times of distress

What is the context – textual and historical?

- Follows Elijah
 - Prior chapter speaks
- Right before God speaks directly to Elijah
- Before Elisha becomes Elijah's disciple

What questions does this text raise for you?

- What motivates Elijah?
- What was the turning point for Elijah? What gave him that final push to keep going?
- Why did God speak through angels first before speaking to Elijah directly?
- How does God speak to us directly and indirectly?

What words/themes seem of particular import?

- Messenger
- It is enough
- Get up and eat
- What are you doing here?
- I alone am left

What is the Gospel / transforming Good News within this text?

- God will come to us in our need
- God promises
- God provides
- God encourages
- God perseveres in encouragement for the journey
- God's unconditional promise, even when it feels like we have been abandoned
- We can't do anything that will separate us from God.

What is the as-over-againstness of this text?

- Elijah went from extreme success to extreme struggle
- He felt truly hopeless and was ready to give up.
- He no longer had faith in himself and thought he was worthless
- He felt distant from God

Who does this text say that Jesus is, or if not Jesus, then who does this text say that God is? What does this text say about God?

- God works in our victories and our struggles.
- God communicates in a variety of ways.

What have others said about this text?

- [“While we can surmise from](#) verse 8 that Elijah’s request to die is not answered, verses 5-7 contain an important divine response to Elijah: sending an angel and provisions of food, specifically a “cake baked on coals, and a jar of water” (verse 6). The Hebrew word used for coals (resapim) only appears here and in Isaiah 6:6, referring to the coal that touched Isaiah’s lips to purify him.” Sara M. Koenig, Professor of Biblical Studies, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA
- [“Elijah just had the most exciting experience in his ministry](#). His adrenaline was pumping. It helped him get through the contest. But following that, he was drained. So when he hears that someone is out to kill him, it naturally stresses him out.” “1 Kings 19:1-21 God's Prescription for Discouragement and Depression” by Jim Erwin
- [“God sends a messenger](#) (angel) who says, “Get up and eat” (verse 5). The angel does NOT say, “Get up and go back to work” or “Get up and get going.” God invites Elijah to simply eat and God provides the nourishment—a cake and water right there next to him.” Amy G. Oden, Visiting Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality, Saint Paul School of Theology, Oklahoma City, OK

What will I teach or proclaim?

- There will be fear and difficult times, even after some really successful times
- There will be changes and twists that bring about fear.
- You may wonder what you’re supposed to be doing.
 - Who am I? What I am doing? What should I be doing?
- You may even ask to give up.
- But God is with you in every moment.
- It may not feel like God is listening
- And God may come in ways that you do not expect or want,
- But God will come though to equip you with ways to keep going.