

1 Kings 19:1-15

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² 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."

³ Elijah was afraid^a and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ 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." ⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." ⁶ 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.

⁷ 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." ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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?"

¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ 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. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ 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?"

¹⁴ 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."

¹⁵ 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.

Elijah needs a rest.

Did you see the highlights of the Test cricket from Tuesday? Particularly the last session? If not, watch these on iplayer now! England needed to get 299 runs from 72 overs. This would usually have been seen as too high a target, at too great a pace, and they would have played for the draw. But they didn't. In the session after tea Jonny Bairstow started hitting sixes in a manner that had almost never been seen in Test cricket. England chased down the target in 50 overs — thanks in large part to Bairstow and Stokes. That hour after tea was the most outrageous cricket most of us have ever seen.

This happened because the new coach, Brendan 'Baz' McCullum, and new captain, Ben Stokes, shaped a new attitude of relentless positivity. Gone was the drawish diffidence and self doubt of English cricket. They were now playing 'Baz-ball', and the rules were different...

In 1 Kings 19 we find Elijah completely drained from an extraordinary show down with the prophets of Baal. He had unequivocally demonstrated the superiority of the Lord, but Ahab

and Jezebel still wanted to kill him. He needed a holiday! He needed comfort and encouragement. So that is what God gave him.

God gave him food, drink, rest and safety from Ahab, drawing him away to Mount Horev in the Sinai, where he could not be found. Elijah had already seen the power of the Lord on Mount Carmel, and so he did not need to see the earthquake, wind and fire, but he needed that still small voice of calm, (as the hymn goes), the presence of God to remind him that God loved him, cared for him, and believed in him.

Perhaps you are tired too? Many of us worked hard for the jubilee — flower festivals, open gardens, animal blessings, outdoor services and so on. You showed your faith through giving time and stress and hard work to the benefit of the communities you live in. Well done! Thank you! God bless you! You did well. Now — do you need to retreat, to be refreshed in spirit by God? What does that look like for you? I like to go on a long walk, and find that in that time I am praying and reflecting. Thanks and thoughts and hopes and dreams and assurance come bubbling up as the miles pass. You might sit on a bench by the sea with a prayer book. You might grab a Bible and read and read. You might book yourself onto a retreat...

How does that connect with my breathless raving about Tuesday's cricket? Like this:

11 beleaguered cricketers who had hardly won anything in 17 tests suddenly felt believed in, and trusted and decided very clearly what they wanted to achieve and believed that they could do it. And the worst test team in the world pulled off a heist against the best.

Elijah achieved extraordinary things for God because of the depth of his belief in God, but also because he knew the depth of God's belief in him. If he tried, he couldn't fail, if he worked with God. His retreat was a moment to find again that strength and confidence in God.

And how does that connect with us? We are church. We are on God's team. Do you trust in God? And *do you really trust that God trusts in you?* And what do you think the script is for what happens next? Do you think God's going to let the church decline with gentle dignity? No!!!!!!! What do you think might happen if you and I lived our faith with the audacious confidence of Bairstow and Stokes after tea on Tuesday?

Bless you and thank you for all that you have been doing and achieving, and all that you will!

Tim.

At our very successful 'Worship on the Green' we attracted many from the village who don't normally come to our church, they enjoyed joining the more relaxed way of praising God.

The question they raised was 'How do we know what type of service it will be?'

So, we are simply renaming our services so anyone looking can see what we are offering be it a Common Worship service or a more relaxed, less liturgical form of Worship.

Holy Communion

Informal Worship