

AND AFTER THE FIRE THE SOUND OF A LOW WHISPER. AND WHEN ELIJAH HEARD IT, HE WRAPPED HIS FACE IN HIS CLOACK AND WENT OUT AND STOOD AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE. AND BEHOLD, THERE CAME A VOICE TO HIM AND SAID, "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ELIJAH?"

There's Elijah -- the mighty prophet who looked the false prophets of Baal in the eye, who stopped the rains, raised the dead, stood before kings and told them exactly the way things are going to be -- hiding in a cave, shaking in his boots like a scared little rabbit.

You remember what happened: The whole nation of Israel was a mess, because her monarch, King Ahab, was kowtowing to his wicked wife Jezebel on everything, including the worship of God. Jezebel was an ardent worshipper of the false god Baal and Ahab didn't have the courage to say, "No, don't do that. We fear, love, and trust in the Lord God." He allowed the entire nation to be dragged into false worship. This angered God, for He is a jealous God.

So, God decided the time had come to show the nation who the true God really is. At God's command, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest. The rules were very simple: the prophets of Baal would sacrifice a bull and Elijah would sacrifice a bull. Then, they would cry to their god to consume their sacrifice with fire and whichever god answered the prayer of his prophets and lit the sacrifice on fire would show himself to be the true God of Israel.

Elijah, being a gentleman, allowed the prophets of Baal to go first. When morning came, the prophets of Baal built an altar, sacrificed the bull, and placed it upon it. Then, they prayed, yelled, hollered, cut themselves

and danced the hokey-pokey before the altar, and ... nothing happened. Baal was a no show. So, things went until lunchtime came, and Elijah offered his astute analysis that perhaps Baal were sleeping or maybe had gone to the restroom.

Then came Elijah's turn. He built an altar of rocks, sacrificed the bull, placed it on the altar, and drenched it all with water not once, not twice, but three times. Then, he prayed to God and "poof," fire came from heaven and burned it all up. God showed Himself to be the true God of Israel. Then, Elijah seized the false prophets of Baal and slaughtered them.

As you can imagine, Jezebel didn't like that at all. She was quite angry, put a price on Elijah's head, and basically told the prophet, "You're a dead man." When the going got tough, Elijah did not call upon the Lord his God in the day of trouble, he ran and hid, scared, in a cave.

Can you imagine that? Running and hiding in a cave, like a scared little rabbit. Sure you can, because you've been there, done that.

It happened when you were a kid. Mom and dad put you in your pajamas, tucked you in bed, said your prayers, kissed you goodnight, and turned out the lights. That's when it happened: the monsters under your bed came out to play. The boogey-man in the closet came out to rattle the closet door and make the floorboards creek, and you were scared, so you hid in the cave that you made when you pulled the sheet over you head.

You've been in a cave when you've gone to the mailbox and the divorce papers came from your spouse's attorney.

You've been in a cave, hiding scared, when you were sitting in the doctor's office, waiting for the test results of that biopsy or the blood work to come back.

You've hid in a cave when you've stood at the graveside and watched the casket of your spouse lowered into the ground and the prophets of "what now" speak into your ear.

You've been in that cave when thoughts of your sins, your faults, your shortcomings assault and accuse you, leading you to despair.

When you are hiding, scared, in your cave, you want God to do something. You want God to act. You want God to act like He did for Elijah, when He went after the false prophets of Baal. You want God to come and be big and loud, show His strength and flex His muscle.

After all, that's how God does things, isn't it? When His children were enslaved in Egypt, what did He do? He showed His power with 10 plagues and parted the Red Sea waters. When His children marched around Jericho, what did God do? He showed His might by bringing down those walls.

We expect God to show His power and strength and might **all the time**. And, we make a mistake when we expect God to act like that **all** the time. So often, God doesn't do anything like that. So often, God doesn't show Himself in signs of power and might. Very often, God is quiet. Often, God comes and speaks in a low whisper.

Look at Elijah. There he was, hiding in fear in a cave – like you in the doctor's office, at the cemetery, alone with your thoughts. Elijah is scared and He wants God to help him. So, God does. He brings him out of the cave and says, you want help, I'll help, **but I'll do it My way**.

A great and strong wind rips the mountain apart and shatters the stones, but the Lord is not in the wind. An earthquake comes, but God is not in the earthquake. Then comes fire, but God is not in the fire. Then,

comes the sound of a low whisper, and God is in the whisper, bringing words of hope, comfort, and salvation to Elijah.

Listen close, and you will hear that low whisper.

You hear that low whisper in the cooing of a baby boy born in Bethlehem, born for you.

You hear that low whisper in the voice of that baby boy when he is grown up, battling the devil in the wilderness, as the father of all lies tempts Him not to go to the cross, "Be gone, Satan" (Mt 4:10)!

You hear that low whisper as Jesus tells His disciples, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Lk 9:22).

You hear that low whisper as Jesus, before Pilate and His accusers and the Sanhedrin, declares that He really is the Son of God.

You hear that low whisper from the cross, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30).

In that low whisper, Jesus tells you that His death and resurrection are for you. In that low whisper, Jesus silences all that makes you afraid; all that makes you run and hide scared in a cave -- especially your sins, death, and all the lies of Satan. God brings you out of the cave of your fears and whispers to you, "The LORD will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life" (Ps 121:7).

God comes to you in a low whisper at the mailbox, when the letter comes that causes your hands to tremble so badly you can barely open the envelope, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Ph 4:6-7).

As you sit in the cave of your fears in the doctor's office, hear that voice whisper, "Let not your heart be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me" (Jn 14:1).

That low whisper comes as you grieve the death of your loved one, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live" (Jn 11:25).

As the guilt and shame of your sin assault and accuse you, hear the low voice of Jesus whisper, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you ... Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament of My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

The voice of God does not come in a great wind, mighty earthquake, consuming fire, but rather in a low whisper. The whisper of God's voice forgives your sin and gives you salvation; the low whisper of God's voice brings you out of the cave of your fears and worries, speaking to you words of comfort, joy, and hope.