

Sunday, August 8, 2021 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading - 1 Kings 19: 4-8

First Kings 18 describes the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Elijah had no problem standing up against four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah, who ate at Jezebel's table. But when Jezebel threatened to kill him, he got totally spooked and fled. This reading finds him fleeing, fatigued, and in utter despair.

1 Kings 18: 45-46 – Ahab rode off and went to Jezreel. But the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; he girded up his loins and ran in front of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Who for you are the prophets of Baal and Asherah? Who for you is Jezebel? When have you gotten totally threatened and completely spooked?

Verses 4-5 - [Elijah] went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep.

Verses 5-8 - Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

There are five things that God did for Elijah to help him in his time of total despair.

Verses 5-8 – He gave him physical nourishment and a chance to rest.

Verse 18 – He corrected his perspective – "I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Verse 15-16 – He gave him an important job to do – "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel."

Verse 16 – He gave him a companion and a friend – "And you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place."

Verses 11-13 – He gave him a chance to experience the presence of God and to hear the voice of God – After a wind, earthquake, and fire there was a sound of sheer silence. Then there came a voice to Elijah.

Psalm - Psalm 34: 1-8

Verse 1 - I will bless the LORD at all times; the praise of God shall ever be in my mouth.

How do you do at blessing the Lord at all times?

When is it – when has it been – especially difficult for you to bless the Lord?

Verse 4 - I sought the LORD, who answered me and delivered me from all my terrors.

Verse 6 - I called in my affliction, and the LORD heard me and saved me from all my troubles.

When has that been your experience?

Verse 8 - Taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are they who take refuge in God!

What are your favorite tastes?

What Bible verses most closely correspond to those tastes?

Second Reading - Ephesians 4: 25-5: 20

Verses 26-27 - Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil.

Two words in the Greek language for anger.

Verse 29 - Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.

If Paul were alive today, he probably would say something about social media.

Verses 31-32 - Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

Verse 8 - Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light.

Live like who you are.

Verse 15 - Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

Verse 18-20 - Do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*How do you do at giving thanks to God at all times and for everything? Cf. Psalm 34: 1
What could help you do better?*

What are you finding it especially difficult to give thanks to God for right now?

Gospel - John 6: 35, 41-51

Verse 35 - Jesus said to (the crowd,) "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Verses 41-42 - Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Verses 47-51 - Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."