



Reflection for October 12

By Forrest Wells



I love the way that God worked powerfully through the prophet Elijah. Miracles of providing food for the widow of Zarephath and later bringing her son back to life (1 Kings 17).

One of my favorite passages is what I call the contest between the prophets of Baal and Elijah in 1 Kings 18. In an instant the God of Israel brings fire upon the altar laid by Elijah after the 450 prophets of Baal failed to convince their god to light the fire of their altar. Ultimately Elijah ends his time on earth not by death, but by gloriously being taken into the heavens by God in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2). Wow, what a remarkable life of this prophet of God!

What draws me even more to Elijah is his human responses of discouragement, fear, depression and pride. After remarkable experiences of God's power and intervention in his life, Elijah becomes exhausted,

discouraged, fearful and he just runs. He is running from his problems, from his enemies, from himself and from God. He ends up hiding in a cave. I love the encounter in I Kings 19:9 when God asks Elijah, “What are you doing here?” In order to ask that question, God has to be right with Elijah there in that cave.

How many times have I been exhausted, discouraged, fearful, depressed? I have felt like all is lost and God is nowhere to be found. Yet the promise of this verse is that God is with us even in the darkest times of our lives. As Elijah remained in that cave, God becomes known to him through a still voice, a gentle whisper of grace.

Today, know that whatever you go through, God is right there with you. As you engage with family, colleagues, friends and the community, be aware of the brokenness in people that may be hidden from view. In the midst of a time of political tension and division remember that the voice of God is often heard most loudly through the calm whisper of grace spoken with gentleness and compassion.

Gracious God, in the midst of the chaos around us and our own exhaustion and discouragement remind us that you are with us in the trenches of life. As you feed our spirits with your love, help us to speak your spirit of grace to those around us. As we look toward annual conference and our national elections help us to clearly see the vision you have for us in being people of Good News in times filled with bad news. Thank you for your spirit of gentleness and love. Amen.

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May this devotion provide you with a moment of faithful reflection and care. You are involved in ministries of justice and witness, in ministries of standing up and standing with people working to create better systems and communities, in ministries of learning and searching and researching to become more aware and awakened, more technologically savvy and proficient, more virtually and personally present in your churches and communities and world. Each of us who serve as members of your Wisconsin Cabinet write these devotions in grateful prayer for you – for sustenance and buoyancy, for strength and courage, for safety and just actions, and for faith and love to be full and fulfilled in your daily lives. God’s grace and blessings, God’s challenge and healthy discomfort, God’s Spirit and energy be with you, in the hope Christ offers us all.

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