

# THE VOICE THAT WILL CALM YOUR FEARS

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Text: I Kings 19:11-18 (emphasis v.12)

Someone said, "Sometimes the Lord calms the storm. Sometimes he lets the storm rage and calms his child." There is a great deal of truth to that. Very often what we really need is to be quiet before the Lord so that we can hear him speak the words that will calm our fears.

■ James Hamilton writes:

Before refrigerators, people used ice houses to preserve their food. Ice houses had thick walls, no windows, and a tightly fitted door. In winter, when streams and lakes were frozen, large blocks of ice were cut, hauled to the ice houses, and covered with sawdust. Often the ice would last well into the summer.

One man lost a valuable watch while working in an ice house. He searched diligently for it, carefully raking through the sawdust, but didn't find it. His fellow workers also looked, but their efforts, too, proved futile. A small boy who heard about the fruitless search slipped into the ice house during the noon hour and soon emerged with the watch.

Amazed, the men asked him how he found it.

"I closed the door," the boy replied, "lay down in the sawdust, and kept very still. Soon I heard the watch ticking."

Often the question is not whether God is speaking, but whether we are being still enough, and quiet enough, to hear.

-- Phillip Gunter in Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching (Baker), from the editors of Leadership.

At various *times* in our lives we will face perplexing situations and fear provoking circumstances but we must remember that the Lord is not far from us and He will never fail to guide us. God will speak to us if we will get alone with Him and tune the rest of the world and its voices out.

## I. WHEN WE FEEL ALONE AGAINST THE WORLD.

A. Standing for God sometimes makes us feel that we are standing alone (19:1-3).

Taking refuge under the scant shade of a broom tree, Elijah prayed for death. He, the mighty prophet, had stood for God as boldly as any of those who had gone before him. Yet here he was, alone and seemingly deserted in this desert wasteland, the very symbol of a wasted life. Yet God would tenderly nourish and lead his prophet to a place where he would get some much-needed instruction. *EBC*

Ann Landers had this to say about the letters that she has received over the years. “I’ve learned plenty—including, most meaningfully, what Leo Rosten had in mind when he said, ‘Each of us is a little lonely, deep inside, and cries to be understood.’ I have learned how it is with stumbling, tortured people in this world who have nobody to talk to. The fact the column has been a success underscores, for me at least, the central tragedy of our society, the disconnectedness, the insecurity, the fear that bedevils, cripples and paralyzes so many of us. I have learned that financial success, academic achievement, and social or political status open no doors to peace of mind or inner security. We are all wanderers, like sheep, on this planet.” (*Saturday Review*)

#### **B. Life can make us feel that our actions make no difference (v. 4).**

■ In his book *Second Thoughts*, Mort Crim writes, “Fairy tales are wonderful because they always have the prince and the princess living happily ever after.

Of course life isn’t a fairy tale. And in the real world the prince may run off with the secretary; the princess may walk out on the family to find herself; the royal offspring may do drugs; and a downsizing at the plant may leave the entire family on the brink of bankruptcy.

Once we accept the fact that bad things do happen to good people, then we can get on with the business of living life to its fullest: giving, loving, creating, sharing, building, walking through every door of opportunity offered by this fragile, unpredictable, exciting experience called life.” (p. 17).

That’s great advice but still difficult when we feel that we are scraping bottom. But in Jesus Christ there is more than good advice there is hope and the power of God for our situation. When we feel that nothing we do matters we must listen for the voice of God and rely upon His power.

## II. WHEN IT SEEMS WE'VE DONE ALL WE CAN.

### A. God takes over when our strength is gone (vv. 5-8).

The Lord had called him aside to help him regain his focus. He needed physical and spiritual strength and God was going to help him find it.

### B. God speaks to us when our purpose is lost (vv. 9-10).

It wasn't long after he arrived at the cave on Mt. Sinai that he heard the voice of God. But instead of giving him instruction or sympathy the Lord asked him a question that must have seemed almost ridiculous to Elijah. The Lord asked, "What are you doing here Elijah?"

I can almost sense his attitude. *"In case you've missed something Lord, I'm running for my life! I've had it with rejection and danger and your people."*

God knew why he was there, after all, the Lord had led him there. But God wanted Elijah to do some soul searching.

## III. WHEN THE ROAD AHEAD SEEMS UNCLEAR.

### A. God doesn't always clarify His will in an obvious manner (vv. 11-12).

Notice what took place. The "Lord passed by" but **was not** in the wind, **was not** in the earthquake, **was not** in the fire. But finally there was a voice. Here comes the message! "What are you doing here Elijah?" What? That's it?! I come all this way, go through all I've been through, see three extraordinary displays of power and all I get is a question? "What I'm I doing here?" I thought we had that covered!

### B. God's heavenly will doesn't always make earthly sense (vv. 13-14).

*The truth about the situation:* Your people have torn down, forsaken, killed, and now my life is in danger.

*Elijah's error:* "I'm the only one left that wants to serve you (v. 18)."

Have you never faced a situation when you didn't know what to do?

■ You know no disturbing voice? God never points out for you a pathway altogether different from the one you had planned? Then, my brother, you are living still in the land of slavery, in the land of darkness.

G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945)

-Edythe Draper, Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992).  
Entries 4968-4969.

## CONCLUSION

**A man by the name of Max DePree related the following heart-touching story:**

Esther, my wife, and I have a granddaughter named Zoe, the Greek word for life. She was born prematurely and weighed one pound, seven ounces, so small that my wedding ring could slide up her arm to her shoulder. The neonatologist who first examined her told us that she had a 5 to 10 percent chance of living three days. When Esther and I scrubbed up for our first visit and saw Zoe in her isolette in the neonatal intensive care unit, she had two IVs in her navel, one in her foot, a monitor on each side of her chest, and a respirator tube and a feeding tube in her mouth.

To complicate matters, Zoe's biological father had jumped ship the month before Zoe was born. Realizing this, a wise and caring nurse named Ruth gave me my instructions.

"For the next several months, at least, you're the surrogate father. I want you to come to the hospital every day to visit Zoe, and when you come, I want you to rub her body and her legs and arms with the tip of your finger. While you're caressing her, you should tell her over and over how much you love her, because she has to be able to connect your voice to your touch."

God knew that we also needed both his voice and his touch. So he gave us not only the Word but also his Son. And he gave us not only Jesus Christ but also his body, the church. God's voice and touch say, "I love you."

-- Ed Rotz in Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching (Baker), from the editors of Leadership.

His voice comforts, challenges, guides, and reassures and makes his presence known to us.

Continue to move forward.