

Dear Brothers and sisters in our loving God

I've Had Enough, Lord!

I. The despair of sinful troubles

II. The help & strength of our powerful God

INTRODUCTION

I've had enough! Enough of the pain, the hurt, the anger, the stress. Enough of the family troubles, the quarrels at work, enough money problems, enough of all the troubles in this world. Sound familiar?

Did or do you ever feel that you are the only one who has your problems or that yours are the worst ever and no one else can understand?

Today we meet a man of the Bible who had real-life problems. A man who had had enough and was ready to give up. Let's consider Elijah's cry "*I've had enough Lord* and see what we can learn from it. Elijah teaches us two things which can help us strengthen our faith and deal with our own troubles. Elijah's story

I. The despair of sinful troubles

When you think of the prophet Elijah, what do you think of? I don't know about you, but I usually think of a man of God with strong faith? Remember how Elijah had gone toe-to-toe with the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel? How instead of cutting himself with knives as the prophets of Baal did while screaming at their gods to help them, Elijah prayed to the Lord and not only his sacrifice, but also the altar was consumed with fire. Just before the words of our text, Elijah had just finished dealing with the wicked King Ahab and (if it is possible), his even more evil wife Jezebel. You would think that a man who had been through faith-building experiences like that would at least maintain a steady line of faith, if not be growing in his faith. How then does he get to a point where he is ready to give up?

Remember what our text tells us that Elijah was doing. He had gone out into the desert and sat down under a tree that was nothing more than a few sticks and was praying that he would die. As you heard those words did you at all find yourself wanting to say to Elijah "Hey buddy, stop the pity party!?" From the vantage point of where we are at – sitting in God's house and hearing his Word – it is easy to see how Elijah was focusing on his problems instead of looking for help for them. But in reality, if we haven't been there where Elijah was ourselves, at the very least we know of someone else who has been there.

How the devil loves to tempt us like he does Elijah. If he succeeds in doing to us as he did to Elijah – getting our eyes off of the cross and our hearts looking elsewhere than God's grace – he feels he has won the battle.

When God does finally get Elijah's attention, Elijah almost misses the strength and help of God. In vv.9-18 we read that Elijah experience wind, fire and earthquake, but God was not in any of those. After all of that, God comes and speaks to Elijah in a gentle whisper. Even when God is there and ready to help him, Elijah almost misses it. Again, things haven't really changed in several thousand years have they? In a day and society where you can get instantaneous gratification and immediate results, how tempting it is for us to expect God to work in the same way as well. In our doubt and despair we often expect God to answer in the way we want and on our time schedule and when he doesn't, how quick we are to point the accusing finger at him as Elijah did.

Praise God that even when we do despair, he doesn't turn his back on us as we so often do on him. He doesn't make us come groveling back. Instead, he comes to us, seeking us and desiring to bring us back.

II. The help & strength of our powerful God

It is interesting how God displays his strength and help in Elijah's life. First, God gives Elijah food to assure him that he is taking care of his physical needs. And again God does this in the most interesting of ways.

Remember where Elijah was – in the desert under that tree that was not much more than a bundle of sticks. God sends an angel to Elijah who taps Elijah on the shoulder and shows him a ready-to-eat meal – a fresh-baked hot loaf of bread and a jug of water. Elijah lays down to sleep and again is awoken by the angel who

tells him to get up and eat because he cannot face things by himself. God shows Elijah that day-by day he provides for his physical needs.

Isn't that what we pray for almost every time we worship here in God's house when we pray the 4th petition of the Lord's Prayer. "Give us this day our daily bread. We don't pray that God gives us a well-stocked pantry, a full freezer and the refrigerator always restocked. We pray and trust that day-by day, one day at a time God will give us what we need."

After God assures Elijah and us that he will take care of our physical needs, God then tells Elijah to go to Horeb where he will show Elijah that he is indeed not alone and that he will care for him physically. Remember we said earlier that Elijah almost missed God's strength for his soul. When God was not in the wind, fire and earthquake, Elijah began to wonder. Then God came and spoke to Elijah the strength of his Word in a quiet, gentle whisper.

Still today, that is the way we get the strength and help of our powerful God – In the gentle whisper of God's voice in his Word and sacraments. Each day we remember our baptism where God reminds us "I have called you by name and loved you with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3). We have the opportunity in just a few moments to do what we will sing in the first communion hymn "Here, O my Lord I see you face to face, here would I touch and handle things unseen." Through simple bread and simple wine connected with God's Word he give us our Savior's body and blood, assurance of full forgiveness of all sins and the promise of strength to live our life of faith.

And in between those times when we partake of the Sacrament, we have the ongoing gentle whisper of the Word of God – "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who live him" (Romans 8:28) "Never will I leave, never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5) "I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord...(Jeremiah 29:11)

CONCLUSION

There is an old Christian saying which says "When God lets us stumble, he does it so that we may fall into his arms." Do you do that when life causes you to stumble? Don't we often find ourselves like Elijah – as God allows us to stumble, instead of falling into his arms, we flail and fight and say "I can do it on my own". And when we do end up falling flat on our face, we, like Elijah, like to point the finger at God and blame him.

When we do feel that we are at that point of despair, may our lips not say "I've had enough Lord", but instead "Speak, Lord for your servant is listening." (I Samuel 3:9). Amen.