

God's Still Small Voice

I Kings 19:11-13

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (NIV)

Elijah's world was a noisy world of fire, clouds, earthquakes, smoke, rain, life, death, blood, famines, droughts, threats, and dogs and birds feasting on the carcasses of kings and queens. Depression and fear, the mental and emotional chatter of Elijah's life, almost wiped him out. Yet God sent a lifeline in the form of a still small voice. Surely God had come in the earthquake, the wind, and the fire in the past, yet this time it was different. He came as a feminine soft whisper. And Elijah made himself vulnerable to the word of the Lord, "anoint Elisha... to succeed you as prophet." Elijah's succession plan was set in motion.

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When I read the story of Elijah's gentle whisper, I have to admit that I would have preferred the wind or the earthquake or the fire that demanded attention. Too often it is easy to miss the whispers that are speaking truth. I want the flashing lights that ensure I don't miss the exit and end up attempting a U-turn on the highway. I want a friend grabbing my arm when the movie star is sitting near us at the coffee shop. I want God to provide the giant spinning red arrow when the opportunity of a lifetime is walking in the door.

But we often get whispers, and whispers require patience, attention, and faith to hear. Thank goodness that God whispers through friends, through scripture, through the Holy Spirit, and sometimes through those U-turns that teach us something new. So our challenge is to keep listening, because when God asks "What are you doing here?", we need to be ready to answer.

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Point for Prayer:

How can I create some times of silence, of listening, this week?