

Happy Father's Day!

A father cooked two bowls of noodles. At that time, eggs were very precious. One bowl had an egg on top and the other bowl had no eggs. The father told his son, "Choose." The son picked the bowl with the egg. But after having started to eat, the son saw that there were two eggs under the noodles in his father's bowl. The father smiled and told his regretting son, "Son, what we see is not all there is. If you try to win over others easily, you will lose."

The next day, the father put two bowls of noodles on the table and called his son. One bowl had eggs and the other didn't. "Choose." This time, the son picked the bowl without eggs. However, this time, there were no eggs hiding under the noodles. The father smiled and said, "Son, do not rely on experience too much. Life will deceive you. Do not be angry or disappointed when that happens, but consider it a lesson."

The next day, the father again asked his son to pick one of two bowls of noodles. The son told his father. "You have sacrificed much for this family, so you should eat the noodles with eggs. I will eat the one without." The son thought that his noodles would not have any eggs, but found two eggs under his noodles. The father smiled and said, "Beloved, my son, give to others, and do not forget that better things will come to you."

What we see is not everything. Experience sometimes deceives us. Before relying on our experience and knowledge, we must have the eyes of faith that see our lives through the word of God.

Well, when we share a moment of great joy, a moment of victory ... there is something to come inevitably. It is spiritual emptiness, spiritual loss. In the book of 1 Kings 19 we read today, the prophet Elijah was in such a deflating

situation. Let me remind you what happened before Elijah went astray in spiritual void and depression.

The people of Israel had turned away from God and were worshiping other things. But God sent his prophet Elijah to remind the people of Israel about God. And Elijah never stopped calling Israel to turn back to God. Even when his life was in danger, Elijah made great efforts to prove to Israel God's power over all things. At Mount Carmel, he burned up the offering even though it was soaking wet. The age of King Ahab was the darkest period of idolatry in Israel's history. 1 Kings 16:30 says, "Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him." The battle was to find out the true God among the many gods, and Elijah won a wonderful victory that testified the presence of the Jehovah/Yahweh God! But the joy only lasted a bit ... When the wife of King Ahab threatened to kill Elijah, he ran away to Be'ersheba in a moment.

At that time Israel was divided into a northern kingdom which retained the name Israel, and a southern kingdom called Judah. King Ahab was king of northern Israel, and Be'ersheba was the southernmost city of southern Judah at the end of the desert. So Elijah was in the north, and he passed through Be'ersheba ("the oasis of oath") to the south and deep into the wilderness about a day later. You can see how fearful he was! Is this the same person who was so brave on Mount Carmel?

Then Elijah sits under a tree, is tired of spiritual exhaustion, and physically hungry, and so asks God to take his life. So now Elijah is suffering from spiritual depression ... just after experiencing the spiritual victory on Mount Carmel! In verse 10 Elijah said, "I am the only one left" ... But God supplies Elijah with food and water for another long journey. Dear friends, sometimes we feel the same way, we feel alone, don't we? Usually when a storm of life

comes, we feel lonely. But after experiencing great joy and victory, the sense of emptiness is even greater! But remember today's scripture...you are not alone!

Even though Elijah said, "I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." And God reminds him, he was not alone. He was not alone because God was with him, and he was not alone because God left seven thousand people who did not surrender to Baal. See who's right next to you right now. God has a plan and unites us into one church. When it seems you're all alone, and your heart would break in two, remember someone is praying for you. When it seems that you've prayed till your strength is all gone, someone is praying for you. Most importantly, God has promised to be with us.

Note that God is telling Elijah, who is discouraged and depressed, 'Stand before me'. Take a good look at verse 11. Elijah heard the words, 'Stand before the Lord.' Is it not that Elijah was not standing before God beforehand? Dear beloved, we too need to check whether we are standing before God constantly! Probably you were standing with a great deal of faith yesterday (before COVID-19), but no one can be sure of faith today and tomorrow. We always need to stand with faith *at the moment*. This is the moment.

In fact, it is hard to find a prophet who performed as many miracles as Elijah did in the Bible. He was a prophet who faithfully followed God. So he said to himself in verse 10 that he has been very zealous for God. However, when you look at verse 13, you will see Elijah's actions covering his face with his outer garment. What does it mean to cover his face with a robe?

In the Old Testament times, people could not even name the name of the Lord: Yahweh or Jehovah. It was also believed that if they heard God's voice or saw

God, they would die. When a sinful man stands before a holy God, he will die. In Genesis, after Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit of the good and evil, they were hiding when God was looking for them. In other words, after sinning, their first action was to hide. Hide from God and hide from each other.

Likewise, Elijah felt his own weakness and sinfulness when he stood before God. Then he covered his face with his cloak! On Mount Carmel, he had relied on God and made his way through faith, but now he was fleeing out of fear of King Ahab's wife, not trusting in the Lord. Elijah was missing the Lord. He was missing the target! The root of sin that the Bible talks about is missing the target: hamartia in a Greek word.

Dear friends, it was not the wind, the earthquake, or the fire that broke the mountain that brought Elijah back, but a faint voice of God. The Word of God touches the soul of Elijah and revives his soul. That is why it is important to listen to the word of God. To us, specifically, this could be reading the Bible, listening to sermons, and trusting and obeying the word of God.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, we are going through endless waves of life. For some, there is a strong wind, some people have an earthquake in their lives, and others are in the middle of a fire. Nevertheless, the Lord says not to be caught in the noise, but to "stand before the Lord." Instead, we listen to the covenant of love of the cross, which is engraved in our souls deep with the voice of our Lord, who comes to us! I pray earnestly in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that we hear and obey the voice of the Holy Spirit whispering constantly through the Scripture so that our spiritual ears are brightened and renewed daily. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.