

NOT ALONE AS VICTIMS OR HEROES (1 Kings 19, 4-8)  
Sermon by the Rev. Corinne Hodges, Sun., Aug. 9, 2009, SJOC

- I. Eph. lessons of conventional wisdom, heard all my life:
  - A. Don't go to bed angry.
  - B. If you don't have anything nice to say, say nothing.
  - C. Be kind to others.
- II. 1 Kings, Elijah lesson seems to go against conv. wisdom: if you work hard, you will be rewarded.
  - A. Elijah situation:
    - 1. End of rope, personal crisis
    - 2. Worked hard for God, altar challenge— work for God exhausting, phys., ment. & spiritually
    - 3. Success, goal accomplished, prophets
    - 4. Should experience joy, satisfaction
    - 5. Instead depressed, call it quits.
    - 6. Threat by Jezebel too much
- III. Have you ever had such situation?
  - A. Big challenge, give it your all, did it
  - B. Payoff not what you expected:
    - 1. Did not receive acknowledgment
    - 2. Internal rewards not what you thought
- IV. Why is this? Why does Elijah (we) exp. the exact opposite of what we'd expect? Unfair, discouraging.
  - A. Elijah claims to be alone in his struggle
    - 1. VICTIM: 19:10, 14 carries weight of world
    - 2. HERO: claims credit
      - a. God is the one: 18:36 E a vehicle
      - b. Lost sight of reality. Self got in way
    - 3. Not meant to do it all on his own
      - a. Successor Elijah 19:16
      - b. 7,000 who stayed true 19:18
  - B. Elijah, regardless of how he felt, never alone
    - 1. Others struggling to live godly life as well
    - 2. God always with him, guiding his work
- V. Story of our lives also
  - A. Instances when we alone, victims of circumstances

- B. Times we've taken credit for something we've worked hard for, but God made it happen
- VI. What is lesson from OT today?
  - A. Not to have goals, work hard to accomplish them? Not to recognize our gifts, roles & successes? No, all part of life, becoming better people
  - B. Three things to remember:
    - 1. Our goals/acc. should be part of bigger plan, God's plan—our goals line up w/ God's
    - 2. As we carry them out, we are just a part of picture/work being done, co-workers in plan—not solitary, God does not intend for us to do it all. Share with others.
    - 3. Success: give credit where credit is due. Credit goes to God
- VII. Like E, need to avoid the traps of claiming title of victim or hero—not alone in our struggles or glory
  - A. Gospel: "Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
    - 1. Not coincidence that E comes to God in time of great hunger & thirst, depleted & complaining, just like Israelites in Exodus
    - 2. Breaks down & seeks a lonely place in Beersheba, southern most part of Promised Land to die=precisely there where he learns God will provide what he needs for life: "w/out food, journey too much" 19:7
    - 3. Weight lifted & he refreshed & can continue for 40 days and nights
    - 4. But shall happen again, at Horeb crawl into cave, again sleeps, & need to be fed again
  - B. Elijah received dose of humility & honesty in desert
  - C. So do we: WE NEED GOD'S continual NOURISHMENT in our lives, otherwise journey too much
  - D. When our hearts are heavy, when burdened w/ weight of family commitments, work, doing the right, godly thing, when we have nothing left to give, may we go to God for everlasting food & life