

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 14)

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 19:9-18

August 9, 2026 - Pastor Katie will be on the alternative reading about **Sibling Rivalry**.

What has you on the run?

For Elijah, who has spoken bold prophetic truths and killed off the prophets of Baal, the answer is Queen Jezebel. She wants him dead. Before this mountain-cave scene, Elijah has fled from Jezreel to Beer-sheba – roughly 100 miles – then continued alone into the wilderness. He is exhausted, terrified and, as is so human of us, convinced that everyone, not just Jezebel, is out to get him. How easily the loudest critic becomes a whole crowd in our minds.

Elijah is ready to quit. He prays for God to end his life. Instead, an angel arrives with food, water and permission to rest. Before God asks anything more of Elijah, God tends to his body. Elijah sleeps. He eats. He sleeps again.

Sometimes the most spiritually healing thing we can do is accept a meal and take a nap.

Many of us are as exhausted as Elijah, from trying to do the right thing in difficult contexts. Pastors are trying to preach faithfully in a climate where a direct quote from the Sermon on the Mount might get them accused of pushing a political agenda. Leaders are trying to care for employees amid painful budget cuts. Churches are trying to serve their communities faithfully while figuring out how to pay the power bill.

It is tempting to check out. To quit. To start perusing LinkedIn for another job, another line of work that lets us pay the bills without the

heavy decision fatigue. What pastor hasn't dreamed of being a checkout clerk at Costco? Or a Starbucks barista? Is it just me?

When Elijah reaches his breaking point in 1 Kings 19:9-18, God leads him up a mountain — and not just any mountain. Horeb, another biblical name for Sinai, is where Moses encountered God. Life has become overwhelming and noisy for Elijah, so God brings him to a place where he can gain perspective.

In *Leadership on the Line*, Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky describe the importance of “getting on the balcony.” Leaders spend much of their time on the dance floor, caught in the movement, noise and emotion of the moment. But faithful leadership also requires stepping back for an overview of what's really going on.

Balcony time is not merely about evaluating everyone else. It also requires looking honestly at ourselves: our reactions, assumptions, fears and habits. How are we behaving on the dance floor? What are we contributing to the conflict? Where have our best intentions become entangled with ego, exhaustion or the need to be right?

God asks Elijah, “What are you doing here?”

Elijah answers: I have been faithful. Everyone else has abandoned the covenant. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too. His fear is real. His grief is justified. But his perspective is incomplete.

Then come the wind, the earthquake and the fire — dramatic forces Elijah might expect to carry God's voice. Yet God is not in them. After the fire comes what the text describes as “a sound of sheer silence.”

In silence, our rehearsed speeches lose some of their force. Our defenses soften. We become more able to know and be known. There, we may remember that we are loved and that God cares for us.

But silence may also reveal the ways we have gotten in our own way despite our best intentions.

God asks Elijah again, “What are you doing here?”

Elijah gives the same answer. God does not shame him, but neither does God allow him to remain in the cave. God sends him back into the world with work to do and a successor, Elisha, who will share the burden. God also corrects Elijah’s deepest distortion: he is not the only faithful one left. Seven thousand others have not bowed to Baal.

The silence does not erase Elijah’s danger or solve every problem, but it restores perspective. Elijah is not alone. The work does not depend entirely on him. God is still at work beyond what we can see.

What has you on the run? Where might God be inviting you to step off the dance floor, climb the mountain and listen? In the silence, you may hear not an easy answer, but the truth you need: You are loved. You are not alone. And there is still faithful work for you to do.

Questions for reflection on 1 Kings 19:9-18

- 1.
2. What has you “on the run” right now, and how might fear or exhaustion be distorting your perspective?
3. Where could you create some “balcony time” — space to step back, listen for God and examine your own role in what is happening?
4. What truth might God be inviting you to hear in the silence?

-‘Matriarch’ Lucia Marshall’s Family-

**Graduate LIZ
and Heather**



Middle: Nathaniel, Liz & Lucia, Ben

Bottom: Lucia & Heather,
Kerri's daughter and cousins

