

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS**  
**Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**  
**Pentecost 12 Series A. 1 Kings 19:8-13 ESV.**  
**September 4, 2011**



<sup>8</sup>And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. <sup>9</sup>There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup>He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." <sup>11</sup>And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup>And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. <sup>13</sup>And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

David *Honeyboy* Edwards died on Monday. Did you know that? Honeyboy Edwards was 96 years old. He was the last and oldest surviving Mississippi Delta blues-man. Honeyboy was born in Mississippi back in 1915. His daddy bought a guitar for \$8 from a sharecropper back when a penny was worth something! Honeyboy was there when they invented the Delta blues---blues singers like Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter and Muddy Waters. Singing the blues – "A lowdown dirty shame slow and lonesome, my mama dead, my papa across the sea I ain't dead but I'm just supposed to be *blues*." Do you know about singing the blues? I actually know a couple of people who have actually literally physically gone down to Memphis – actually met Honeyboy--ate grits and cornbread and backbacon – and listened to the people who invented the blues! They have gone to the clubs in Chicago – and actually heard B. B. King and Aretha Franklin sing the blues! The blues are indescribable – the pain and sadness – that find expression in the music, the rhythm, the sad eyes and the scared and calloused hands. You can hear the sadness in the words of the prophet Elijah-when he was discouraged. And we hear the power of the Gospel in the Words of the LORD--

**Don't Give Up!**

- 1. The LORD will sustain you.**
- 2. The LORD will send backup!**

*Give us this day our daily bread.* I think it's safe to say – it's pretty tempting to say those words without thinking them through. Do you remember learning in Confirmation Class: Give us this day our daily bread? What does this mean? *God gives daily bread indeed without our asking, also to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread is – everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.* Elijah was running for his life from wicked Queen Jezebel. <sup>8</sup>And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God. <sup>9</sup>There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" It's always important to understand where we are! When I was in College – Prof. Scharf was always saying, "Boys – work with me at the map!" What happens in God's Word happens in real places. You can fly half way around the world to the places where Moses walked – where Abraham and Isaac and Jacob shepherded their sheep. You

can go to the place where Elijah went. Elijah was in the very same neighborhood where Moses was. Remember how that went? Exodus chapter 3! **<sup>1</sup>Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." <sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup>Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup>And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Only because He is good – the LORD came near to Elijah! And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup>He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."**

Elijah was discouraged! It can happen. You try very hard to serve the LORD faithfully and what do you get for your efforts? Grief? Complaints? Fault finding? Criticism and sarcasm? Sometimes people will complain to a person face to face. Sometimes they write a letter – print it on their computer with really big letters – but they don't sign it – *anonymous!* That makes it just about impossible to talk to them as a brother or sister in Christ – to perhaps explain. More often than not – people will gossip – grumble and complain – tear down and disparage behind a person's back. It's easy to find fault – because prophets – pastors and teachers and Church workers of every kind are flawed sinful people. The examples are too easy. You can make a wedding sermon – very well prepared and practiced and delivered and people will actually say out loud – "I wonder how many times they gave that exact same sermon?" Assuming that because it was given without stops and starts – it's a rerun! You can make a funeral sermon – and talk only about Jesus – not a single anecdote about the deceased – and people will complain – it's like they didn't know them. You can tell a story or two about the child of God – called home to heaven – and people will say – I didn't come to hear about the person who died – I came to hear about Jesus. It's the same with what you call the sainted child of God. If you use their first name – it's disrespectful – if you use their formal name – it's cold and impersonal. If the service is long – it's too long. If it's short – it's too short – people will actually say – they didn't get their money's worth! It's easy to find fault! What if the pastor or teacher or congregational President speaks – and they make a grammatical error? What if they say, "I" when they should say, "Me" or they say "Me" when they should say, "I"? What if there is a typing mistake in the bulletin? I knew a lady who used to bring a yellow marker to church – take a bulletin and after church give it back with mistakes highlighted! It is sinful – to be a sawdust inspector – while planks of lumber are stuck in our own eyes! It is a sin – to point out a pine needle from last year's Christmas tree – instead of simply and *quietly* picking it up and putting it in your own pocket until you get home. It is a sin – to stand in a circle and point down with such disgust – that one honestly thinks it's a dead church mouse or a dead belfry bat – when the offending piece of trash is a cigarette filter squashed into the floor that stuck to someone's shoe – and was tracked into church. We can pick it up. Throw it away. Wash our hands – singing *happy birthday!* When people criticize and complain so bitterly – it's no surprise that even Elijah – a humble and faithful man of God – with courage to fight the bloody and blasphemous and obscene prophets of Baal – could finally be so discouraged he thought he was the only one left! He thought he was the only one left – but by the power and grace of God – he wasn't! Far from it!

In the chapter before the one we are concentrating on God's Word says---**Now the famine was severe in Samaria, <sup>3</sup> and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, his palace administrator. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the LORD. <sup>4</sup> While Jezebel was killing off the LORD's prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.)** The LORD takes care of his people. It's one of the devil's most time worn temptations – to be worried and anxious when there are troubles all around. Where is our Heavenly Father? He's right there beside us – watching out for us – taking care of us. Of everything the LORD does perfectly – long range planning is right up there. We need to remember the powerful Gospel promises all through God's Word. **<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.** Jeremiah 29 Before we call – our Heavenly Father will answer. While we are still speaking

our Heavenly Father will listen! Like the three men in the fiery furnace – or Daniel in the lions' den – we have nothing to fear!

**"Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup>And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. <sup>13</sup>And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.** The LORD – the Great I Am – the One who changes not – the same yesterday and today and forever – doesn't do things the way people do! In about 6 weeks – if Jesus doesn't come back before that – our first lesson will be from Isaiah chapter 55. <sup>8</sup> **"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.** <sup>9</sup> **"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than our thoughts.** The LORD doesn't think like we do. The LORD's plans aren't our plans. We need to have a child like faith that trusts our Heavenly Father to always – absolutely always know what's best for us. Oh, if we were going to go by Elijah I think we would go for the special effects-and so? The powerful wind that tears the mountains apart – splitting rocks. Surely an earthquake would be a powerful way – to make the very ground tremble! Or a fire – flames and scorching melting heat would be very impressive! But no – the LORD drew near his discouraged prophet with the sound of a low whisper – a still small voice! That's the LORD's way!

Again he asks, **"What are you doing here, Elijah?...<sup>15</sup>And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. <sup>16</sup> And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup>And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. <sup>18</sup> Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."** The LORD is in charge. The LORD is in control! Elijah was by no means in this fight alone! The LORD is the God of history. He makes kingdoms rise and fall – puts people on the throne and takes them painfully down. Elijah's first job was to go to Damascus – the capital city of Syria – to anoint Hazael king over Syria. *"King Hazael of Aram would be a murderous thorn in Israel's side, an instrument of God's judgment against the worldly, ambitious Israelites for years to come!"* Jehu would bring about the end of the terrible and blasphemous and godless reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel! <sup>30</sup> **Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she put on eye makeup, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. <sup>31</sup> As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, "Have you come in peace, you Zimri, you murderer of your master?" <sup>32</sup> He looked up at the window and called out, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. <sup>33</sup> "Throw her down!" Jehu said. So they threw her down, ...**It gets worse. When she was thrown from the tower – horses trampled her. God's Word says Jehu went in and ate and drank. When he was done they checked on Jezebel. All that was left of her was her skull – her feet and her hands. This fulfilled the Word of God – Elijah had spoken – that her body would end up like fertilizer in the fields. And what of Ahab's 70 sons – 70 princes? They were all put to death, too, their heads in baskets sent back to Jehu! When the LORD promised judgment – it would be fierce indeed – but nothing – absolutely nothing – compared to eternal destruction?! Still there were 7,000 people who never worshiped Baal – 7000+ faithful to the LORD! When you talk about the blues – the delta blues – people talk about Robert Johnson – perhaps the greatest blues guitarist of all time! How did he get to play so well? The story is told – he met the devil – who tuned his guitar and gave it back – in exchange for his shoes and his immortal soul! By age 27 Robert was famous and dead – like Amy Winehouse, Janis Joplin and so many more! It's one thing to sing the blues – sad songs about tragic lives – it's another thing to live them eternally. We will not *sing the blues* for eternity – because Jesus died and rose again to wash away all our sins. We have a place stored up for us in Heaven. We have the strength and

the courage we need here and now – in the meantime! For Jesus' sake we will never give up – never surrender.  
Amen!

To God alone all glory!

*Rev. Anthony L. Schultz*