



**SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2021**

## **ENCOURAGEMENT FROM ELIJAH**

**This month** in Mulbarton Church, we will be remembering all those affected by the pandemic: loved ones we have lost; the bereaved; the traumatised; the overworked; those who have lost work (or now fear doing so); those who have built up debt..... The list could go on. Crosses have been hung on the church fence in memory – and these will be gathered and prayed over in the morning service on 22 August. I hope that reflecting on the way God dealt with Elijah will be an encouragement for the days ahead. Next week, 15<sup>th</sup> August, is our monthly communion services, 9am at Bracon Ash and 10am at Mulbarton

***Come, now is the time to worship.***

*Come, now is the time to give your heart.*

*Come, just as you are to worship.*

*Come, just as you are before your God.*

One day every tongue will confess you are God.

One day every knee will bow.  
Still the greatest treasure remains for those  
Who gladly choose you now...

**Confession:** (based on Luke 15)

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.  
We are not worthy to be called your children.  
We turn to you again.  
Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself  
as those who once were dead but now have life  
through Christ our Lord. AMEN

**God's forgiveness:** May the God of love  
bring us back to himself,  
forgive our sins, and assure us of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

**Hymn:** Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful minds,  
in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper rev'rence praise....

In simple trust like theirs who heard,  
beside the Syrian sea,  
the gracious calling of the Lord,  
let us, like them, without a word  
rise up and follow thee...

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
the silence of eternity,

interpreted by love...

Drop thy still dews of quietness  
till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the stain and stress,  
and let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of thy peace...

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
thy coolness and thy balm;  
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,  
O still small voice of calm...

[by John G Whittier, 1807 – 1892; those last lines refer to this reading.....

### **Reading:** Matthew 17 verses 1 – 13

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup> There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. <sup>3</sup> Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

<sup>4</sup> Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

<sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

<sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched

them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” <sup>8</sup> When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

<sup>10</sup> The disciples asked him, “Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

<sup>11</sup> Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. <sup>12</sup> But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

## **Reading: 1 Kings 19 verses 1 – 18**

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. <sup>2</sup> So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

<sup>3</sup> Elijah was afraid<sup>[a]</sup> and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, <sup>4</sup> while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” <sup>5</sup> Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” <sup>6</sup> He looked around, and there by his head was

some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

<sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” <sup>8</sup> So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>9</sup> There he went into a cave and spent the night.

## **The LORD Appears to Elijah**

And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

<sup>10</sup> He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

<sup>13</sup> 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?”

<sup>14</sup> He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

<sup>15</sup> The LORD said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. <sup>16</sup> Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. <sup>17</sup> Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. <sup>18</sup> Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

### **Reflection: ELIJAH – How God brought encouragement**

Feeling fearful, isolated, unwanted, depressed, even suicidal.... Is this a man panicking in a pandemic? No – this is a prophet fleeing an evil queen after a great show-down when his God won! But a lot of people *are* feeling these things now – there are plenty of reports on how mental health has suffered in the past 18 months, and Christians are not immune. So, what can we learn from the way God dealt with Elijah?



1. PRACTICAL PROVISION (vv. 5 – 8)
2. PROBING THE PROBLEM (vv. 9 & 13)
3. POWER DISPLAYED (vv. 11 – 12a)
4. PRESENCE & PEACE (v. 12)
5. A PURPOSE RENEWED (v. 15)
6. PROMISES IMPLIED (v.18)

How your faith has fared since the start of the pandemic is between you and God. But many people are feeling inadequate at least, and some may be depressed, feeling they are failures, or even ready to give up. But God wants to meet us – to be present to us, as individuals, if we'll be patient enough to let him. He wants to give each of us a new purpose in life – it may be to return to

former roles, or it may be a completely new direction that fits our present state of health and gifting. But always with the promise that we are not alone: he is with us, and that there are many faithful folk who can encourage us on our journey with him. So *'let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.'* (Hebrews 10 verse 25)

*Jill Wright* (who is happy to talk over these thoughts with anyone)

**A modern song** (with a simple tune – each line is repeated twice more) based on Psalm 46 verse 10:

Be still and know that I am God (x3)

I am the Lord who healeth thee (x3)

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust (x3)

**To be in your presence**

to sit at your feet,  
where your love surrounds me,  
and makes me complete:

*This is my desire, O Lord,  
this is my desire.*

*This is my desire, O Lord,  
this is my desire.*

To rest in your presence,  
not rushing away;  
to cherish each moment,  
here would I stay.



**Creed:** Let us affirm our faith in God:

We believe and trust in God the Father,  
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist.

We believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature, died for us and rose again.

We believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known  
in the world.

This is the faith of the church:

We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

AMEN

### **Collect for 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Trinity**

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,  
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;  
and that they may obtain their petitions  
make them to ask such things as shall please you;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession:**

Father, I place into your hands the things I cannot do.  
Father, I place into your hands the things that I've been through:

*Bring to God thanks and frustrations from the past week....*

Father, I place into your hands the way that I should go....

*Ask God's help for the way ahead – both in our personal lives and as citizens of this nation.*

Father, I place into your hands my friends and family:

*Bring to God thanksgivings, needs and ask for blessing*

Father, I place into your hands the things that trouble me:

*In our world, our nation, our local area...  
and especially pray for Christians who face persecution in many parts of the world.*

**Father, I place into your hands the person I would be,  
for I know I always can trust you. AMEN**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

**HYMN by Robin Mark:**

## **These are the days of Elijah**

declaring the word of the Lord:

and these are the days of your servant Moses,  
righteousness being restored.

And though these are days of great trial,  
of famine and darkness and sword,  
still we are a voice in the desert crying  
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord'.

*Behold he comes, riding on the clouds,  
shining like the sun, at the trumpet call;  
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee.  
out of Zion's hill salvation comes.*

These are the days of Ezekiel,  
the dry bones becoming as flesh;  
and these are the days of your servant David,  
rebuilding the temple of praise.

These are the days of the harvest,  
the fields are as white in the world,  
and we are the labourers in the vineyard,  
declaring the word of the Lord.

## **Closing Blessing**

The Lord bless you and watch over you,  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you  
and be gracious to you,  
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**