

The God Of Whispers

1 Kings 19:11-13

The King James calls the voice of God to Elijah as a “still small voice” (NRSV). This gets the closest to the Hebrew, which could be translated “the sound of gentle stillness.” The prophet feels the presence of God in quietness. A sense of fear and wonder hangs over him, and he covers his face in reverence. One scholar said, “The voice of silence spoke.” In recent years, however, the whisper of God has nudged me to listen more and to hold back and wait instead of jumping into activities, no matter how good they may appear. Silence is important, but we need quiet spirits, quiet places, and quiet times. Even around noise and confusion we can find the quiet center. I think I’ve figured out why the writer of 1 Kings had so much trouble expressing what happened in the cave. It was silent, and it took place in utter solitude. I can listen for a short time, I can sit in contemplation. I try to clear my mind of all the things I want to talk to God about or think about. I take time to listen. Then, in those quiet moments, the silence of God comes to me. But silence needs expression. That silence, in ways I can’t comprehend, translates into thoughts. I hear my own words, what I sometimes call my inner voice, but I prefer to call it God’s whisper. I have no formula to explain how or when God speaks in this way. I can’t even be certain that it’s God and not my own desires. I get them mixed up at times. But I can think of occasions when I heard the whisper so clearly that no one could have persuaded me it wasn’t God. When it’s the real whisper of God, we know on some deep level. I know without knowing how I know.” A friend once said, “But it’s so certain, no one could talk me out of it.” That whisper I want to hear more regularly. As I pray and worship, I provide the Lord with an opportunity to whisper.

-Cecil Murphy

“Be Still and know that I am God.”

Psalm 46:10

“Then there came a voice to him and said”

1 Kings 19:13a

God,

Whisper to me

Teach me to listen in utter silence

So that I may be ready,

Alert

And open to your silent whisper, Amen.