

WD October 21, 2024

“The Weight of Weariness”

Ever struggle with weariness or the case of Mondays? A couple of years back a video went viral of a four-year old preschooler named Landry. The video was caught by the home’s outdoor security camera. Some called it ‘Landry’s case of the Mondays.’ The video shows the little guy walking out to the yellow school bus stop in the street at the end of the concrete driveway. It appears to be a dry, sunny, winter day. Landry is bundled up in his coat, hood up over his head, and backpack, walking down the driveway. Suddenly, near the end of the driveway, Landry stops, bends over forward looking exhausted and then plops backwards on the driveway and just lays there exasperated. Even better the bus driver comes down the bus stairs and calmly reaches down to help little Landry back to his feet and together they get back onto the bus.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPF_lgKrQnQ

Weariness. Godly people are prone to weariness like anyone else. Perhaps in spiritual ways, more so. Weariness is a kind of burn out that comes when too much with too little of you and seems to go on with no end in sight. Elijah became a wearied prophet in 1 Kings 19. The prophets of Baal and the idolatry they promoted had taken over the country. Jezebel relentlessly pursued Elijah to kill him and all of God’s prophets. We all remember how Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel in 1 Kings 18. It was a strong victory that Elijah thought would finally turn the tide toward repentance for Israel only to be threatened even more by Jezebel. Elijah flees to Mt. Horeb. Elijah is so run down and depressed that twice an angel has to make a meal and convince Elijah to eat it just make the long journey to Horeb.

Verse 9-10 lays it out. And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”¹⁰ 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.” Where is ‘here’ for Elijah? The ‘here’ is weariness...”I’m the only one left...what’s the point?”

I was talking with a realtor from North Carolina this week. She was a member of a little church who is trying to help. One of the things she made clear is how the community was still in shock weeks after the hurricane. The community is devastated as we have all heard and still in a state of triage—still trying to evaluate the totality of the damage. In our conversation one thing stuck out more than any other was that the people are exhausted. They are running 7 days a week because there simply is not enough help yet. Not only that, but as does typically happen, many are falling through the cracks and not getting any help. The workers are few but the work is overwhelming. It is clear that the weariness has set in—too much to do and no end in sight.

Weariness is common. Too many arguments in a marriage makes one weary. Too much drama at work may drive you crazy enough to leave the job. Too many glitches with a computer gets old too. Too many visits to the doctor, the effort just to get there, the number of pills every day, another test one just gets tired of the lack of progress. Elijah is no different. Rather than stay he decides he’s had enough so He leaves the area entirely and runs to Horeb.

This is where that still small voice of God comes into the picture. God comes in a whisper to Elijah, not in an earthquake, in wind, or in fire. In a plain calm gentle whisper. In the sound of this whisper Elijah pulls the cloak over his face and realizes God is speaking to him. Essentially the Lord gently but firmly tells Elijah, “You are not the only one left. I am here with you. I have also reserved 7000 others like you. And if you think there is no end in sight look again. I am sending you to anoint Kings that will get the justice you are looking for. You will also train up Elisha who will continue the work after you are gone. This is not the time to stop, only to rest and collect yourself.

We all need that still small voice to speak to us too. Matthew 11:28-30 is the most notable as Jesus says, “Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest.” The “I” in this statement implies that God is here to give us rest. Jeremiah 31:25 also says, “For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish.” These are important places in scripture. Jeremiah preached in Jerusalem when it fell to the Babylonians endured many hardships that would have wearied any soul. Yet, he stuck to it

because of the Lord's promise to be with him. So please note first thing, and most important thing in weariness is that the Lord says you are not alone.

Secondly, the still small voice may come in subtle forms such speaking through other people. Perhaps something hit us as we notice other people saying or doing something indirectly related to us, yet we remember it for some reason. God's voice may come directly as it did with Elijah through His Word. We are reminded in the Word that God is still working behind the scenes. Even when we feel like we are all alone God reminds us that the game isn't over and good still being accomplished. Galatians 6:9 says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Some good will come in faithful efforts.

I am not going to suggest that weariness is cured simply by reading the Bible either. Elijah wouldn't have done any good without the time of rest that he took. So, take some rest if you need it. After all, the Lord gave us a Sabbath each week. For Elijah it was for forty days. If the caregiver is strong then the care will be strong too. If the prophet is strong the work he does will be strong.

Lastly, at some point after listening to the Word of God its important to follow through. The Prophet had to get up, leave Horeb, and get going again. One cannot let weariness dictate your day. Make your bed. Get the kids to school. Get dressed. In the case of the prophet, just eating something on the way to Horeb. Each little thing that is done is another victory and a source of momentum. Walking back to Israel, anointing this person and that were each a new victory and momentum towards something good.

And note this. Weariness can turn into a new direction, a new path for doing what needs to be done. Previous strategies maybe didn't work before. Now maybe you will be open to some new ideas. Maybe a journey through weariness may lead to a new job, marriage counseling, better money habits, or maybe it's just a kind of perseverance in a unchanging condition. In the Lord's hands some good will come, but we cannot passively just hold our breath for it to come. Like Elijah. At some point we have to get up and leave the cave.

So, may the Lord strengthen us in weariness. May we find rest at critical moments when we need it. May our weariness turn into a juncture that leads us to something good. Most important may the Lord give us ears to hear that still small voice especially in weariness.

Pastor Matt Woods
John 3:30

The Meaning in the Monotony

Stephanie is a young mother with four children. Her typical day includes waking up at dawn, diapering and feeding one child while clothing another, preparing lunches for the rest, doing a couple loads of laundry, cooking dinner, and putting the kids to bed—all before falling into bed herself, exhausted. The exhaustion runs deep. Aren't there more important things I should be doing? she asks, lamenting that she doesn't have the energy for prayer and study. Many days, she suffers quietly and alone.