Living Hope

(Please Don’t Post or Circulate)

Dear Friends-

It has been a rough fall. Full schedules always keep us busy but adding health issues has made it all the more complicated. There’s never enough time and it has left us feeling thin. In September, I started a short sermon series looking at the life of Elijah. He was a faithful servant that also struggled with the same feeling. He followed in obedience, but instead of things getting easier, it kept getting harder. Every step was worse than the step before. His story finally culminates as he is hiding in a cave. God asks, ”Why are you here, Elijah?” Elijah was so worn out and spent that he was in the wrong place, physically and mentally. All Elijah could do was complain. We all get to that place. We just want to hide and whine. Maybe feel sorry for ourselves and just maybe get a little sympathy from God.

God listens until Elijah is done and then calls Elijah to stand before Him. God wants Elijah to draw near. He wants Elijah to get so close that his field of vision is only filled with God. When you stand that close to God, it’s hard to see the world around you. It’s hard to see the problems that had been consuming you. So, Elijah does as God asks and God passes by. First, there is a strong wind, then a fire and finally an earthquake. Elijah’s world is rocked. God gets his attention. Things are falling down around Elijah in fantastic fashion and Elijah can do nothing but stand in awe. And that’s what God wanted. God wanted Elijah to stop and wait on Him.

As Elijah stood there, God whispered. He spoke to Elijah in a still, small voice. He reminded Elijah that He alone is God and that He is in control. He reminded Elijah that He held all those horrible circumstances in His hands and nothing was beyond His view. It’s hard getting to that place. We can be so wrapped up in doing things or whining to God that we aren’t quiet enough to hear Him whisper words of consolation. We get so busy trying to fix things or plan things that God needs to shake our world so violently that all we can do is stand in awe before Him.

Now, I’m not claiming to be Elijah, but I can certainly identify with this story. Sometimes it feels like we are all alone. Sometimes it feels like the world is crashing down around us. Sometimes it’s hard to trust God in the chaos so we try to fix everything ourselves. But God is good. He has rocked our lives hard enough that all we can do is stand in awe and listen to His whispers.
Emily’s health issues seem to be under control. Medication has her back to a place where she is active and gaining weight again. She was able to enjoy youth soccer and has already started high school soccer. Colette’s health has also leveled out. Medication has her heart where it needs to be. It has allowed her to have a bit more energy than before. I’m recovering from surgery. It has forced me to slow down, although the world around me seems to be spinning just as fast.

As Christmas draws closer, it would be easy for us to feel overwhelmed. It would be easy for us to whine and complain. Instead, we find ourselves in a place of still quietness. A place where the things of this life seem small and trivial compared to the awesome God we serve. We pray that in your chaos, you also find that the place where the voice of God is clear and sweet. The place where your life is filled with the loving whispers of a good God.

Please consider joining our ministry through an end of the year gift or through a recurring monthly donation.

The Schwenks
(206) 794-2930
bschwen@cvmusa.org

Contributions are solicited with the understanding that the donee organization has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.