

June 20, 2021

So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." 1 Kings 19:10, 19:18

Dear Friends,

I know, strange verses to start a letter. Today is Father's Day and I am reflecting a bit on the turmoil in our nation. I was reminded of this verbal exchange between God and Elijah. For context, Elijah has just finished a great victory over the false prophets and ended the severe drought God had imposed on Israel due to its rebellion toward Him. He should have been flying high, but Jezebel, the king's wife and a very wicked woman was so mad for what Elijah had done to the prophets of Baal that she threatened Elijah and told him she would have him killed. He takes off running and tells God the words above. He feels so very alone in serving God and is sure he is the last one of his kind. God does not argue with Elijah about the whether his feelings are right. He just states boldly it's not true and He has reserved 7000 like him.

Sometimes for all of us, we feel a bit alone in the midst of unjustified persecution and we look inward. That is not healthy or even remotely true. The truth is that no matter how believers are persecuted today, God is doing a very great thing in our world. His children continue to faithfully proclaim the good news of salvation and people are turning to Jesus in very great numbers. On this Father's Day, I am reminded of the great number of men whom I have had the privilege of knowing and ministering with for over forty years. Men of integrity who lived and loved the way God intended and who stand as an inspiration to us all. They lived this way often when no one was looking and no one would notice. Some of them are gone now and some are still with us but this is their legacy, a life well lived and full of love for their Savior and the people of this world. Of course, I am also reminded of the godly women who live pure and loving lives of sacrifice and witness to a very broken world. Today, I want to remind us we are not alone, God is at work and victory is sure. Do not grow weary of doing good! (Gal 6:9)

A note for prayer: while here in the US, and particularly here in Florida, covid restrictions are lessening, it is not true globally. Please remember to pray for our people in Africa (one friend said they were so tired of attending funerals), the Middle East and especially for our staff in India and Nepal. Some of our Indian staff have died and I believe that over 50% of our staff have had covid. This new strain is highly contagious and difficult to contain. While we are opening up here in the US, many of my friends tell me their nations are entering new phases of lockdown, especially in Asia.

Please pray for me (Mark) as well. A few weeks ago I did a dumb thing and stepped on a wire in our garage that got deeply embedded in my foot and after two doctors couldn't get it out, I had to have surgery to get it removed. (Yes, a wise woman told me not to go into the garage barefooted but.....) Surgery was a week ago and recovery is taking longer than this impatient man would like.

Lastly, I want to say that when I think about the faithfulness of godly men and women, it is impossible for me not to think about you who have prayed and given sacrificially for us to continue to serve the King of Kings. Please be encouraged and know you are deeply loved by Jesus and us!

Mark & Elaine