

God's response to loneliness

Introduction

Do you feel **lonely** in the time of Corona? When there is no worship and work places are closed, those **that don't have family** are especially lonely. And for me personally, I felt disappointed and lonely when we had to **cancel the Les Diablerets weekend and the concerts in May**. Even in normal circumstances, each one of us can feel **lonely** even surrounded by a big **group** of people: in the work place, or even in the church or the family. Why is that? Enemy is working, and as Christians we are always going **contre-courant** (against the current). Even in the Christian family, the enemy is working to sow seeds of discord, as he knows there is power when we are united.

So what is God's cure for loneliness? Let's look in two cases, one when God personally took care of a lonely person, and another one when other people supported a lonely person.

Elijah

Right after a big manifestation of God's power through Elijah on Mount Carmel, he gets afraid from pagan woman Jezebel. 1 Kings 19 reads:

³And when he saw *that*, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a ^[a]broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!"

Elijah is tired, Elijah is exhausted of apparently being only God's representative. He is tired of fighting and going **contre-courant**. Why nobody was with him on the Mount Carmel? He must be wondering how such an **apostasy** could arise in God's people. And after the powerful manifestation of God on the Mount Carmel, he expected people would **reform** their ways. Elijah was working among his people for a very long time without obvious **results**. It looked to him as he is the only one following God. Have you ever felt lonely in doing God's work?

EGW wrote "Those who, while spending their life energies in self-sacrificing labor, are tempted to give way to despondency and distrust, may gather courage from the experience of Elijah. God's watchful care, His love, His power, are especially manifest in behalf of His servants whose zeal is misunderstood or unappreciated, whose counsels and reproofs are slighted, and whose efforts toward reform are repaid with hatred and opposition."

⁵Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an ^[b]angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise *and* eat." ⁶Then he looked, and there by his head *was* a cake baked on ^[c]coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. ⁷And the ^[d]angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise *and* eat, because the journey *is* too great for you." ⁸So he arose, and ate and drank; and he

went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

EGW wrote: "Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves, and ready to die in discouragement. We should see angels flying quickly to the aid of these tempted ones, forcing back the hosts of evil that encompass them, and placing their feet on the sure foundation."

How does God deal with his disappointed prophet? Does God **lectures** Elijah? Does God preach to Elijah, **proving** his way of thinking is wrong? No, God feeds Elijah, and let him be alone for a while. Elijah is surrounded by nature for 40 days where he does quite some exercise (walking approximately 15KMs per day). We need some time for ourselves. In our family, we have time for kids which we do not organize for them, nor we play with them. We call it "**Time for ourselves**", and kids really appreciate it.

How many times we are so eager to share our precious piece of **advice to a suffering soul**, or to someone who is fighting for God's work? We are so **fast to speak**, and so slow to give people time, and to **meet their needs** (Elijah's need was not an advice or a sermon, but a vacation). What would happen when we would try to meet the needs of the person that is shouting and maybe misbehaving? How much **evil would be prevented**?

Jeremiah was warning God's people that a disaster is coming. One of the reasons why we found in Jeremiah 6:14:

¹⁴They have also healed the ^(a)hurt of My people ^(b)slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When *there is* no peace.

Jesus did not call Peter to rule over his people, preach, advise and rebuke to his people but to "Feed My Lambs" (John 21:15).

1 Kings continues:

⁹And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

EGW wrote: "Much depends on the unceasing activity of those who are true and loyal, and for this reason Satan puts forth every possible effort to thwart the divine purpose to be wrought out through the obedient. He causes some to lose sight of their high and holy mission, and to become satisfied with the pleasures of this life. He leads them to settle down at ease, or, for the sake of greater worldly advantages, to remove from places where they might be a power for good. Others he causes to flee in discouragement from duty, because of opposition or persecution. But all such are regarded by Heaven with tenderest pity. To every child of God whose voice the enemy of souls had succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed, "What doest thou here?" I commissioned you to go

into all the world and preach the gospel, to prepare a people for the day of God. Why are you here? Who sent you?"

¹⁰So 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."

God, being the Creator of the Universe and knowing our thought always **asks us how we feel first or what do we think, before saying anything**. Remember God seeking Adam and Eve in the Garden of **Eden**: "Where are you? Who told you that you were naked?". People need to talk out loud how they feel. Sometimes we are so eager to **judge** people without understanding them first. We need to **talk less or listen more**. How many **misunderstandings** would be avoided if we would simply ask people why they did something, rather than **attributing to them our motives**, our worldview, misinterpreting someone's actions. This is especially important in **the English group**, when people come from very different backgrounds.

Then God reveals Himself to Elijah in a "still small voice".

¹³So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

God gives us a chance to spill out our frustrations and **express our feelings**. And He knows this has a healing effect. Sometimes we **do not let people grieve** but we hurt them saying "stop complaining, trust God".

¹⁴And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because 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."

¹⁵Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. ¹⁸Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

God does **not argue** with Elijah. After some vacation for Elijah, God gives him a new **mission** to fulfil. God's response to our worries and difficulties is pointing us out to our mission. **Do not look at problems, but look at Christ!** Our job is not to worry about the **results**, but to steadily **follow God's voice** and remain in His presence. And by the way Elijah, do not worry, **you are not alone**.

[Moses, Aaron, Hur and Joshua](#)
Exodus 17.8-13:

8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. **12 But Moses' hands became [a]heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.** 13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

The people of God attain victory when stays **united**. Aaron and Hur supported Moses' hands while he was praying. **Persistent prayer and unity** allows God to work miraculously on our behalf. When we **support** each other rather than **fighting** who will do what. When we **accept our duties**, no matter how small they look to us, God will bless our efforts. When we restrain from **complaining and criticizing**, but rather **support** each other, we can attain victory. Everyone of us has a special role to play, and we should gracefully **embrace the role God assigns us to**. Please do not assume "somebody else will do this", nor say "my agenda is already full".

I would like the English group to work as a team, that we share the responsibilities of helping this group to grow.