

Five Minutes ‘Til Burnout?—1 Kings 19:1-15, Luke 8: 26-39

Elijah was living in a time zone that I call “*Five minutes ‘til burn out.*”

A stressful state of mind!

All the time!

Poorly paid!

Nerves always frayed!

Problems that can’t be solved!

Conflicts that are never resolved!

Death threats start to arrive!

How long, Lord?—Will he still be alive?

Where can he hide!

Elijah! You’re five minutes ‘til burn out!

You gotta get out!

Head for Mount Horeb!

An ancient hideout!

(whisper) The prophet takes flight!

For forty days and forty nights!

Collapses under a broom tree.

He’s all out of fight!

For what’s right!

He prays to die before midnight.

“I’ve had enough, LORD. Let me lay down and die!”

“Don’t ask why!”

But then an angel arrives!

Feeds him flat bread baked on the fly!

Becomes his soul’s surprise ally!

Whisper.

Drink some water, Elijah “ Keep moving at night!
 Toward Mount Horeb’s lofty heights!
 Where Moses and your liberated ancestors met!
 After fleeing slavery’s long, bleak plight!

(Pause)

Look to the sky! Can he climb that high?
 Will he fall and die?
 Do you think those dry rocks can speak!
 Watch a real prophet strain higher toward Sinai’s desert peak!

Like a goat, he struggles toward a dark, mysterious cave.
 Isn’t he brave?

All sound has fled this dark sky terrain!
 Only the voice of God remains.

Whisper

El-ee—jah!
El-ee—jah!

Come to the edge of this cave
 I have a vision, your life, to save!

Loud

Earthquake! Wind! And Fire!
Earthquake! Wind! And Fire!

The natural world in an upheaval of tyranny and war!
 Life and death struggles with constant opponents!

You will recall your loneliness, Eljah!—
 You will recall all your personal sacrifices!

Earthquake, wind and fire!

Earthquake, wind and fire!

Calamities in the natural world!

A persistent and deadly drought that visited famine on the whole region!

Remember?

Exhausted—You were fed by ravens!—at Cherith Brook.

Fed by a God miracle of food a starving widow cooked!

Whisper

As Elijah recalls and re-lives all these experiences at the edge of the cave—

He has a mystical, 5th dimensional experience that involves both the natural, physical world and the invisible, spiritual realm—where God exists.

The cave is Elijah's vivid thin place!

“Earthquake, wind and fire....”

The wind rushes by!

The fire subsides!

God comes closer....closer....closer.

Elijah becomes aware of God's presence—in *“the still, small voice.”*

He hears the voice of God inside a sound of sheer silence.

He begins to detach himself from all the contentious events that have left him five minutes before burn out!

He manages to re—attach himself to God.

In a remote environment of sheer silence.....

In the cave, he becomes receptive to the voice of God, speaking within.

Time passes.

The star clusters wheel and blink far above the dark sky place.

The sound of sheer silence persists.

At the edge of the cave—Elijah becomes more and more detached—from the things which had brought him to this place.

(Pause)

Detachment is the inner path that leads to the possibility of healing.

Detach from your fears!

Detach from your worries.

Re-attach to God.

Detach from your desires. Detach from your grasping.

Re-attach to the Living God.

Detach from your wounds and your sins.

Re-attach to the Mother of Mercy and Grace!

Detach from your resentments and your regrets.

Re-attach to the Father Whose Love and Beauty is Everywhere!

(MOVE)

People who were asked to reflect on what their biggest regrets and personal guilts have been in life said things like:

I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself—not the life others expected of me.

I wish I hadn't worked so hard.

I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings....Tell people "I love you.

I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.

I wish that I had let myself be happier.

Doesn't that sound about right?

So what must we do today? This week?—so it doesn't become too late?

Detach!—from the fears!

Detach from the worries!

Detach from the substitute satisfactions!

How does one detach?

With love!

And with trust!

The people—the things—the situations—the problems—that are standing strongly between us and the joy and beauty God has create us for—we begin to detach ourselves from them—not with anger!—but with love.

And trust.

Trust God.

We start to trust God more and more.

We start to remind ourselves to pray our fate and destiny more often in God's hands.

"I'm setting this down and leaving it in Your light, God.

Give me added light!"

"I'm climbing out of the driver's seat, God.

I'm letting you do the steering."

"Into Your hands, God. You will show the way I need to go."

Jesus once met a man who was beyond burnout. People said he was possessed by demons.

In modern parlance, that means he was eternally distracted by purposes that lead to dead ends rather than to open doors. You can imagine all kinds of things that drove this person to distraction every hour he was alive: panic attacks, addictions, anger attacks, suicidal thoughts, gloom, violent wishes, distortions in thinking and personality.

This man Jesus met might as well have been dead.
He had no place to live but a cemetery.

Jesus helped this person by persuading him to focus on the central thing that was wrong with him, which was—he didn't know who he really was.

He didn't know his name. "My name is Legion," he said. "I have so many names. I can't even begin to keep it all straight."

Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

What is your core identity?

Whatever it is—detach yourself from all that is not you and attach yourself to your core identity. (walk)

You are someone's friend.

You are someone's grandparent.

You are someone's husband or wife or partner.

You are someone's brother or sister.

Daughter or son!

You are your own best caregiver in whatever way you need care and nurture and creativity within yourself right now.

You are a child of God.

You are a soul.

You are an eternal soul undergoing a temporary physical experience.

“There was never a time when you and I did not exist, nor will there ever be a future when we shall cease to be.”

(Pause)

Being a human is hard. Remember what the angel said to Elijah when he had collapsed underneath the broom tree—something God could say to anyone:

“Get up and eat. Otherwise the journey will be too much for you.”

Get up and eat!

Feed your soul!

Ask God to feed your soul!

Forget everything else. Detach with love!

Get up and eat!

Trust God that **what you need to eat** will be there.

Trust God to carry you far beyond—*“Five Minutes til burnout!”*

Amen.

Rev Scott Myers

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