

Reflections for August 9th – 9th Sunday after Trinity

A still small voice

Have you ever felt like running away? That is what the prophet Elijah did, as we read in this week's Old Testament reading. From a point where he seemed to be at the height of his powers, all his faith and confidence suddenly faded away, and he ran away to a mountain top. There he met God in a new way, and that experience turned him around and sent him out again to continue his work as a prophet.

So what was it that happened to Elijah on the mountain, that transformed his life? He stood on the holy mountain and experienced the awesome power of a great wind that shook the mountain, then an earthquake, and then a fire. But, we are told, the Lord was not 'in' the wind, the earthquake or the fire. After the fire Elijah heard a 'gentle whisper', a 'still small voice', 'the soft whisper of a voice'. And in that experience he found his deepest encounter with God.

Elijah had to let go of all his worries and troubles, and then go beyond dramatic and powerful events and experiences, before he could be in the place where he could simply be attentive to the presence of God.

There are times in our journey of faith when the most important thing, and perhaps the only thing, we can do is to seek and find a place where we can be still and attentive to God – and then we can begin to see our concerns and assumptions in a new way, in the light of God's presence.

That may sound simple, but we do not always find it an easy thing to do. For Elijah, it took a long, difficult and dangerous journey to reach that place. We may find that it is a costly, and perhaps a difficult thing, to truly seek the presence of God, but we may also find that it the most important thing that we will ever do.

Revd John Waller

Loving God,
whose power we see in the wonders of creation;
bring us to the place of stillness
where we may be attentive to your voice,
and so be made new
to serve you through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible readings: 1 Kings 19. 9-18; Romans 10. 5-15; Matthew 14. 22-33