

## A living hope- 1 Kings 19:1-10

Introduction: One of my challenging moments in my ministry was providing pastoral care to someone who was on the verge of life. Life had become unbearable and most of the time we spent together would end with words: "Adam, please pray that God takes me...". This was difficult for me.

### Background:

Elijah was so troubled- physically and emotionally exhausted... Elijah's contest with the false prophets of Baal is the source of all the trouble. There has been a severe drought in the land, Elijah calls the authorities for a challenge to see who the true God is. The King of Israel Ahab and his wife Jezebel are so wicked they worship false gods (idols). On Mount Carmel, Elijah has a contest with the false prophets. YHWH, the God of Elijah proved himself to be the true and living God when rain poured down when Elijah prayed. The prophets of Baal were losers, hence were killed. This offended Ahab and Jezebel. Jezebel takes it upon herself to deal with Elijah, now threatening to kill prophet Elijah.

**Elijah's wilderness-** Elijah is pushed out: out of fear he flees to the wilderness.

Elijah asked God to take his life: "I have had enough now O Lord, take away my life..." (vs 4) His request arises from feelings of despair (An honest conversation with God).

- He is alone  
Wilderness can be a very lonely place, anger and bitterness.

### Your wilderness situation:

Like Elijah, we all get there...everything will not go right for you every day, Elijah a prayerful man had his dark days.

No one is immune to broken hearts and disappointments

- So much has happened during the lock down, it has been a time for family bonding in some cases, but it has also been a time that has caused some rift in some families and domestic violence. There have been some heart breaks in many ways...Now we are preoccupied about when we shall return to church and how that is going to work (anxious about technicalities and practicalities). We need God's assurance.
- Whatever your situation is - upside down or upright because of Covid 19, please be assured that you are not alone. When you find yourself in the wilderness/ in your dark days, don't despair, there is hope.

### There is hope

- God brought Elijah out of his depression.
- God strengthened Elijah with food and drink: "He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank" (vs 6).
- God reassured him and restored him. We need spiritual renewal. Like what we do in life- renewal of car insurance, MOT, policies etc. 'we all need spiritual renewal' especial when we feel tired and worn out.

### Exhortation

May God speak HOPE to your soul, may God send sensitive and caring people to support you. Never listen to the voice that will tell you that "you are finished"- NO! You are a child of God, and in Him you are more than a conqueror through Christ who loves you (Romans 8:31). May you too be God's hope to others who are in the wilderness.

Amen.

**Loving God, hear our prayer**

Loving God, we pray for your world,  
so imperfect and yet so rich and so diverse.

We pray for those places where humanitarian aid  
is being distributed amid violence, fear and power struggles...  
for volunteers, medical staff, peacekeepers, reporters  
and all who risk their lives to help others.

We remember those who continue to be affected  
by the attack at the maternity hospital in Iraq...  
for the people of Yemen, and Syria...

We pray too for those places where landmines  
still lay in the crops of fields, in villages,  
in places where children and communities  
live and work and go to school

**Loving God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for discernment and wisdom  
around the use of social media.

We give thanks for those who use it for good –  
to fundraise, to highlight injustice, to share good news  
and to keep in touch with family and friends;  
but we also pray protection from, and for a change of heart for,  
those who use it to incite hatred, to bully and abuse,  
those who are predatory,  
and those who initiate financial fraud and scams.

**Loving God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for our relationship with creation,  
and we give thanks for birds and wildlife,  
and those green spaces that inspire and nurture us;  
but we pray also for those who live in places devoid of colour,  
for all caged by their surroundings;  
we pray for an end to practices that are cruel and inhumane,  
and we pray for the welfare of all animals and creatures,  
and for wisdom in our stewardship of the earth.

**Loving God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the family of the nations,  
for our own families and for our church family.  
Where there is division – bring reconciliation.  
Where there is mistrust – bring healing.  
Where there is opportunity – bring courage.  
Where there is a shared dream – bring joy.  
Where there is discouragement – bring hope.

And, amid all the muddle of the best and the worst of humanity,  
bring your grace, your love and your truth  
We ask these things in Jesus' name.

**Loving God, hear our prayer. Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer**