

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY, JUNE 22 2025

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## "Ordinary Time"

Based on 1 Kings 19:8-15

So we have begun the long season of "Ordinary Time." In the church calendar there are seasons, just like there are months in our year, although the timing is a little different than the Romans set up.

The church year begins with Advent, in late November, followed of course with Christmas, and on its tails, Epiphany. Depending on the moon cycle that year, Epiphany can be very short or very long, but eventually meanders to Lent, then Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

From Easter we move to the final big push of the year, Pentecost, winding down the following week, (which was last week) Trinity Sunday.

And then?

Then we have close to six months of "Ordinary Time."

- No special events, save World Wide Communion which isn't scripturally based but a global celebration by the World Council of Churches

- No high moments of scripture.

- No seasonal colours, events, celebrations, special

services, bazaars, or pot-lucks. Ordinary time.

Some of you more serious pew sitters out there might be looking at this time with relief. Finally, the distractions of all these church seasons has quietened, and it is easier for you to contemplate and consider your faith journey with the steady, predictable course of worship.

Some of you may have welcomed those seasonal distractions, finding the themes, and events and hymns a meaningful way to deepen your relationship with the Saviour, and the lack of such distractions now, may make things feel dull and listless.

some of you may find these "Ordinary Days" too ordinary; doubt and worry creeping into the silence of your heart, with nothing compelling to distract you. Perhaps in these long summer months, your heart may begin to cry out quietly, "Where are you God?"

The prophet Elijah was asking himself the same question.

Elijah was a troubled man, in a great deal of trouble. He had angered the queen, had a

price on his head, and had run to the desert to escape.

Elijah's story sounds very similar to other biblical heroes, Jacob and his ladder; Moses and his burning bush. These men too, had run from their problems into the desert.

- All of them, found God in the silence of the desert.

- All of them used by God, despite their faults and problems.

- All of them playing an important role in the story of God's Chosen People.

Elijah looked for God in the expected places: the wind, the fire, the earthquake. God was omnipotent after all. One would expect a God so big to be discovered, seen, and heard in the big things of the world.

Perplexed though, God was not to be found in the loud, busy, chaotic things.

- Moses found God on bended knee in front of a burning bush.
- Jacob found God in his dreams by the river's bank.
- Elijah found God in the silence of the cave, when the wind, and the fire and the chaos had subsided.

I love the way it is expressed in the New Revised Standard Version.

*"...a sound of sheer silence."  
(v12)*

- Not a quiet moment in a busy day.

- Not the sounds of a house settling down for the evening.

- Not the hush when walking through the woods.

A sound of 'sheer silence.'  
Even the words make you pause for a moment.

Elijah recognized the moment for what it was. He wrapped his head with a cloth, covering his eyes; in respect and with a clear understanding that

*"No one can see the face of God and live..." (Exodus 33:20).*

- I am comforted by this moment.

- I can feel the presence of YHWH with Elijah.

- I am reminded of those times in my life when I have felt that similar closeness.

But God's next move was unexpected.

*'What are you doing here, Elijah? (v13)*

"Why are you here, Elijah? Why are you hiding out in this cave?"

A pause, and then the excuses, the justification.

- I've been a servant of you God and I am being punished for it!

- There's a price on my head!

- No one will listen to me!

- Isn't this the moment where you take over and fix everything?

And God's reply...

*'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus  
(v15a)*

"Get back out there. Keep working for the cause. There is more to be done. It's still going to be difficult. There will continue to be hard moments. But I need you to do it. Now."

You see, God wasn't upset that Elijah escaped to the cave.

God was upset that Elijah had started to hide.

God was upset that Elijah was allowing fear and uncertainty to cloud his vision and his purpose.

The sanctuary had become a hiding place.

- Hiding from life.
- Hiding from responsibility.
- Hiding from his Call.

And the world was suffering because of his fear.

These "Ordinary Days" afford us time to sit in our silence and our silent

moments and consider what it is that we do with our silence.

Do we sit quietly with the Lord, head bowed, heart open, and draw Him closer to us?

Do we recognize that the things we place around ourselves: our homes, our toys, our activities, and our friends, can be both a sanctuary and a hiding place?

- Sometimes we need a sanctuary.
- Sometimes we need to hide.
- Sometimes we need to shake off our fear and return to the world.
- Sometimes we need to set aside some of our conveniences, so that we might experience a deeper understanding of our Saviour.

Are you following the tasks that God has set before you?

Or are you hiding from them, filled with reasons why you can't, shouldn't, or won't do what He asks?

Are you uncertain what your next move should be?

Then these "Ordinary Days" are exactly why there are "Ordinary Days" in our church seasons.

Time to consider.

Time to pray.

Time to change.

Time to begin the work again.

Now is the time to plan to leave the cave. Amen.