

Sermon 2009 Pentecost 10
August 9, 2009
Text: I Kings 19:1-8
Theme: "Get Up and Eat"

Ever get sick of God? Dänya used to ask that question regularly when I was in seminary because it was all that was talked about at every social occasion she attended. You want to see obnoxious? Invite a bunch of graduate students from the same discipline to your party. That's just the nature of the beast with people who are involved in studying something about which they are all passionate but the spouses are not necessarily quite as passionate.

But the question applies beyond a bunch of pastors or pastor wannabes sitting on a patio drinking beer. I think it applies to all of at one time or another because many of us, and I suspect all of us, get sick of God at one time or another. Maybe he has allowed some kind of horrible situation to happen in our lives and while we understand that God never creates evil, we aren't stupid. We know that if he wanted, he could intervene and stop evil any time he wanted. But we also know that he can see the big picture which we cannot see and we have to trust that he will always do what is best for us in the long run. It is no different from a kid wanting a motorcycle when he is a

teenager. How many parents are comfortable with their teenager riding around on a motorcycle? I'm not. I have worked as a chaplain in the Emergency Room and seen the 17 year old organ donors coming through the doors. It may not have been his fault that he got broadsided in an intersection. He may not have been breaking any rules and might have even had on a helmet, but when a 3,000 lb piece of metal hits a 300lb piece of metal at 40 miles per hour, it does not matter who was at fault, I know who is going to lose. God too sees a bigger picture than we can and often his decisions seem callous or capricious because he knows what the long term outcome is. That being true, we still get sick of him from time to time.

Elijah was having one of those times. The evil Queen Jezebel was hot on his trail and was going to kill him because he had been instrumental in getting her false prophets, exposed, humiliated and killed. Now she had decided that Elijah would pay and pay dearly. Elijah was tired of it all and he sat down in the shade of a broom tree and said, "I'm done." But what Elijah would learn, was what Jonah would learn along with Jeremiah and Peter and Paul and each of us in our time. We don't get to decide when we are done. God decides.

And that is very scary for anyone who has not thought it through and for everyone who does not want to believe in him.

Once we resign ourselves to being his children, we find it so much easier to live with the rises and falls of life. But most of us if not all of us, have been through a time of rebellion when we did not want to let God be in control. These are the times we thought we could call the shots in the game and then nothing comes up the way it is supposed to come up. But unlike us, God never gives up and washes his hands of us.

This is one of the more maternal qualities of God, for though he often reveals himself in terms of traditionally male characteristics, God is neither male nor female since he is a spirit and he has female characteristics as well. We want to pull the covers over our head and die. Our mother God bangs through the bedroom door holding a lunch tray, plops it down on our nightstand, opens the drapes and says,

“Get up and eat.” We say,

“Leave us alone God. We’ve tried and everything is failing and we just want to be left alone to die.”

“Get up and eat.” And so it goes until God has his way and we get up and eat and once we have eaten, we decided to go another day before we bury ourselves under the comforter and die. Here we are today, ready to face another week. Some of us are facing illness, some death, some financial problems, some relationship stress, all of us are facing the various aspects of this world that set it apart from heaven. When the last day comes and we are in paradise, it will all be resolved, but until then – here we are. So get up and eat.

I know that you may be sick of God and his demands, but whining about it and lying in bed with the covers over you head, or sitting under the broom tree, as the case may be, will solve nothing. That’s why we do what we do here on the weekends. God knows full well that we get sick of him when our faith is strained and we begin to run on fumes. But remember why you were washed in Baptismal waters that never stop flowing. Just when you are at your weakest, they refresh you like the drapes being opened in a dark room, and God bangs into our lives with a tray full of his Word and his own body and blood and says,

“Get up and eat!” says God, “There will be time enough for whining and bemoaning your wretched life tomorrow. Today, you need your strength and eventually you will see why I did all I did and why I allowed all that I allowed and you will rejoice that I took control of things before you completely derailed.”

Get up and eat. It is what Jesus says too but the people did not want to hear it because receiving the bread of life from Jesus would be admitting that they were not in control. They would be admitting that they were not self sufficient – that they NEEDED something from God. Well okay. It is finally our choice. We can stubbornly refuse to eat because we believe that we are so self sufficient, so wise, so powerful that we don't need God. Or we can be like the little child who held her breath until she passed out because her parents said no. But in the end, there's God with good food that we need, saying,

“Get up and Eat,” AMEN.