

# Hope

by Emma Ghazarian



I find hope and comfort when I call my friends with similar vision and focus, who pray for the same things I pray for.

I find hope and motivation when I can see new meaningful relationships form and deepen alongside scripture study, theological discussions, testimony exchange, and prayer.

And I find peace when reminded that I am part of a larger community, all working towards a common goal.

Recently, I have been remembering a past conversation I had with my church peers during a Tuesday Church conversation. The topic for the night was The Voice of God.

We read one of my favourite stories from the Old Testament, which comes from Kings 1, Chapter 19.

It's a story of a prophet called Elijah who runs into the wilderness to Mt Horeb (aka Mt Sinai). Elijah had just survived a battle against 450 false prophets of Baal, and now his life was in danger. He was afraid, he was tired, and was tempted to give up on life. He climbed the same mountain Moses had climbed with the expectation of encountering God.

"Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Kings 1 19:11-12

Elijah responds by telling him how faithful he has been towards God but then goes on to explain how everyone else in Israel has forgotten their covenant and murdered all of God's prophets. He mentioned that he was the only one left, and now they want to take his life away.

God responded by giving him instructions to go back, and anoint a new King and reminded

him that in fact, there were seven thousand in Israel who had stayed faithful and had not yet worshipped Baal.

That story has stuck with me. Not only because he went up expecting to have the same mountaintop experience Moses had with the thunder and fire and instead encountered God in the silence, but because he was about to give up, assuming he was all alone in his faith when in truth, he wasn't.

I have not survived a battle against 450 false prophets as Elijah had, but I have experienced weariness and loneliness, and I have, at times, felt like giving up in ministry. I have found myself asking, what is the point? Am I the only one who cares? I have seen people close to me blinded by grief and sadness, unable to see the people still around them.

When Elijah was in deep despair, God reminded Elijah that there were other people out there who would help him. As the story continued, Elijah met Elisha, who became his close partner in ministry and eventually his great successor.

I am reminded often that although I may sometimes "feel" alone, I'm not.

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