

PROVIDENCE

THE LESSON: 1 KINGS 19

Let's recap. Who are we? We are a people with a good, unchanging God. We are a people who trace our roots back to the teachings of the apostles. As the Church, we are built on the solid foundation of Jesus and our future is secure in God's hands.

Even though we know these things, life can be difficult and we can become discouraged along the way. So, what help do we have *right now*? The answer is providence: God's attentive care that protects and provides for us. He has promised never to leave us or forsake us, and he keeps that promise in several ways. God has given us his indwelling Holy Spirit. He has drawn us into the fellowship of believers (the Church), and though we do not often talk about them, his angels are actively at work on our behalf. God knows and cares about what we're going through and he knows what it's going to take to get us to the place we need to be.

+++

There are many wonderful stories in the Old Testament about a man named Elijah. We only have time today to look at one small part of his story, but first, here's what you need to know: Elijah was a prophet in Israel during the reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Scripture tells us that this pair "did evil in the sight of the Lord" – more than any of the monarchs who went before them. It was Elijah's job to speak the words of God to them: words of judgment that they did *not* want to hear. Because Elijah obeyed God, he was hunted by this powerful couple. But even though things were far from easy, Elijah did not have to do it all on his own.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Imagine that God is calling you by name and saying, "What are you doing here?" Take a moment to consider your answer. Where are you in your life and faith? What has brought you to this place? How do you feel about your past, your present and your future? Have you become discouraged in your faith? Ask God to remind you of who he is, and of the care that he has for you.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love: Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (THE COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 219)

PROVIDENCE

1 KINGS 19: **NEVER BEYOND GOD'S CARE**

⁵And Elijah lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." ⁶And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." ⁸And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

⁹There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹¹And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks 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. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹⁵And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."