

2nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (OT-12)**ST PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 22nd June 2025****Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur****Readings: 1Kings 19:1-15a / Psalm 42; 43 / Galatians 3:10-14, 23-29 / Luke 8:26-39¹****Theme: *Where does hope come from?***

1Kings 19:1-15a

19 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." ³ Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵ Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." ⁶ He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. ⁷ The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." ⁸ He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. ⁹ At that place he came to a cave and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰ He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

¹¹ He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." 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, ¹² and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³ 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?" ¹⁴ He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." ¹⁵ Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus;

Psalm 42; 43

¹ As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.

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² My soul thirsts for God,
 for the living God.
 When shall I come and behold
 the face of God?
³ My tears have been my food
 day and night,
 while people say to me continually,
 "Where is your God?"
⁴ These things I remember,
 as I pour out my soul:
 how I went with the throng^[a]
 and led them in procession to the house of God,
 with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,
 a multitude keeping festival.
⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you disquieted within me?
 Hope in God, for I shall again praise him,
 my help⁶ and my God.
 My soul is cast down within me;
 therefore I remember you
 from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
 from Mount Mizar.
⁷ Deep calls to deep
 at the thunder of your torrents;
 all your waves and your billows
 have gone over me.
⁸ By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
 and at night his song is with me,
 a prayer to the God of my life.
⁹ I say to God, my rock,
 "Why have you forgotten me?
 Why must I walk about mournfully
 because the enemy oppresses me?"
¹⁰ As with a deadly wound in my body,
 my adversaries taunt me,
 while they say to me continually,
 "Where is your God?"
¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you disquieted within me?
 Hope in God, for I shall again praise him,
 my help and my God.

Prayer to God in Time of Trouble

¹ Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
 against an ungodly people;
 from those who are deceitful and unjust,
 deliver me!
² For you are the God in whom I take refuge;

why have you cast me off?
 Why must I walk about mournfully
 because of the oppression of the enemy?
³ O send out your light and your truth;
 let them lead me;
 let them bring me to your holy hill
 and to your dwelling.
⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God,
 to God my exceeding joy,
 and I will praise you with the harp,
 O God, my God.
⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you disquieted within me?
 Hope in God, for I shall again praise him,
 my help and my God.

Galatians 3:10-14, 23-29

¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is reckoned as righteous before God by the law, for “the one who is righteous will live by faith.” ¹² But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, “Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”— ¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

²³ Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be reckoned as righteous by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Luke 8:26-39

²⁶ Then they arrived at the region of the Gerasene’s, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ As he stepped out on shore, a man from the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had not worn any clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, shouting, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me,” ²⁹ for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. ³¹ They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding, and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of

the man and entered the swine, and the herd stampeded down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they became frightened. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷ Then the whole throng of people of the surrounding region of the Gerasene's asked Jesus to leave them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone out begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

SERMON

In a world that often seems to be spiralling toward conflict and despair, in times when everything in our lives seems not to be as we hoped, it is so easy to lose faith, to surrender to the hopelessness or inevitability of the chaos that comes with loss and failure. However, in today's scripture, we find a continuation of the narrative of hope found in Jesus Christ.

Through Easter, we heard that the hope offered by Jesus is not some flippant or constrained offering; rather, it is a gift like no other, not a hope of maybe, but a hope of certainty. A hope from which we know that while life may be difficult, it is not something we experience alone or pointlessly. It is an experience from which we grow into fuller awareness of ourselves and our relationship with God.

Elijah² was a prophet who faced immense challenges and persecution. He was on the run, feeling alone and despondent. *Have you ever experienced a time when you just felt there was nowhere to go but give up?* Yet, in his darkest moments, when all seemed lost, Elijah persevered, and God provided him with sustenance and guidance.

We all experience times when we are tempted to give up on hope just as Elijah did, but just as God responded to Elijah's perseverance with sustenance and direction, we too remaining open to the movement of the Holy Spirit will know the security of hope and direction through God's loving, wise leadership and find guidance through our struggles.

Elijah's story reminds us of the importance of perseverance in faith, and the psalmist³ expresses the depth of Elijah's and our longing for God's presence. "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God" (Psalm 42:1).

² 1 Kings 19:1-15a

³ Psalm 42; 43

This longing for God reflects the human desire for spiritual connection, especially in times of despair. When we feel overwhelmed, we can find solace in our yearning for God's presence. This longing can foster a sense of unity and purpose, encouraging us to come together in search of peace and reconciliation. It opens us to possibilities that may seem irrational. Despite the psalmist's feelings of despair, there is an expression of hope and trust in God's salvation. The psalmist shows us that, even in our darkest moments, we can trust in God's plan for our lives. --- But how does trusting God work? It requires faith, the willingness to surrender the self to God.

To this end, Paul⁴ emphasizes the importance of faith over the law. He reminds us that faith in Christ rather than strict adherence to rigid rules brings true righteousness. This theme is particularly relevant as dialogue to resolve tensions between, for instance, nations, is increasingly discarded for the preference of throwing bombs. The same applies to us when we choose to hold a grudge, to punish rather than forgive. By prioritizing faith and empathy over legalism, we can bridge divides and foster reconciliation and halt the spiral toward isolation.

"Love one another as I have loved you."

Paul highlights the unity of believers in Christ, transcending geographical, sociopolitical, cultural, and even personal barriers. "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

This unity in Christ encourages us, **No!** ... it demands that we look beyond our differences, that we find and work towards common goals, promoting harmony and cooperation not for one group but all. For those who might say get real, Fr Stephen, religion is rarely far from the frontline in many of these fights, it is more complex, --- I say...

Humanity submitting to evil in the form of greed for worldly power, arrogance toward others who think, act, or view differently, and pride in one's perceived brilliance or certainty is what creates the schisms. Jesus is calling all to be humble, to love and serve not just those we affiliate with, but more importantly, with those we do not. Through this, God is truly glorified through all, and all are glorified as God desires.

The story of Jesus healing the demon-possessed man⁵ demonstrates this depth of God's desire, God's power in Jesus to deliver and restore. This theme of healing and deliverance offers hope for people and a society facing conflict. Jesus' transformative power can bring about healing and restoration, reminding us that

⁴ Galatians 3:10-14, 23-29

⁵ Luke 8:26-39

change is possible if we desire it. This transformation is not just personal but can also be societal.

In conclusion, the hope found through Jesus Christ is a beacon of light in a world filled with conflict and despair. By persevering in faith, seeking the Spirit's guidance, longing for God's presence, prioritizing faith over legalism, embracing unity, and experiencing the transformative power of Jesus, we can know hope and inspiration. Let us hold fast to this hope and share it with others, knowing that through Jesus Christ, we can overcome any challenge and find true peace and reconciliation.

Let us pray,
Most gentle and forgiving God,
as we pray for peace in these troubling times,
as we deal with disagreements in our relationships
and struggles in life,
May the Spirit fill our hearts with compassion and the hope
That through the person of Jesus, we will be
guiding rightly in all that we say and do. Amen.