

God Isn't Done

1 Kings 19:4-8

John 6:35, 41-51

Slide: Raining Cats & Dogs

Sometimes I wonder where idioms come from. You know, a turn of phrase or a combination of words that end up having specific meaning like:

- "It's raining cats and dogs."
- Or - "Sick as a dog"
- Or - "Break a leg"

We use them all the time without really thinking about them and in my case, I sometimes use them wrongly. I can never remember saying "You're pulling my leg" right and it somehow always comes out as a combination of two idioms - pull my leg, twist my arm, twist my leg, pull my...no, that's not how it goes.

There is a particular idiom that speaks to having had

enough or simply being done. It's the phrase, "I've had it up to here." Up to where, you might ask? Well, most people do a hand motion with it up to their necks or noses or some such thing to indicate that they are exasperated.

Slide: I have had it...

To use an example would be something like: "I've had it up to here with all these forest fires going on"! I had a friend from Georgia once who did a variation of this idiom when I heard him say, "I'm up to my neck in alligators." Now, that's definitely being done, finished, and sick of something. I mean, who wants to be up to here in alligators?

Elijah would definitely relate to being up to his neck in alligators. In fact, he's just done. He's had it. And, I really pity his predicament because his is a very, very bad day, not to mention an extremely fearful situation. We know this to be true because he says so, but we also know what Scripture tells us happens to him up to this point.

Slide: Elijah – Prophet of...

Just before we encounter Elijah going a day's journey into the wilderness to give up because he had had enough, he receives a message from Queen Jezebel that she is going to kill him. She is seeking his life. And, up until now, Elijah has had quite a bit of success as a prophet of God, including winning a contest between Jezebel's false god named Baal and the Lord God of Israel, which of course infuriates Jezebel, who as a foreign queen has made her religion the state religion that everyone was to follow.

Initially, you might wonder why Elijah would be so afraid of Jezebel, but he is afraid for his life. Or, it's quite possible that he has simply had it up to here. He was done. He was tired of doing God's bidding as a prophet and was afraid of his violent end, so he runs away.

Slide: I have had enough

He dismisses his servant – which in ancient times was an indication of him being done

with what he was called to do. And, then he journeys one day into the wilderness, again, indicating that he wanted to simply abandon God's people as the prophet God called him to be. He simply was done. He wanted out.

Exhausted, frightened, tapped to the limit, Elijah has a moment of wanting to quit what God has called him to do. He even wishes that he could just fall asleep and die under the broom tree for which he takes shelter. Elijah is just done.

Slide: Elijah under the tree

Only, God isn't done. God is not done with Elijah. And, what I find interesting is that God's way of telling Elijah this is by giving him food to eat, bread that will sustain him. And, an angel, a messenger, a helper of God gave Elijah what he needed to keep going on. In fact, without the strength that came with eating this particular bread from God's hand, it's likely the journey coming next would indeed have been too much for him.

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I don't know about you, but I can really relate to Elijah – not the part about death threats, or the prophets of Baal being slaughtered, nor the whole being a prophet thing, but I can relate to wanting to give up. I can relate to being done, of having it up to here. I know the feelings of overwhelm and consternation about the difficulties of life that you have an intense desire to just find a deserted island and hide. Well, and don't you? In your job, in a relationship that is tough, in family, in politics, in the news, in the daily grind, or in your health?

Not unlike Elijah, we know what it is to wander a day in the wilderness and slump down under a tree with resignation. And, oftentimes, this wilderness, when times such as these occur in our lives, they often are self-imposed, sometimes not, but often they are. We don't know how we get there, but we do, and then there comes a crossroads. Then comes the bread from an angel we do not necessarily attribute as divine at the time, but it is.

Slide: Elijah and bread

Then someone, something, some situation pulls you out and then feeds you what you need for new direction, for new energy, for rest, and for purpose. When you're done and have had it up to here, that sometimes can be blessings, for oftentimes we are forced to stop and notice what God is truly doing.

This week, I encourage you to consider the following questions:

- Have I ever been in a place where I felt like giving up just like Elijah?
- Has there ever been a person who was like that angel and gave you what you needed to continue?
- In what way is God not done with you in your life OR is leading you towards something? In what way is God not done with this community of faith and is leading us somewhere? What is your story? What is our story?

Slide: Bread

Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

In the same way, Jesus offers himself as sustenance when you have had it up to here. This bread, this sustaining gift proclaims the reality that God is not done with you. God never gives up nor tires in giving you the bread that endures for abundant life. And God continues to find ways to bring you out of the wilderness. When you take in the bread of life into yourself, you become what Jesus is: broken, given, raised for new life, sent out to be bread for others.

Slide: God's Not Done

Because God is not done with you...even if you find yourself up to your neck in alligators; or whatever idiom that best suits you. Amen.