

Fr. Jack's Homily, August 8-9, 2026

Elijah's Journey and the Ongoing Call to Purpose

I thought maybe we'd give a little context to that first reading about Elijah and what brought him to that cave. You see, Elijah was about to contest with 450 Baal prophets on Carmel, and the idea was: your God called down fire for the sacrifice, or my God. And the 450 Baal prophets lost; they couldn't get any fire, and Elijah got fire even though he threw water on everything, still burned up the sacrifice. And so that totally angered the king Ahab and his wife Jezebel, who did all the dirty work. She put out a contract on Elijah, and so Elijah, in fear, took off and headed out into the desert and sat down under a broom tree. And there he just said, "I've had it. This isn't working. Take my life. I don't want to live."

And, you know, no good deed goes unpunished. And so he was out there just wanting to end his life. He had done what God wanted him to do, and look what it did: it got him on a contract. And so there was some water there, some food, and to eat and drink, and he went back to sleep. And then again, "Eat, drink, get up. You've got to move. You've got to journey."

And so he was headed to Mount Horeb, and there he's in this cave, hiding, and he's told that God will visit him. And there's a strong wind that was crushing rocks, but God was not in the wind. There was an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. There was a fire, but God was not in the fire. And then there was a tiny whispering sound. God was visiting Elijah.

You see, Elijah did God's purpose: battling the Baal prophets. But that's not it. Purposes keep coming into our lives. And I think that's the message today of: what is your purpose, my purpose? Because Elijah then—his purpose became to go and anoint a couple of kings, and also to anoint Elisha, who would take his place as a prophet.

And so what are our purposes tonight? I just finished a Camino. That was my purpose. Now, for God, it's like, what have you done for me lately? And so what is God calling us to do lately?

I have kind of an extreme example because we're never free from doing God's purpose. He has a will that wants us to complete that. And there was a young woman—in one of my parishes—she was a cantor as a teenager, and then she kind of got messed up in her life and stuff. But she began to turn it around, and she was part Indian. She was able to go to the college free. And she graduated from college and received a scholarship for law school at SLU. But that spring, she was told that she had brain cancer, and serious kind of brain cancer. Nodules were coming out of her head and

things, not pretty at all. But at Siteman, they were using some experiments, therapies and drugs, and she started to get better. Life was looking good. And she went in for a regular checkup, and the doctor said, "You're pregnant." She said, "You told me I couldn't get pregnant on these meds." "Well, so you need an abortion." She said, "I can't do that. I want to have this baby." And the doctor said, "You've got to go off the meds or you won't be able to have that baby. If you go off the meds, the cancer is going to come back." "I want the baby." And so she did have that baby, and she actually lived the first year of that baby's life. And obviously, you know, the cancer is taking her over, but she still wants to do God's purpose. And what she did was a couple of things. One is, since she had a beautiful voice, she taped some songs so that her son could listen to her voice later on when he was older. She also wrote a letter to each of her siblings. And I just saw her brother on Saturday. He's still got the letter after 10 years. She continued God's purpose even though she was facing death and cancer.

Nobody here looks like they're dying. What's God's purpose for you, for me? What does He want next so that we can be a part of the flow of His grace, of His love?

You know, the gospel today is not just a storm on the sea. The storm is in the hearts, minds of the apostles. We're not sure what's going on here. It's chaotic in the water in the Old Testament. It's chaos.

And so it's God that comes in that chaos so we can pick up a purpose in their case to continue to follow Him even though strange things were happening.

May this Eucharist encourage us to seek our next purpose.

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