

GCFSM SUNDAY BULLETIN

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SERMON OUTLINE

IF GOD IS WITH ME, WHY DO I FEEL LONELY?

1 KINGS 19:1-18 | REV. LITO VILLORIA

Divine presence is not anchored on human feelings but on our faith in Christ. When we believe in the gospel of Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells in us. He is the fulfillment of God's promise to dwell among His people. The Holy Spirit is the seal that guarantees our eternal inheritance in Christ.

As we await our future eternal destiny, God often allows us to face temporal challenges to transform us and strengthen our faith for His glory. During these moments, we should not lose sight of what is truly essential. When we focus on our present concerns, our faith might be overcome by fear. We may then fail to sense God's presence and feel lonely, even abandoned.

In 1 Kings 19, we see the story

of Elijah, the prophet. He experienced the power of God's presence in his life. Yet, when his life was threatened, he ran for his life. When Elijah was overwhelmed by fear, he failed to sense God's presence. He felt lonely and abandoned by God. Ironically, he ran for his life, and yet, he wanted to end his life (19:1-4).

When Elijah felt lonely and abandoned, God showed His goodness by preparing him for a long journey to Mount Horeb. Elijah went on his own without seeking guidance from God, and yet he was shown divine mercy. Instead of rebuking Elijah, God allowed him to express himself (19:5-10).

God, then, revealed Himself to Elijah, not through spectacular means, like a strong wind,

earthquake, or fire, but through a still, small voice. In the midst of Elijah's frustration, God gave him two crucial things to do - he needed to restore his spiritual passion and regain emotional strength. God gave him an assignment he needed to execute and an assurance he needed to embrace (19:11-18).

Elijah responded appropriately. He accepted God's assignment. He also acknowledged God's assurance. Elijah regained and kept his passion burning until he was taken up to heaven on a chariot of fire!

In this sermon, we will learn how to overcome fear so we can keep our passion for God burning like a blazing fire! ✨

THE DANGER OF COMPARING WORSHIP

REV. REVIN VASALLO

In today's post-pandemic era, many churches have adapted to hybrid worship which is capable of reaching more people through the internet. Since I preach regularly in GCF Northwest, I find it refreshing to hear God's Word from other partner churches. So, for the past months, that's what I've been doing. You too may have tried visiting other churches as well for various reasons.

Attending worship services of other churches is good. However, we need to be careful because we may end up comparing worship services which may be unhealthy. That's the potential danger of doing so. And, this may certainly affect your worship of God.

Ezra recorded an incident when people compared two different corporate worship gatherings. When Zerubbabel went back to Jerusalem after the seventy years of Babylonian exile, they built the temple of the Lord where they could worship and offer sacrifices. Upon finishing the foundation of the temple, there were two different responses from people, as we see in Ezra 3:11-12.

"And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy."

In the Old Testament, the temple was their place of corporate worship. So, when the Israelites finished the foundation of the temple, many rejoiced and praised the Lord, but some did not. People who had seen the glory of the old temple wept bitterly. They compared the new temple with the previous one, which was built by King Solomon. Sadly, even their leaders, priests, and Levites were not content with the current temple worship.

When we begin to compare worship services, our personal worship is directly affected, and we may lose three (3) important elements of worship.

The first one is **contentment**. When we worship, only the presence of God can make us content. So, if we don't focus

on God, but instead look for other things we see from other churches when we worship, then we will never be content.

The second one is **joy**. When we lose our contentment, then it means we focus more on the things we lack. Then as we think about things we do not have, then we will never have genuine and lasting joy when we worship.

The third one is **anticipation**. As we worship God and behold His greatness, we begin to anticipate that God will do even greater things. But, if we focus on what's good in other churches, then we begin to think that we will never be like them. The Israelites thought this way that's why God promised them in Haggai 2:9: *"The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house!"*

Ezra 3 serves as a warning for us that there is danger in comparing worship. So, as we gather for corporate worship in this post-pandemic era, may we be so careful not to compare, but instead focus on what is essential - to worship God with all our heart with contentment, joy and great anticipation! ✨

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