

Nineteenth Sunday Ordinary Time - B 2018  
1 Kings 19.4-8///Eph. 4.30-5.2///John 6.41-51

One of my favorite movies of all time is Forest Gump....I don't know if you ever saw it or not.....but it is a delightful movie about the life and dreams of this person named Forest Gump who, despite his disability and handicap is able to experience all kinds of interesting and fascinating events throughout his life.

---however what I find captivating about the movie, is not so much the events of Forrest's life...but more so...the way in which he lives it...very unassuming, very straightforward.... simplistic and forthright..... and in doing so he accomplishes great things....

→which is very similar to the message of both the first reading and gospel today

→in the first reading from Kings...we hear about Elijah...who very frankly....tells it like it is.... “after a day's journey into the desert...he prays for death...saying... *“this is enough O Lord!....take my life already for I am no better than my fathers”*

→likewise....Jesus speaks very straightforwardly today when he says...

.... *“I am the bread of life....stop murmuring among yourselves...I am the living bread that came down from heaven”*

→and much like Forrest Gump...both Elijah and Jesus lay it all out on the line...they tell it like it is...however from the tone of their words you can't help but get the impression that both Elijah and Jesus were having bad days...

→something at all of us, I am sure can relate too....because....we have all had the experience at some time or another when things just don't go our way, when life doesn't seem to go well

--and today we hear about Elijah having one of those days

→[you know] being a prophet wasn't an easy job

→and today...we find him literally running out of town, lying exhausted in desert////begging God to let him die

→Elijah was asked to do something by God... to preach and teach His word

----to be a prophet....and it wasn't going so good...so Elijah just wanted it over

PAUSE

→in essence you and I have also received the same call as Elijah ---to preach and teach the gospel, AND sometimes you and I also face the same problems as Elijah

----when things just aren't going all that well

PAUSE

there are things and events that happen that make it sometimes hard to see God at work...

→like unborn children dying....hunger.....pollution.... and war.....

→there are also things that happen in our own backyards that also make it difficult to see God at times

→a teenager's problem with alcohol abuse

→a young married couple unable to conceive a child

→a young person seeking a job yet receiving no firm offers

→the discovery of cancer in anyone of us

→these are things that happen around us every day

→things that we don't like to see happen

→....and things that very easily could make us want to quit and give up.

→likewise...in today's gospel, the people are murmuring to J. in protest and in response J. gives them a very strong yet straightforward message

→He challenges the people, as he does you and me.... to look at the difficulties, hardships, and trials we face and to BELIEVE AND HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

→but I think it is important to note exactly what Christ is implying by his words.....

[you know].....very often many of us take a simplistic and fundamental approach to our faith

→when things go wrong, or we are facing difficulty.....it is easy to blame God or get mad at God for all that is wrong...or we offer the simplistic response "well.....just have faith in God and everything will be o.k."

→...[I don't think] that is what Christ is implying

→[I believe]...**THE CHALLENGE OF CHRIST** goes much deeper than this simple approach.

→you know as well as I do....that just saying we have faith in God is not going to make poverty go away, or stop war, or prevent death from happening

→**BUT**, having faith in God and in each other **WILL HELP** us to better understand the presence and message of Christ in our lives

→which in turn helps us to deal better with the problems and difficulties we face

----[you see].....it is very easy to just quit and give up when things aren't going well...

→that's what Elijah wanted to do AND SADLY.....many people today do this as well...they do it with their life, with their family, w/jobs, the church, w/God, and w/faith

→however we also need to be reminded that Elijah was fed, by God, He was given food and faith....to continue on in his life...

→today we also are once again reminded that we too have been fed,

→we have been strengthened and nourished and enriched by the bread of life

----AND IT IS THIS bread....the presence of Christ in each of us and in one another...that needs to be deepened and enriched

----that's why we are here....that is our purpose

----and that is what gives meaning to our worship

PAUSE

we have been given the bread of life...we have been fed

and now we need to use and recognize this food in each and every one of us

→no doubt about it.....Elijah had a bad day ---and often so do we

however Elijah didn't give up...he didn't give up on life...or on God

neither did Christ when people grumbled against him, when his disciples left him, when he was nailed to the cross

and likewise no matter how easy it might be...we too must never give up as well...on God...or each other....

You know...one of the enduring qualities about Forrest Gump as well as Jesus, was that when they were done talking...they shut up...and while I am not Forest Gump or Jesus...I believe that is a quality worth having.

When Jesus finished teaching the people he always moved on to the next town....and in the movie....when Forrest was done speaking...he always said.... “that’s all I have to say about that...”...and that, I believe, is not too bad of a way to end.

“that’s all I have to say about that”