**ROAD TRIP! Wk 5: Rest Stop: Intentional Margins**

**Life is a HWY song. I love road trips. The music & the open road.**

**We’ve been talking about knowing & walking in God’s will for our life. The adventure of following God’s will!**

**But even on the best of trips, you need to stop.**

**The time it’s taking to get to our new location… keeps getting bumped. We’ve had a few rest stops and detours along way.**

**Does God really talk? Extremes: Not anymore vs. All the time - oh, there He is now… Let’s see how it happened back then and how it happens today. Does God really talk to people? Yes, but…**

The Elijah Story – **a guy in the OT who next to Moses, talked to God probably more than anyone – amazing stories…**

**1 Kings 17:1-19:13 - 1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab (extremely wicked king), "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." (God has had enough of you...) 2 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: 3 "Leave here, turn eastward (like a GPS) and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. 4 You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there." (Pretty clear and cool – Dr. Doolittle)**

**He did what God said – and by that brook, the raven brought him food for breakfast and dinner. (Elijah fed by ravens!)**

**And then - 7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. (God’s GPS) I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." (Clear instructions) 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. (to eat her last meal and die) He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" (She could have said no – had one meal left – but she stepped out on this word from God through Elijah)**

**Elijah did has God said and at that moment God miraculously provided for both Elijah and her family. (Elijah’s creative miracle)**

**And then - 17 Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. (He died) 18 She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" (What Kind of God is this?)**

**Instructed by the LORD, He carries boy into another room and after 3 prayers – her son comes back to life. He takes him back to her and says, let’s have dinner. (Elijah’s resurrection miracle)**

**And then - Chap 18:1 After a long time, (He hears God / raises the dead / does miracles, then 3 yrs without hearing God) in the third year, the word of the LORD came to Elijah: "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land." (time for me to send rain) 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.**

**1 Kings 18:17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" (here comes trouble) 18 "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. 19 Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal (god of rain – have not had rain for 3 yrs.) and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." (Female super goddess – known as the - “wife of God”)**

**Whistle the Good the bad and the ugly. Let’s have a God showdown - 850 pagan prophets vs. Elijah.**

**Elijah draws a line in sand - Here’s your chance, who you will follow? Elijah tells the “prophets” get 2 bulls to sacrifice to Baal – and I will do the same to the LORD – and whoever’s God lights the Bar-B-Q wins…**

**(So, they dance around and cry out to Baal. 27 At noon Elijah began to taunt them. (Elijah starts talking smack) "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, (lit. - going potty) or traveling. (out of town) Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." (Then they started to cut themselves / plead and cry out to Baal – by night fall – Elijah says – step aside)**

**(Elijah builds an altar, sacrifices the bull, then soaks the altar w/ water) 36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." 38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. (Great day!) 39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD - he is God! The LORD - he is God!" (Elijah then prays for rain and it does. God came thru! Powerful)**

**(Elijah is on a role! Then Chap 19 – Ahab runs to Jezebel - His political wife)**

**1 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." (Elijah says bring it on… no) 3 Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. (he freaks out – and runs!)**

**We hear about all th great miracles - but we’re never told that part – we like to end on the fire part… but he runs off and leaves his servant by himself, tired he sits under a tree**

**1 Kings 19:4 While he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. (Ever felt like that?) "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." (wow, unexpected) 5 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. - Then an angel appears – at this much-needed Rest Stop**

**19:5b All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. (fresh baked bread from an angel) He ate and drank and then lay down again. 7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” (serving – restoring)**

**Strengthened, He gets up and walks 40 days to Mt Horeb (aka. Mt. Sinai) where Moses was given the law. God, you spoke here before – will you speak to me now? He crawls into a cave, and waits. God, where are you? Silence… Then finally -**

**9 …And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (Rhetorical) 10He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." (After all I have done for you, when will I get a break?)**

**11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." (Sounds cool, but he does not get up) Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. (a storm - whirlwind) After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. *(still small voice, whisper, “Elijah”)***

**(Then he gets up) 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (Rhetorical / self-reflective)**

**15 The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu… over Israel, and anoint Elisha… to succeed you as prophet. (He then explains the 2 new kings who will bring justice. And, anoint your new best friend – Elisha. You are not alone) 18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.” (they need you – they are waiting for you – are you rested? Get going.)**

**Amazing story of miracles & provision. He stands up to 850 prophets, then runs away from 1 women. Exhausted, losing his way, looking for God, he pulls off to the side – a rest stop.**

**What can we learn from the Rest Stops – what are they for?**

**1. The Rest Stops – are for restoration**

**Road trips – people can get on your nerve. I need to get out! Even the best of drivers need a break. Driving can take a toll – you need to stop, stretch, sleep, breathe – space.**

**Elijah was going, going, going – he had clear objectives and direction. With great victory! But even Elijah hit a wall. He faced 850 angry false pagan prophets – with boldness. But then one woman pushed him over the edge.**

**He felt alone, exhausted, frustrated. The road had got to him. He took the exit. God didn’t yell at him, sent ministering angels to revive him.**

**1 Kings 19:7 The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.”**

**Some of you - it’s time to rest – pull over. The journey is too much. The value of rest – The gift of the Sabbath – to ensure – you reflect, restore and refresh. Your helping by pushing thru.**

**2. The Rest Stop – is about learning to enjoy the journey**

**On road trips – the journey is the adventure. Sometimes more so than the destination. (Roadside America example - pics)**

**Elijah’s rest stop was a detour to Mt Hebron. Sightseeing! Place of interest. The place God spoke to Moses. To stand on the place - God came to earth - imagine.**

**This is about learning to stop – pause – look around you – hold your kids. Have coffee with a friend. Life is a journey – not a destination.**

**Last 11 yrs of being here has been both a pleasure and a trial. Things we could have done better – could have utilized. I can’t live in the could have / should have – I must live in the now. This is about being thankful – and embracing the detours.**

**The way God leads us may not make sense to us, but he has his reasons for each and every detour. 1) Detours - showcase God’s faithfulness. 2) Detours - are an opportunity to trust God & build faith.**

**3. The Rest Stop – direction clarification**

**But what he got was rest and clear direction. God told him go back – you were going in the right direction. But now do this…God gave him clear directions**

**But notice how God showed up - The Elijah Principles:**

* **We want *thunder* & *lightning – But* God likes to *whisper***

**He finds Him not in the big explosive events (wind, quake, fire), but in a whisper! 1 Kings 19:11b Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks… but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After that came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.**

**We want the big things – the evidence – the audible voice: In this story, God shows up big (calling down fire, heaven BBQ, ravens feeding him, miracle wheat and oil, ministering angels) - that’s what we look for…**

**But the one time it seemed God did not step up – he ran –afraid. God where are you! God took him to the woodshed Mt.**

**God was saying – My presence is most experienced, not in wind (reference to miracle of the resurrected Boy) the storm (miracle of rain) not in the fire (the miracle altar) it is in my still small whisper…**

**The comfort of knowing God is there with you – close enough to whisper in your ear.**

**We look for the wind, thunder, and fire! Thunder and lightning Christians – noisy, but light on godliness – arrogant & prideful lives.**

**- Don’t confuse the thunder and lightning with God!**

* **Don’t expect the *rare* to be *common***

**Elijah went years between hearing from God – he had to trust and rely on what was already said and what God had done.**

**You know why they wrote the miracles down in the bible? They’re a big deal, they were rare. If they were everyday events they would not be there, they are incredible God sightings!**

**I’ve had miracles in my life where God showed up – provision – healing – but they are rare – I’ve try to reproduce them, but I can’t.**

**We tend to look for a recipe to control God to do our bidding.**

**God is not a vending machine we can buy things from**

**\* I have learned to seek the miracle worker not the miracle.**

* **God primarily speaks *through Scripture***

**God uses Bible, Holy Spirit, wise Counsel, and (supernatural events) But the Bible is most often the whisper of God.**

**When those quakes, storms, fire, even miracles happen - great – But look here to find Him - whispering – the still small voice**

**Does God speak today – yes, he does not – but not on demand (Elijah learned this) He does intervene but on His timetable… not ours. But when we pull over – and take a break. That we hear from God best.**

**It was when I was going through treatment – that the Vive was spoken to me.**

**What can we learn from the Rest Stops:**

**4. The Rest Stop - takes care of the needs of others**

**Sometimes the rest stop is for others. Bathroom breaks!**

**Look what God tells Elijah - V15-18 - Go back the way you came… anoint Hazael king over Aram… anoint Jehu over Israel… anoint Elisha to be the next you - and on top of that there is 7000 people who need you.**

**A proper rest stop – gets our eyes on the needs of others**

**- When we take the breaks, and leave room for reflection / refreshment our family is better. During our big move (I’ll be taking breaks) – keeps home healthy – marriage healthy.**

**- When we take breaks, we get a greater sense of the value of the lives around us and the role we play. Those breaks remind you – you are not the goal – serving others is. RT is about - Lives! (Great commission)**

**- When we take breaks, you give room for interruptions and room for clarity – God brings people across our path – the rest stops give a chance to take a break and help them. (Good Samaritan)**

* **Create margin – make space. Turn off distractions. Breathe, listen to God – slow down.**

**This mission God has for us (for you) is exciting - enjoy the trip. Don’t rush it and drive all night. Pushing through and aggravating everyone. Slow down – reflect – refresh – be restored – get clarification. Rest – sleep. Then get back on the road.**

**Matthew 28: 25At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. 26Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way! (God uses the unexpected – reveals himself to the humble)**

**27“My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” (with this in mind – Jesus says this…)**

**28Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (His plans – his mission – his road trip - his yoke is bearable. Pull to the side and toss**

**Are you exhausted, worn down, feeling overwhelmed?**

**I want to end with a break – silence. Listen or the whisper.**

**Silence for 3-5 minutes. (reflect – refresh – restored)**