

Sermon Title: **“Where Is Your God?”**

Bible: **1 Kings 19:11-18 & Psalm 42**

When: on Sunday, June 19th, 2022

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube live streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, you are with us during this challenging time. Please open our minds to see your presence. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. Elijah Meets God at Horeb

Today’s Scripture Readings come from part of the lectionary. And for the reading from 1 Kings, I added the following three verses. It is a story of Elijah who meets God at Horeb mountain. In the former chapter, 1 Kings 18, Elijah had a contest with the other prophets. There were four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. But there was only one prophet of God, and that was Elijah. Because there is only one true God, Elijah won against four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. Now it was time to celebrate the great victory! One against four hundred and fifty. However, Elijah was afraid. Elijah was afraid and fled. Under a broom tree, Elijah said to the Lord, “It is enough!” Even after a great success, Elijah was exhausted, afraid, and lonely. God sent an angel to feed Elijah. And today’s Scripture reading begins there.

Have you ever been afraid and exhausted after a big success? Have you felt lonely, after a

great achievement? I like to watch many sports. Many professional athletes sports play experience these emotions. They are professional, not amateur. Sometimes, they experience similar emotions or moments like Elijah, even after a great victory or winning. Have you heard of a Slump or the Yips? A slump is a period when a player or team is not performing up to their abilities or expectations. Sometimes, a slump happens to champions. The yips are an unexplainable loss of ability. Some professional golfers find themselves missing a simple and easy putt, which they have practiced successfully thousands of times.

2. Where is Your God?

I have never been a professional sports player before. I just like to watch many sports. But, how about our faith journey? Have you ever experienced any slumps or yips in your faith journey? We already have many issues in our lives. I know that we all still experience this challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among many churches, we did not stop being a church even during the COVID-19 pandemic. We gather to worship together via online and in-person. We not only take care of ourselves, but also care for others. We did a great job of being a church. Maybe, there is a possibility of having a moment like Elijah did after his great triumph. We can feel exhausted, afraid, or lonely. We can experience a slump or the yips. When we experience slumps or yips, where is our God? Where can we find our God?

We might expect that God would be found in an impressive place. But, in today's reading of 1 Kings, God was not in a great and strong wind. God was not in the earthquake. God was not in the fire. We imagined that God ought to be there in a miraculous way. But, God's voice

was in sheer silence. Perhaps, God wants to reveal Godself to us, in our normal daily lives, rather than in moments of miracles or special events. Of course, we can experience God's presence when we are sick or when we need God's help in a miraculous way. But I believe that many times, God shows Godself in our daily lives.

3. Hope and Seven Thousand

Psalm 42 is one of my favorite Psalms. "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God." I hope for us to have this longing, this desire, this hunger for God. When we are desperate for God's help, when we experience slumps or yips, we look for our Lord. Even when we are okay, even when we are in our normal lives, I hope for us to look for our Lord, and experience God's gentle presence in our daily lives, even through sheer silence. Elijah thought that he was alone. But there were seven thousand people who worshiped God. When we feel alone, please look to each other. We are not alone. We all together worship our Lord. There is a hope in our Lord, and God's hope is in us.

Closing Prayer

O Lord, we are looking for your presence in our daily lives. Please help us to see your presence with your people. In Jesus' name. Amen.