

2 quite different stories

Elijah: on his own hiding in the cave	Peter & disciples: together sailing across lake
Heard God in the sound of sheer silence	Saw Jesus among the battering wind & waves

Let's see how these passages can encourage us today

### Elijah

Why was Elijah spending a night alone in a cave?

Back track slightly

-Israel had been worshipping Baal and many other gods and queen Jezebel had been killing off the Lords prophets (1 Kings 18:4)

-Elijah had challenged this behaviour on Mount Carmel (See 1 Kings 18)

Then he challenged them to contest on Mount Carmel

- 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah gathered together

- 1 prophet of Yahweh = Elijah

- built wooden fires and placed a bull each on top for a sacrifice

- Elijah told other prophets to call on the name of their god to light the fire

- the prophets of Baal etc had no effect in their calling

- Elijah had 12 large jars of water poured onto his offering

- He called on God and the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice ( 1 Kings 18:38)

-Elijah then had the prophets of Baal killed

-Jezebel was furious, sent word to Elijah- she would have him killed in the next 24 hours (19:2)

-Elijah was afraid and ran for his life (1 Kings 19:3)

So Elijah ran, hid under a bush wanting to end his life because he was so afraid and fed up,  
God sent an angel to touch him and feed him

He moved on and spent the night alone in a cave still feeling worthless, dejected and fearful

But then the Lord passed by Elijah - came VERY close to him

Not in the wind or earthquake or fire

But in the sound of sheer silence      SOUND OF SHEER SILENCE

And he heard the voice of God speaking to him

Sadly Elijah failed to be moved or comforted by the awesomeness of God

Do we sometimes miss the deep connection with God?

### Peter

Story of Peter is so different - and probably better known to many of us

Just seen the incredible feeding of 5000 from just a few loaves and couple of fish

Peter is with his friends, several of whom are fishermen and therefore used to rough weather

They see Jesus walking on the water

Peter takes courage and gets out of the boat and also starts walking on the water

But then gets distracted by the strong wind, becomes frightened and starts to sink

### Afraid

Both Elijah and Peter were afraid  
Fear comes in many different guises, different things cause us to be fearful  
And we react to it in different ways - fight or flight?

### This week

This week has been a tough week for us as a church  
Diane - dying on Monday  
Claire - having her lovely twins who are doing well but the challenge of being separated  
Ed - been in hospital  
But also for some of us as individuals - different things

In the midst of this maybe fear has crept in and become a part of it  
Fears of       the death of our spouse or close family member  
                  being alone  
                  our own mortality

Even if not fear, we may well have asked ourselves at some point this week "Where is God in this?"

It is easy to take our eyes off Him, to lose our confidence in Him sometimes

### But Jesus IS LORD

Do we, as the words from Paul in the letter to the Romans say 'Confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead' (Romans 10:9)

It is in the difficult, sometimes humanly inexplicable, that we can doubt this truth

Understandably doubt it sometimes when the storm is huge around us, when we feel battered by yet another gust of something tough happening...

When things are tough we often want reassurance from God that He is with us in the midst of it all  
But do we have preconceived ideas of how that might happen?  
Do we actually believe that He will show up? That He IS LORD

If Elijah had been expecting God to show up it may have been at least in the wind or the fire like he had when burning the bull sacrifice  
But God actually came in the SHEER SILENCE!

Sometime we can miss the comfort or assurance of God because we are not looking in the right place

It is easy to miss him because we look in the wrong places, or we expect something different  
Sometimes we are looking for God in the earthquake and He comes in the whisper

God loves us... His children

He sees everything and longs to be our comfort and our strength in the midst of everything

The good and the bad the easy and the tough

He understands even when our fear or doubt seems illogical

Elijah had just seen the incredible miracle on Mount Carmel

Peter had just seen the feeding of the 5000 and been walking on water

But fear and distraction and the sense of being overwhelmed still became stronger

But God understood and still showed up

In the midst of this week God has still been there  
Diane - family all around her  
Claire - lovely Christian mid-wife to talk and encourage her  
Ed - quiet room with a lovely room even including Guildford Cathedral... JUST!

Sometimes we miss God because we are looking in the wrong places  
Or maybe not looking at all

We can prepare / train ourselves to see / hear / notice God  
Jesus always prepared with prayer  
    Before feeding 5000  
    Before walking on water to meet disciples and then calming the storm

Good for us to train ourselves to be open to God and see Him, even in the unexpected  
How? Through prayer and reading and admiring beauty and praising and even SILENCE!

I enjoy bird watching... Nuthatch in Mums garden  
Sarah spends a lot of time Bat watching / surveying  
Similar observation skills you might think.... small flying creatures in the air!  
Earlier in the week we walked the dogs at dusk in the park  
Suddenly she said - the bats are out.. look! A Pipistrelle !!  
It took me a few moments to get my eyes tuned in and see what she was pointing out!

Sarah has trained herself to spot Bats and so sees them even when not looking for them!

God loves us - His beloved children and wants to meet with us. Are we expectant to meet Him?

In the midst of everything keep your eyes on God, be expectant to see Him at work in different places,  
Practise proclaiming with your lips and believing in your hear that Jesus us Lord  
And be prepared to see His wonder around us even in midst of the storms

Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in His wonderful face  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace