

WHEN ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Pastor Dennis Gingerich

We all have known people that “Burn Out.” People that hit the lid of their capacity. People that scrape the bottom of their emotional reserves.

In fact, given the year we’ve had, you may be wondering whether that’s what is happening to you. And, I’ve wondered, *Can a culture burn out?* And if the answer is YES, any chance that’s happening to America right now? When I listen to the news or scroll through social media, I can feel the despair. There is a whole bunch of pessimism, cynicism and numbness as many look toward the future right now. Between a pandemic, a fragile economy, racial injustice, climate instability, and a very stressful election and political tone, it’s a very difficult moment in our history.

I’m not here to provide a diagnosis and provide a treatment plan for our nation. But, I am here to offer some hope and help if you are feeling exhausted, burned out, anxious, stressed to the max, angry, indifferent, unmotivated, or just feeling ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.

I want to point you toward a scripture in the New Testament and then illustrate through a story in the Old Testament. Apostle Paul, who wrote two-thirds of the New Testament, had a vision to strategically preach in the mega-city crossroads of his world, Rome. He got his wish in an unexpected way—as a prisoner in a Roman jail. In that circumstance, he wrote these words: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything. But in every situation, no matter what you're going through, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:4-7 NIV)

In the Old Testament, there was a prophet named Elijah. He loved God. He saw God’s faithfulness, power, and provision, (1 Kings 18) but he struggled with a huge amount of anxiety and stress when he confronted evil King Ahab. In fact, King Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, got involved and promised to kill the prophet. Elijah was overcome with depression. Here’s the story, “³ *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his*

servant there, ⁴ while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." (I Kings 19:3–4 NIV)

Four Blunders Elijah Made That We Often Make:

- a. We Run Ourselves To Exhaustion**
- b. We Shut People Out**
- c. We Focus on the Negative**
- d. We Forget God**

God's response to Elijah's blunders are found in 1 Kings 19:11-12: *"Go out and stand on the mountain, "in the presence of the Lord, "for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountain apart, and shattered the rocks below. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire came a gentle whisper."* God came near to Elijah with a whisper. No loud shouting or firey appearances.

God was not in the remarkable. God was in the ordinary.

God still uses the ordinary things available to us when we have anxiety and enough is enough:

- o It might be a change of our diet.
- o It might be needed exercise that releases the "feel good" chemicals in our brain.
- o It might be a doctor prescribing medications to correct a chemical imbalance.
- o It might be a counselor to help us process our circumstances.
- o It might be prayer from our small group at church.

God mostly uses the ordinary and rarely the remarkable.

The humorous part of Elijah's story is that his worst fear never became a reality. He feared death by Jezebel. Instead, God provided a celestial taxi service that took him directly to Heaven. He never died. He was anxious for nothing. Our greatest fears rarely become a reality. We too are often anxious for nothing.

WHEN ENOUGH IS ENOUGH....GOD IS ENOUGH.