

**Sunday, June 19, 2022 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church
Second Sunday after Pentecost**

**Father's Day
Bible Study – Luke 8:26-39 and 1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a**

“Madness to Stillness”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes)

In groups of two or three, have each participant complete the following sentence, “I find silence to be . . .”

1 Kings 19:1-15a. Context. In a “showdown” on Mt. Carmel with the prophets of the Canaanite god Baal (one of Jezebel’s favorites), Elijah had proved the power of his God, and the unreality of Baal. In this contest the losers paid with their lives. This sets the context for this week’s reading. Following his triumph, Elijah fled for his life to Mount Horeb (= Sinai). He was depressed and discouraged, and given to self-pity. Here Elijah, like Moses, experiences the divine presence – but not in the physical manifestations of wind, earthquake and fire. Rather, Elijah encounters God in the “sound of sheer silence.”

Luke 8:26-39. Context. This week’s reading is one of a series that demonstrate Jesus’ power. Here we see Jesus’ power over the demons who were thought by many in the first century to be evil spirits that could take control of a person. In this story, Jesus not only heals the man, but destroys the demons – or rather, allows them to destroy themselves. Notice that such a reversal of the status quo is met with fear and rejection by the local people.

Read Luke 8:26-39 and 1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Luke 8:26-39 and 1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a again

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Before reading 1 Kings, observe two minutes of silence. After reading the passage, observe another two minutes of silence. Did observing silence before reading the passage aid in your attentiveness to the passage? How so?
- Do you find it surprising how God encounters Elijah in a still small voice (19:12)? Why or why not?
- Why do we find it so hard to be still?
- How is being intentionally attentive to God connected with the ability to be intentionally attentive to others?
- How do we see madness in the part of the story when Jesus encounters the man among the tombs? How do we see madness in the people who encounter the man with Jesus now “in his right mind”? How might we experience madness through inattention or scatteredness?
- Is there anything else in these stories that has you pondering or wondering?
- **(R)** How is being attentive to God risky? [We might hear rebuke, challenge, or the need to change something in our lives.]

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

God of might and God of stillness, you have and continue to bring order from chaos. Help us to crave your order more than the allures of chaos; to desire the stillness of your presence over the noise of the spectacles. Give us the zeal to proclaim how much you have done for us. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord’s Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.