

Proper 14 (19) - August 9, 2026

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

1 Kings 19:9-18

Romans 10:5-15

Matthew 14:22-33

“Out for a walk”

1. Well before cell phones and texting and relying on a whole lot of other new means of communication, when getting the attention of one of us kids, my Mom would yell at us from the other end of the house.
 - a. Mijito...! Mande mami... Ven... Ahí voy...
 - i. Which means: Honey (the term of endearment is literally “my little son”) ... Yes mommy... Come here... I'm on my way...
 - b. When I reached her, what followed were instructions, requests for us to get something for her or to run an errand
 - c. The way in which a parent calls out to us is an image we can picture for what we would say God does when God seeks to get our attention or wants to give us guidance.
 - d. In fact, we refer to that sense of God reaching out to us as a calling, a vocation (from the Latin, it means a summons, a calling)
 - e. Now that has another parallel. All of us receive a calling from God (vocation) and all of us are **sent out** to serve (that's the Greek word for “apostle”)
2. We have in our passages today both a calling and a sending, a vocation and guidance for that which God is sending us to do.
 - a. Elijah was a prophet of God about 900 years before Jesus, and he lived in a terrifying moment for those who sought to be faithful to God
 - i. The worship of idols and corruption had reached the highest levels of authority including the King and the Queen
 - ii. God sent Elijah to speak out and stand up against those who turned their backs on God
 - iii. Elijah was empowered to do great miracles which showed God's power in comparison to the powerless idols,
 - iv. but at the moment when Elijah had the clearest affirmation that he was doing exactly what God had asked him to do, he looked around himself and all he saw was danger.
 - v. The God who in power had allowed him to succeed now seemed absent and Elijah's enemies threatened to kill him.
 - vi. So Elijah, feeling abandoned, ran for his life deep into the desert.
 - vii. He ran thinking all was lost, but God sent angels to bring him food and water for the long journey.

- viii. God spoke to Elijah and said “Mijito, what are you doing here?”
 - ix. Elijah replied that he was all alone and abandoned in this mission from God
 - x. So God sent Elijah to the holy mountain, THE holy mountain, promising to be present there for Elijah
 - xi. And God put on a miraculous display of strength and power with an earthquake that split rocks, winds that flattened trees and a fire that consumes everything in sight
 - xii. But the promise had been that God would be present, yet in all those dramatic moments God wasn’t there.
 - xiii. It was instead in the calm after the storm, when the winds were so quiet that Elijah could only hear his heartbeat pounding in his ears fed by the adrenaline of the moment,
 - xiv. it is only then in that silence that Elijah’s senses are finally open to hear God's tender voice (with a little bit of a sharper tone this time perhaps) saying: “Mijito: what are you doing here?”
 - xv. As God listened to the same words coming from Elijah's tightening throat, we read God forgiving Elijah right there in real time, with God regrouping and sending Elijah back to work, to continue the work God had been doing through Elijah, reminding Elijah that God and fellow servants of God would surround him.
- b. In the gospel passage, we see likewise a curious scene where after long sessions of teaching and healing, Jesus is exhausted and looking for refreshment and re-centering
- i. Jesus sent the disciples to take a break, and some of them were fishermen so they go into a comfortable place, their boat, and get some rest while Jesus went up a mountain.
 - ii. Yes, one of those moments for solitude, for silence and prayer and Jesus prayed all night almost to dawn and having pulled an all-nighter, he came to the shore to find that the boat had been pushed away from the shore by the unpredictable winds which could surprise even people used to fishing there.
 - iii. Jesus didn’t seem concerned for the safety of the disciples, but rather just went towards them to join them on the boat... walking on the water!
 - iv. But with the breaking of dawn beginning to dim the stars, the disciples could tell a shape was coming to them. And what else could they

imagine coming to them at 4:00 in the morning out in the middle of the lake but a ghost!

- v. They screamed in a panic and Jesus said Mijitos! Mijitas! It's me. Don't be afraid
 - vi. But they were paralyzed in fear
 - vii. But Peter, always Peter, sought clarification because he wanted to make sure it is Jesus, but rather than ask a question: is that really you? Peter said: if it's you, order me to come to you walking on the waves and Jesus said Mijito... Come!
 - viii. Peter, completely unself-consciously, did exactly as directed and approached the one who called him with love and with power. Walking on the water.
 - ix. But just like Elijah, it's in the midst of a moment of affirmation that God was working through them,
 - 1. in the midst of doing exactly what God had intended for him, poor Peter became aware of the unbelievable circumstances around him
 - 2. and "unbelievable" stuck to him and so now in unbelief he did what humans do when they are on the water: they sink.
 - 3. He had nearly reached Jesus, so he caught Peter and picked him up
 - 4. and Jesus said "Mijito you were so close! Your faith looked like it was going to hold up. You have work to do."
 - x. And when they both arrived walking on the waves hand in hand, Jesus stopped the wind and the frightened and sleepy disciples fall to their knees and said: yep, you are the son of God
3. You might very well be seated there thinking: that's all fine and good for biblical characters who could easily get a direct line to God. Who hears God like that anymore anyway?
- a. Well, I'm telling you that you probably have heard God call you maybe more often than you're willing to admit or that you have been able to recognize.
 - b. We might not have had a thunderous voice from above calling out our name or a term of endearment and then saying "Listen..."
 - c. We probably more readily remember those terrifying moments we've lived through, proverbial fire, earthquake, and wind storms, when we were desperately looking for God, trying to hear what God may be calling us to do,
 - d. and in the end we missed the moment in the silence when God tried to assure us of God's presence and provide us with instruction.

- e. It might well be that we're forgetting those whom God provided for us as helpers in the journey, in our time of question or distress.
 - f. They're there to give voice to God's voice, to embody a message of presence and care.
 - g. What I find most helpful in these bible stories today is that when the characters felt THE MOST distant from God, it was actually in those moments when they were receiving an affirmation of God's presence and guidance.
 - h. I don't want to minimize their scary feelings in those moments, for Elijah, for Peter, for us.
 - i. They're real and they sting.
 - j. I just want to remind you and me that those are moments when God is still calling out to us, seeking us out, sending helpers to us, and listening to our panicked and distraught cries.
4. Remember that even when we feel like we're paralyzed or like we're sinking, God's presence and voice are closer and clearer to us than we may expect.

Questions for reflection

1. Think of a time when you sensed God calling you to do something in life (or a time when you wished God HAD!)
2. Reading 1 Kings 19:9-18 and Matthew 14:22-33, how do you relate to Eijah, Peter, or the disciples still on the boat?
3. These days: how is God calling you, whispering in your ear? Who are you going to share that with so you can process it?