

I've Had Enough  
Christie Alston 8/28/16

OT Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

NT Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

Have you ever been exhausted? I know that last time I was exhausted it was when I had taken the red eye from Oregon to New Jersey and had been up for about 24 hours before I was finally able to lay my head down on my pillow... But that type of exhaustion is relatively easy to bounce back from...but what about that exhaustion that you feel all the way done to your bones? The type that leaves you dragging your feet and leaves you wondering if you can continue to endure whatever it is that you are facing...have any of you every felt like that? I know I have. Maybe it was caused by yet another fight with your family, a bad medical report, a lost job, a crushed dream....what do we do when the exhaustion we feel comes from our souls rather than our bodies? Hopefully today, if you are in that place this message will give you the courage to find a place where your exhaustion can be replaced with hope.

Please pray with me

Yesterday I was reading a devotional about Elijah the Prophet and was surprised to see that he got frustrated and exhausted... this man who talked with , and for God got tired and I thought ME TOO!  
1 Kings 19:3-4: Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and

prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord" he said....then he lay down and feel asleep

This past Christmas I got too got to a point where I threw up my hands in frustration and said: Enough!! For those of you who don't know me as well, I'm pretty laid back, but there are 2 things in life that just cause me to panic: being late and being lost. If you are ever with me when I am late or lost you will see a completely different side of me...one that I am not very proud of.

So on Christmas I was going to Dick and Betty's house to have breakfast and I had never driven to their house before so I put their address in my GPS turned on my music and was off. Well what I didn't realize was that they live in a gated community and the address I had was to their house, rather than to the gate where I needed to go to enter into their community....so essentially once the GPS took me took their address I realized I was lost (remember what I said about being lost). So panic didn't set it right away, I figured I can figure this out, so I turned around, tried another way and after about 20 minutes of driving in circles, I was about done. So I called Krista and had a not so calm conversation with her. Krista knows me well so she tried to help me and maybe if I wasn't so frustrated her directions would have helped, but **alas** I was still lost....so after trying again to find their house with no luck, Krista and Barry agreed to meet me where I was and I was so upset and frustrated that I almost just went home because I wasn't sure I would even be good company at this point, but I **waited for them** and when they got there instead of having me follow them, Krista got in my car and gave me turn by turn directions to her parents house and after

she helped me get there, I realized I had been one turn short finding the way to the gate.

As I was preparing for this sermon I thought about this story and it got me thinking that my Christian life can be this way sometimes. I go to church, I read my Bible, I pray, I serve but I still feel frustrated because I sense that I am missing my mark and it occurred to me, that it's because I am striving to do it on my own using my own limited knowledge....just like when I was lost. It wasn't until I open my door and let a guide in that I was able to find where I was going. And church we as individuals and as a church do this. We follow all the "rules" and try all the new techniques to grow our faith and our church and at the end of it all we feel exhausted and maybe have very little to show for our efforts and it's because we have forgot to invite our guide, the Holy Spirit into our journies.

When we needed a savior, a God that would understand what it was like to be human, God the Father sent us Jesus and he came to this world to die for us, and to pay the penalty of sin so that we wouldn't have to and then he went back up to Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father and for many Christians this is where we stop, but did you know that just like the Father sent us Jesus, Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit?

This was so important that Jesus even told his disciples in John 16:7 that: it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. Seriously, Jesus said it was GOOD that he left! I don't know about you, but for a long time I really

thought it would be better to have Jesus here with us and it wasn't until I did a Bible Study on the Holy Spirit this past Spring that I changed my mind and here's why: Jesus was a GREAT teacher, but he was an outside influence, the Holy Spirit, however, influences us from the inside and if you don't believe that makes a HUGE difference, just look at the first disciples.

The first disciples spent 3 years with Jesus, eating, laughing, learning and just spending time with him, but when Jesus was crucified instead of finding them out proclaiming his name and telling the world that he was the Son of God, we find them denying Jesus and running away...Seriously?!? Even after they saw him alive again they didn't rush out and spread the gospel...it wasn't until the Holy Spirit entered them that the disciples became powerful messengers of God. In Luke 24:49 Jesus even tells the disciples and early church to wait to move until they were clothed in the power of the Holy Spirit and in Acts we see that they waited and that book of the Bible is full of the Acts of the Holy Spirit....it's full of miraculous healings, of jail breakouts, of the early church growing and growing and it's full of weak disciples who became strong through the power of the Holy Spirit... and church full of people who didn't get tired but rather endured because they were full of the Holy Spirit, and only because they were full of the Holy Spirit. So church are we at FPC and we as individuals, relying fully on the Holy Spirit? I think we need to take an honest assessment of this and I will be the first to admit, that in my ministry here, I haven't always relied on the Holy Spirit and I am going to challenge myself and my CE committee to rely on the HS for guidance instead of on our own human wisdom and I challenge the session, elders, deacons and committees to do the same this year and to

stand back and watch God move. Church if we don't invite the HS in, you may like myself, like Elijah and like the early disciples become exhausted doing the work of God.

We need to make sure we are inviting the HS in and not stifling him. Be open to the HS, and understand that he may move in ways that are unexpected and in ways that can ruffle our feathers. Look at the Rabbi's of Jesus' time, they rejected him because he didn't act the way they thought a messiah should act, lets not be accused of doing the same thing with the HS. God moves in mysterious ways and he will chose the weak to do his work.

Remember Jesus picked a bunch of uneducated fisherman to spread his message rather than picking a bunch of rabbi's. So let it be said of FPC that we are a church who will invite the HS in and will not be afraid of what he will do. Let us be brave enough to ask for the same outpouring of the HS that was found at Pentacost. Many Christians believe that the HS doesn't work that way anymore, but that not true. We know God doesn't change, so why should we expect him to do anything less for us than he did for the early church? Lets stop putting him in a box and rather pray that he knocks the lid off our box! Even though I can't imagine what that would look like, I know that when people invite the HS in, they are no longer seen as exhausted Christians, rather they are seen as full of life, just like the dry bones became full of life in the OT reading.

Before I end, I want to talk about what happens when we become exhausted in our personal walks of faith. What happens when we think we have failed

and are afraid to let the Holy Spirit in to heal us, because I have been there this past year, and I feel that God wants me to address this as well.

This past year, I have been struggling to trust God in an area of my life and this is very hard for me and I have often felt like a failure because of this. I trust God in so many areas of my life, so this should be easy too, but it's not. I have prayed, I have spent time with God, I have done this and that and have strived on my own to achieve this trust, but what I haven't done until recently was WAIT and invite God to really come lead me....oh I thought I had, but as my Christmas story reminded me, I was spinning my wheels getting no where. So I cried out to God and said: ENOUGH!! I am weak and I need your help to trust you with this obstacle I'm facing and I realized just like Elijah that's where God wants me because that when God can come in and heal me. God is not impressed with my measly show of strength, he is impressed when I acknowledge that I am weak and that I can't do this....I am not the little engine that could....I'm the Christian who can't....I am a Child of God in need of her heavenly Father's help. God is not surprised that I can't, in fact he made me to need Him and to acknowledge I can't do it on my own.

Because I can't do it on my own, he has promised me his HS and here is a short list of what the Holy Spirit does for us: He intercedes for us, advocated for us, comforts us, guides us, prays for us, points us to Christ, gives us truth, convicts us, gives us power, help, liberty, wisdom, love, grace, glory and strength just to name a few.

Church, God is not surprised by our shortcomings...remember before we were even created God knew all of our days and that gives me comfort because he still chose to create me and he still chose to die for me. I'm still working on daily inviting the Holy Spirit to control my life and some days are better than others. Some days I have to pray to want to trust God more and to want him to lead and church he has been faithful to help me.

So if you find yourself exhausted, just stop, rest and invite the Holy Spirit in. You cannot fix you, but God can and he will. At the beginning of my struggle this year, God led me to Ecclesiastes 3:11 that says he has made all things beautiful in his time. He promised to take my struggle and make it beautiful, I don't know how he will do that, but I know he will and he will do the same for you. So lift up your hands and give him your brokenness so that you can receive his Spirit!

Thanks for listening! In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit