

**NEWS AND VIEWS**  
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*“Southern Baptists with the Full  
Gospel for the Whole World”*

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*Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9)*

When the man of God is asked a question by the God of the man there is often a reasoned response to explain how the man is out of place and out of order. I am intrigued as to how God asks questions of humanity when He already knows the answers. It is apparent to me that the Lord is not seeking information. He is demonstrating a truth...we need to know that the place where He finds us is not the place where we should be. We need to know that the work to which we have been assigned is often not the work in which we spend our time performing.

This passage reminds me of a time when a young man was found to be out of place and living a life that was out of order. One summer this teenager was hired on in an entry level position, working for a road building contractor. As soon as the trees were cleared out of the roadway, the young man received his daily assignment from the superintendent. He was to walk along behind the motor grader and pick up the roots that came to the surface in the plowed up roadway and throw them into the woods on either side of the cleared out roadbed. It didn't take very long for the teenager to become bored with what he considered to be a monotonous assignment. Walking up and down the new roadbed, bending over and retrieving a root, flinging it out of the workspace, and repeating it all again. So he devised an alternate plan. He would occupy a different place...he would pursue a different purpose.

His alternative purpose brought him out of his assigned place in the hot sunshine into the cool shade of the tree line. Here the work was easier. All he had to do was watch the road plow go back and forth from his place of relative comfort. He even told himself that one day he may operate a machine like that. Obviously, the superintendent did not realize that the young man was wasting his potential picking up roots. Maybe it was because he was not working in his assigned place that he became distracted and lost his focus. He never heard the superintendent approaching his position until he heard his voice.

*What are you doing here, son? Why are you not doing what you were told to do? Why does it seem that humans try to reason their way out of their out-of- place position to justify their self-assigned agendas and out of order priorities? Sin is the answer. Fear is one of the symptoms. We see this demonstrated in Adam's response to the Lord's question in the Garden...Where are you? Adam's response was that he was afraid of the Lord. Sin's infection causes us to hide from the Creator among the creation. The answer of Elijah is a reasoned response...after his powerful display of faith against false worship and Jezebel's false prophets on Mount Carmel, we see a strange response to her threat against the man of God. He was hiding in a cave. In his fear he was hiding in Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. He was found out of place. His fear had rendered him out of order. But he found refuge in the place where God could be found. Or, more to the point, in a place where God was sure to find him.*

As we come near to the end of the age, there are many things that will bring fear into the face of the people of God. We will be tempted to leave our assigned positions and pursue our own agendas to isolate ourselves. But we can be sure that the Lord will find His people. The young man in this story was not fired for being out of place. But he was given principles to live by for the rest of the summer and stuck with him all of his life. Some them were *You'll never know when I'll come and where I'll find you. Be mindful of your assignment and always be faithful to it. And my favorite...Don't ever throw your last root away. In other words, Be found doing what you were told to do.* This applies to disciples of King Jesus in these last days. Keep focused on the Lord's commands. *Occupy till He comes. Live to hear these words...Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master. (Matthew 25:23)*

In my opinion, *Well done* is highly preferred over *What are you doing here?* How about you?

Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam