Elijah has had it! Even though God had just given him what any faithful prophet would call his greatest triumph. At Elijah's request, the LORD had just sent fire from heaven to show Israel who was God! Not the Baal and Asherah of those weakling prophets who couldn't rouse their gods if they'd had a telephone or a megaphone, but Yahweh. "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God," the people had all shouted (1 Ki 18:39). Then they'd rounded up and killed those 850 pagan prophets. At least for a day, Elijah was king of the prophets!

"Not so fast, Elijah!" said wicked Queen Jezebel. "By tomorrow I'm going to see that you're as dead as my beloved prophets." And so, Elijah runs—out of the country, out of the neighboring country, out into the desert. And when he stops and catches his breath, he desperately but reverently prays, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life" (v 4). "Why would Elijah want to give up so quickly on the heels of a massive victory for God and a devastating defeat for the pagan idol worshipers?

Let's get a little back story so we can see it from the prophet Elijah's point of view. Looking back through the two chapters leading up to our text, we read that because of his faith in God and his ministry on God's behalf, Elijah has endured years of deprivation: isolation, hiding, worry, hunger, getting by on meager rations, knowing he is hunted by wicked Queen Jezebel and evil King Ahab.

To everyone else, Elijah seems so strong and so wise as he boldly and eloquently proclaims the Word of the Lord and that the LORD, Yahweh, alone is God. And then considering what just happened on Mt. Carmel with the LORD sending fire from heaven to consume Elijah's water-soaked sacrifice and the entire water-soaked altar, God's prophet seemed to just about everyone else as a victorious, successful, powerful man of God.

But that's not how Elijah sees himself. He knows the extreme hardships he has faced. How for so long he has learned to live life on the go, not knowing where his next meal would come from. And now, even after the downfall and death of Baal's 850 prophets, the vile queen swears an oath that Elijah will be next. Quite the opposite of strong and successful, Elijah sees himself as weak and a failure. And so, he cries out in anguish, 'Enough, O LORD!'

Can you relate to Elijah? At least a little? To the people around you, your neighbors, those who pass by you in the store, or seated right by you at the restaurant or coffee shop, yes, even to your brothers and sisters in Christ sitting near you this morning, you, also, very likely appear confident, like you've got it all together, that you are a responsible person, that all is well with your life, much like the people back then viewed Elijah.

But how do ***you*** see yourself—after years stuck in the same job? after all this time striving to make ends meet? with the long list of troubles that you ***could*** name but you don't want to sound like a complainer? Deep down inside have you ever felt like crying out to God, like Elijah: "Enough!" "I have put with too much for too long and I can't take it anymore!" No more of this job, no more studies, no more peer pressure, no more family fights, worries about money, health concerns, no more anxiety, no more depression. "I've had enough, Lord!"

A lot of the music we hear on the radio expresses the feeling: "I've had enough." Do you remember this classic from Johnny Paycheck?

Take this job and shove it
I ain't working here no more
My woman done left and took all the reason
I was workin' for
You better not try to stand in my way
As I'm a-walkin' out the door
Take this job and shove it
I ain't workin' here no more

A few years later Joe Nichols also sang about the sadness that comes at the unexpected end of a relationship. He sang:

"Here's to the girl who wrecked my world, that angel who did me in. I think the devil drives a Coupe de Ville I watched 'em drive away over the hill. Not against her will, I've got time to kill down in Brokenheartsville." Brokenheartsville . Now that's a village no one wants to live in!

Without a doubt, wanting a new job, or coping with a lost love, or loneliness, the death of your dog, and even the rust on your pickup truck all show up in the list of our miseries put to music, particularly country music. But, despite the stereotype country singers didn't invent songs of lament.

Way back in 1662, a German musician named Johann Ahle wrote a hymn to honor a teacher in the city of Leipzig. That teacher must have had some really tough challenges, because the hymn written for him is patterned on the lament of Elijah in our text this morning. (1 Ki 19:4). "Es ist genug" is the title. That's German for "It is enough!". In the song the singer lists the reasons for wanting to die. Just listen to his complaints! He says: "It is enough! . . . Lord, take my spirit." Then he says his griefs "gradually are tearing me apart." "The poison of sin [has] all but smothered me; nothing good dwells in me." The author feels as if he bears a "cross that almost breaks my back; how heavy, O God, how hard is this burden! Many nights I soak my hard bed with my tears.

How long, how long must I yearn? When is it enough?" (Full text of the hymn in German and English is available here: https://www.bach-cantatas.com/Texts/Chorale053-Eng3.htm.)

This "cheerful" hymn is not in our hymnal. But I suspect its theme is familiar to you. Because if you're like me, then you too, have cried out to God because the burdens of life are sometimes simply too heavy. I think we ***all*** have had moments when we can relate to the words penned by that melancholy hymn writer, Johann Ahle. The song does end with ***some*** hope, but like Elijah, the author must ***wait*** for God's deliverance.

There is a happier ending, though. A few decades later the world -renowned composer Johann Sebastian Bach, who was also a faithful Lutheran, ty the way, felt inspired to write a cantata on the last verse of Johann Ahle's hymn, and when he penned it, he turned this cry of despair into a hymn of ***hope*** and ***longing for the Savior***. Although this hymn doesn't appear in our hymnal, either the ***tune*** for it does. In fact, it's the name of the tune for the hymn we sang right before the sermon: "I Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives" (*LSB* 468). "Es ist genug" is right there in the fine print at the bottom of that page in the hymnal. You can check it out for yourself… after the sermon, please! The bottom line is: To this melody of despair, we sing about the joyous ***victory*** of our Savior over death.

Interestingly it's the same word. Elijah says, "I've had enough!" And ***we*** sing, "I have had enough. I am ***content***. I do not only have a vague (fuzzy, ambiguous) hope for the future. I also have the certainty of the resurrection of the dead and eternal life, because my Jesus still lives!" I am content!

Rest assured; God never leaves you without hope. He didn't abandon Elijah, and He won't abandon you either.

Elijah was sustained by the angel of the Lord in the desert (vv 5–8). He was strengthened by the warm bread, cool water, and refreshing rest. This gave Elijah enough strength and encouragement to go on. That's not to say all Elijah's problems were immediately taken away, but he was assured that God was with him in all the work He had Elijah do until finally the Lord took him home one day, years later, in a triumphant, heavenly fiery chariot.

That must have been quite a sight to see, but actually, as spectacular as that was, Elijah did not see the ***final*** fulfillment of all his hopes. The fulfillment of God's promise that Elijah longed to see, which is much greater than a fiery chariot, was reserved for you. It is the fulfillment of all of the Old Testament prophesies in the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ. This is what gives you and me hope, even on our darkest days.

You may experience the same sense of despair as Elijah. You may have that same long list of troubles, an unfulfilling job, overwhelming studies, soul-crushing peer

pressure, family squabbles, money worries, physical health challenges, mental health challenges. Any of which can lead you to cry, "I've had enough, Lord!"

But you have received help from the same Lord who helped the prophet Elijah. For you it happened when God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God that Jesus never said, "It is enough," until He indeed had ***done*** enough to pay for all our sins, taking them to the cross. And that ***was*** enough! The work of saving us is ***finished!***

Like Elijah, Jesus has fed you with bread that sustains ***you***. Not just ordinary bread and water but His own body and blood, which, in the bread and wine of His holy supper , is the food of healing and life.

And so our complaint of despair – whether we're living in Brokenheartsville, or just wanting to tell the boss what to go do with this job or anything else- our complaint of despair is transformed into a song of resurrection victory: "I am content! At length I shall be free, Awakened from the dead, Arising glorious evermore to be With You, my living head. The chains that hold my body, sever; Then shall my soul rejoice forever. I am content! I am content!" (*LSB* 468:4).

We may tell God, "I've Had Enough,"but Jesus comes to give us ***more*** than enough. Elijah, the great prophet, cried out in despair, "Enough!" Now, because of Jesus' work for you and what He has in store for you in the eternity of heaven, you also may cry out to God, "It is enough! … I am content! I am content!" Amen.