

## Thursday, March 26

*Scripture reading: 2 Kings 2:23-25*

This story is probably one of my favorite stories in the Bible. Yet, it is one that is rarely preached on from the pulpit or taught in Sunday school. Elisha has just witnessed Elijah being taken up to heaven, and while traveling, begins to get mocked by some of the town's youth for being bald and essentially telling him to die. In response, Elisha calls down a curse from God, and immediately, two bears come out of the woods and kill 42 of the youth in the crowd. And then Elisha continues on his way.

It's such a short story, but one that raises many unanswered questions. How big of a crowd of kids was this that 42 youth died in this incident? And just how fast were those bears in their mauling to get 42 youth before they were done? If I was there, I would have been immediately running away. Those must have been some fast bears to have killed 42 kids before it was all over with!

But digging deeper into this story, the one thing that always strikes me is Elisha's response to the mocking, to the kids, and to the incident in general. Like many of us, when someone makes fun of us, we get hurt and angry. How many times have you wished you could curse someone and God would send down bears to destroy them? In Elisha's anger, he calls down a curse to which God obliges. That has always struck me as odd. God obliges Elisha in this curse, for something that is seemingly not that great of a crime. But even more odd to me is that after witnessing 42 youth die in this bear attack, the Scripture then states that Elisha continues on his way to Mount Carmel. It's like it's just any other day. Did Elisha have any remorse? Any regret for asking God to curse these youth? The Scripture leaves out a lot there.

Elisha was justified in his feelings to he was probably very hurt by the youth's words. And there is a big difference between doing something out of anger and doing things because you are hurt. We all have done things that we may regret out of hurt or anger. But how many of us just continue on our way?

During this time of Lent, as we anticipate the death and resurrection of Christ, let's make sure that we aren't just continuing on our way. Let's make sure that those we hurt are healed. Let's make sure we reach out to those who are hurting with love and not in anger. And let's remember not to mock those who are bald. You never know where there might be bears lurking.

Written by Miranda Bailey