



# Glyfada Christian Center



30/06/2024

**Preacher** Peter Demetriades; Leto Karantoni

---

**Series**

---

**Service** Sunday Service

---

**Passages** Proverbs 3:3; 1 Kings 19:1-2; 1 Kings 19:9-10; 1 Kings 18:13; 1 Kings 18:30,38-40; Proverbs 13:12; 1 Kings 19:4b; Philippians 4:6-7; Psalm 86:6-7,11; Psalm 27:4; 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:13-14

---

**How God speaks to our souls, in the midst of the darkness.**

**Reading the Word – Prayer – Stavro Antoniadis**

Please remain standing for the reading of the Word of the Lord. We will read from Psalm 119:105-106, “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws.”

**Announcements – Anton Beukes**

Good morning, everybody. You are welcome to sit down for a moment. It is good to be together this morning, as a church, as God’s people, as His holy temple, coming together to

worship the Lord, in truth, in Spirit and in love. May we show that love to one another today, as we also love our Lord.

Just a few announcements. From this Wednesday onwards, up until September, we will not have our weekly Bible Study. We will recommence in September with our Bible Study, but we will continue with our weekly prayer. The prayer will be at 7 o'clock; it will be hosted here in the center, but it will also be broadcast on Zoom. So, please you are welcome to come here, but also, to link up on Zoom.

In two weeks', time we will have a very special guest with us, a longtime friend of pastors Gail and Brian, But I'm inviting everybody to be here at that Sunday service for that guest coming. And as we are experiencing a warm summer, and everything slows down, except for the fellowships in the nights, we are reminded again, that our relationship with the Lord, and with one another, does not have to cool down after summer. But I pray that the Lord will give us a renewed heart this summer, to be in His presence, and to come together often, to enjoy the fellowship.

Pastor Gail sent out a message over the weekend, with this document attached, and we want to give one of these to every household. This coming Tuesday, a few of us from the church, joined with a church from the UK, will go to Skoponeria, to the camp site called Porto Astro. We will meet with about 100 others, for the ECOS conference, and this conference is a follow up to the Bible distribution campaign, that Hellenic Ministries has been doing for the last 20 years, and last year we completed the distribution of Bibles throughout rural Greece. And this year we will start going to different islands and rural areas to connect with people. And as a church, we have decided to go to Kefalonia. Many of you know Trudy and Elisabeth and Costa there, and we felt that the Lord is calling us, to pray and to discern to start a church in Kefalonia.

So, after the three-day conference at Porto Astro, eight of us will be going to Kefalonia on Friday, and spend six days with Trudy and her family, praying on the island for the people, to visit and encourage the few believers on the island, and in the evenings, hang out on the plateias, to connect with people. We're inviting all of you, to be a part of our team, to pray with us, to ask the Lord to guide and lead us, that His Spirit will go out before us, to prepare the hearts of the people that we'll come into contact with, that He will use us, as light and as salt and as witnesses as we go out to this dark place.

So, this document has a couple of pages of background information on the island, and then on the third and on the fourth page there are some prayer points that you can pray with us. We are truly dependent on the Spirit of the Lord guiding us and giving us strength, but we also know that we are part of His church, and we know that the Lord wants us as church to go together. So, we ask that you pray with us.

I'm going to ask Sarah and Leto and Benny to come forward please. We all know Leto and Sarah. Some of you have met Benny. Benny is part of Sarah's church back in the UK. And he's been serving here in Athens for about 3 weeks now already, and will be a part of our team. There's also Mila that's coming with us, he works for Hellenic Ministries, a very gifted video photographer, so, we hope to get some good material back to the church, and then the 4 young people from Liverpool, who are currently on the plane to Athens.

As I said, we'll be staying with Trudy, with her daughter Elisabeth and son-in-law, Costa, together with her grand-daughters Elena and Chaela. We hope to, reach out to the community. So, we've asked Stavro to pray for us, and maybe Evy, and Cecilia, and Henneke and Erik, if you could come up with us, please, and Stavro to pray for us as we are commissioned by the church.

(Stavro) Heavenly Father, we thank you once again, that You give us the opportunity, to be able to reach and to bring Your Word to the world outside of this church. We ask, heavenly Father, to bless each heart, every brother and sister, that will take part in this work, that You keep them strong, that You will encourage them, that You give the words and give them wisdom, so that they will be enabled to speak and to work, and to touch each and every person that they will come into contact with. Keep them united as a team, and assist them to do the best, dear heavenly Father. You are Lord God almighty, we depend on You, Hallelujah, and we would like to do the best for You, Father. We thank You in all things and bless this team specifically. In the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We now have the opportunity to bless the Lord with our tithes and offerings. Let me (Anton) pray for us. Father we are thankful for what You have given us, we are thankful dear Lord that You have given us even more than we need. We thank You Lord, that we can come together as Your household, Your church, and to give back to You and to the work that You have called us to. We pray that our offerings and our tithes, will be generous, as You have been generous in giving to us. May this offering, these gifts that we give may be used to Your glory, and to the advancement of Your Kingdom. Thank You Lord Jesus, that we can pray this in Your name. Amen.

#### **Peter Demetriou – Main message**

Hello everyone. Good morning. We've been in Athens since Monday, and I don't know what language is going to come out of my mouth. We planted a church with our family almost 10 years ago in Strasburg France, and so I was pretty pumped to come to Athens, to speak Greek, and I go to a shop and just French comes out. And there was one person that spoke back to me in French, and then it clicked, no, I need to speak Greek and I started speaking Greek, she's like 'You speak Greek? What are you doing?'

Anyway, it is such a great joy to be with you all this morning. And also, we have another daughter, who didn't make it here today, but she sends her love, and you may have heard my Australian accent, so it's still strong. I was born and raised in Australia, and moved to France 11 years ago, and living in France, I've gotten to know a few pastors in Greece, which is great. And it's wonderful to see what God is doing in Greece. But I do want to recognize pastor Gail and pastor Brian for their incredible work here in Athens.

I can see speaking with them, that just got this strong commitment to the Kingdom of God here in Athens. When I think of them, I think of Proverbs 3:3, "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart." Let's thank God for what He's doing through pastor Brian and pastor Gail and you all here, and their hearts for Athens, Greece. And nothing compares to good old fashioned Greek food, whether it's moussaka or souvlaki, or baklava, it brings us together with laughter, joy, it's awesome.

I want to pray for us all, as we come to the Word of God, and I want to invite you, it's not compulsory, but I want to invite you to close your eyes and open up your hands. And just opening up your hands as a sign that you want to receive from the Lord. So, I'm going to pray.

'Loving Father, we thank You for Your goodness, we thank You for what You are doing here in Athens, God. We thank You Lord God for pastor Gail and pastor Brian and we pray for Your blessing upon their ministry, Lord, and wherever they're travelling, they're going to be leaving for Indonesia, and then over to the US, and we pray Father that You would go before them, keep them safe, open up incredible doors for the ministry Lord Father. And I pray for each one here, Lord God, and to receive what You have to give to us this morning. Open our eyes as we sang, open our hearts, Lord God, we pray Lord Father that we would leave this place just a little bit different, Lord God, than what we came in. And so, we pray Lord Father, touch our hearts, with Your Word, in Jesus' name. And everyone said Amen.'

When my daughters were very little sometimes, they would get fearful at nights, so, rewind the clock, 15, 18 years, and something would happen often in the evening. In the early hours of the morning, 2, 3 o'clock in the morning we would hear a voice, that would go, 'Daddy, mommy', and I would do what every loving parent would do, I would ignore that voice, but that voice kept on going and I would rebuke that voice in the name of Jesus, but that voice kept going, and my prayers weren't answered. And I would get up and the kids would say, 'Dad, there's a crocodile under the bed, please have a look.' Because we lived in Australia, I would check, and so, I would say, 'Look, I've checked and there's no crocodiles under the bed.', 'Are you sure, daddy?' 'Yes, they're definitely not under the bed, but I'll check the kitchen, just in case.' Or there would be a dark shadowy figure in the corner, 'Can you just check it?' It would normally be a teddy bear or a dress hanging somewhere, and I would remove it, and whatever was causing the shadow. And at that point they would usually say, 'Just come lie down with me.' So, I would just jump into bed with them and I would hold them, and I would say to them, 'It's alright, daddy's here, it's OK.' And we'd basically both fall asleep until the morning light kicked in.

And I think I learned something during that season. That there's an antidote to fear, particularly when it comes to the fear of the dark. And I'm speaking spiritually now. And so, we're living in a cultural moment where it feels pretty dark. The despair levels are pretty high, anxiety levels are pretty high, we're living through a mental health crisis, particularly among the younger demographic. And it feels pretty scary up there. And the antidote to fear isn't just daylight, that daylight will come. But you can actually experience peace in the midst of darkness.

And this morning, I want to speak about how God speaks to our souls, in the midst of the darkness. So, in February, last year, you may have read or seen it online what happened in Asbury University, Kentucky in the USA. There was an outpouring of God's presence in February in the university chapel services, the Spirit fell in power. And it was just meant to be an hour-long chapel service, but it became 16 days of 24/7 prayer. And it wasn't like a massive service, like with lots of musicians or some preacher giving an incredible message. It was just a couple of people, playing worship, leading worship. The person that preached was

interviewed afterward and said, 'If I knew what was going to happen, I would have preached a totally different sermon, I didn't really prepare for it.'

But 100,000 people descended upon this tiny town, in Kentucky to encounter the presence of God, during those weeks. And what people saw was both remarkable and unremarkable. As I said, the music wasn't of great quality, it was 19, 20-year-olds, giving it a go. The sound was pretty average, there was no big screen or graphics or anything like that, and it wasn't unbelievably impressive.

And so, at one level it was underwhelming, but there was something overwhelming. And so, it was the presence of God in that place. It was just God's presence just falling upon that place. Like the thickness of God's presence. And there were scores of students dragging their mattresses into the chapel so that they could just stay in the presence of God at night. The presence of God was just so strong and beautiful in that place, they didn't want to go back to their bedrooms to sleep. They wanted to stay in the presence of God. And there were students packing meals as well, taking them to this chapel service. They were hungry for the presence of God.

And I don't think that I've ever seen anything like that before in my life. I feel like I've seen something pretty powerful when God moved among our churches back in Australia. Some of my backstories, I was probably about 19-20 years old during a renewal movement in Sydney. The holy Spirit just moved in power, over the churches in Sydney. So, it hit Pentecostal churches, Baptist Churches, Catholic Churches, and I remember walking to some gatherings and the Spirit of God was just moving in power. And people were shaking under the power of God. And the gift of the Spirit was just falling upon them.

I remember someone being set free from demonic oppression. And I feel like I've seen what it feels like when the Spirit moves in power. But in Asbury, there wasn't much manifestation of power but there was an incredible sense of God's presence. So, if the charismatic renewal back then, was about the church rediscovering the power of the Spirit, what was witnessed was the priority of God's presence. God's presence above all else. The priority of being in His presence.

And that's what we're starting to see in our church in Strasburg right now. Our people just wanting to be in God's presence, and God is moving, and we sense that we are at a threshold. And talking to some pastors in Strasburg and other pastors around the world, we're saying the same thing. There's a spiritual hunger that I've never experienced, it's a sense of the waters are rising. It's dark out there, and fear is noisy.

But God is speaking to His church, Amen? There are whispers in the wilderness. And the voice of God comes in a whisper. And He is saying, 'I'm with you, step into what is stirring right now.' And when we gather to praise God, there is a stronger sense, of His manifest presence. This is a moment where we tune into His still small voice.

I believe daylight is coming, I genuinely do. But this is a moment where we tune into His still small voice, the whisper in the wilderness. The whisper of God that is saying, 'Hey, step out be courageous, I'm with you.' This is a threshold moment for the church. And I believe that this is a season change that is happening. So, I want to encourage you to step in and take courage, move forward.

Everyone here, you've been called for such a time as this. No matter how young you are or how old you are, you are here for a purpose, there's no mistake about it. You might be here just for a few weeks, or a few months, or a few years, don't lose sight of the reason why God has you here. Don't just think, 'I'm just passing through, I don't want to get involved.' There's a purpose as to why you are here. You've been called for such a time as this.

And so, this word, 'threshold', so, what is a threshold moment, I want to explain this. Threshold moments are when we're about to step into the abundance of what the Lord has for us. And also, that's a moment you can expect a counter voice. Basically saying, 'Shrink back, step back, do not step into your destiny,' in the midst of that wilderness moment, that threshold moment. We need to tune into that still small voice, so that God can birth what He wants to do in us, and through us. And we need to tune into that still small voice.

So, what I want us to do this morning, is to learn a few lessons from Elijah. But actually, zoom in on the effect that he has on our lives, and how we can tune into that still small voice and nix the fear. I want us to look at 1 Kings 19:1-2, "Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So, Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, 'May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.'" That's pretty intense, right?

Now, in the chapter before there was an epic battle on Mount Carmel, and Elijah has overcome 450 prophets of Baal. There was a victorious moment, and Jezebel says, 'I'm giving myself 24 hours – I've got a target on your back.' She's saying, I'm going to take you down. And Elijah is terrified. So, what is the effect that fear has on our lives?

The first thing that I want to say is that fear can distort reality. Then in 1 Kings 19:9-10 it says, "There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." Now that's a statement of fearing, by the way. It's not a statement of fact. The verse that's highlighted, "I am the only one left." It's his perception of reality, but it's not reality. Because, there is perception of reality and then there is reality. And fear widens the gap.

So, what is reality? So, let's go back a chapter. Elijah knows this because his servant told him. Elijah's servant says this, 1 Kings 18:13, "Haven't you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord? I hid a hundred of the Lord's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water." Now, that's reality, but what Elijah is feeling at that moment is, 'I'm on my own. There's no one left anymore.' And Elijah knows that there are 100 other prophets, but in this moment of panic, and fear, it distorts reality.

And here's another distortion. He says, "The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword." Again, that's a perception of reality, it's not reality. But what actually happened at the back end of 1 Kings 18:30,38-40, is this. This is reality. "Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down... Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and

cried, 'The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!' Then Elijah commanded them, 'Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!'"

So, in other words, the last thing that happens at the end of Chapter 18, is a restoration. There's a repairing of the altar; there's a turning back to God. There's a reality and then there's a perception of reality, and fear distorts reality.

Secondly, fear erodes faith. It chokes faith. This is how the writer of Hebrews defines faith, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." So, faith is a way of seeing. So, it just says fear distorts the reality of the present. It also distorts the reality of the future. Faith enables us to see into the future. Faith enables us to see what God wants to do in the future.

So, what's a faith statement? A faith statement is, 'I believe the promises of God, regarding my future.' That's a faith statement. And through God, these promises will come to pass. But when fear comes in, faith levels just diminish. The Bible says in Proverbs 13:12, "Hope deferred, makes the heart sick." And we are seeing sickness all around us.

So, what happens next? In the 1 Kings 19:4b, Elijah comes to a broom bush, and he sits under it and he prays that he might die. And we don't really talk about the heroes of the faith experiencing suicidal thoughts. We don't talk about that. But that's exactly what's going on at this moment. "Lord, I've had enough. Take my life. I'm no better than my ancestors." And he lies under the bush and he falls asleep. And he's had a great moment, at Mount Carmel, and this is a moment where he breaks down in the wilderness. And so, he's in absolute panic. It's like his life is getting choked.

The Greek Biblical word for anxiety, literally to be divided or destructed. And this is how anxiety manifests itself. It creates internal division. And in the moment where fear kicks in, we begin to question, 'Can we actually put our hope and our faith in God?' Or maybe we need to take matters into our own hands. We actually question everything about God. Is He powerful enough to bring these promises into our present? So, maybe I need to take control. But even this response creates anxiety, because you know you don't have the internal resources for the darkness that surrounds us. And so, I don't have the resources for this wilderness moment. And panic and anxiety begin to rise as internal division.

So, what is the remedy when this happens? I'll tell you what isn't the remedy. A self-pep-talk. And it's like, 'I've done this before.' It's like, 'Get yourself together Peter, this is embarrassing. Make sure that you hold yourself together, don't let anyone else see you panic. You're the pastor of the church. Get yourself together. You've got this, be strong and courageous.' That is not the remedy. The remedy is to bring your anxiety to God. And I love what Paul says in Philippians 4:6-7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

What's the lesson of this text? What can we learn from this text? That if we can worry, we can pray. Worrying without God, is a downward spiral. So, what does worry look like? 'I just don't think I can do this. Like I feel I'm out of my depth. I'm not really sure I can cope.' OK, this is what prayer looks like, 'Dear Lord, I just don't think I can cope, I don't think I can do

this, I feel so out of my depth.’ This is what presenting our anxiety to God looks like, rather than just saying it to yourself, you’re presenting your anxiety to God. ‘Lord, I don’t think I can do this.’ It’s not just walking around, repeating it to yourself, ‘I can’t do this.’ But it’s saying, ‘Lord, I can’t do this.’ That is what presenting your anxiety to God is. It’s bringing all your anxiety into the presence of the Lord.

Psalms 86:6-7,11, is a beautiful example, “Hear my prayer, Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me... Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.” And so, an undivided heart is a cry for our heart to be in His presence. The psalmist says in Psalm 27:4, “There is one thing I ask, one thing I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” Beautiful. Yes, isn’t that beautiful. Hey, let’s thank Leto, for her translation. Thank you very much. The psalmist’s deepest desire was to be in His presence; that is what the psalmist desired.

It’s frightening out there, really. It feels pretty dark, and I’m praying that daylight will break in. But even in the midst of darkness, it’s praying, ‘Lord, will You come and hold me. Would You come and embrace me. Above all else I long to be in Your presence. I really need Your presence, Lord. Lord, give me an undivided heart. There’s internal division. Give me an undivided heart.’

And just really quickly, the third thing is, fear makes you run and hide. Fear creates a psychological response that makes you want to run. Nearly 10 years ago, our family came to plant a church in Strasburg. And since living in France, French people have surprised me in many, many ways. In general, Europeans have surprised me in many, many ways. I’ve come from Australia which has been peaceful, the last few hundred years. We haven’t had many battles in Australia, or we don’t have much history really, like modern history. We don’t have the wars that have happened in Europe. But I’ve learned a lot living in Europe. And a lot of people say to me, ‘I would love to go to Australia, your wild animals are just too scary.’ I’ve had 2, 3 Greek people even on this trip say, that to me.

So, because I love you guys, I’m going to do a presentation on how to survive the ‘big five’ in Australia. So, you’d be prepared, if you ever visit Australia, you’ll know how to handle the big five dangerous animals. I did some research, because I love you all, and I have some photos. I don’t have photos of all of them, because some of them are gross to look at.

Ok, we’ve got the first one here, which is the Great White Shark. And if it bites you, it bites you with a force of 18,000 newtons. Now, try not to splash around as you gradually swim backwards towards the shore. You must try to keep the animal in sight and swim very slowly back away from it. Get into shallow water, that’s my advice.

The next one is salt water crocodile. They’ve actually got the strongest bite. I know, you have never encountered these in Athens, but you never know. But if you encounter crocodiles on land, you run in a straight line as fast as you can. Don’t run in zig zag ways, like the movies. That’s not true.

OK, snakes. We don’t have a photo of that, so that’s OK. Garlic and onions work as natural snake repellants. They’re known to repel snakes. So, ladies, just chop up some garlic and put it in your bag and you’ll be fine.



OK, redback spiders. I know that no one wants to talk about spiders, so I'll skip this one.

The last one, Tasmanian tiger. It hasn't been sighted in 90 years, but you never know. Now with the tiger, you don't run, you never run. Even when they charge towards you, you don't run, because they sometimes they falsely charge. So, you make big motions like this, waving you arms and you speak loudly. I'm an expert. And I would suggest speaking in tongues, but I didn't read this on any website. But the key thing is that you stand your ground. You stand your ground and you pray for mercy.

Now, I'm going to finish with this. You know where I'm going here, don't you? The apostle Peter talks about another great animal, the lion. And he says in 1 Peter 5:8, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." In Ephesians 6:13-14, it talks about being "dressed in the armor of God and standing your ground. And when you've done everything that you continue to just stand your ground." The enemy wants you to shrink back, not step into the threshold moment not to step into your destiny. Can I invite the worship team to just come up please.

Lastly, I want to say that right beyond this threshold, that there are green pastures; there are still waters. Like this is a moment where the church is going to come alive. More than any time before. Winter is passing, spring is upon us. And we should be incredibly excited about it. And even though there's darkness around us, there's a whisper in the wilderness., and we need to tune into what God is saying. Getting the ear trained to hear the voice of God. Like hearing His voice.

Being in a loud city like Athens, we need to be tuning into His voice, His still small voice. He has something to say. Can we all stand up. I want to pray for all those that are feeling anxious at the moment, and you're sensing the darkness more than ever before. And you're just thinking, 'I can't do this. Pastor Peter, I hear what you're saying but it is scary out there. The culture is just intimidating me. I don't even feel confident to speak out.' And I want to encourage you today; the Father has got you. The Father has you and daylight is upon us. Daylight is coming. Despite the darkness, He's holding you.

And so, as we worship right now, I want to invite you to come down and I would love to pray for you, and I know there's a prayer team here and my wife and I would love to pray for you as well.

And why don't you just, I know we have gone over time, I'm sorry, we're having lots of fun. I'm going to pray. Loving Father, we just thank you Lord Father, for what you are doing this morning, and so, I pray Lord Father, that as we worship, I pray for those who are needing a touch from You this morning. Lord, I pray Lord Father that You would give them the boldness to step out, Lord God, in Jesus' name. Thank You Lord God.