

**“Hope, Lost and Found”
1 Kings 19:1 – 8**

Big Idea – Human beings have no hope without God.

Ephesians 2:12 “...having no hope and without God in the world.”

Intro: A man told his doctor that he did not know what was wrong, but he wasn't able to do all the things around the house that he used to do. When the examination was complete, he said, "Now, Doc, I can take it. Tell me what is wrong with me in plain English." The doctor said in plain English, "You're just lazy." The man said "Okay, now give me the medical term so I can tell my wife."

Sometimes we find ourselves physically knowing something is wrong, but we do not know what the problem is. The same thing can be true emotionally. At times we find ourselves emotionally drained but we really do not know what the problem is.

Did you know that many times when we find ourselves like this it is because we have lost all hope.

Today we want to look at 3 things about hope and how it affects us.

1. Why hope is lost

A good example to look at is the life of Elijah -1 Kings 19:1-5. Before this happened, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest to see who was serving the True God. The God that answered by fire would prove to be the true and living God. Elijah's God won overwhelmingly!

1 Kings 19:1 When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done, including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal.

2 So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah: “May the gods strike me and even kill me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed them.”

3 Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there.

4 Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.”

But later, after Jezebel threatened his life and stated he was a dead man, we find him under a juniper tree saying that he wished he was dead. But he really did not wish he

was dead, because if he had stayed there, Jezebel would have been glad to accommodate him.

Illus: Did you hear about the couple that came upon a wishing well? The wife leaned over, made a wish and threw in a penny. The husband decided to make a wish, too. But he leaned over too far, and fell into the well and drowned. The wife was stunned, but she smiled and said, "It really works!"

Elijah was wishing he was dead, but he was not really wishing he was dead, because all he had to do was sit there until Jezebel arrived, and she would have granted his request.

This great man of God became so distraught that some think that he had a small nervous break down.

What caused this despair in his life? We need to consider four things, such as:

He had unrealistic expectations

On Mt. Carmel, the God that answered by fire would prove to be the true and living God. The God of Elijah proved overwhelmingly to be the true and living God.

Elijah presumed that everyone would repent. Things didn't turn out the way he planned.

We have to be careful in our expectations, because they can lead to big discouragements in our life.

Illus: Often a pastor prepares all week to preach a sermon that is burning in his soul. And as God works in his heart in that sermon, he begins to get excited, and hopes the same sermon will do for others what it has done for him.

Sadly, too often people don't attend church for the Bible messages; it's more like a social club.

To avoid discouragement, we have to guard against unrealistic expectations by remembering that God only requires us to be obedient. We need to leave the results in the hands of God.

Illus: We have to be like the farmer, Sam Smith, that had the biggest watermelon crop in the county each year. (This is a true story.) Someone asked how he did it year after year. He said, "I do everything I know to do to have a good crop, I spare no energy or cost. But when I have done all that I can do, I park my tractor under a large tree at the end of the watermelon field, and I say, 'God, I have done all that I can do and now the rest is up to you!'"

The second thing that caused Elijah some problems was -

He focused on the problem

on Mount Carmel, Elijah focused on the power and greatness of God. But under that Juniper tree, he focused in on the power of that murderous Jezebel.

We have to look at the power of God, what God can do for us, and not our own power or our enemies power, or else we are going to have some serious discouragement problems.

He focused on himself

Elijah was in the depths of self-pity. Look at verse 4, we read, "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."

This is a discouraged man. The only thing he can think about is himself.

He was physically exhausted

Another reason we yield to depression is exhaustion. By the time Elijah got to Sinai, he was weak from fatigue and from all of the activities that had gone on before. He was very run down from that trip.

These four things that we find in his life are what caused him to LOSE ALL HOPE. He allowed his problem (Jezebel) to become bigger than the God he served. Any time we allow our problems to become BIGGER than the God we serve, we have LOST ALL HOPE.

It is obvious from looking and listening to some Christians, that they are like Elijah, all hope is gone in their life! You can not see a trace of the Lord in their life.

Illus: There is a story about a little girl who, on the way home from church, turned to her mother and said, "Mommy, the Preacher's sermon this morning confused me." The mother said, "Oh! Why is that?"

The girl replied, "Well, he said that God is bigger than we are. Is that true?" "Yes, that's true," the mother replied.

"He also said that God lives within us. Is that true too?" Again the mother replied, "Yes." "Well," said the girl. "If God is bigger than us and He lives in us, wouldn't He pop out through us?"

The little girl makes a point.

If we are trusting in the Lord, our life will reflect that:

- He is within us
- He is bigger than our problems

And we can say to the devil and his crowd, "Greater is He that is in me than He that is in the world!"

Understanding the enemy can help you win the battle. The devil wants every one of us to feel hopeless, and to think that the God we serve is asleep, or just doesn't care what happens to us.

We looked at why hope is lost, but let's also look at-

2. When hope is lost

We look at each other at times and become frustrated because others do not think or do things like we do.

But did you know we all have similar thoughts about God? God tells us in

Isaiah 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

Hope is lost when we forget God!

Hope is lost when we forget God does not think the way we think nor are His ways our ways.

For example,

The Time factor

It seems that time wears on hope, like nothing else! For example, one of the things I have a hard time trying to figure out about God is, "Why at times is He slower than I want Him to be?" Sometimes I pray about things I know that are within His will, and then I wait, I wait, and I wait.

We like it when things happen fast. Did you hear about the man who went on a diet, and wanted to lose weight fast? He went on a diet some time back using "Slim Fast", and in two weeks he only lost two pounds! He didn't like that. He said they ought to call that stuff "Slim Slow!"

Illus: When I go to the doctors office I do not like to wait. But I found out that the reason we are called patients is because you SIT there, sit there, and sit there! You better have some patience!

Illus: I like doctors like the one who advertised that he gave flu shots through a drive through window. He advertised it as a "Drive-By Shooting".

Nothing seems to wear on hope like time. But as we pray about some things, we need to consider that God did not answer my prayers yesterday, but I have HOPE that He will today.

Thank the Lord for *2 Peter 3:9*, "*The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some men say; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"

Illus: Consider the example of E. Howard Cadle. His mother was a Christian, but his father was an alcoholic.

His mother did something every night for him. No matter what she was doing at 8 o'clock, she would quit what she was doing and get on her knees beside her sons bed, and pray for him. This was something she did every night.

When her son chose the path of sin, she began to pray more earnestly for him each night at 8 o'clock.

But it seemed the more she prayed for him to come to know the Lord, the worse things began to get.

- By age twelve, Cadle was emulating his father, and was drinking and out of control.
- Soon he was in the grip of sex and gambling, and in the clutches of the Midwest crime syndicate.

But her prayers didn't seem to slow him, until one evening on a rampage, he pulled a gun on a man and squeezed the trigger.

But the weapon never fired and someone quickly knocked it away.

Cadle looked across the room, and he noticed that it was exactly eight o'clock, and somehow he'd been spared from committing the crime of murder.

He continued headlong in vice, however, and presently his health broke. The doctor told him he had only six months to live. Dragging himself home, penniless and pitiful, he collapsed in his mother's arms, saying, "Mother, I've broken your heart. I'd like to be saved, but I've sinned too much."

This dear old mother opened her Bible and read Isaiah 1:18, which reads, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;."

That morning, March 14, 1914, E. Howard Cadle started life anew. The change in him was dramatic and permanent. With Christ now in his heart, he turned his con skills into honest pursuits, and started making money hand over fist, giving 75 percent of it to the Lord's work.

He helped finance the crusades of the famous evangelist Gypsy Smith, in which thousands were converted.

Then he began preaching the Gospel himself on Cincinnati's powerful WLW, becoming one of America's earliest and most popular radio evangelists.

He once said: "Until He calls me, I shall preach the same Gospel that caused my sainted mother to pray for me. And when I have gone to the last city and preached my last sermon, I want to sit at His feet and say, 'Thank You, Jesus, for saving me that dark and stormy day from a drunkard's and a gambler's Hell.'"

Dear friends, do not get discouraged. TIME can wear on our HOPE like nothing else can do, but in due time, God has promised we shall reap if we faint not!

But another thing that wears on our HOPE is the-

The Fear Factor

In the Old Testament, Job experienced hopelessness like few men have ever experienced. It seemed like the only kind of news that came his way, day after day, was bad news.

Job got some alarming messages, but he is not the only one to get alarming messages.

It was bad enough when he lost his reputation, his friends, his wealth, and his health, but probably the most devastating thing was, that through the terror of a devastating tornado, he lost all his children.

Job understood that fear robs us of hope. Notice what he said in

Job 3:25 "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me."

This was his greatest fear, and it became a reality in his life.

Fear can rob us of our **HOPE!** At any time, any of us can be stricken with the fear of sickness. And while we are weak, tired, and suffering, you can count on Satan coming around whispering words of hopelessness in our ear.

We looked at **why hope is lost** and **when hope is lost**.

Conclusion:

3. Where hope is found.

The cure for hopelessness is not a program, nor is it a religion. The cure for hopelessness is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

There are many folks today that will tell you they know something is wrong with their life. They will tell you they know they do not have any joy or inner peace.

But the fact is, they never will know anything about Peace until they **know the Prince of Peace!** You'd be surprised at the people who are trying to find PEACE without turning to the Prince of Peace! It does not work!

Satan cannot rob us of **hope**, unless we allow him to do it. If we focus in on Christ and His Power, we can have hope.

When you come to know Him and trust Him as your Savior, He promises you peace – He is the Prince of Peace

Romans 5:1 “having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

John 14: 1 & 27 “Let not your heart be troubled...believe also in me... Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives...”

Matthew 11:28, 29 “Come unto me all you who labor and are burdened down, and I will give you rest ... my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

The Promises of Hope by the Scriptures – knowing them brings peace.

Romans 15:4 “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

13 “I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”