

Elijah and Despair

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 July 2017

Preacher: Rev. Clive Jennings

[0 : 0 0] where do you place your hope it's what it's about it's about Elijah and despair where do you place your hope as a people of God as an individual my hope it says is in the name of the Lord my hope is in the name of the Lord but what does that actually mean because that's a powerful voice and that's a powerful sense that we want in our lives but what does it mean in reality and I pray this morning that the story of Elijah for you if you feel as though you've been standing alone in this situation I pray this story this morning will bring you hope because it is a true story of hope over despair because Elijah had followed the succession of ungodly kings my goodness had they been a group of kings there had been one after the other and it seemed as though each one came got worse than the one before it is sort of accumulated and the Bible says that this King

Ahab did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than all the ones that had gone before him do you get the picture and then adding into that he marries this woman called Jezebel who probably was just as bad as he was it was a marriage made in hell for the people because it got worse and worse and into this Jezebel also decided that she would worship the gods of Baal these fertility gods and gods or whatever so she brought 450 of her prophets with her and then another 400 prophets that served the goddess asherah so I can see a bit of a sort of kingdom growing here that isn't too good maybe you feel that you live in those times of where wherever you look things seem to be getting worse and worse and worse and what do we do about it Elijah a great man of God feels that his message is falling on deaf ears not only has he been challenged but what happens with all the followers of God the one true God at that time they all get together they cluster around Elijah no they don't they disappear and Elijah is left alone to stand in that place to deliver this message of God's hope God's hope God

Elijah actually means Yahweh God is my God nothing better than a statement for that is it you know what's your name Elijah God is my God well we know where you're coming from that's great there is no hiding and I thought here we're just setting up for the big fight aren't we really I wanted a bit of rocky music for this bit in the sermon and comes out this is the big ticket because Elijah is about to confront everybody else he is about to confront the establishment and there's going to be a bit of a showdown just to catch up bell worship was to do with crops so all the people quite rightly they felt oh well we'll follow these gods who give us rain and stuff like that so we're okay it's what we want it's what we do but it wasn't and uh here we've got Elijah is called to King Ahab and he says to him look basically this is my translation here if you don't get a grip if you don't get a grip on this nation if you don't follow the one true God if you basically don't get a grip on your wife and what she's doing then actually what I'm going to do is uh the Lord your God is going to withhold rain and he won't turn the tap on until I ask him to do that what a big call what a big call what a courageous call to stand for God to go and say I am not going to put up with this anymore the Lord your God I can buy into everything else but I refuse to buy into this and whatever the Lord refutes to buy into this and there needs to be a change three years later three years later how stubborn can you get the people wouldn't listen there was drought there was famine and here is Elijah goes back three years later and three years later here is the showdown so he went to meet with Ahab Elijah said and he says to him is that you you troubler oh yeah oh I'm the one that's causing the problem am I I'm the one that's getting in the way and he says that's okay gather all your 450 prophets bring the other 400 as well and we'll have a showdown on Mount Carmel how do you fancy that and they think well yeah this is it we'll get rid of Elijah once and for all and this is what happens you see you see there's going to be this big showdown and you're either people I want to ask you this morning either you're all in or you're all out there is no halfway and I think I lived my life as a Christian for many years as a half-eight Christian

I was one foot in I could sit on the fence with everybody else I could buy into everything else but I wasn't two feet in we've just come back from a CVM men's weekend away where there were 69 men gave their lives to Christ and one woman at a men's weekend she had come as a carer for one of the people that she was looking after and we were there on that night and she was there all these people went down gave their lives to the Lord and most of those had been brought by other Christians they'd been brought along and then she came walking down and gave her life as well in amongst two two and a half thousand men how brave is that you see either you are all in or all out there is no sitting on the fence there is no observing we are both feet in and here I've met so many Christians who have one foot in or worse do not commit here's the challenge from scripture how long will you waver between two opinions says Elijah how long will you waver between the two if the Lord is God follow him but if Baal is

God follow him but the people did nothing so what he does he does this showdown and he says that's okay bring all your people carve up your ox or whatever you're going to sacrifice and you do that on the altar but the call is is you call down fire from heaven from your God and set it on fire so they do and all the prophets of Baal they're dancing around they're cutting themselves with swords they do all of this and what I love in scripture is in between all of this Elijah speaks into us you see because there is a choice time there is a choice either you live with hope or you live with despair and Elijah wasn't going to live with despair he wasn't going to live with despair for the people because he had a heart for the people his heart was with the people we heard that in our testimony this morning we've heard that in our hearts this morning we have a heart for the people that we are called to reach and so we do something do you stand do you call on the name of the

[8 : 30] Lord do you call on the name of the Lord in those sense in those times when he has to make a difference and bring hope because that's what we live in you see I'm gonna I'm all in I'm all in and Elijah was all in I want to bring hope to a people I don't want to just see them carry on in this way in this life we want to bring hope into people who have despair and I don't know about you I talk to people as you do and I just sense there's a lack of hope around at the moment but there's a lot of despair I believe that we're called to be bringers of hope so what happens everybody comes it's the big ticket it's the big ticket event it's even bigger than Ed Sheeran you know this is the big ticket event they've all come what's going to happen on Mount Carmel so all the prophets of Baal they've cut themselves whatever nothing happens and what I love is Elijah just leans over and says shout louder why don't you just shout louder for your God they must be on holiday what's all that about nothing happens and then Elijah said to the people come here to me come here to me and with that he says

I don't want to make this easy just there's four big pitchers of water over there just pour it on this thing I don't want anybody to be in any doubt so they do that once and they said no actually let's do it again and let's do it again let's let nobody be in any doubt about this God of hope that I'm talking to you about and so he does that he calls fire down from heaven and it burns up the people fell prostrate and said the Lord he is God and a nation came to know the one true Lord can you imagine that moment can you imagine seeing your friends and your family those that we meet with those that we work with coming to Christ then a cloud as small as a man hand rises from the sea and then it starts to rain that's just awesome isn't it well Elijah can now retire he can write books he can go on premier Christian radio he can appear at spring harvest he can do book signings he's made Elijah is the man and then one thing comes Jezebel says to him I'm going to kill you what would you do we mighty people of God we've just seen the Lord do amazing things what does Elijah do he runs he runs in despair a hundred miles in fact he runs again and again and again and where it ends is that he is found lying under a broom bush and he says this is life for God's purposes and his power this is the game changer a hundred miles later he lies under this bush and says take my life what brings a mighty people a mighty person of God within just a day or so to that point and I would suggest that we know that place that we know that place is people of God who have given our lives who have served who have done amazing things and seen God do amazing things and we have come to that point where there's one thing that happens that suddenly knocks our faith puts us into despair and makes us run this is encouragement because what did the angel bring the angel brought cake it says he fed Elijah at that point you know I want to give you hope because I want us to realize that we are human nudged the person next to them and said you're human it's okay you're human we are human and we meet that point sometimes where something will happen and we get burnt out

Elijah has given three years three years of drought he's done all of this he's done that great thing on Mike Carmel he is human and he's done the amazing thing and then the one thing that catches him is he realizes that his gauge of fuel is nearly on empty and then comes the one thing that breaks in and causes him despair and he runs be encouraged because we all meet that point mighty people of God we have all been there what do we do we do the encouragement here first of all the physical what does God do for Elijah he builds him up physically he builds him up again he's been at his end he's been part of the drought he's been part of the famine what does God do God builds him up again for any of us that's been in that place what's the first well not me personally I just eat when I'm stressed but some people just stop eating for me you know he fed him and he builds him back up what was the next thing he needs to do he gets fed so that he can build up then the emotional and the spiritual and then the emotional and the spiritual comes and Elijah is restored and renewed the Lord brings hope in the place where Elijah was and if you are there this morning if you're listening on a podcast if you're listening wherever you are be encouraged because the Lord won't take us as mighty people of God and leave us in despair he will bring hope and may will be that some of us will be bringers of hope to other people bringers of hope in that place because 40 days he walks to Horeb and then the Lord says to him where are you Elijah where are you and I don't think that's about a location I don't think that's on

Elijah's sat nav the Lord knows where he is but he says where are you because let's have a real relationship here this is about relational this is personal where are you be honest with me be honest with yourself and let's get back to that place where you need to be because I can do that and I don't know where you are at the moment but if God asked you where are you what would your reply be to God honestly because that's what it's about maybe Lord I'm two feet out at the moment but I want to be two feet back in maybe I was two feet back in years back maybe I've lived my Christian life as only one foot in maybe I've lived my life of just acknowledging God but never actually being open enough or think I can be open enough to have a personal relationship so I want to be all in and so spiritually Horeb was an opportunity for a fresh revelation and that's where he was I don't know what your Horeb is where is your place for a fresh revelation of God to say I'm all back in again I'm two feet in you see Elijah already knew the power of God and so we get this thing of the mountain it comes back the thunder and the lightning do you know what he'd seen all of that he'd seen the fire come down from heaven he'd seen the power of God come down he'd seen fire come from nowhere into anything he'd seen that he doesn't need to see that again maybe many of us don't need to see that again we've seen the power of God we've seen lives changed we've seen people change we've been seen people transformed and the love of God and that's been great but what does God do God says after the fire comes a gentle whisper and then Elijah stood at the mouth of the cave and he went out and in the presence of God in the stillness and in the quietness the Lord spoke and said where are you Elijah where are you maybe for us this morning it's that still small voice this says to us where are you where are you because we're going to do great things because what's happening is Elijah it's I'm going to restore you and renew you because you've been running on empty and you are going to go back and you are going to do great things but I just want to encourage you and make you a bringer of hope again to your people

Elijah tells God as though he didn't know anything he just pours it out and he says don't go somewhere different go back to where you came from go back to that place and make a difference and he does filled with hope restored and renewed you you you you you you you you