

“Elijah: The Depressed Prophet”

Who’s the Boss? – A series on the Kings

1 Kings 19:1-18

Introduction: Take your Bibles and turn to 1 Kings 19, 1 Kings 19.

Have you ever been driving in a major city and you turned onto a road thinking that it would take you to a certain place, only to find out that it went somewhere completely different? That is kind of what happened to me this week as I studied 1 Kings 19. I have read this account many times in my life, and as I began to study more intensely this week I was pretty sure on Monday where I was going to end up on Friday. But by Thursday I began to realize that the text didn’t take me where I thought it was going to take me. Now, I say this because I am trying to prepare you for a similar journey this morning. You probably have an idea of where we are going to end up in our study of the life of Elijah and this account of his running from the threats of Jezebel. But I am just warning you at the beginning that this road we are on may not end up where you originally imagined it would. This is not because I am desiring to be novel or different or edgy. No, believe me, I tried to make the road go a different direction, but I must say what the text says. And so, this morning, we will seek to understand together what God intended to communicate to us about the life of Elijah from 1 Kings 19. Let’s read verses 1-18.

Most people, including most commentators, read about this running prophet and assume that his fear of Jezebel overpowered him and drove him to turn tail and run deep into the wilderness. Most people read the words of God to Elijah in chapter 19 and hear God rebuking Elijah for his faithless adventure to Mount Horeb.

So, one commentator says:

“Having showed us Elijah at his best, the Bible also shows the prophet at his worst, when he went out alone in the wilderness and sat under a broom tree. Elijah ran away from Jezebel, away from the people of God, away from his prophetic calling, away from it all.”¹

And another says:

That up to this point Elijah “had been sustained by faith’s vision, but now he lost sight of the Lord and saw only a furious woman.” This commentator continues and says that Elijah “went for his life” but “not for God, nor for the good of his people; but because he thought only of self.”²

And yet another says:

“The response is self-serving. One would imagine he came to Horeb simply to celebrate his personal faithfulness.”³

And just one more for you:

“What a contrast! Elijah the hero on Carmel victorious over Baalism! Elijah the coward of unbelief at Horeb, self-occupied, utterly discouraged, wishing to die . . . , praying against rather than for God’s people.”⁴

These commentators merely serve to illustrate how most of us have thought about Elijah in 1 Kings 19. But we must ask the question – is this really what is going on? Is this really how God intends for us to understand this chapter of Elijah’s life – that he was nothing more than selfish and faithless on the run from God and his

¹ Ryken, Philip Graham, *1 Kings*, pg. 519

² A.W. Pink, as quoted in *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly*, by Dale Ralph Davis, pg. 254.

³ Walter Brueggemann, as quoted in *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly*, by Dale Ralph Davis, pg. 255.

⁴ Merrill Unger, as quoted in *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly*, by Dale Ralph Davis, pg. 255.

prophetic calling? What does the text actually say about Elijah? Obviously I am going to take a different view on this, and I will seek to make my case for that over the next few minutes, but please understand that I do this in humility. My view is not new or novice, there are other commentators who uphold this view, but it is certainly different than how most of us have thought. Now, don't get me wrong. I am not saying that Elijah is not depressed and discouraged and despairing. He definitely is that – to the point of wanting God to take his very life. But the question we face is, why is he like that? So, what does the text actually say about Elijah? What is the cause of this depression in the life of God's prophet?

1. The Cause of this Depression – vs. 1-2, 9-10, 13-14

- a. Well, our understanding of what is going on in Elijah's heart hinges upon the very first phrase of verse 3. Before we get to that phrase, let me remind you of the context. Elijah has just seen the monumental working of God on Mt. Carmel. God has powerfully answered his prayer to send an all-consuming fire from Heaven to consume his sacrifice and thereby prove to all the people that Yahweh God is the only true God. Elijah's prayer is then answered again as the Lord sent rain upon the land, and God miraculously empowers Elijah to run for about 18 miles from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel in front of Ahab's chariot. Ahab then goes into Jezebel and tells her all that has transpired that day while Elijah waits to see how the king and queen will respond to what God has done. Elijah then receives word from Jezebel that promises she will kill him just like Elijah has killed the prophets of Baal and she is so serious about this threat that she curses her own life if she doesn't accomplish it.
- b. And then we come to verse three. Almost all of the modern English translations say something like "Then he was afraid." This is the translation of one word in Hebrew. And it is this one word that shapes our understanding of the rest of the narrative. The Hebrew word is a textual variant, which simply means that of the copies of the manuscripts that we have today, this word is different in some of the manuscripts. Some of the oldest manuscripts have the Hebrew word for "he saw" and some of the newer manuscripts have the word for "he feared." In Hebrew, this is a very understandable variant because the difference between the Hebrew words is very miniscule.
 - i. **וַיִּרְא** – "To See"
 - ii. **וַיִּרְא** - "To Fear"
- c. As you can see, the difference between the words is a matter of a few of the vowel pointings in Hebrew. So, you can imagine a scribe copying the Hebrew here and writing the word for "to fear" instead of the word for "to see." It could happen pretty easily. So, now the question becomes, which reading was original? This is not the place or the time to get into the details of textual criticism, but when it is all considered, the Hebrew word for "to see" stands as the most likely original reading. So, for one thing, this is the Hebrew word that is found in all of the Hebrew texts that I could find in my study. In other words, it is a textual variant, but I couldn't find the manuscripts that had the actual word for "to fear." For another thing, it is the harder reading, which usually points to it being the original reading because a copyists is more likely to change a word to make it easier to read than to make it harder to read. So, it is easier to read here that Elijah was struck with fear and this caused his flight. It is more difficult to read here that Elijah saw what was going on and took flight. Most of the modern translations have taken this easier reading and have put that in their texts, sometimes without even a footnote to the

alternative. But, I do think that the King James translation gets it right here. It should read, “Then he saw, and he arose, and ran for his life and came to Beersheba.”

- d. Now, if this is true, then you would expect it to be verified in how the rest of the story is told. In fact, I would argue that if it is supposed to be that Elijah feared and then fled, the rest of the narrative would fit this. And most commentators use this first phrase of verse 3 as a jumping off point to prove that Elijah was faithless and fearful of man and this is how he ended up in the wilderness. So they point to Elijah’s statement in verse 4 and say that he is so full of self-concern that he has despaired of life itself. Then they look at God’s question to Elijah in verses 9 and 13 as an indictment upon Elijah – “What are you doing here Elijah?” But can these details be read with different lenses than to see them as proof that Elijah feared for his life before the wicked queen Jezebel? Are there things that are not in the text that should be there? For instance, God is not interested in whitewashing history, and so the narratives of the Old Testament often include clear descriptions of the failures of God’s appointed men and women. Think of David and his sin with Bathsheeba and of Moses and his striking the rock out of anger, and of Abram and his lying about Sarai while they were in the land of Egypt. God makes known the failures of his most faithful men. But when those failures are known in the text, there is also a word from God that is a word of rebuke, correction, and often judgment. So with David he was confronted by Nathan and the sword never departed from his house. With Moses he was confronted by God himself and he was barred from stepping foot in the Promised Land. So, do we have that here with Elijah? Does God confront and correct Elijah’s wrong thinking? Does God tell him he has it all wrong and he shouldn’t have come to the wilderness and he will have this punishment upon him because he did it all wrong? I don’t see that in the text.
- e. Rather, I see God sustaining his prophet and helping his prophet to get to the depths of the wilderness and Mount Horeb. In verse 7 the angel of the Lord comes to Elijah a second time after Elijah has slept for some time and awakens him and tells him to eat and drink because he has a great journey ahead of him. And then we are told in verse 8 that Elijah ate and drank and then went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights into the wilderness until he came to Mount Horeb, also called the mount of God. It seems to me that Elijah went into the wilderness on the sustaining provision of the Lord. If God didn’t want him to do this he easily could have stopped him in verse 7, but instead he blesses him with some kind of heavenly meal that provides enough strength to last for a 40 day/40 night journey through the wilderness.
- f. Also, we see that Elijah goes to Mount Horeb, or what is also known as Mount Sinai. This is the mountain that the children of Israel were led to on their exodus out of Egypt and on the way to the Promised Land. It is in the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, and it is on this mountain that God met with Moses and crafted the covenant agreement between these children of Abraham and himself. It was at this mountain that God appeared in fire, smoke, thunder, lightning, and earthquakes to the point that the people said to Moses that they never wanted to experience that again. It was at this mountain that Moses went up before the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights as he received the covenant agreement and instructions for God’s people. It was at this mountain that God’s people agreed to the terms of the covenant and declared that they would indeed be God’s people who would be called by God’s name. They here at the foot of Mt. Horeb agreed to be keepers of the covenant Law. And now, almost 600 years later, they were in the land that had been promised to them and they were bearers of the name of Jehovah God, and they were living and worshiping in ways that looked just like all of the pagan nations around them. And so, the geography is important to our understanding of the text. It is to this covenant mountain, the mount of God, Mount Horeb, to which Elijah flees. Why does he go here? Does he

go here because he is thinking only of himself and walking in faithlessness and fear? I would think if that were the case, he could have stayed in Beersheba, or even made a trip to Egypt and found himself a nice resort town on the Mediterranean Sea to unwind in for a few months. Instead, he is sustained by this heavenly meal provided by the hand of the angel of the Lord so that he can go deep into the wilderness, some 200 miles south of Beersheba, to the mount of the covenant.

- g. He goes here because in the face of unmistakable revelation by the only true God, the nation of Israel was hopelessly ruled by a king and queen who operated in unbelievable unbelief. He goes here, to Mount Horeb, because the children of Israel themselves are a people who are blatantly rejecting God by their refusal to stand against wicked Queen Jezebel who obviously is running the show in the royal court of Israel. Though these people cried out, “The Lord, he is God. The Lord, He is God” on Mount Carmel, they were obviously unwilling to stand in the way of a wicked queen who was fully committed to destroying the worship of Yahweh God. And so, Elijah flees to Mount Horeb to plead his case. This blatant unbelief in the face of unmistakable revelation left Elijah flabbergasted and distraught and deflated and depressed. And so he embarks on a journey to the Mount of God to plead his case against the people of God. And so God engages him at this mountain and asks him why he is there. I do not see this as an indicting question – like “Why are you here Elijah – what are you doing?” But rather, I see this as an inviting question that provides Elijah with an opportunity to lay out his case against God’s people to the very God of those people. And so this question is asked two different times, and the same answer is given. “For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword.” These are statements of legal argument from God’s prophet against God’s people.
- h. In the New Testament the Apostle Paul talks about this exchange between God and Elijah and what he says helps us to understand what is going on. In Romans 11 Paul’s point is to show that God graciously always keeps a remnant of faithful believers even in the midst of rampant unbelief and that he had to correct Elijah’s thinking about that in 1 Kings 19. We will get to more of that in a bit, but before he says that, in Romans 11:2 Paul says that Elijah “appeals to God against Israel.” This word for appeals is a word that is translated often as intercedes or pleads the case of, and usually it is followed with the preposition “for.” So Jesus intercedes for us to the Father. He pleads our case and secures the Father’s mercy and grace on our behalf. But in this passage it says that Elijah intercedes against Israel to God. In other words, he goes to God and makes the case against them that they have been covenant breakers to the point that Elijah is now convinced that they will never turn around and he is the only one who is left. So, what is it that drives Elijah to Mount Horeb? Is it fear of Jezebel? No, I think it is a right appraisal of the current spiritual condition of his people.
- i. He is overwhelmed with their disbelief in the face of God’s super-abounding revelation on Mount Carmel. He can’t believe his eyes, and so he flees to the wilderness to the Mount of God in search of answers. I mean, what else could he do here? It’s not like another miraculous work of God is going to change things around. If these people can’t follow after God after the Mount Carmel experience, what hope is there that they will ever follow God? And this discourages and depresses Elijah. This sends him on a solitary journey into the wilderness. The cause is not his own fear of man, but actually his own fear of the Lord. He can’t believe that people could spurn the Lord like this and it drives him deep into despair and depression.
- j. Now, honestly, we like the fear of man narrative better here because we can identify with it better. The jump to our own life is much shorter of a leap if Elijah fled into the wilderness

because he lost faith and was totally self-focused. We know that trail well. But this trail of discouragement and depression based on fear of the Lord is one that we are pretty unfamiliar with. So, when was the last time we were so overwhelmed with the unbelief of those around us that we were thrown into despair and depression of soul? Now, to be fair, we haven't had a Mount Carmel experience anytime recently in Newton, KS, but has your heart ever been saddened by the blatant unbelief that abounds in our city? Have you ever been gripped with sorrow as you drove past house after house after house on your way to church as you saw one family after another have absolutely no thought of God on a Sunday morning? Have you ever been in a conversation with someone who is religious and who has read a lot of the Bible and who limps along in deception as they believe in something other than the God of the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Those moments are but glimpses of the sadness of soul that Elijah the prophet experienced in 1 Kings 19.



2. The Course of this Depression – vs. 3-8

- a. So, what kind of journey did this sadness of soul lead Elijah on? We have seen the cause of the depression, now let's evaluate the course of the depression so that we can understand its depth.
- b. In verse 3 we are told that Elijah saw the blatant disbelief and so he arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba. In other words, he fled. This depression and sadness of heart sent him to flight away from the situation. This exposure to the blatant unbelief of God's people put Elijah in a situation that he could no longer handle. There was no reason for him to stay. They had rejected his ministry and they had rejected the God he represented. So he fled.
- c. This flight led him to seek isolation. He didn't want, need, or desire the counsel of anyone else. He needed to be alone with God. This deflation of spirit and depression as a result of this blatant unbelief drove him to isolation. He left his servant in Beersheba and travelled another day's journey into the wilderness where he collapsed under a broom tree. The point of the narrative is not here to mainly teach us about how we should operate when we are in these rare moments of spiritual depression in the face of obvious disbelief, but there are lessons we can learn from Elijah here. So, it is instructive and helpful to see that he seeks this isolation from others, and more helpful is the fact that he seeks God. He wants to be alone with God in the face of despair and discouragement. He had no other course of action. Staying in Israel and continuing his ministry in the face of blatant disbelief was worthless. He didn't need the counsel of a friend. He didn't need a vacation. He needed the Lord. And so he sought him, alone!
- d. There was a specific moment in my ministry life where the pressures were great, the results were few, the exhaustion was high, and the despair was enveloping. I couldn't seem to escape the fog and depression. I felt hopeless as I ran on the ministry treadmill of sermon prep, counseling, discipleship, and ministry meetings. I felt like I was going to explode. And so instead of coming apart, by God's grace I decide to come apart. I planned a day to be alone with God. I took my Bible and fled to a state park. On the way to the park I listened to a message about

discouragement from 2 Corinthians, and then I spent several hours walking on lonely trails pleading my case in prayer before a compassionate and caring God. I took out my Bible and read 2 Corinthians slowly and intently. And then I walked some more and prayed all along the way. I still remember the relief that came as I unloaded my burdens upon the Lord and found his yoke to be easy and his burden to be light. I had found that the best thing I could do was to seek God alone, and to get alone to seek God. This is what Elijah does here. He seeks God as he isolates himself from everything and everyone else.

- e. And in this seeking of God there came an answer and a cure. You see Elijah's heart needed a cure. He was convinced that this prophetic ministry he was called to was hopeless and pointless. And so in verse 4 he views his ministry as done and his usefulness to God as over and commits himself to God to take his life. This is a low spot indeed. It is a bewildering place for a servant of God to find himself and it is a place that must be met with answers from God. There must be a cure for this broken servant.

3. The Cure for this Depression – vs. 5-18

- a. And as we see in the text there is a cure. In verses 5-6 we see that this broken servant is met by a sustaining God.

b. A Sustaining God – vs. 5-6

- i. Elijah was broken, discouraged, and hopeless. He wanted the angel of death, but he was sent the angel of provision. The amazing truth of the words in these verses is that God graciously handled his broken servant. He didn't come down as the harsh father and correct Elijah's thinking and inform him of what he was doing in all of this. But rather, he meets him in his despair and provides for him sleep and food. Two of the most basic needs of the human existence. God has made us as physical beings with physical needs, and those needs are concerning to him. He knew that a contributing factor to Elijah's depression was his overwhelming physical need for rest and food, and so he graciously provides. Now, we often think of food as a provision from the Lord, and as money as a provision from the Lord, but we don't often think of sleep as a provision from the Lord. But the text of Scripture says differently. Psalm 127:2 says:

1. ² It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. (Psalm 127:2 ESV)
2. Every night that you get a good night of sleep is a gift from the Lord, and so with Elijah, in the midst of his journey into isolation as he seeks after God, he is met by God with the provision of sleep. This sustaining God sent the angel to Elijah two different times, and on the second time he gave him sustenance and direction. Therefore, part of the cure for Elijah's heart is not simply a sustaining God, but also a directing God.

ii. A Directing God – vs. 7-8

1. God's angel provided Elijah with this second meal and told him to arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you. We are not told what else the angel said to Elijah, but what we gather from this is that Elijah was either on the right track as he headed to Mount Horeb, or the angel directed him to go the 40 day/40 night journey to Horeb. All we know is that he was given this Heavenly meal that gave him the strength necessary to make the journey. Either way, whether Elijah was already intending to go to Horeb, or God directed him specifically to go there, we know that God directed him through this meal and the words of the angel to continue the journey.

2. This direction is crucial for a broken servant of the Lord. He is directionless. His very own people have displayed blatant disbelief in the face of insurmountable evidence of God. His ministry seems to be fairly meaningless at this point. What is he to do? Where is he to go? How is he to serve? And it is here that God meets his servant and provides a part of his cure by directing him to continue on his journey deep into the wilderness. This direction is met by the caring hand of God in verse 9.

iii. A Caring God – vs. 9

1. Elijah's 40 day/40 night journey to Mount Horeb finds him in a cave where he takes up residence. There seems to be limitless possibilities to how God could have interacted with Elijah here. He could have met him with stern consternation, or authoritative correction, or absolute silence. But rather, God caringly and gently asks a question of Elijah. Because Elijah is not here in a cave in Horeb because of his fear of Jezebel, I do not take this question by God in verse 9 as a question of indictment, but rather as a question of care and concern. God is seeking to draw Elijah out, not just of the physical cave, but of the emotional and spiritual cave that his depression has created. God handles Elijah with the gentle care of a loving father and asks him a question about what has brought him to Mount Horeb of all places. Of the many reasons I don't think this is an indictment against Elijah is the fact that after Elijah gives his answer which details the many sins of Israel and its leaders, God does not correct Elijah. If it was an indictment against Elijah you would expect a "you are the man" type comment after Elijah gives his answer. But rather, God is going to continue the healing process of Elijah's heart in verses 10-18 without casting indictment at his broken servant. And this began in verse 9 with this caring and compassionate question that God asks – "what are you doing here Elijah?" The cure for Elijah's broken heart was a providing God, a directing God, and a caring God. But really, all of these were leading Elijah to the pinnacle of his needed cure – a relentless God.

iv. A Relentless God

1. So here Elijah sits, in a cave, in the wilderness, alone with God. And God caringly speaks to him in verse 9 and gives Elijah the opportunity in verse 10 to state his case against Israel. In response to Elijah's answer the Lord tells Elijah to go out of the cave and stand on the mountain before the Lord. And then we read of this fascinating account of the Lord passing by and then a great and strong wind that tore the mountains and broke rocks in pieces before the Lord, and then an earthquake and then a fire. And we are told after each of these three dramatic and powerful displays of natural disturbances that the Lord was not in them. So after the great wind we are told that Yahweh was not in the wind. After the Earthquake we are told that Yahweh was not in the earthquake. After the fire we are told that Yahweh was not in the fire. And then we have this most interesting phrase in the middle of verse 12 where we are told that after the fire there was a voice, a small and quiet voice. Elijah most likely had retreated back into the cave a ways for the sake of his own protection from the wind, earthquake and fire, but at the sound of this quiet voice, he covered his face and went out to the entrance of the cave. And after this small voice we are told that a voice said to Elijah –

“What are you doing here Elijah?” God’s display of his power was followed up by his gentle care of his servant. Elijah didn’t need to be healed from his depression through powerful displays of God, but rather through the gentle care of God’s voice. God spoke and invited Elijah to again state his case against Israel. And so Elijah does. He states the case again, just like he did before.

2. But this time the Lord responds to Elijah’s complaint against God’s people by speaking to him words of instruction. In this we see the relentless nature of Yahweh God. While his servant is totally deflated by the unbelief of God’s people, God is not sidetracked or derailed. Though his servant has been driven into the wilderness in the face of this unbelievable unbelief, God has answers. He has a plan and he lets Elijah in on the plan.
3. He will Judge – vs. 15-17
 - a. He tells Elijah to depart from the wilderness and do three things. Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat to be the prophet in Elijah’s place. This is to be done because these three men are being appointed by God to carry out the judgment of God upon the nation of Israel, and in particular, its leaders.
 - b. In other words, God is making clear to Elijah that he completely agrees with Elijah about how things are going in Israel. The nation, and in particular its leadership, has blatantly disregarded the one true God. But this disbelief does not handcuff God. He is not sidelined because people don’t believe in him. He doesn’t receive his power through the belief of people, as if our faith adds to his reality. But rather, he has a plan that will be carried out in light of the faithlessness of his people, and this plan is a plan of judgment upon his people that will be carried out by these three men – Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha. God will not let iniquity go unchecked or unpunished. He will bring the promised judgment to pass. Elijah’s prophetic ministry has not been meaningless. It has been used to display the previously masked depth of Israel’s unbelief. Mount Carmel has shown this unbelief in living color, and God will judge.
4. He will Save – vs. 18
 - a. But he will not only judge, he will also save. So, in verse 18 God says that he will leave 7000 in Israel, and these 7000 will be all those who have not bowed to Baal or kissed this idol as an act of worship. This is a fascinating verse in the Hebrew. The verb for “Yet I will leave” is a verb that has the sense of something that is caused to happen. In other words there will not just be 7000 that are left in Israel who have not bowed down to Baal nor kissed him, but rather, there are 7000 left whom God has caused to not be left. In other words, this remnant of faithful people are a result of the work of God. God had been at work, was currently at work, and would continue to work to keep 7000 faithful people in Israel who would not worship Baal.
 - b. In other words, God is healing Elijah’s broken heart by informing him of his relentless work to save 7000 who will be faithful to Him.
5. By His Word (not miraculous works) – vs. 11-13

- a. When you link this with the context of everything else that has happened in the chapter, I think you can see that this saving work of God is happening by the work of His word. I think this is the main point of verses 11-13 where God shows his mighty power through the great wind, the earthquake and the fire and then the text says that God was not in any of those things. And then we are told that a voice, a quiet whisper is heard that draws Elijah out of the cave. This quiet voice gives way to a voice asking Elijah a question and then instructing Elijah's heart. Why did God do this? Why did he have those great and powerful displays followed by a quiet voice? I think the point is that God's work in the world is accomplished through His word, not through miraculous acts of power. His Spirit was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but it was in His Word.
- b. These 7000 would not remain faithful because they continued to see miraculous displays of God's power like they had seen on Mt. Carmel. Rather, they would be saved by God's Word. God would use His Word to encourage and develop their faith and would therefore work to make them faithful. Oh how we need this understanding today! There are so many who are seeking God in the miraculous and the strange and the amazing. But God is at work through His Word. He is relentless in our world, and this relentless work is happening as His Word is proclaimed. He is causing some to be faithful to Him and to follow Him whole heartedly, and this work is being accomplished through His Word.

Conclusion: So, after examining this chapter of Elijah's life, what are the take-aways for us this morning? What can we go home and chew on? There is much, but let me mention a few.

- Ministry is often depressing
 - The ministry of calling people to repentance from any other faith to a singular faith in Yahweh God is often a depressing task. Most people will reject and go their own way. So, for those of you that are on the front end of your ministry career – can I warn you about this reality? I do not mean to discourage you, but rather to rightly inform you. It is easy to think early in life that you will be the catalyst to change the world. But most likely you will be used by God to faithfully administer His Word for many years of your life and throughout that ministry you will have many reject and a few receive.
- Information is not the solution
 - It is easy to think that people's problem is that they don't have enough information. If only they could see all of the facts about Creation versus Evolution, or if only they could understand all of the proofs for the resurrection of Christ then they would believe. Well, let the heart of Jezebel serve as an example of the human heart for you. Let the people of Israel instruct you about the true problem of the sin-ruled heart. They had received more information. In fact, they had received undeniable information, and yet they still did not believe.
 - Did you know that there was great evidence mounting before the Pearl Harbor attack took place in WWII that it was going to happen? So, for instance, American cryptographers had cracked the Japanese diplomatic code and on November 22, 1941, they intercepted a message to the Japanese envoys negotiating with Roosevelt in Washington that in about a week 'things are

automatically going to happen.’ And earlier that year in January of 1941 our ambassador to Japan had heard a lot of talk that if there was a break between the US and Japan that Japan was planning a mass surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The FBI also reported just days before the attack that the Japanese consulate in Honolulu was burning its diplomatic papers. You see, we had evidence that an attack was coming, and really, in hindsight we should have been expecting something, but all of this evidence changed nothing and we were surprised when the attack happened. You see evidence and information is not the problem. In the ministry of the Gospel to needy hearts around the world, we must give them the right information, but in so doing we must depend upon God to do a work in their heart to save them.

- A Relentless God is the cure
 - God is at work. No matter how impossible that seems at times, and no matter how discouraging the ministry may become, we can be cured of depression in the face of unbelief because God is at work. So, when your heart is overwhelmed by the hurt and pain that comes when people reject God, know that He is still at work in this world and that he will use you in that work but that this work is not dependent upon your ability to make people follow God. Rather, God is at work through His Word, so trust His Word to be at work and keep on keeping on in the ministry set before you of proclaiming the glories of Jesus Christ. Let’s pray.

Benediction:

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-21 ESV)