Amen. What a wonderful truth.
Come in your Bibles again tonight if you would one more time.
The book of 1 Kings.
The book of 1 Kings chapter 19.
Good to see this crowd here on a Sunday night.
Anybody got anything on your heart tonight before we go to the Word?
Amen. Amen.
Amen. 1 Kings chapter 19.
This morning we looked at verses 1 through 8.
I'm going to pick up in verse number 7 and read down through verse number 19.
The Bible says, And the angel of the Lord came again the second time and touched him.
And said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.
And he arose and he did eat and drink and went the
strength of that meat forty days and forty nights
unto Horeb the Mount of God.
Verse 9 says,
And he came thither unto a cave and lodged there.
And behold, the word of the Lord came to him
and said to him, What doest thou here, Elijah?
And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts.
For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant,
thrown down thine altars,
and slain thy prophets with a sword.
And I, even I only, am left,
and they seek my life to take it away.
And he said,
Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord.
And behold, the Lord passed by,
and a great and strong wind writ the mountains,
and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord.
But the Lord was not in the wind.
And after the wind an earthquake,
but the Lord was not in the earthquake.
And after the earthquake a fire,
but the Lord was not in the fire.
And after the fire a still small voice.
So I hope y'all are seeing this as we're reading it.
What a, what a, what a, what a thing.
And it was so when Elijah heard it,
that he wrapped his face in the mantle,
and went out and stood in the entering of the cave.
And behold, there come a voice unto him and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?
And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts,
because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant,
thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with a sword.
And I, even I, only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.
By the way, it's just jumped out to me in reading this.

I've never really thought about it this way.
When we're mentally and spiritually in a place that God doesn't want us to be,
the only people we can think about is ourselves.
This is, I, I, I, just me, me, I, I, I.
That's the only thing we can think of.
And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way
to the wilderness of Damascus, and when thou comest,
anoint Hazel to be king over Syria.
And Jehu, the son of Nenshi,
shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel.
And Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel, Mahalah,
shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.
And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazel shall Jehu slay,
and he that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.
Love verse 18.
Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel,
all the knees which hath not bowed at the barrel,
and every mouth which hath not kicked him.
That's a good one.
I've still got some.
Standing tall.
There's still an army.
Lastly, verse 19 says,
Tonight, I want to share with you on the thought of how to get out of the cave.
Let's pray.
Dear Father, we thank you for the day that you've given us.
Lord, for this precious church that you created, that you established,
that you have sustained and strengthened throughout the years.
Lord, despite all the resources that we have here,
and the talent, and the means that we have here,
the only way that it will stand and thrive
will be by your power and your word and your strength.
God, I pray tonight that you would take this story that is familiar to many of us,
that's relevant in the life of one of your own children,
that you would use it to teach us
on how to get out of a place if we're there,
or mostly how to avoid from resorting to this cave of despair.
Lord, use it to strengthen your church.
We love you and praise you.
In Jesus' sweet name we pray.
Amen.
Amen.
This morning, the phrase that really grabbed me
as I was studying this was those words of the angel
to Elijah at the end of verse number 7.
It says, The journey is too great for you.
The journey is too great for thee.

What you're dealing with, what you're going to have to deal with, this entire thing,
is way, way, way, way more than even you, Elijah can handle,
can deal with.
We looked at what led him there,
where he was.
He was in this place of not just despondent, depressed.
Elijah was done.
He was so done,
he just said,
Ask God to just completely take him out of the situation altogether.
What led him there?
Well, Elijah was, again, he was a righteous man, but he was just a regular man.
Was not immune to the troubles and the trials of life, the pressures of life,
the difficulties of life.
The news that he heard sent him there,
Jezebel,
who had already slain some of God's prophets.
After the contest of Mount Carmel,
Elijah goes down to slain 450 false prophets of Baal.
And she said,
Okay, tomorrow you're going to be just like them.
Wasn't an empty threat.
It was a real threat.
Got him down, got him low, got him to a place that he was ready to quit.
But thankfully,
God knew where he was, and God sent a messenger.
God sent a divine angel from heaven down to speak to Elijah.
But what really grabbed me in studying this, y'all know it to be true,
not every messenger is an angel from heaven.
I'm telling you, a friend,
a neighbor,
a preacher,
a mother,
an aunt, an uncle,
there's plenty,
many people that God uses to convey his message.
And God had a message for Elijah.
Again, we find in verse number seven,
that all of this is too much for you,
but I have made a provision.
I have given a provision.
Elijah wakes up out of this sleep that he's in
and there's this food there that is prepared for him, there's water.
And Mitzi called me.
She's on her way.
She's traveling to go out of town.
And she said, Brian, there's something that you didn't mention

that I noticed.
And she said, maybe you need to pay attention to this.
She said it nicely.
And I've never noticed it.
Look at verse five.
And he said, Elijah slept under a juniper tree.
Behold then, an angel touched him
and said, arise and eat.
And he looked and behold, there was a cake baking on the coals
and a cruise of water at his head.
And he did eat and drink and laid him down again.
She said, do you know what this angel did?
I said, what?
She said, let him rest.
Let him rest.
When he dressed.
She let him get his,
angel,
let him get his nap out.
Let him rest some.
Then woke him up again.
And that's when he conveyed this message.
So from this divine provision that God made, Elijah did get up.
It was enough.
Elijah got up, but he still had not arrived yet.
He left the shade of a juniper tree.
And resorted to a cave
on top of Mount Horeb.
And I sort of titled this myself or the Lord gave me the title this years ago.
This cave of despair.
This dark place
where he went where he could be by himself.
Where he went where he could be
alone with his thoughts.
And this same God
who dispatched an angel to him there underneath that juniper tree.
This time it's not an angel,
but God comes himself
and comes to Elijah because there's still work to be done.
I am so thankful
that when it comes to salvation,
that that is a, my eternal position
is a finished work.
My eternal stance before the Lord
is a finished work.
I have been cleansed.
I have been claimed.

I am a child of God
and there is no power of hell nor scheme of man,
nothing in heaven, nothing in earth,
nothing below earth
that can ever change that.
That is finished.
That is completed.
That is done.
However, when it comes to my sanctification and my usefulness
and my worship
and my walk with the Lord,
I ain't ever done.
We're not ever done.
Though Elijah got up from that juniper tree,
he still found himself resorting to this cave of despair.
Tonight I want to talk to us about the subject of how to get out of the cave.
Folks, God is perfect
in every attribute that he possesses.
When I say attribute,
I want you to think about maybe personality trait
or characteristic,
even though that's very,
not a very accurate word of what we're talking about.
We're talking about
the qualities of God.
He isn't ever halfway anything.
He's completely that.
When the Bible says
that God is love,
that means that he doesn't love sometimes.
God is perfect,
unadulterated,
pure love.
God is grace,
unmerited favor.
He's just grace
because he is grace.
He gives grace because he's gracious.
God is merciful.
He's perfect in his mercy.
He's perfect in every attribute.
God is perfect in his wrath.
When God displays his wrath and God displays his justice,
it is right, it is fitting, it is pure,
it is needful.
But if there's one area that I believe that God absolutely shines in, at least I know
in my life, I'm telling you he absolutely excels in it,

is God excels
in longsuffering.
Folks,
God is patient.
Twice in this passage of Scripture,
he asked Elijah the very same question.
We find it in verse number 9
and verse number 13.
God asked him,
what doest thou hear,
Elijah?
Verse number 9.
We go down again.
We have to this fire and the earthquake and the wind.
He goes down to verse number 13 again.
What doest thou hear,
Elijah?
I don't believe this has anything
to do with geography.
I don't believe it has anything to do with his locale,
what particular mountain that Elijah had landed upon.
Folks, it has everything to do with
the state of mind.
That Elijah,
indeed,
he had backed away from that provision of God.
When we back away from the provision of God,
we do nothing but backed up spiritually.
Here we find this man
in the same state of loneliness,
the same state of defeat,
the same place of despair,
and God basically saying to him with these two questions,
you're back already.
You have no reason to be.
Folks,
that's the first point that God really stressed to me.
I want to stress to you tonight.
If we find ourselves
in this cave,
we need to understand
we've got no business being there.
No business whatsoever being there.
Now, I want to be real careful for here.
I'm getting a little older and I'm hoping I'm getting a little bit wiser
and I'm a little bit more sympathetic about some things than I used to be.
I'm not talking about medical issues.

I'm not talking about chemical imbalances.
I'm not talking about hormones.
I'm not talking about any of those things
because I have learned firsthand that those things are real.
And you want to know what?
Doctors are a gift from God.
Medicine is a gift from God
used the right way.
This world is cursed.
This body is cursed.
This thing is dying.
And sometimes there's things within us.
I went to the doctor.
I was sleepy.
I was tired.
I was worn down.
I gained all this weight and basically I found out my testosterone,
if it's supposed to be here, it was way down there in the basement.
It wasn't just my mind.
There was something wrong with me.
So I got my daughter.
She gives me a shot every week.
There ain't a thing in the world wrong with that.
I realize there's medical things, chemical things that can affect those things.
That's not at all what I'm talking about.
What I'm talking about
is the child of God
who is living in defeat.
The child of God who is throwing his own personal pity parties.
Head mostly hanging.
His joy is gone.
His song is gone.
God isn't being unsympathetic to Elijah
nor am I being unsympathetic to you.
But we've got to understand that this is where we're at.
Folks, we've got no business being there.
What doest thou here, Elijah?
Go back to all you've seen.
Go back to all you've experienced.
Now this man
has experienced a lot.
He has seen the fire.
He has seen the rain.
He has seen the birds.
He has seen the ravens.
He has seen the oil.
He has seen the meal.

He has seen God raised this boar from the dead.
Now here he is.
If things don't go exactly the way
he expected them to go,
the pressure's on.
And we find this man indeed backing up.
And God shows up basically to say, why are you even here?
I heard a preacher mention it in service the other night.
When Joshua,
they go,
and it is right after it's the battle of Ais, right after Jericho.
I love this scene.
I've got it underlined in my Bible.
Y'all know what happened in Jericho.
They didn't fire a shot and God took that entire city.
All you're going to do is walk around it.
There was no way God's going to let them get credit for what he did at that place.
But they did have one instruction.
You ain't supposed to take not one thing out of there.
Not one thing, not one thing, not one thing.
This place is cursed.
Y'all know Achan took what he wasn't supposed to take.
Went and hid it in his tent, the whole thing.
They go up to A.I.
We can take A.I.
and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.
They get beaded, chased down.
Now we find Joshua
down on his face.
God, God, God, why have you done this?
Everybody's going to think you have left us.
And God says, get up.
Get up from there.
This ain't my fault.
They're sitting in the camp.
Folks, there's some places we get
and it ain't God's fault we're there.
We've let the mind take hold.
We've let the pressures of light take hold.
We've pushed away from the provision of God.
We've backed up in our faith and when we do that, all we can do
is back up.
So the first thing that God does
when he shows up to Elijah,
you go, what are you even doing here?
But he didn't stop there.
If we're going to get out of the cave,

our ears and our hearts
must be attentive to the voice of God.
I can't say this loud enough to myself.
I can't say it enough to all.
If we're going to get out of the cave,
our ears and our heart must be attentive to the voice of God.
Look at verse 11 again.
And the Bible says, and he said, go forth,
God said.
And he said, go forth and stand upon the mountain before the Lord.
And behold, the Lord passed by
and a great strong wind with the mountains
and breaking pieces of rocks before the Lord.
But the Lord was not in the wind.
And after the wind and earthquake,
but the Lord was not in the earthquake.
And after the earthquake of fire,
but the Lord was not in the fire.
And after the fire is still a small voice.
It says in verse 13,
and it was so when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in the mantle
and went out and stood in the entering of the cave.
Now this is one of those scenes in the Bible I really, really,
really would have loved to have seen.
A wind so strong now it ripped rocks from the mountain.
It tore rocks off of them.
An earthquake that shook the mountain.
Now we find fire all over again.
Signs and wonders visible,
feelable.
If you're in that mountain you can feel God shaking every bit of these things.
A display of God's power.
But we find this statement,
God was not in the wind.
God was not in the earthquake.
God was not in the fire.
God was in something else.
And this grabbed me as I was studying it last night.
It was this something else
that got Elijah
from the back of the cave
to the entrance of the cave.
Look at this in verse number 13.
And it was so when Elijah heard it
that he wrapped his face in his mantle
and went out and stood in the entering
of the cave.

It was the voice of God that got him out of that
back of that thing and got him out to the front.
If we're going to get out of the cave,
we must be attentive to the voice of God.
Folks, I believe with all my heart that the Lord uses people to help people,
to encourage people,
to instruct people.
But I also understand when I look at the Bible,
when I look at life,
there are some places other people simply can't help.
There are some places that great signs don't work.
The only answer
is the still,
small voice of God.
That our hearts
and our ears are attentive
to the voice of the Lord.
But I want to be very, very careful right here, folks.
We must be people
who are discerning.
Because there are so many voices out there.
So many voices that are so loud.
So many voices that speak constantly,
non-stop.
We hear all of these things.
So how do I tell the difference?
What is the voice of God
and what is the voice of man?
How do I try the spirits?
How do I test these things?
Well, you'd be amazed.
Well, no, you wouldn't be amazed because some of you heard this hogwash too.
But the things that I've heard
in 21 years
of God told me to do this
and God has told me to do that and God is
leading me here and God is leading me there.
I'm going,
somebody spoke to you but it ain't God.
So how do we discern how we attended to the voice of God?
We tell it as a voice of God because we ask this question.
Is what I'm hearing
agree with what God
has already said?
So what I'm telling you,
the best way to hear the voice of God isn't to hide out in a cave somewhere,
not in your barn,

but it is to get into the Word of God and see what God has already said and God uses
the Spirit of God to the Word of God
for His still small voice to speak to the heart of man.
I love that scene with Mary.
Mary's there, she's back at the tomb,
distraught and despair.
Boy, there was one thing that changed her.
It wasn't just seeing the supposed gardener,
it was when the Lord Jesus Christ said Mary.
His voice,
but what He said had agreed with what He already said.
I'm conquering death.
Are you a cave dweller?
Do you resort to this place of defeat and lowliness
and despair?
Woe is me.
There's only me.
Understand,
the Lord
has no desire for you to live in that place.
And the first step of getting out of that place
is for your ears and your heart to be attentive to the voice of God.
That wasn't the only thing that got Him out of there.
Look at verse 15 and 16.
Oh, will get us out of there.
Folks,
God
has something
for Elijah to do.
Look at verse 15.
Let's look at verse 14.
And He said,
I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts because the children of Israel
have forsaken thy covenant,
thrown down thy altars and slain thy prophets with a sword and I,
even I only,
am left and they seek my life to take it away.
And the Lord said it to him,
Go,
return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus
and when thou comest anoint Hazel to be king over Syria and Jehu
the son of Nimshi shall thou anoint to be king over Israel and Elisha
the son of Shaphat of Abimehola shall thou anoint to be prophet in thy room
and it shall come to pass to him that escapeth the sword of Hazel
shall Jehu slay to him that escapeth the sword of Elijah shall Elisha slay.
Here's the reality is,
Elijah had been used

very mightily by the Lord.
Elijah had been extremely busy.
He'd been going where God sent him doing exactly what God had told him to do.
It reminded me of a quote I read not too long ago and some of us need to hear this.
It said,
we must beware of human reactions after holy exertions.
That may not strike anything with you
but buddy it does with me.
At times you can pour your heart out in song,
you can pour your heart out in a lesson,
you can pour your heart out teaching,
you can pour your heart out preaching,
you can pour your heart out witnessing,
you can pour your heart out serving.
And Dickie, this thing doesn't look like you thought it would look.
I mean, why didn't Ahab and Jezebel just repent?
Why didn't they cry out to God?
Because man's got a free will and most of them won't have it.
So here we find Elijah and this didn't work the way it was supposed to.
But God said, well I guess we're done with this situation now.
That's not what he said at all.
I believe Elijah would have been just fine with being done.
He had already said that.
There's been times in my life that I would have been just fine with being done.
I'm not mad at God.
I'm just done.
I'm just soon to go on my way.
But the fact is God was not done with him.
He had completed previous assignments but the Lord
had new ones and he could not complete them dwelling
in a cave.
I say that to say this folks.
God had something for every one of us to do and
we cannot do it dwelling in the cave of despair.
It's impossible.
I've just been picking on Jessica and Blake so much lately.
I just love seeing these couples that I married with children.
Blake you're not a preacher.
You got a lot to do my friend.
Your first minister is that woman sitting right next to you.
And then kids you've got something to do and you can't
do it being done spiritually done in a cave of despair.
There's so much for us to do.
There's people to love.
There's people to serve.
There's people to care for.
There's the glory that God named deserves out of

our life that we're walking the beauty of holiness.
All of these things.
There's something to be done at this church.
There's something to be done in life.
things for you to accomplish and the only way for you to accomplish those things is for you to get up out of there and get busy about what I've told you to do.
I've told you this plenty of times especially being here and at Pleasant Hill.
I don't want to make this all about preaching but I've been here.
I'm thankful for multiple reasons for Sunday night.
I don't want to get on a soapbox but I'm telling you what y'all if we ever get to the place that we honestly feel like that 20 minutes
of Bible study a week is enough to get us through a 168
hour week we've absolutely lost our minds.
I need to be preached to all I can be preached to.
I need to hear the word taught all I can hear taught.
I need to be sung to.
I need this as much as
19
really my first it ain't happened here yet and praise God I hope it don't happen but it happened on my first go around here I get over there after Sunday morning and get an Elijah fit
and be crying nearly done and go Lord if you
are I just like to be finished here take my life away from me
but you know what couldn't happen I could because I had to come back and do it again at five
and that's good for me
it's good for us
it's motivation
do you know what I can't stay there you can't stay there we can't stay there Ricky because there's too many things that need to be done you had a bench full this morning boy you're a lot more gray headed than
you was my first go around here the Lord is
you he has things for you to do he has things for all of us to do and we cannot get it done dwelling here in this cave
there's one last thing that got Elijah out that get us out and it's one of my favorite folks Elijah no matter what he thought
he was not
alone look at verse 18
yet verse 17
and it shall come to pass to him that escape the sword of Hazel shall Jehu slay and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal and every mouth which have not kissed them man man I love this statement how many times did Elijah say it's me it's just me it's only me and how easy it is to get overwhelmed to get alone
you feel like you're fighting uphill an unformidable phone and God says wait a minute wait a minute
I got an army

you ain't by yourself
you're not
I've got an entire
army that has not forsaken me I got seven thousand people that hasn't scarred their knees by bowing down to that false prophet they haven't kissed an out there are still people who are devoted to me devoted to me devoted to me church I want you to do something for just a minute just look around just look around Tammy I want you to look over there Tammy you look over here everybody just look around for just a minute can I tell you something y'all you ain't
looking they said no look around we ain't alone
none of us in here are alone
I told Randy we got to ride together I feel like I come back we're family now I love where I've been I love the churches that I've been
at but I feel like I connect here more than anywhere
I know
I am not alone I know
and you are not alone there are people here who will pray with you there are people here who will stand with you there are people here who are going to the same things that you're going through that were all in this thing together and praise God thank God we've got a God that's undefeated and God says
basically Elijah you're still on the winning side by the way
and it ain't just you
that's one of the purpose as a church
is to realize we're not alone
yea though it's heavy yea though it's dark
yea though it doesn't look like I thought it would look
and things aren't going the way I thought they would go
that God still sees me where I am
and he cares enough to speak to me where I am
personal
provision
it's a God that can shake the mountains
a God
that can rent rocks
but a God so intimate
that it just speak
and still small voice to the heart
so you're not alone
folks that will get us out of the cave
we got no business being there
listen to the voice of God
understand there's much left much left much left for me and you to do
praise God we're not at this alone
heavenly father I thank you for your word I thank you for your truth
Lord it is only by
fixing our eyes upon you
your strength your goodness

Lord our
experiences with you
your practice
of faithfulness in the past
your promise of your presence in the future
Lord will keep us from these places
Lord it will also get us out when we land in the places
Lord you are the provision
for our strength and most of all the Lord you the provision for our sin
this is too big for us
only the cross only the cross
only your cross
could supply what we need
the Lord and I thank you for it
praise your holy name
in Jesus name I pray amen let's stand