

## Newsletter 10

### “Have you ever been there and done that?”

**(I Kings 19:1-5, NIV)** *“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.” Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day’s journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.””*

It took a long time for me to learn, mostly caused by my own stubborn nature, that times of victory in the church are most always followed by low times of depression and despair.

Take the time to read Elijah’s story of victory on Mount Carmel, I Kings 18:1-46, what a tremendous victory he was able to accomplish in the name of God and by the power of God. All of us would probably admit there have been times when we would like to call down the fire of Heaven, but I am pretty sure that my timing would not have been the Lord’s.

For the most part everyone who serves the One True Living God has experienced times of great victory in this life. Maybe they are not as profound as that of Elijah, but great victories none the less. Then we enter times of depression and despair and we wonder what in the world is going on? Just like Elijah we start running for our life. We leave the people who can offer us the most comfort. We find a lonely place where no one else can find us or at least they wouldn’t think to look for us there. And after we have arrived we simply throw up our hands and tell God it would be better for us if we were dead. Then when God doesn’t answer our prayer for death immediately we go into a suspended state of depression wondering what in the world we have done to deserve such treatment from those we have helped.

If you are in the service of the King you are able to say, “I have been there and done that,” or “I am there right now and I don’t like the way I feel, but I don’t know what to do.”

Fact number one we sometimes forget: “Difficult times are a part of any successful work for the Lord.” If you don’t believe that is true will you please take the time to re-read the accounts of the crucifixion! The servants are not above the Master. Jesus told us that if we love Him then the world will hate us. Have you ever been around anyone who truly hated you? Well I have a good idea that our best interest was not their concern.

Their efforts were directed at making our life as miserable as they possibly could. Never forget who it was that had committed their lives and time to getting rid of Jesus. Do you remember who they were? It was the religious leaders of His day. Yes, the common people followed along, but it was the religious leaders who believed Jesus was the enemy.

People in power, people who are following a political agenda, people who have a godless agenda, people who do not know the Christ; all of these and more can make the most committed disciple want to sit under a tree and ask God to take us home. It is about as natural as anything I know.

Fact number two: “We can identify some of the things that drive us to depression and despair in the ministry.”

1. Our own lack of spiritual preparations...We have failed to prepare for battle and when the time comes we get whipped easily.
2. We aren't able to discern the signs of the times...Look around, people every where are struggling and those struggles will affect what we do.
3. The past is a tough road to hoe...Fighting entrenched ideas and traditions can be mind boggling and energy zapping.
4. The mindset of America is negative...Living a negative life about all that is good is so much easier than being positive.
5. Our own past can linger around and haunt us...We know what the Bible says about freedom in Christ, but we haven't learned how to live in that freedom.
6. Procrastination...We simply put off doing the things we need to do when we have then time and now we are under the gun and the pressure is debilitating.
7. We take ourselves way too seriously...Ministry is about Jesus!

We could list more but I think you can get the picture I am trying to paint. When these things or things like them take control of our lives we are going to look for a tree to sit under and unashamedly ask God to take our lives.

Fact number three: “God knows what we need and He will never leave us or forsake us.”

1. Stop where you are, turn around, and return to God.
2. Pray, pray, and then pray some more.
3. Allow God to handle the situation, He'll do a better job anyway.
4. Get in the Word now!
5. Witness to someone about Jesus – He still reigns!
6. God's Will won't take where His grace cannot keep you!

Sermon Series Idea: If it works for you please feel free to apply to your circumstances...

Title – “Running in the Right Direction”

1. "Run With Jesus" – Colossians 3:1-17
2. "Run the Race Marked out for You" – Hebrews 12:1-4
3. "Run from Sin" – Romans 6:1-14

Why do I keep on sinning?

- a. Failure to repent...
  - b. Refusing to repent...
  - c. People in whom I have confided have let me down...
  - d. No accountability...
  - e. Dishonesty in coming clean on all levels of life...
  - f. Staying too close to the source of my sins...
  - g. Convincing myself that God really doesn't know...
- 
4. "Run to Serve" – Acts 8:26-40
    - a. Listen to the Lord...
    - b. Fulfill the Great Commission...
    - c. Yield to the Holy Spirit's leading...
    - d. Run to the work...
    - e. Ask the right questions...
    - f. Rely on the word of God...

Title – "Keeping Your Head Above the Water"

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

- I. Live with the Lord...
- II. Lean on the Lord...
- III. Listen to the Lord...
- IV. Learn from the Lord...

Support Corner

One of the most difficult things for me is this life is to totally trust that the Lord not only knows my needs, but that He longs to provide all I need in this life. Just like you, when the economy is down, gas is high, the offerings are low, and the work just keeps growing I begin to wonder what in the world I am going to do! Why do I worry about what God already has planned? I told you that I am slow and stubborn. Those together can make for uncertain days. However, when I turn it over to the Lord He gently reminds me, He is in charge.

How can you be used by the Lord in this ministry? If God has laid it on your heart to help out preachers of the Gospel then Living Hope Ministry can use your support. Everything you give is tax deductible. Donna Faris is doing a marvelous job with our finances and I know she would be glad to answer any questions you might have about our work.

In advance I thank you for sharing with us in this vital work!

“Practical Steps to Help Make Ministry More Effective”

Before you chuck this article aside as for just those in located ministry please know that all of these suggestions will help no matter the work God has placed you in today.

1. Concentrate daily on the three keys of effective life in Christ.
  - a. Personal daily prayer...
  - b. Reading from God's Word daily...
  - c. Talk to people about Jesus daily...
2. Take control of your calendar.
  - a. Only have one calendar and keep it located on your working desk.
  - b. Learn how to say “no” to things that do not fit into the work you are doing.
  - c. Make sure you start each calendar year with days that are “x” out for your family that can only be interrupted by extreme emergencies.
  - d. Don't allow a loaded calendar to be your source of personal self-esteem.
  - e. Don't use busyness as an excuse for not doing what God has called you to do. Someone has well said, “If we are too busy to do what God wants us to do, then we are busier than God ever intended for us to be.”
3. Plan your preaching at least a quarter in advance. A better way is to plan the whole year.
4. Learn to close the door when it is time to study and prepare.
5. Learn how to tell people that your preparation time is very important and your definitely are busy.
6. Don't put off today what will become an emergency if you have to do it tomorrow.
7. Keep your commitments. If you cannot keep all of your commitments then stop making commitments. It looks bad on our character and our integrity with we fail to do what we say we are going to do.

8. Don't use "let's do lunch" as an excuse to get away from someone you don't want to talk with or be around.
9. Plan your visitation around the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He knows best where we need to go and who is ready to talk about Jesus.
10. Don't ignore the gentle promptings of the Holy Spirit. When He tells you to do something that is the best time to get the job done.