

“God’s Remnant”
1 Kings 19:15-18
(Preached at Trinity, September 5, 2021)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 18** we witnessed the almighty power of God as Baal was shown to be a figment wrought in the corrupted imaginations of men. The prophets of Baal failed in their efforts to call forth Baal and they were executed.
 - A. The unmistakable display of God’s power brought Israel to tremble at His presence. They reaffirmed their commitment to God. Elijah would have been hopeful that Israel had finally returned to their covenant relationship with God, but it was a tentative hope. Israel’s history was marked by broken promises.
1 Kings 18:39 NAU - "When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God."
 - B. When Ahab arrived home he called Jezebel and told her all that had transpired between Elijah and her prophets.
We can see the depraved heart of Ahab. He was present for the entire scene on Mount Carmel, and yet he says nothing about what God had done. He only spoke of what Elijah had done.
1 Kings 19:1 NAU - "Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword."
 - C. We can also see the depraved heart of Jezebel. She was consumed by her wickedness and hatred of God. You would expect her to tremble before God. Instead, she set her heart on the execution of God’s prophet.
2. When Elijah saw this he fled for his life. He was despondent, not out of fear for his life. He had proven himself bold and courageous. He was despondent because of his holy passion for Israel. He deeply cared for his people. He grieved because he had been no more successful as a prophet than his fathers before him.
3. Elijah complained before God,
1 Kings 19:10 NAU - "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."
4. God ordered Elijah to a cave on Mount Horeb and there spoke with him. God renewed Elijah’s mission and ordered him to anoint Hazael king over Aram, Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha as his successor.
1 Kings 19:15 NAU - "The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus"
5. And then God gave Elijah the most encouraging news. Elijah complained that he was alone in his worship of God, alone in faithfully serving God. God corrects his faulty conclusion:

1 Kings 19:18 NAU - "Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him."

6. God has always had a faithful remnant serving Him.

I. God's people have always been in the minority – a holy remnant

A. There are few in any given age who believe and serve God

1. Jesus taught this

Matthew 7:13-14 NAU - "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

2. By the time of the flood the number of the righteous was reduced to a tiny remnant – Noah and his family.

Genesis 6:5-8 NAU - "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶ The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷ The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."

a. Only 8 were saved from the flood

b. This is in spite of the righteous preaching of Noah

2 Peter 2:5 NAU - "and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;"

B. The smallness of the remnant would continue to be demonstrated

1. Of the multitude that was delivered from Egypt only a small remnant entered into Canaan

2. God sent Elijah to the nation of Israel. They witnessed many miracles.

a. They saw God's victory over the prophets of Baal

b. Elijah prayed and rain came ending a three-year drought

c. In spite of this the nation remained unrepentant – Jezebel sent to have Elijah arrested. Jezebel said to Elijah:

1 Kings 19:2 NAU - "Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

d. Elijah falls beneath a juniper tree discouraged before God requesting that he might die. He cries out:

1 Kings 19:4 NAU - "O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

1 Kings 19:10 NAU - "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

- e. God answers Elijah with the truth that seems to have been consistent throughout the ages
1 Kings 19:18 NAU - "Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him."
- C. History is covered with the blood of martyrs who were a remnant in a mass of men who hate God – often religious men
 - 1. The same holds true today
 There are still many religious men
 - a. Remember, Cain was a religious man – He brought an offering to God
 - b. The Israelites in the wilderness were religious – they even fashioned a golden calf.
 - c. The Israelites of Elijah’s day were religious. They faithfully worshipped Baal.
 - 2. There are few today who truly love and serve Christ. There are few who have not bowed the knee to the gods of this age. There are few whose lives are consistent with their profession.
- II. But God will always have a holy remnant. The Jezebel’s of the earth cannot stop it.
 - A. Paul taught this in his Epistle to the Romans
Romans 11:1-5 NAU - "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about* Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³ "Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, they have torn down Thine altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." ⁴ But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." ⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God’s* gracious choice."
 - 1. In one sense this is referring to national Israel. Only a remnant shall be saved. But in a broader sense all of God’s people, all of true Israel are but a remnant from among rebellious humanity. Only a remnant shall be saved.
 - 2. God maintains a remnant of holy people.
 - a. Lot was one righteous man in a city of evil.
2 Peter 2:7-9 NAU - "He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men ⁸ (for by what he saw and heard *that* righteous man, while living among them, felt *his* righteous soul tormented day after day by *their* lawless deeds), ⁹ *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,"
 God said He would have spared Sodom if there would have been ten righteous men.

- b. Joseph was sold by his brothers and taken into Egypt. One righteous man in a pagan land. He continued walking with God refusing to compromise his righteousness. When tempted by Potiphar's wicked wife Joseph cried out:
Genesis 39:9 NAU - "How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"
- c. Moses chose faithfulness to God rather than enjoy all the riches of Egypt.
Hebrews 11:24-26 NAU - "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward."
Later, Moses continued faithfully serving God even while the people continually murmured and complained against God.
Numbers 11:11 NAU - "Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all this people on me?"
- d. During the captivity period young men like Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to compromise their integrity to the prevailing wickedness around them.
3. God has always had a faithful remnant. This is Paul point in **Verse 27** as he quotes from Isaiah.
Romans 9:27 NAU- "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;"
4. This has always been the consistent condition upon this earth. The wicked have always outnumbered the righteous.
The righteous have always been few in number, standing firm upon the promises of God seeking to glorify Him upon the earth.

II. As Christians we are a part of God's remnant

- A. We are a great minority upon this earth.
1. We are called upon to be holy, set apart
2 Corinthians 6:15-18 NAS - "Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹⁷ "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. ¹⁸ "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty."

2. This will often bring conflict.
Matthew 10:34-38 NAS - "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. ³⁷ "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

B. God has saved us that we might be holy

Ephesians 1:4 NAU - "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him."

1. We must always strive for holiness. And we must continue to stand apart as God's holy remnant.
Titus 2:14 NAU - "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."
2. Never forget that if there would have been 10 righteous men in Sodom God would have preserved the city. Are you one of ten righteous in our generation?

Conclusion:

1. The truth of God's remnant is a great source of encouragement for us. When things look bad, when it seems that no one is following Christ remember God has His faithful serving Him.
2. Remember, the church is a remnant upon the earth and it marches forth with great power. The gates of hell will not prevail against it.
3. We may be hated and despised, but we will not be stopped.