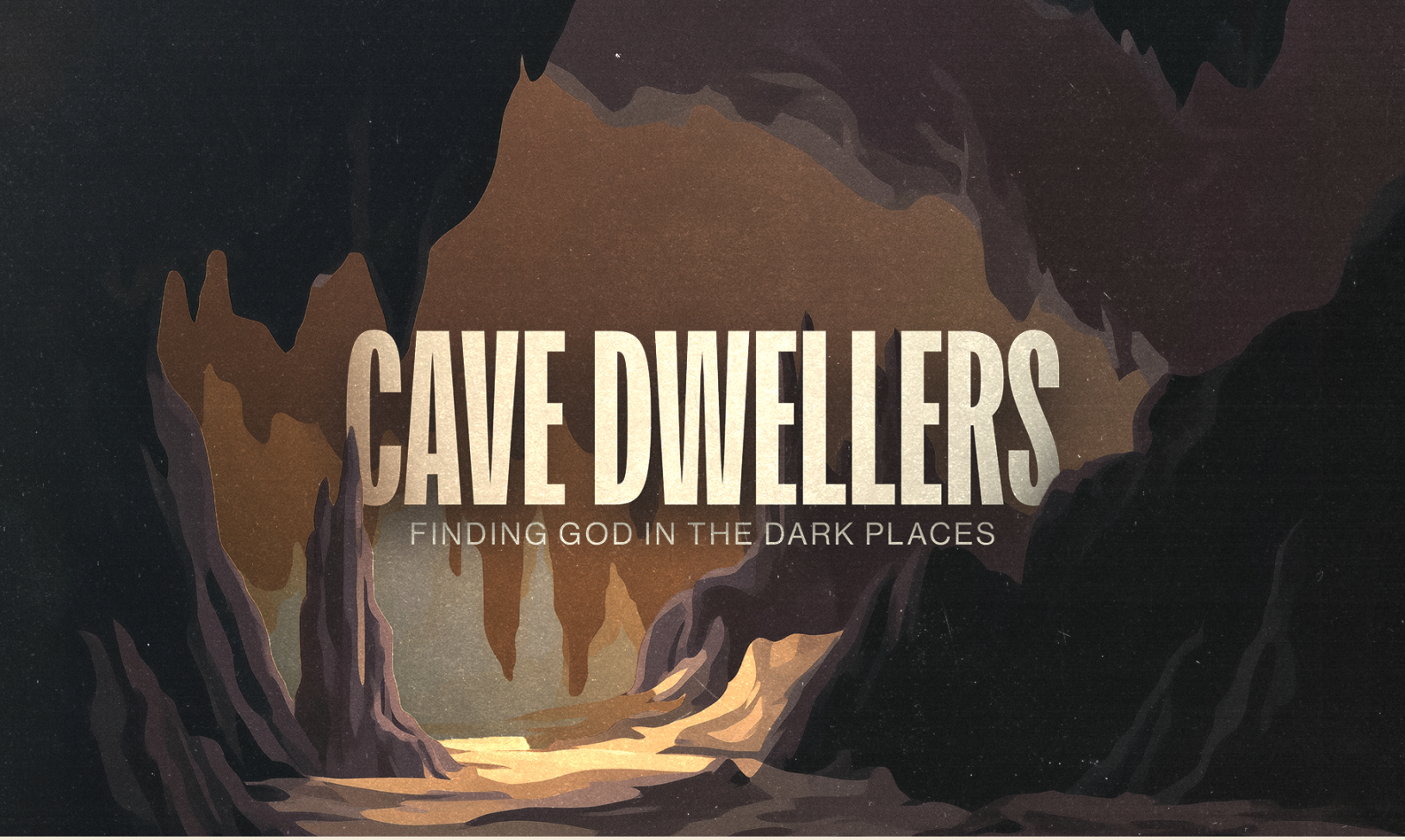


WEEK TWO · PASTOR TRAE

The Cave of Failure

1 Kings 19:1–21

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL · SMALL GROUP GUIDE

5-DAY DEVOTIONAL

When God Meets You in the Cave

DAY 1 When the Brook Dries Up

READING · 1 KINGS 17:1–16

Elijah learned to trust God at the brook Cherith, where ravens brought his daily provision. But the brook eventually dried up. A dried brook does not mean God has run out of provision. It often means He is preparing to provide in a new way. Many believers find themselves at a dried-up place, where what once sustained them no longer flows. God did not abandon Elijah at that brook, and He will not abandon you in your drought. His faithfulness is not tied to a single source. Trust the Provider, not the provision.

REFLECTION

What dried-up brook in your life has caused you to question God's provision?

TRY THIS WEEK

Write down three ways God has provided for you in the past. Let that list become an act of remembrance and faith today.

DAY 2 The Weight of Exhaustion

READING · 1 KINGS 19:1–8

Before God corrected Elijah's perspective, He addressed his physical condition. An angel touched him, provided food and water, and allowed him to rest. Then it happened again. God met him in his exhaustion with patience and care, not rebuke. This is the character of a God who sees not only our spiritual state but our human frailty. Some of us have been running so long that we cannot think clearly, pray honestly, or see hope accurately. God's answer to Elijah's exhaustion was not a sermon. It was bread, water, and rest. Receive His care today.

REFLECTION

Are you demanding more from yourself than you are receiving from God?

TRY THIS WEEK

Set aside intentional time today for rest and stillness. Treat it not as laziness but as obedience to a God who cares for your whole person.

DAY 3 The Echo Chamber of the Cave

READING · 1 KINGS 19:9–14; PSALM 46:1–11

Elijah repeated the same complaint twice, and each time God did not validate the distorted conclusion buried within it. The cave had become an echo chamber. His feelings were real, but they were not entirely true. He believed he was the only one left, yet 7,000 had not bowed to Baal. Discouragement narrows our vision. Psalm 46 reminds us to be still and know that God is God, not because the threats are gone, but because He is greater than all of them. The whisper of God carries as much authority as the earthquake. Listen for it.

REFLECTION

What repeated thought or conclusion have you been rehearsing that needs to be examined against the truth of God's Word?

TRY THIS WEEK

Identify one lie you have been telling yourself in a season of discouragement. Find one Scripture that directly contradicts it and write it somewhere visible.

DAY 4 God's Voice in the Quiet

READING · 1 KINGS 19:11–13; JOHN 10:1–5, 27

God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. He was in the still, small voice, the low whisper. This was not an accident. God was showing Elijah, and showing us, that His presence is not always announced with spectacle. Jesus said His sheep know His voice. Knowing His voice requires spending time in His Word, in prayer, and in stillness. If we only seek God in dramatic moments, we will miss the quiet, steady guidance He offers every day. His whisper is not a lesser form of His presence. It is an invitation to draw near.

REFLECTION

When did you last slow down long enough to listen for God's voice rather than simply speaking to Him?

TRY THIS WEEK

Spend ten minutes today in complete silence after reading Scripture. Do not fill the time with requests. Simply listen and allow God's Word to settle into your heart.

DAY 5 There Is Someone Waiting Beyond the Cave

READING · 1 KINGS 19:15–21; ISAIAH 43:1–3

God did not leave Elijah in the cave. He gave him an assignment, a direction, and a reminder that the story was far larger than Elijah's part in it. There were people to anoint, a successor to raise up, and 7,000 faithful souls Elijah did not know existed. The cave was never the end. Isaiah 43 declares that God calls each of His people by name, and when they pass through deep and difficult places, He is with them. You are not too far gone. You are not a failure beyond recovery. There is someone waiting for you beyond the cave. Answer the call.

REFLECTION

What assignment, relationship, or act of obedience have you been avoiding because the cave has felt more familiar than the mission?

TRY THIS WEEK

Take one concrete step today toward something God has been calling you to do. It does not have to be large. Obedience begins with a single step out of the cave and into the light.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

The Cave of Failure

OPENING PRAYER & ICE BREAKER

> *Open your time together in prayer, asking God to meet honestly anyone who has been hiding in a cave of failure or discouragement.*

Ice Breaker: Without going into too much detail, describe a season of your life that felt like a cave, a place of withdrawal, discouragement, or isolation. What first sent you there?

SERMON OVERVIEW

Pastor Trae walked through the story of Elijah, who went from one of the greatest spiritual victories in Scripture to hiding in a cave, exhausted and convinced he was finished. Through his story we see how failure and discouragement can drive us into isolation, and how God meets us in those dark places not to leave us there, but to restore us and send us forward.

KEY SCRIPTURE · 1 KINGS 19:9

There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section 1 · When Discouragement Drives You Into the Cave

1. Pastor Trae said, "You can sit in a church service and still be living in a cave." What do you think that looks like in real life? Have you ever experienced it?
2. Elijah went from calling down fire from heaven to running for his life and asking God to take it. What does that tell you about the emotional and spiritual vulnerability of even the most faithful people?
3. "Yesterday's victory does not remove today's need for God." Why do we sometimes assume past spiritual experiences should protect us from future difficulty? What is the danger in thinking that way?

4 “What has become so large in your thinking that you have stopped remembering God's faithfulness?” What tends to crowd out your memory of what God has done?

Section 2 · When Exhaustion Leaves You Empty

1 Before God addressed Elijah's theology or perspective, He addressed his physical condition: rest and food. What does that reveal about how God views the connection between our physical state and our spiritual wellbeing?

2 “Some of us keep demanding another mile from ourselves while we are refusing to stop for what sustains us.” Is that true of anyone right now? What does it look like practically to receive God's care rather than push through it?

3 The angel told Elijah the journey ahead was too great for him, but then provided exactly what he needed for it. How does that speak to a situation you are facing that feels too great for you?

Section 3 · When the Cave Distorts Your Perspective

1 Elijah said twice, “I alone am left,” yet 7,000 had not bowed to Baal. Pastor Trae described the cave as an echo chamber where our own conclusions come back amplified. What conclusions or internal voices tend to echo in your own cave?

2 God was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. He was in the still, small voice. Why are we sometimes more drawn to dramatic displays and less attentive to the quiet voice of God? What makes it hard to be still?

3 “Feelings are not always true. They may be real, but they are not always reliable.” How do you discern the difference between a legitimate emotion and a conclusion that needs to be corrected by truth? What role does Scripture play in that?

Section 4 · When God Calls You Forward

1 God responded to Elijah's complaint not by explaining every painful moment, but by giving him an assignment, something to do next. Why do you think action and purpose are part of how God restores discouraged people?

2 “You are responsible for your obedience, but you cannot control every result.” Where are you currently carrying something that belongs to God rather than to you? What would it look like to surrender it?

3 There were people waiting for Elijah beyond the cave, both people to serve alongside and people who needed what he carried. Who might be waiting for you beyond the cave you are in right now?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Failure is something that can happen to you, but it was never meant to become the place where you live.
- ✓ Great discouragement often follows times of great encouragement, and that pattern does not mean God has abandoned you.
- ✓ God addresses your physical and emotional condition before correcting your perspective. He cares for the whole person.
- ✓ The cave distorts your view. What feels permanent and total may be incomplete. God sees more than you can see from inside the cave.
- ✓ God speaks in whispers as well as in wind, earthquake, and fire. Learning to recognize His voice in the quiet is essential.
- ✓ God still has an assignment for you. His purposes are larger than your part in them, but your part still matters.
- ✓ You are not alone. There are people waiting for you beyond the cave.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose one or more to put into practice before your group meets again:

Option 1 Remember His Faithfulness

Set aside time this week to write down specific moments when God came through for you. Read that list when discouragement begins to narrow your perspective.

Option 2 Receive His Care

Identify one area where you have been pushing past your limits, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Take one concrete step this week to rest and be replenished rather than pushing through.

Option 3 Listen for His Voice

Build a period of intentional silence into your week. Put aside noise, screens, and busyness. Ask God to speak, and then wait. Journal what comes to mind.

Option 4 Check Your Conclusions

Take one of the repeated thoughts echoing in your cave and bring it to Scripture. Ask someone you trust to help you examine whether that conclusion is actually true.

Option 5 Take One Step Forward

Ask God in prayer this week, “What is the next thing you have for me to do?” Write down what comes to you, and take one obedient step in that direction.

Option 6 Reach Toward Community

If you have been withdrawing, reach out to one person this week, not to perform or appear strong, but simply to be known. The cave loses its power when we stop isolating.

CLOSING PRAYER FOCUS

- Remind each person of His faithfulness in their specific story.
- Provide rest and renewal for the exhausted.
- Correct distorted perspectives with the truth of His Word.
- Make His still, small voice clearly heard.
- Give each person a clear sense of purpose and next step.

> *A disappointed outcome does not erase God's faithfulness. You cannot judge the whole story from one difficult chapter.*
>
> PASTOR TRAE