



THE SUNDAY MESSAGE


THE CAVE

sunday 15 august

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps.

These notes provide some ideas to reflect upon about what we are to achieve in this life.

When you think of a cave what image and emotion comes to your mind first?

 **Genesis 19:30; 23:19; 1 Samuel 13:6**


If you were born in NZ you might think of glow-worms, giant wetas (large creepy insects) or potholers (people who love tight dark caves). If you come from another country you might think of caves as places bears and other wild animals or bandits hide. Kids might think of caves as places to find hidden treasure or as an exciting place to hide. In Biblical times in Israel caves numbered in the many thousands because the soft limestone rock was easily shaped by water flows to form natural caves. They were used as places to live 2,000+ years BC. They were used as places to hide from enemies or hide from God. They were used to bury people. In the Bible we come across person after person who encountered God in the cave (sometimes in the Bible called 'clefts').

Is there a place in your life which is like a cave where you can be alone?

 **1 Kings 19:1-18**

Elijah hid in a cave to escape his enemy and to escape the massive pressure he was under. He was a special man, one who was faithful to God and faith-filled. In a time of despair after years of miracles and proclaiming the voice of God to a rebellious people, who were determined not to listen, he collapsed. In the cave God came and ministered to him and showed Elijah how evil would soon be destroyed and how he could pass on a legacy to the next generation through Elisha. It is a rare person who hasn't needed to find a cave to get away and meet God before setting out into life once again. Sadly many people never stop to find a place like a cave so they continue until they crash or dry up and die with their dream trapped inside them.

Will I stop and find a 'cave' to meet God? What would I be prepared to pay?

 Look at **Matthew 14:3-23** (focus upon v13 & 23 this came after news of his cousin's execution) and **1 Samuel 16:11-13**

Are you ever alone for a whole day or is life so busy and demanding there is no time for such a day? Imagine a place where you had no phone, no texts, no TV, no internet and no one to talk with except God. What's the worst that could happen if you found such a place? Nothing. That's right nothing might happen – not much of a risk. What is the best thing that could happen? You might hear from God. You might have an experience which energises you. You might experience His peace and presence. David found God's comfort in caves even though he wasn't there by his own choice. Jesus found strength when he was alone with His Father. Maybe we were always intended to have such days periodically so that we are ready to listen.

NEXT STEPS

You might be in a cave now, seeking refuge from trials or because life is unbearably hard. You might want to read **Psalms 57** and to listen to the message from this Sunday once again. The first step is to strengthen yourself in the Lord like David did (**1 Samuel 3:6**). The second step is to find another believer who is in a strong and spiritually healthy place to guide you out of danger – they will have the energy and wisdom to help. The third step is to ask the Holy Spirit to help you change and to fill you so you can overcome the trial with His power.

Or you might be going through life quite well or things are okay but you have been on a plateau for a while. Why not take a day away from the land of normal and find a place to be alone with God, the Bible, maybe one favourite music CD, a note pad and pen. Switch off the phone, leave the laptop behind. Talk and listen. He just loves to spend time with you.

Noise

- Why is silence so hard to deal with?
- Do I ever surround myself with noise intentionally?
- Is there such a thing as visual noise?
- Does all the noise in our lives make it hard to hear God?
- When was the last time I spent some time in silence?
- **Search your hearts and be silent** (Psalm 4:4)
- Have I spent the same amount of time worrying and talking about my difficult, confusing situations as I have spent in silence, listening to what God might have to say?
- Why is talking so much easier than listening?
- Do I sometimes avoid silence because I'm afraid of what God might actually have to say to me?
- Does my schedule, my time, my life look like that of a person who wants to hear God's voice?
- When was the last time I was in a solitary place?
- Maybe the healing and guidance we desperately need is not going to come from one more meeting or sermon or self-help book but from simply listening for the voice of God.

Some of the questions & thoughts from the 11 minute Nooma DVD Noise by Rob Bell. Available at the [Elim Bookstore](#).