

# I Alone Am Left

by Anton Bosch

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*The sermon explores the theme of loneliness and faithfulness in the lives of biblical figures, encouraging believers to find strength in God's promise amidst rejection and discouragement.*

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 31:6, 1 Kings 19:14, Isaiah 53:3, Matthew 11:3, John 6:68, John 15:20, Philippians 2:21, Hebrews 13:5, 1 Peter 4:13

**Topics:** "Faithfulness To God", "Persevering In Trials"

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## Description

Anton Bosch preaches about the common experience of despair and loneliness faced by many men of God throughout the Bible, including Elijah, Moses, Job, the prophets, John the Baptist, Paul, and even Jesus. He emphasizes that true Christians and leaders are not measured by popularity but by faithfulness to God, as demonstrated by the examples of Noah, the Israelites, and the small number of faithful individuals in various situations. Bosch encourages believers to find comfort in the promise of God's presence and faithfulness, even in times of discouragement, disappointment, and abandonment.

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## Transcript

I have often heard preachers speak disdainfully about Elijah's depression when he felt that he was the only one left of those who were faithful to the Lord. (1Kings 19:14). Most of these preachers seem to have great difficulty having any sympathy for a man who, a few days before, had called fire down from heaven and who was now fleeing from a woman. Those who look down their noses at this discouraged and dejected prophet seem to pride themselves in their self-sufficiency and popularity. They have obviously never been in the hole where this great man of God found himself. They think that that makes them superior to a man who so acutely felt the hurt of rejection and loneliness.

What they seem to forget is that Elijah was not unique in his despair and loneliness. Almost every man of God found themselves in a similar state of mind. Moses fled to the back side of the desert and spent 40 years looking after a bunch of wayward sheep until all his hopes and dreams of greatness and destiny had died. Can you imagine the fears, doubts and frustrations that Moses had to cope with as he had to come to terms with his lost privilege, and the apparent purposelessness of his existence as a nomad?

Job openly vented his frustrations in chapter after chapter of complaint after losing everything except a wife who berated him for his misfortune and three "friends" who accused him of all sorts of imaginary sins. As you read through the prophets of the Old Testament, you find that every single one of them felt the pain of loneliness and of hopelessness as they watched everyone around them forsake the Living God for

dumb idols. Not one of these men was popular and many of them were imprisoned by the king and falsely accused by the hordes of false prophets of the time. Many of them were forbidden to preach and thus resorted to writing their prophecies down.

The New Testament opens with the account of John the Baptist who boldly announced Jesus as the Messiah. Yet, soon after, he is thrown into prison where his hope and faith slowly ebbed away until he even questioned whether Jesus was indeed the Promised One. (Matthew 11:3). At the end of Paul's ministry he looked around and discovered that he and Timothy were the only ones of the many preachers who were likeminded and that all the rest were seeking their own interests. (Philippians 2:21). After one of his hearings in Rome he seems to feel the same as Elijah did when he said: "At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. ■May it not be charged against them." (2Timothy 4:16). The last prophets in the Bible were no different. John was banished and alone on Patmos and the final two prophets will be rejected and killed on the streets of Jerusalem.

Even Jesus was not immune to the pain of rejection. One day thousands were following Him and enjoying the free meals he was providing. A few days later he was preaching in Capernaum when people began to turn their backs on Him and forsake Him until He seemed to be left with only the Twelve. I can imagine the discouragement in His voice as He turned to them and asked "Do you also want to go away?" (John 6:68). Can you begin to understand the disappointment and abandonment in His eye as He turned to look at Peter who three times denied that he even knew Jesus? As He hung on the Cross, almost everyone forsook Him and finally, even His Father turned His back on Him.

Elijah's experience was not unique; it was common to every man of God throughout the Bible. And it is no different today. Those who will stand for, and speak the truth, are not popular but are often slandered, rejected and pitied. Jesus said it would be so. "A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. ■If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But ■all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me." (John 15:20,21)

So when preachers try to make light of the despondency and despair that many of us feel, they are simply declaring that they are not following in the footsteps of the One Who was "despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." (Isaiah 53:3). Don't allow them to get to you. When the accuser of the brethren tries to discourage you because you are not popular and lays a guilt trip on you, rejoice because you are found worthy to be made a partaker of His sufferings. (1Peter 4:13).

It is in the darkness and emptiness of discouragement, disappointment and abandonment, that we truly discover that Friend Who sticks closer than a brother. When we look around and see people falling away and turning aside one by one, may we be encouraged by His promise: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

True Christians and true Christian leaders are not politicians whose success is measured by their popularity. We should never allow this worldly mindset cause us to feel that we have failed just because the crowds don't embrace us. Our success is measured by One alone and He is not looking for those who are most popular but for those who are most faithful. One of the curses that has come upon the church today, is the view that a preacher or a church can be measured by its size and popularity. This was never God's measure. Noah was one in a whole world. Only two out of 600,000 Israelites entered the Promised Land. Of the thousands of Judah who were in Babylon, only three did not bow before the golden image.

Jesus' earthly ministry produced only 120 in the upper room and Paul and Timothy were the only two of that generation whose ministry did not center on themselves. It is no different today. Do you want everyone to think you are wonderful and thus be rejected by Him who called you, or do you want to discover intimate fellowship with the Fourth Man in the furnace?

I know it is not easy and it is never comfortable when for the umpteenth time someone turns away from you. But the Lord is faithful and as Elijah cried to the Lord, the Lord met with Him. The Lord also assured Elijah, as He does us, that there are others who have also remained faithful and that there will be those who will carry the work forward after we pass on. (1Kings 19:16).

Be strong and of good courage... for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

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