# I Will Lift Up My Eyes

*By* **Slavik Miller**

We are all living in challenging times, and yet God is with us throughout the journey. It is important to be aware of the circumstances around us, but to "manage our reality," by trusting in God. We don't have direct control over what's happening in our nations and beyond, but we do have control over how we react, *what we focus on*, and how we guard our heart.

Our faith is tested when life is difficult, not when it's easy. Yet when the Lord is part of the picture, we can move from a state of survival to growth, from hopelessness to hope.

We must ask, "*What am I focusing on?*" and be open to changing our perspective. Am I seeing the challenge through God's eyes? If I am only aware of what is in front of me, I miss God. That's why it's important to "zoom out," and see things from His point of view. The moment I choose to look to the God above me, , more than the problem in front of me, I build my faith.

"*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV)

We place at His feet the things that currently do not make sense, and the trials we don't want to pass through, knowing that He is in control.

"*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*" (Romans 8:28)

## Elijah and David - Flesh and Blood Like Us

Let's learn how God helped two of our forefathers in the faith emerge victorious from great difficulties. After Elijah killed the prophets of the false god, Queen Jezebel threatened to kill him. In spite of the sweeping victory on Mt. Carmel, Elijah became filled with terror and fled south.

"*... he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' So he said, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.'*" (1 Kings 19:9-10)

- In spite of his recent success, Elijah allowed fear and emotions to dictate his path.
- He forgot God, forgot his call to serve, and ran away.
- Elijah felt abandoned and alone. Sometimes you and I may feel the same, longing to leave everything behind. Elijah hid himself in a cave. In our case, the cave might be an addiction, depression, or enforced isolation. In any case, God will ask, "What are you doing here?"
- With this question, God compelled Elijah to "zoom out," return to his calling and fellowship.

Have you too felt alone with your difficulty – in spite of having family, friends, community? The lie of the enemy says that we are alone. God reminded Elijah that he was not alone. He told Elijah of seven thousand who had not bent the knee to false gods. There were and are other believers!

King David is another example of a man who learned to keep his eyes on the Lord and not on circumstances. It must have been an exciting surprise for David as a youth, when Samuel came to anoint him king of Israel. However the path to his coronation involved many trials and took many years.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 3

- Time is a tool in God's hands; God is in no hurry, and so this is not wasted time. In David's life, God used those years to further shape and build his character.
- David's confidence came to be in God and not in circumstances.
- David had to change his focus from what was in front of his eyes, to what God had promised; reminding himself that God fulfills His promises. Throughout rejection, loss and tragedy, David poured all that he learned and experienced into the psalms that have inspired generations and still encourage us today.

Where do you find yourself in this story? Can you proclaim with me now, what David proclaimed in a challenging time?

***"I would surely have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living... Hope in the Lord! Be strong! Let your heart take courage! Hope in the Lord!"***
*(Psalm 27:13-14)*

## Let's apply this message in our lives.

How can we lift our eyes to the Lord in the present reality?

1. Spend time in His Word to remember His promises. David was almost killed multiple times, but he knew that his life was in God's hands (Luke 12:7).

2. Spend time in prayer before God. Surrender to Him all that burdens your heart (Philippians 4:6).

3. Be locally connected to other believers in a faith community. Realizing that he was not alone helped Elijah through his crisis.

4. Encourage others by sharing what God has done in your life. Remind yourself. He was faithful in the past and will continue to be.

By the Lord's grace I encourage us to focus on Him. Continue running the race. Even if we stumble and fail, let's not run and hide in a cave, but help each other onward towards all that He has promised.

*"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)