

# Hope in Hard Times

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[ 0 : 00 ] Kevin, thank you for blessing my soul.

I woke up at 3 o'clock this morning, and I did not have any voice whatsoever. And my first impulse was to call Brian and say, Brian, you need to get a sermon ready.

And then I got a mental image of what Brian's face would look like in that moment, and God softened my heart.

And then I realized I really could not say anything. Why should I call Brian? He can't hear me. God works things out.

It is good to be with you today. I want to talk for just a second how we respond to certain words. If I say Trump, some people respond this way, and some people respond that way.

[ 1 : 15 ] If I say Biden, some people respond this way, some people respond that way. Either name you say, somebody's going to respond, right? If I say China, men get an angry look on their faces because men like their trucks, their pickups.

And China wouldn't give us those chips. And the price of pickups went up so high, and they're not coming down, and now we can't afford them. They get angry.

If you talk to an auto parts person and want to order a part, they say, don't get it from China. It won't last. We bought some LEDs for our house. Very reasonably priced.

10,000 hours guaranteed. Two of them didn't last two weeks. Our pastor's down in Peru. I was down there a few years ago. I was getting out of one of those cars, and my foot hit that piece of trim there at the foot.

It just fell right out on the ground. I was embarrassed. I got out, picked it up, and handed it to the driver. And I was apologizing profusely.

[ 2 : 27 ] I am so sorry. He looked at me with this bewildered look. He started laughing. Don't worry about it. It's made in China.

It's a piece of junk. Parts fall off all the time. You say clean air. Everybody wants clean air. Our government is working toward clean air.

We've only got 217 power plants that are run by coal now. 217. And they're well regulated and they're very clean. China says they're cleaning theirs up.

But instead of 217, they've got 1,142 coal fire power plants. And they're not regulated. But they say, we're working on it.

We're working on it. Right now, they've got 252 more power plants fueled by coal. Either being built or the permits already being issued.

[ 3 : 27 ] You say COVID. A few years ago, nobody had the flu. Now everybody's got it. Don't worry.

I don't have COVID. I've been tested repeatedly. How does this come on? Oh, by the way, if you ask anybody about the direction of America, nobody's optimistic.

Right? You know the one thing I have not heard from anyone? I am excited about what God is doing in America today.

I have not heard one person say that. But I want to tell you, I am excited about what God is doing in America today. Because I think God is doing some great things in America in this very hour.

And we need to open our eyes and see it. Just a few weeks ago, we had a beautiful young couple back there. They came up. It was Alex and Ashley Edwards. They had Brooklyn, their daughter, and Parker, their son.

[ 4 : 36 ] And they came up to dedicate that young man. And our pastor took that young man. And he walked back there, carrying that young man, talking, and walked all around. And every one of us did the same thing.

We sat on pins and needles, wondering if that boy was going to cry. Right? Every one of us. And the parents held their breath. And there were some people here who were thinking, I'm happy for them.

They look like great parents. That boy did not cry. It's obvious he's being raised in the admonition of the Lord. But I'm glad it's them and not me.

I wouldn't want to try to raise a child in this day and age. It's not a good time to raise a child. Friend, I want to tell you. It's a great time to raise a child.

It is a wonderful time to raise a child. Let me give you a quote. Our youth love luxury. They had bad manners and despised authority.

[ 5 : 43 ] They showed disrespect for their elders and loved to chatter instead of exercise. Young people are now tyrants. Some people think that could have been written yesterday.

It was written 2,400 years ago by Socrates. And it's been repeated every generation since then. This young couple came up.

They have a child. It is a great time for them to have a child because we just don't know our history.

If there was ever a bad time, ever a bad time not to have a child, it was when Moses was born.

The scriptures say in Hebrews 11, 23, and we're going to look at this passage several times. By faith, Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born because they saw he was no ordinary child and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

Why was it a bad time? Well, first of all, they were being crushed by the lash of slavery under the Egyptians. Why? Two reasons. Why? Profit.

[ 6 : 56 ] Greed. The Egyptians' economy was built on the backbone of slavery. The Egyptians had a very good lifestyle. They were well-to-do.

But it was built on the backbone of slavery. In Exodus 1-11, so they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Python and Ramses as store cities for Pharaoh.

Now, think about it just a moment. They did all the work. The Egyptians prospered. The Egyptians prospered. And then along comes Moses, the ten plagues, the death angel passes over.

They say, get out of our country. And so, the Israelites leave. The Israelites leave. But Pharaoh goes after them. Do you know why? Why did Pharaoh pursue the Jews after they left?

The Bible is very plain about it. The Bible is very plain about it. In Exodus 14-5, when the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, what have we done?

[ 7 : 58 ] We have let the Israelites go. And have lost their services. Our standard of living is going to go down now.

We can't have this. We've got to go and get them. There's another reason that it was a bad time to be born. And that was prejudiced. Now, the Egyptians were not prejudiced against their Jews.

But they were extremely prejudiced against them for another reason. They said, when Joseph brought his family down, we'll give you a nice place to live.

We'll give you the land of Goshen. It's an ideal part. It's the best part of Egypt. It would be ideal for you. You can go and live in Goshen, and it's a great place to live.

But it will not be in our communities. We will not associate with you. Joseph told his family when they came down, when the Pharaoh asked you what you do for a living, this is what you ought to answer.

[ 9 : 08 ] It's in Genesis 46-34. You should answer, your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on. Just as our fathers did. Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen for all shepherds.

All shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians. Have you ever thought about the skill set that a shepherd had? They had to stay up late at night.

They had to be able to count. They had to be brave enough to fight a wild animal. They had to be strong enough to carry a sheep or lamb that was injured.

And they had to be nimble enough to get up and down those cliffs. That was it. But while I was in the land of Goshen, and a great land for raising a sheep because it was delta land and lots of grass, they flourished.

They grew in numbers and numbers and numbers. So much so that Pharaoh decided that every male baby born to the Hebrews had to be thrown into the Nile River and drown.

[10:29] But, Hebrews 11, 23 again, by faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born because they saw he was no ordinary child and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

Do you know how important those words were? We've heard it twice already. We're going to read them again. Do you know how important they were? Do you remember the first Christian martyr, Stephen?

They stoned him to death for preaching Jesus. Do you know what was on his lips as he was preaching Jesus that day before they stoned him?

In Acts 7, 20, these are the words that Stephen spoke before he was martyred. At that time Moses was born and he was no ordinary child.

For three months he was cared for by his father's parents. You realize how the people of Israel came to understand those words?

[11:35] How God gave them so many reasons for hope during a hard time. He gave them reason after reason after reason. God blessed them materially.

They were blessed materially. Now, you may think, well, how are they? Were we in slavery? Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, taken down to Egypt, accused in Potiphar's house falsely, ended up in the dungeon, interpreted dreams, came to run in the dungeon, interpreted dreams for Pharaoh, became prime minister of Egypt, the second most powerful man on the face of the earth. And when his family came down, he gave them the best part of Egypt to live in. Now, if that's not a blessing, I don't know what is.

That's a tremendous blessing. And they were blessed numerically. Exodus 1, 7. The Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous.

So the land was filled with them. They started off with 70. When they left Egypt 400 years later, there were 600,000 men taking women and children into account, about 2 million people.

[12:54] This is one of the most understated verses in all the Bible. I have read it and read it and read it for a year after a year.

I've preached on it, and I never understood it. Let me put it into context so that we can understand it all right. America was founded in 1776.

We had 2,500,000 people in America on that first day. Today, for every one American alive then in 1776, we have 131 Americans in this country today.

We're 131 times larger than we were then 250 years ago. You got that? Now, this is 400 years, a little bit different.

But for every Hebrew child that went in to Egypt 400 years later, there's not 131.

[13:57] No, no, no. For every one that went in, now there are 28,500. 28,500.

They grew like that during the harshest time. Can you imagine God's hand on them to give that type of almost miraculous, miraculous increase?

And while all this was going on, while God was giving all this evidence, Israel, strangely enough, sort of went back in our faith. Abraham was the friend of God according to the Bible.

Joseph was probably the most Christ-like man in the Old Testament. But something happened during that 400-year period. Now, you would think when God parted the waters of the Red Sea, and the Israelites walked across on dry ground, and the army of Pharaoh came after him and swatted him up and drowned him, they would have said, praise be to God.

When they got out there in the wilderness, and there was a cloud of fire to lead him at night, and a pillar of cloud to lead him by day, you would have thought, praise be to God.

[15:16] He is a powerful God. When he got water from a rock, when he gave quail and manna, you would have thought, praise be to God. But Moses goes up on the mount to receive the Ten Commandments, and they revert in their faith.

They go back the opposite way. They went down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in reverie.

And Joshua, he challenged them, throw away the gods your forefathers worshipped in Egypt.

But in Ezekiel 28, but they rebelled against me and would not listen to me, and they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.

Now, there were men like Joshua and Caleb, other men, but they just didn't pay attention. They just didn't see what God was doing. Do you know how unreasonable their lack of faith was?

Now, it is true that a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph came to power in Egypt, and they were put into slavery. But the Bible says, but the more they were oppressed in Exodus 112, but the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread.

[ 16 : 36 ] So the Egyptians began to dread the Israelites. There were not enough weapons in hell's arsenal to stop or even slow down what God was doing.

And the Hebrew midwives were then older. Whenever a male child is born of the Hebrews, report that child so they can be drowned in the Nile River.

And they refused to do it. And they were brought in before Pharaoh, and he demanded nothing counting. And they said, but you need to understand, these Hebrew women, they're much more vigorous than the Egyptian women.

When they have a baby, I mean, it happens so quickly, they're gone before we can get there. They were doing the exact opposite of what abortion providers do today, and God blessed them for it. They were multiplying leaps and bounds. But why didn't God prevent all that suffering? That's the real question, isn't it?

[ 17 : 36 ] He had a people, his people, but they were in desperate need of development because they had not understood the elements of faith yet. What happened during that 400-year period?

Have you ever thought about what they had when they came out of Egypt that they did not have when they went into Egypt? You may be thinking, if you're a good student of the Bible, I know they had gold and silver and fine cloth and linens because the Lord told them to ask for whatever they want and the Egyptians would give it.

After that death angel passed over, that's what happened. I like your necklace. Well, here it is. Take it. Get out. I like your rings. Oh, take them. Get out. Get out. The Bible says that God allowed them to plunder the Egyptians, carry away all that wealth.

That's not what I'm talking about at all. I'm talking about the skills, the crafts, the knowledge, the expertise they had when they came out.

They went in as shepherds. Knew how to stay up late at night. Knew how to count. Knew how to carry an animal and fight off an animal. Knew how to get up and down cliffs.

[ 18 : 51 ] That's what they knew. But when they came out, they had built two huge cities. And when the Egyptians built something, friend, they did it right.

Lasted thousands of years. Very ornate, very beautiful, very detailed, and very exact. Well, preacher, what does that have anything to do with? Read Exodus 25 through 30.

They're out there in the wilderness, and God says, build me a tabernacle, a place of worship, one that you can move from place to place.

And today we often say, well, it was sort of a tent. Read Exodus 25 through 30. Friend, it was unbelievably beautiful.

It was detailed and exact and decorated and ornate. And all the priest clothes and all that stuff done the same way.

[ 19 : 56 ] Where did they learn to do that? In Egypt. And then that multiplication. One in, 28,500 out.

God needed a nation big enough and large enough to take the promised land and hold it. And he had that in Egypt. He did it in the devil's own backyard.

That's the amazing thing. And the other two things they came out with are even more important.

They went in. They went into Egypt.

But when they came out, they had a hatred for slavery. And they despised oppression of any type. And it became part of their DNA. Think about the history of the Jews. Probably the most persecuted people ever in all the world.

[ 20 : 59 ] Think of the Holocaust in World War II. Six million Jews. They had maintained a unity as a nation through all of that. Why? Because those years, it became part of their DNA.

God had to develop that in them. And the last thing. Their identity as a nation. When they went into Egypt, they were a people group.

When they came out of Egypt, they became a nation. Ask the Jews, what are the two most important things? Abraham and the Passover. Those are the two pivotal events to every Jew.

That Passover. That's when they came out of Egypt. That's when God gave them an identity as the people of God. And why is that important? Because that's where the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the lineage that he came through. And every Jew should have seen the miracles performed around Moses.

[ 22 : 05 ] It is amazing just to look at it. In Hebrews 11.23. Third time now. By faith, Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born because they saw he was no ordinary child.

And they were not afraid of the king's edict. Now, Amram and Jochebed, that's Moses' parents. They could count. They knew that years before Abraham had said, you're going to be in bondage down in Egypt for 400 years.

And after that 400 years is up, you're going to be brought home. They knew that 400 years was up. And they were not afraid of the king's edict because they believed that God was going to do the work that only God can do.

They were not afraid of the king's edict. You know that paralyzing fear and faith cannot live in the human heart at the same time? Now, we might have some emotional fear. We might even be shaking in our boots.

But I'm going to tell you something. People of faith will stand up even though they're fearful. They will do the will of God.

[ 23 : 13 ] That is a fact. Because God has put something in them that enables them to overcome that fear. And Amram and Jochebed had a faith that worked.

They hid the baby for three months and then they built a little bassinet, put him in the river. Maze and a crocodile didn't eat him or didn't turn over or something. Maze and an Egyptian didn't find him and just turn it over because he knew he was a king's edict.

What happened? Floated down the river. God knew. There was a woman down there who would see that basket and say, what's that? They'd run over there and say, it's a baby.

And that baby would cry and it would just touch her heart. And she says, I'm going to keep that baby. Oh, I love that baby. I'm going to keep it. And she's the only woman in Egypt that can defy the Pharaoh's orders and get away with it because she's his daughter.

Dad, I found this baby. I want him. Well, he's a Hebrew. I want him. All right. All right. And then Miriam, Moses' sister, walks up.

[ 24 : 21 ] And says, I know a woman that can nurse that baby for you. Oh, you do? I tell you what. Take it to the woman and finish nursing up.

And I will pay her to nurse the baby. So she takes Moses home to her mother, Jacobin, and said, Pharaoh's daughter's going to pay you to nurse your child here. Only God can arrange something like that.

Only God can do stuff like that. And it's amazing what God does every day. Now, all this taking place, and unfortunately the Jews didn't see it.

God is doing stuff around us all the time. And sometimes we don't see it.

If you read the Gospel of Mark carefully, the first eight chapters are wonderful. There's applause. There's miracles. There are crowds around Jesus. Everybody's happy.

[ 25 : 28 ] Everybody's enthusiastic. Read the last eight chapters of Mark, and it's a different story. Jesus is marching resolutely toward Jerusalem and the cross.

And on that march, he starts giving some hard sayings. And people said, what? I didn't sign up for this.

And they leave. So many leave. So many people who were followers of Jesus left that he finally turned to his 12 disciples.

He said, are you leaving also? That's how bad it was. And in John 6, 68 through 69, Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God. When we had COVID, every church lost some people.

[ 26 : 41 ] Some people worry about that. Jesus knew what lay ahead. His focus was on the ones that remained.

His focus was on the ones that stayed. Because that's where he was going to work. You have stayed. You're still here.

God's going to use you. All right, preacher, what God's going to do in a great in America. I've noticed something among young people. About a year ago in February, Ashbury University in Kentucky.

Oh. It happened. It was just absolutely miraculous what was going on. And then it happened at this college and this college and this college.

And the news doesn't like to report that stuff. I'm a big college football fan. I noticed something. More and more, and this year especially.

[ 27 : 47 ] More and more and more. They interviewed the players after the game. And they'll begin. I want to give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes the network tried to cut it out. But it's there.

Colton. I'm going to tell you about the hunger for scriptures that the young people in this church have. God is doing something.

Just like when Jesus was marching toward Jerusalem, he had to get the right people. He's got the right people. Now, do I know what he's going to do? I, that's above my grade level, pay level, you know.

I'll tell you this. I have absolutely no doubt that God is getting ready to do something great in America.

I believe that with all my heart. And I believe it's going to begin with our young people. The very people that Socrates gave up on. It's going to begin with the young people.

[ 28 : 51 ] And we're going to see something great happen in this nation. I believe that with all of my heart. And why do I believe it? Because I don't want to be like the Jews down there in Egypt.

God working all around me and me not see it. I prefer to see what God's doing. I prefer to see the fact that this morning at 3 o'clock I couldn't talk.

I mean, I couldn't make a sound. And God gave me this opportunity. And he does it in a thousand different ways.

As we open our eyes. So here's the challenge I want to give you. It said that, Peter said, You have the words of eternal life.

If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ is your personal Lord and Savior, Today's the day you need to say, Lord, come into my heart.

[ 29 : 53 ] Come into my life. Because he's ready to. He wants to. Now, I'm going to tell you, he doesn't want to change you. He does not want to change you. He wants to transform you.

He will make you completely, completely different. I spoke about the young people a moment ago. I want to give the young people a challenge.

If you're already a Christian and you're a young person, You're thinking about what college you want to go to, What you want to do with your career, Who you might marry, and all that stuff. My pastor challenged me years ago up in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Don't ever make any of those decisions without taking them to God first. Don't ever make a decision like that without praying for it for months. And so I prayed for it, and I prayed for it, and I prayed for it.

I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to teach math and coach wrestling. That was my sport. For some reason, God took it away, And I was the last person you would think for ministry, But God led me into the ministry.

[ 31 : 02 ] But he could have led me into teaching or coaching, Or he could have led me into business or doctorate or whatever. It makes no difference. We need to be where God has called us to be.

And I prayed about a wife. And God did me far better than I ever hoped for. Pray. Pray. Ask God, what do you want me to do?

If you end up driving a truck, you'll be a happier truck driver. If you end up being a doctor, you'll be a happier doctor. If he calls you to ministry and you say, that's not possible, I've been down that road, you'll be amazed.

God is doing stuff. Let's open our eyes and watch what he's doing. Father, thank you for what you do. What you can do.

What you're going to do. And Lord, we ask that you do it in us. Please begin with us. Let us be the first fruits.

[ 32 : 09 ] Make our hearts willing to go where you'd have us go. And do what you'd have us to do. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.