Mining the Depths of Faith - there was one extra soul in the mine shaft
Rabbi Dan Moskovitz

- I was struck by two things as I watched the rescue of the miners in Chile
    - How they each showed such patriotism and pride in their country. It's a sermon for another time, but we have had work place and natural disasters in this country recently requiring the full force of the Federal or State government to come to the aid of our citizens – I don't recall any flags waving or anthems being sung. Chile ready did step up, it was obvious not only to those watching around the world but more importantly to those trapped 2,000 feet below its surface.
    - In addition to thanking the rescue workers, every miner thanked God when they came out of that shaft.
        - This was not a casual "Thank God I am out of that hole"
        - This was *Hodahah*, heartfelt prayers of thanksgiving. For all the technology and industry brought to bare on their predicament, they attribute their rescue to a higher power.

- **I am in awe of that kind of faith, I want it for myself, I want it for you and yet I think many of us think that such deep faith in an intervening, rescuing God is not Jewish.**

- (1) Let me share with you why such deep faith in God is Jewish
- (2) Why I think it is so important that we open ourselves to the possibility of such belief
- (3) How faith in God pulled the miners out of the depths of their despair and it can do the same for each of us.

- (1) Jews Believe in God
    - Ask a child what is God and he will describe an old man with a beard, ask a child what God does and he will look at you like you're an idiot and then say with all sincerity, God does everything.
        - Abraham Midrash Sun/Moon – God is what makes those things go up and down
        - Abraham heard a voice, it sounded like it came from heaven but it came from inside his soul that told him in this week's parsha *Lech Lecha* – find yourself, be who you are intended to be, go unto yourself. He trusted the voice, he trusted himself
            - That was an act of faith
            - That was belief in a power greater than himself
            - That was God – the thing that caused him to do what he could not do, did not have the courage to do on his own.

- Larry Kushner says that when God created light on day one he created not light you can see, but the light of consciousness, of self awareness. The kabbalists call it the divine spark that is inside each of us.
- We are a deeply faithful people

- When we close ourselves off the possibility of a power greater than ourselves we extinguish that divine spark that leads us like a flashlight or candle along a darkened path, showing us the way forward to safety.
    - Most of us don't stand still in life, we move forward but if not guided by this divine light of what we think God wants us to be and become we become guided by false gods of money, power, possession, greed, envy, vanity, lust.
    - They take over they become the light that we seek.
    - But they do not lead to self awareness, of consciousness, those inherently pedestrian desires lead us astray, they are empty and when we lose them, our looks, our money, our power, our external validators that our life has meaning and purpose – we have nothing.

- And I was reminded of this by the faith of the trapped miners.
    - Down in that hole, they had only two things
        - Their companions, fellow human beings
        - Faith, Hope, Belief in a power greater than themselves that they would not be abandoned. That even if no one came to rescue them they were not alone because God was with them.
        - These were not saints or priests or scholars of the bible. These were working men, many with the most minimum of education but because they believed in God they got through the unthinkable.
            - It kept them alive
            - Gave them hope
            - Purpose
            - A desire to live

    - What do you have? In your own hole however deep? How ever narrow? In the depths of your own moments of despair, what carries you through? What is your ray of light at the end of the tunnel?
    - Believe that your life has purpose, that you were created for a reason, that you have something to offer the world and your fellow human beings. Believe that all of this is bigger than you, that it matters and that you want to live your life in the most meaningful way possible because it's the only one you get.

- To do that you have to know yourself, you have to listen to your inner voice, some call it a soul.
- Go there, like Abraham *Lech Lecha,* go into yourself, live who you were created to be, follow that light, seek a holy and elevated path and you will find God. God is not in the heavens, God was not on the surface of the desert, God was in the mine shaft with those miners, God is in you. Go find him – tonight in this service go find him.