

The Prayer of Faith

Scripture Readings: 1 Kings 18.41-46, James 5.16-18

Key Text "Get up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundant rain." 1 Kings 18.41

When Elijah spoke these words to wicked King Ahab, the sky was cloudless and the earth was cracked and bare, after 3½ years of withering drought. Elijah could hear what Ahab could not, because he was tuned in to a different world. It is our aim in studying the life of Elijah to learn what we can of Elijah's faith, Elijah's spirit and Elijah's God. Elijah was listening to the wave bands of Heaven. He was in tune with God. Is this secret impossible for us? Look up Galatians 3.2 and compare Psalm 25.14, Amos 3.3-8 and Acts 22.5-10. It might be difficult, but not impossible because it is God's intention to speak with those who are eager to listen. Let's see if we can learn any of Elijah's secrets in the life of faith. He had prayed in public for fire (Study No. 6) and now he prays in secret for rain.

Elijah prayed:

In Faith, believing the promise of God. Here is an excellent lesson on the need to pray according to the direct promise of God, and thereby within the will of God. God was working out His purposes and Elijah was keeping in step with God as He revealed them. See 1 Kings 17.1, 17.8 and 18.1. He knew exactly when to expect the rain to come. Had Elijah taken it on himself to act before that time, he would have been acting outside the known will of God. See 1 John 5.14-15 and Romans 8.26-28

In Secret It was a closet prayer without the closet. Jesus not only encouraged the Disciples to seek privacy and solitude in prayer, but also gave them His own example, which has come down to us. Matthew 6.6. See also

Luke 5.16 and Luke 6.12. When you are alone with God you can pour out your heart to Him and share with Him things that if shared with others may hinder your petition and your relationship with God. This does not mean that we cannot and should not agree to pray with others. Both forms of prayer have their place in the Christian life.

In Detail He was very specific. He concentrated on one thing that burned into his heart. "Lord send the rain". Like King Hezekiah with Sennacherib's letter in 2 Kings 19:14-20, or for Peter's imprisonment in Acts 12.5-10. Look up Luke 11.11-13 and see what Jesus taught on this matter. Here then is just one of the secrets of believing prayer. Concentration on an issue in prayer is not vain repetition.

In Reverence This is seen from his action, his manner and mode in prayer. We see him, not teasing the priests on Carmel, but humbly bowed before God, his face between his knees. Elijah is conscious that his Lord is Jehovah, the Eternal God, the Majesty on High. There is a pattern here found throughout Scripture. See: Genesis 24.52, Joshua 7.6, 2 Samuel 12.16, Isa 45.23, Daniel 9.3, Mark 14.35, Romans 14.9 and Philippians 2.9-11

In Earnest While Ahab feasted, Elijah fasted. See verse 1 Kings 18.41&42. There are times when prayer is more important than food or rest See also James 5.16-18, Matthew 26.40-41 and Hebrews 5.7. The setting of earnest fervent prayer is real and immediate need which only God can answer. It is not an act. It is not panic. It is the sincere belief in a God who has the power and will to meet the needs of His children.

In Expectation. He was looking for the evidence that his prayer had been

answered. No sooner had he begun his request but that he sent his servant to look for the answer. Paul instructed his Colossians hearers to, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." and by watch he meant to be vigilant, be aware of what is going on around. Psalm 130 is written for those who have their hope in the Lord.

In Persistence He didn't let up. He sent his servant seven times to look for the answer to his prayer, an answer previously declared by God. Why did God delay his answer? Surely Elijah did not need such a lesson.. Look up 1Corinthians 10:11, also Philippians 3:17, 2 Peter 2:6 and 2 Thessalonians 3:8&9. We learn from one another. George Muller who through prayer and faith alone supported hundreds of orphan children, foreign missions and Scripture distribution prayed for 52 years for the salvation of two of his friends. One found the Saviour only after Muller's death.

In Conclusion In studying Elijah's prayer as a model for praying in faith, let us avoid reducing his actions to a system, a method, or a pattern to be followed. To do so would be to turn a relationship into a religion. All his actions stemmed from his interaction with the living God in his struggle against the forces of evil in his day. Every Christian needs to establish his own relationship with his Lord, a new, unique, one to one interaction in real time. We each must learn to trust God through Jesus Christ by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our own lives. Anything else is inadequate. Anything less is insufficient. Anything more is impossible.

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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