

“EXHIBITING FAITH IN FAITHLESS TIMES”**PART V****“THE PRAYER OF FAITH”****I KING 18: 41-46****JAMES 5:17-18****INTRODUCTION**

IN THE FIELD OF SPIRITUAL CONFLICT, WE CALL MEN LIKE ELIJAH “GIANTS OF THE FAITH.”

THEY STAND APART OF THE PAGES OF GOD’S WORD AS TOWERING HEROES OF SPIRITUAL BATTLES.

READING OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, WE TEND TO WRAP THEM IN A MANTLE OF GREATNESS OF WHICH WE WILL NEVER BE WORTHY.

BUT JAMES WROTE THAT ELIJAH WAS A “MAN OF LIKE PASSION AS WE ARE.”

HE WAS HINDERED BY THE SAME FLESHLY LIMITATIONS THAT WE CARRY WITH US.

HOW THEN COULD HE DO THE THINGS THAT HE DID?

THE ANSWER IS FOUND IN THE THREE WORDS, “AN – HE – PRAYED.”

THAT’S WHERE HE WAS DIFFERENT; HE WAS LIKE US IN HIS PASSIONS, BUT HE OUTPERFORMED US IN HIS PRAYERS.

YET, IF THERE IS ANYTHING THESE VERSES HAVE TO COMMUNICATE TO US, IT IS THIS: SINCE ELIJAH WAS LIKE US IN HIS PASSIONS, WE CAN BE LIKE HIM IN OUR PRAYERS.

GOD WILL PERFORM HIS WORKS FOR US AS HE DID ELIJAH IF WE WILL LEARN TO PRAY AS ELIJAH PRAYED.

I. ELIJAH PRAYED.

A. AHAB ACTS ON ELIJAH’S WORD.

1. **IN VERSE 41, ELIJAH TELL AHAB TO GET HIMSELF SOMETHING TO EAT AND DRINK BECAUSE THE RAIN WAS ON IT WAY.**
2. **THAT WAS A PRONOUNCEMENT OF FAITH BECAUSE THERE WASN'T A CLOUD IN THE SKY.**
3. **IT HADN'T RAINED IN 3 ½ YEARS AND THERE WAS NO INDICATION IT WOULD RAIN THAT DAY.**
4. **NEVERTHELESS, AT ELIJAH'S WORK AHAB WENT TO SUPPER.**
 - a. **ELIJAH IS THE ONE WHO SAID IT WOULDN'T RAIN, AND IT DIDN'T.**
 - b. **ELIJAH'S GOD ANSWERED FROM HEAVEN WITH A FLASH OF FIRE.**
 - c. **IT MADE SENSE FOR AHAB TO EXPECT THE CLOUDBURST ELIJAH PREDICTED.**

B. ELIJAH ACTS ON GOD'S WORD. VERSES 41-42

[41] AND ELIJAH SAID UNTO AHAB, GET THEE UP, EAT AND DRINK; FOR THERE IS A SOUND OF ABUNDANCE OF RAIN.

[42] SO AHAB WENT UP TO EAT AND TO DRINK. AND ELIJAH WENT UP TO THE TOP OF CARMEL; AND HE CAST HIMSELF DOWN UPON THE EARTH, AND PUT HIS FACE BETWEEN HIS KNEES,

1. **WE READ A CURIOUS THING. WHILE AHAB FEASTED, ELIJAH CLIMBED TO THE SUMMIT OF MT. CARMEL TO CAST HIMSELF UPON THE GROUND IN PRAYER.**

2. **WHICH BRINGS ME TO A QUESTION: IF ELIJAH WAS SO CERTAIN THAT RAIN WAS ON ITS WAY, WHY WAS HE PRAYING?**
3. **GOD HAD ALREADY PROMISED TO SEND THE RAIN.**
 - a. **READ 18:1: AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER MANY DAYS, THAT THE WORD OF THE LORD CAM TO ELIJAH IN THE THIRD YEAR, SAYING, GO, SHOW THYSELF UNTO AHAB; AND I WILL SEND RAIN UPON THE EARTH.**
4. **IF GOD HAD ALREADY GUARANTEED A RAINSTORM, THEN WHY PRAY?**
5. **YET ELIJAH KNELT ON THAT PARCHED EARTH WITH IS FACE BETWEEN HIS KNEES, AND SHOULD THERE BE ANY DOUBT, JAMES INFORMS US THAT ELIJAH WAS PRAYING “AGAIN.”**
6. **GOD’S PROMISES BECOME PERFORMANCE THROUGH PRAYER.**
7. **GOD HAS PROMISED TO SUPPLY ALL OUR NEEDS.**
 - a. **PHILIPPIANS 4:19: BUT MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY ALL YOUR NEEDS ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES IN GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS.**
8. **YET A CHRISTIAN CAN SUFFER WANT BECAUSE HE HAS NOT ASKED FOR HIS NEEDS.**
 - a. **JAMES 4:2: YE LUST, AND HAVE NOT; YE KILL, AND DESIRE TO HAVE, AND CANNOT OBTAIN: YE**

**FIGHT AND WAR, YET YE HAVE NOT,
BECAUSE YE ASK NOT.**

9. **THE POINT: GOD IS HINDERED FROM ACTING WHEN WE NEGLECT TO CLAIM HIS PROMISES IN PRAYER.**
10. **GOD HAS CHOSEN TO PERFORM HIS WORK IN THE WORLD THROUGH THE BELIEVING PRAYER OF HIS PEOPLE.**
 - a. **JOHN WESLEY SAID, “GOD WILL DO NOTHING BUT IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.”**
 - b. **CONVERSELY, JESUS SAID, “HITHERTO YE HAVE ASKED NOTHING IN MY NAME: ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.” (JOHN 16:24)**
11. **AHAB ACTED BECAUSE HE HAD CONFIDENCE IN ELIJAH’S WORD.**
12. **ELIJAH PRAYED BECAUSE HE HAD CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S WORD.**
13. **LET’S ASK OURSELVES A TOUGH QUESTION: WHERE IS OUR CONFIDENCE?**
14. **PAUL E. BILLHEIMER WRITES, “WERE THE CHURCH TO BELIEVE FULLY IN THE INTEGRITY OF GOD’S WORD, IT WOULD CURE HER PRAYERLESSNESS.”**

II. ELIJAH PRAYED EXPECTANTLY. VERSE 43

[43] AND SAID TO HIS SERVANT, GO UP NOW, LOOK TOWARD THE SEA. AND HE WENT UP, AND LOOKED, AND SAID, THERE IS NOTHING. AND HE SAID, GO AGAIN SEVEN TIMES.

ILLUSTRATION

ELIJAH TOLD HIS SERVANT SEVEN TIMES, “GO LOOK.” SIX TIMES HE RETURNED TO SAY, “THERE IS NOTHING.” ELIJAH WAS LEFT TO DRAW ONE OF TWO CONCLUSIONS: EITHER GOD HAD FAILED, OR ELIJAH WAS NOT DONE PRAYING. WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF DELAY?

- A. PRAYER IS NOT TRYING TO OVERCOME GOD’S RELUCTANCE TO DO SOMETHING THAT HE DOESN’T WANT TO DO.**
- 1. THE PRAYING CHRISTIAN ENGAGES IN THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES, THAT WHICH IS BETWEEN GOD AND SATAN.**
 - a. SATAN’S FALSE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM HAD SUFFERED A TERRIBLE BLOW THAT DAY;**
 - b. ELIJAH WAS ON HIS KNEES SEEKING TO INFLICT THE “KNOCKOUT” PUNCH.**
 - c. ELIJAH ANSWER WAS DELAYED BECAUSE SATAN VIGOROUSLY CONTESTED THE ANSWER TO THAT PRAYER.**
 - 2. IF SATAN’S PERSISTENCE HAD OUTLASTED THAT OF ELIJAH, ELIJAH WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED IN PRAYER.**
- B. OUR PRAYERS OFTEN GO UNANSWERED BECAUSE WE QUIT PRAYING BEFORE THE ANSWER IS RECEIVED.**
- 1. PAUL WROTE, “PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.”**

- a. **THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE ARE CONSTANTLY TO BE IN AN "ATTITUDE OF PRAYER."**
 - b. **IT MEANS THAT WE DON'T GIVE UP ON PRAYER; WE KEEP PRAYING UNTIL WE GET THE ANSWER TO OUR PRAYER.**
2. **PERSISTENT PRAYER IS NOT NECESSARY TO OVERCOME GOD'S RELUCTANCE, BUT SATAN'S OPPOSITION TO GOD'S ANSWER.**
- a. **FAITH IS ALWAYS BASED UPON CERTAINTY, KNOWING THAT GOD HAS SAID HE WOULD DO.**
 - b. **PERSISTENCE IS A BY-PRODUCT OF OUR FAITH.**
 - c. **FAITH COMBINED WITH PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER IS UNCONQUERABLE.**

IV. **ELIJAH PRAYED EFFECTIVELY. VERSE 45 – "THERE WAS A GREAT RAIN."**

[45] **AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE MEAN WHILE, THAT THE HEAVEN WAS BLACK WITH CLOUDS AND WIND, AND THERE WAS A GREAT RAIN.**

- A. **THIS CAUSED JAMES TO WRITE, "THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH MUCH."**

ILLUSTRATION

THIS WAS NO AFTERNOON SHOWER. IT WAS A DROUGHT ENDING "GULLY-WASHER."

- 1. **IT WAS GRANTED FOR TWO REASONS:**
 - a. **IT HAD BEEN PROMISED**

- b. IT HAD BEEN PRAYED FOR.
2. IT WAS GRANTED IN A BIG WAY BECAUSE ELIJAH HAD BIG EXPECTATIONS.
 - a. ELIJAH HAD TOLD AHAB HE HAD HEARD AN “ABUNDANCE OF RAIN.”
 - b. GOD’S ANSWER WAS IN PROPORTION TO ELIJAH’S REQUEST.
 3. WHEN THE RAIN BEGAN TO FALL, THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN ANYONE’S MIND BUT THAT IT WAS SENT IN RESPONSE TO THE PRAYERS OF THE MAN BOWED DOWN BEFORE GOD ON THE TOP OF MT. CARMEL.
- B. GOD WILL PERFORM HIS WORKS FOR US AS HE DID FOR ELIJAH IF WE WILL ONLY LEARN TO PRAY AS ELIJAH PRAYED.**
1. WE NEED TO PRAY – TO FAIL IN PRAYER IS TO FAIL.
 2. WE NEED TO PRAY EXPECTANTLY – KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ASKING FOR, THEN LOOK FOR THE ANSWER.
 3. WE NEED TO PRAY PERSISTENTLY – OUR PRAYERS MUCH OUTLAST SATAN’S OPPOSITION.

EXPOSITION

S.D. GORDON, IN QUIET TALKS ON PRAYER, WRITES THAT PRAYER “...IS A FIERCELY CONTEST CONFLICT. SATAN IS A TRAINED STRATEGIST, AND AN OBSTINATE FIGHTER. HE REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE DEFEAT UNT HE MUST... [HE] YIELDS ONLY WHAT HE MUST.”

CONCLUSION

- A. PRAYER IS A SPIRITUAL CONFLICT, BUT IT CAN BE WON.**
 - 1. THE EFFECTUAL, FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH MUCH.**