

Prophets Work is Never Done Part 3

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[0 : 0 0] 18. 1 Kings chapter 18.

We've been looking at the last part of this chapter, last few weeks, verses 41 to 46. I will not read them tonight. We'll go through them as we're going through the lessons.

But Elijah has been on top of Mount Carmel. He's defeated the prophets of Baal. Fire came down and consumed everything.

And now we're talking about after that. He's up on top of Mount Carmel again, talking with the Lord. Ahab's off having a feast. The rain is about to come. And what's going to be happening?

And we're talking about the fact that prophets' work is never done. And we've talked here the last few weeks about the fact that Elijah was a promise claimer, first of all.

[1 : 0 7] We said that he was one who looked at what God had said and what God was doing. And he followed God in every situation. He was one who saw, we said, the precious word of God.

And we looked at chapter 18, verse 1, where it says, And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.

He went. He showed himself to Ahab. They had the confrontation. So Elijah knows, okay, according to the precious word of God, the rain is about to come. He was one who believed in the perfect will of God.

And back in chapter 17, verse 1, it says, And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

And so he says, this is the will of God. This is what God wants. I will deliver that message. I'm going to do whatever God wants me to do. Then last week, we talked about, or was it?

[2 : 2 5] Yeah, last week, we were talking about the prior work of God. He believed also he had seen God be faithful at the brook Cherith with the ravens and the food.

He saw him be faithful with the barrel of meal and the crews of oil not running out. He saw him be faithful when the lady's son had died and raising him again. He saw him be faithful in the bull on the altar and over Baal by sending the fire and consuming the sacrifice on the altar.

He saw that God was faithful and he was going to be faithful to claiming his promises. Then we started on Elijah the prayer warrior. And we talked about the fact, first of all, that Ahab went to a feast.

You get into those last verses of chapter 18, 41 through 46. Elijah goes back up on top of Carmel to pray, praying for the rain to come.

Ahab went to a feast. And we talked about the difference between these two men and how Ahab was weak. He was always following Elijah's orders. He was focused on stirring.

[3 : 40] He had seen what God had done and it didn't really affect him. He was always following Elijah's orders. He was always following Elijah's orders. And we saw that he was never confronted by Elijah about his sin.

And we talked about the fact that why was that? Because he would not have listened. He would not have paid any attention at all to what Elijah was saying. He was so wrapped up in himself.

Which brings us to where we need to be tonight. Ahab went to the feast. Elijah went to the father. Elijah went to the father.

Let's have a word of prayer. And we'll talk some more about this. You hear me, Father. I pray that you would just be with us now, Lord, as we continue on tonight. As we look at the fact that Elijah went to you.

He spent his time in prayer. He spent his time going to you to see what you wanted done. How he was supposed to handle it. How he was supposed to do it.

[4 : 43] And, Lord, I pray that you would just help us to learn from this example of Elijah in his prayer life. Lord, we've seen him do a 63-word prayer and the fire came down.

Now he's going to spend time in prayer with you for the rain to come. And so, Lord, I pray that you would just help us to spend time with you. To understand what you're trying to do.

What you're working on. And, Lord, that we would follow you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, Ahab wanders off taking care of making sure he's fed and everything.

Elijah, prophets of Baal are now gone. They're dead. God has sent the fire down. But he says there's still more to do. The rain has to come.

And so, in verse 42, it says, chapter 18. So, Ahab went up to eat and to drink. Elijah went up to the top of Carmel. And he cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees.

[5 : 47] Why did he go up to the top of Carmel alone? Why didn't he invite Ahab to go with him? Because, like we said about the other, Ahab wouldn't have cared.

Ahab didn't care the least about what God wanted. He didn't care the least about anything. 450 prophets of Baal have just been killed. One who were at his castle. One who were, or wherever he was.

And they ate at his table. And they're all dead now. And he's like, oh well. He didn't care. So, in fact, you know, Elijah is just like Ahab in the fact that he's been up there all day.

He hasn't eaten anything. He hasn't had anything to drink. And Ahab goes off to have his feast. Elijah goes up. Why? Because Elijah understands.

John 4, 31 and 32, Jesus talked about meat that people don't know of. We have meat that no man knows of. We have strength that comes to us that no people understand because we have the Father with us.

[6 : 56] And Elijah is having that same attitude. He's going to do what God wants him to do. And he knows that God is going to sustain him. God is going to take care of him.

God is going to meet his needs. He goes up to pray. Why does God hear Elijah's prayer? Well, first of all, notice the last part of verse 42 there.

He cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees. He was humble. Elijah was humble. Ahab is still trying to build himself up, still trying to show that I'm the king, I'm in control, I'm in charge.

Elijah is humble about what's going to happen. He stood tall when he needed to. He stood tall when he had to go up against those prophets of Baal and against Ahab.

He stood tall as God's representative here on earth. But now it's a matter of I need to talk with God and I need to come before him humbly. In 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 5 and 6, it talks about being humble before God.

[8 : 07] And Elijah is that guy. And it talks about that. And it actually talks about Elijah in those verses, the fact that he was humble. Look at verse 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. At times, he is very specific in his praying. He is praying for rain.

God says the rain is going to come. Once you show yourself to Ahab and stuff, the rain is going to come. So he is praying for rain. He's very specific about what he wants. We need to make sure we're specific in our prayers.

How do we know God is answering our prayers if we're always praying in generalities? He says, be specific. Ask for specific things and watch what God does.

He's going to answer. Now, that doesn't mean he's always going to answer yes. But he is going to answer. So he says, be specific in the praying that you do.

[9 : 12] He was earnest about it. He put his head between his knees. He is like, come on, God. We need to see you work. We need to see what's going to happen here.

He's sincere about his prayer. Earnest about it. He sees the needs of the people.

And he sees that three and a half years of no rain. It has affected their country totally. And he sees they're now ready for it. And he's up there praying specifically for rain.

And he's earnest about it. He's saying, look, God, you're our heavenly father. We need to see your hand at work. We saw your hand at work already upon Mount Carmel.

We saw the fire come down and consume the altar and the water and everything else around it. Now we need to see the rain come down. Not yet.

[10 : 13] He's going to, I think. But not yet. Because he hadn't seen it yet. He's going to see it. I mean, he'd seen the altar, yes. But you're right. And he didn't impress him there. The water coming, maybe might get to him.

No, but okay. He was persistent. Again in verse 43. And he said to the servant, go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up and looked that there's nothing.

And he said, go again seven times. Servant goes out and looks. Nothing. Comes back. Elijah says, go again. Nothing.

Go again. Nothing. Go again. Nothing. Nothing. If I was a servant, I'd be getting a little, you know, there's nothing out there. He said, go again. So he says, he was persistent in his praying.

You know, a lot of times we pray for things once or twice and say, oh, God didn't answer. Okay. I give up. He says, no, no, no. Keep going. Don't give up. Sure.

[11 : 17] I didn't want to ask for something specific. That's why. Fred told me I had \$499 to take care of that as my account. So when I had a divorce with him, I'm probably, I thought he said, oh, he says, ask for specific.

So I'm going to ask for specific. So I did. For the day that I didn't get \$439, I got \$435. That's pretty good. Yep. Good. It was specific.

Tell Fred, recalculate that. You sure it wasn't \$435? Because that's what God gave him. So anyways, he was persistent in asking the things that he needed.

And one writer put it, why do we keep going back and talking to God about these things? If he's, you know, why would we be persistent about doing those things? One writer said this, it is not that God is hard to persuade.

It is that he will have us mean what we say. Do we really mean it? Are we really concerned about it? Is it really something that's on our heart that we're willing to pray about with him?

[12 : 22] Like I said, a lot of things will think, I need to pray about this. And I'll pray once. I'll pray twice. And then, oh, well, okay. Guess not. He says, no, no, no. Pray. Pray. Tell God you really know that this is something that needs to be done and needs to be impacting on people's hearts and lives.

Like the neighbor that kept knocking on the door. Yep. In opportunity, the guy came to trust him, but he wouldn't quit. The lady that went to the judge.

Yep. Yep. They wouldn't give up. But, you know, there are times that God answers immediately, and there are times where he doesn't. He delays. And there's times where God is working behind the scenes that we don't know about.

I've mentioned this one a number of times, but Billy Sunday, when he got saved, he had five friends he started praying for. Two of them got saved within a year or two.

The third one got saved just before he died. Fourth one got saved at his funeral. And the fifth one got saved a few weeks after he passed away. But he prayed for those five.

[13 : 28] He didn't see all of it happen, but he prayed believing that it was going to happen. And all five of them did come to know the Lord as their Savior. Yep.

Yep. Yep. Not supposed to surprise you. Yeah, it's not supposed to surprise you, but. Yeah. We do get that way, don't we? Yeah. Yep. Number five, he was expectant.

Expectant. Look at verse 41 again. Elijah said to Ahab, get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain. Look at verse 43 again.

You know, he keeps sending them back. Seven times. Because he's expecting God to do it. Do we pray expecting God to do things? Do we have faith in God?

Do we have faith that God is going to take care of us and meet our needs? Do we? Let's see. You haven't heard these words before. Do we trust him? Do we trust him?

[14 : 32] See, if we're ever going to see real success in our prayer lives, we're going to pray expecting God to do things. Mark 11, 24 says this. Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Believe that you receive them, and ye shall have them. Nothing is going to hinder our faith than unbelief. When we don't believe that God is going to take care of things.

There's a story about a little boy who was part of a community that hadn't had rain for a long time. And they were all out praying about it. He was part of it. And he went and got his umbrella. Yep.

And one little guy brought his umbrella with him to the prayer meeting. Yep. Number six. He was answered. He was answered. Look at verse 44. And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, behold, there rises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.

And he said, go up, say to Ahab, prepare thy chariot and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. At seventh, eighth time, the guy goes up, comes back and he says, well, there's one about the size of my hand.

[15 : 55] If I hold it up, my hand can kind of cover it. And Elijah says, go tell Ahab to get on the move, to get out of here.

You think about it for a second. What's about to happen? God's going to send rain. He's going to send a deluge. They're going to see something they have not seen in three and a half years.

The contrast between these two men is just something marvelous. Then the third thing about Elijah, Elijah, the power runner. Elijah, I love this part of the story.

They've been told the rain is going to come. And Ahab has left in his chariot. He's heading out. Think about three and a half years of drought.

And now rain is coming. And it's not just going to be a gentle little rain. It's going to be coming down. Notice in verse 45, And it came to pass in the meanwhile that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.

[17 : 04] And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. It is going to come down in buckets. And when it does that, what is going to happen to that ground? Mud.

So Ahab's got his chariot. Chariots were made out of iron, with iron wheels. And they're heavy. And he's like, tell Ahab he better get on the move.

Otherwise he's going to get stuck in the mud. But you know the rest of the story. Look at verse 46. It says, And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah.

And he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. The hand of the Lord, excuse me, The hand of the Lord was upon Elijah.

Stop right there for a minute. We've seen Elijah through so many different things. We've seen Elijah be blessed by God in so many different ways. We've seen Elijah be used by God in so many different ways.

[18 : 10] The hand of the Lord was upon Elijah. That's one of those things we could pray for, specifically. I want the hand of the Lord upon me like it was upon Elijah.

I want the hand of the Lord upon me so I can go out and do the things that God has called me to do. He gives strength. He gives stamina. Remember, go back to the very beginning of this study.

Elijah is an ordinary man. Just like us. He's an ordinary man. And yet God is using him tremendously.

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4.13? I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. So here's Ahab.

He's heading out. But Elijah has a social power that Ahab does not. It says the hand of the Lord was upon him.

[19 : 11] How about the secret of the preparation? It says that Elijah girded up his loins there in verse 46. What does that mean? He took his robes and he brought them up, tucked them inside his belt, loosened it so that, I mean, tightened it there, but loosened things around his legs so that his legs could move and he could run.

He put everything inside his belt. Why the preparation to do that? Because the rain was coming and he needed to be able to go and he did not need to get tangled up in his garments. He needed to be able to run as fast as he possibly could.

And he cleared every obstacle. Everything was out of the way. But think about during that time, usually when kings went to cities, they had a runner go before them.

That runner would go to announce that they were coming. They would go to announce that, you know, make sure everything was out of the way and the path was cleared so the king could come through and stuff. So Elijah's about to do that for Ahab.

I mean, he's doing it to announce what God has done, but he's going ahead of Ahab. He's making the path for Ahab. You know, we need to be ready to run with God wherever he takes us, wherever he leads us.

[20 : 37] Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, verses you know well. Therefore, seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which has so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking under Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

If we want to run well, we have to get ourselves prepared. We have to be ready to go wherever God wants us to go. We have to be ready to go when he wants us to go.

He says, look, all the weights, all the sins, everything's got to be put away, put aside, so that we can run. And again, look at the strategy that he has here.

Like I mentioned, for ancient kings, they usually had a runner. So he's running ahead of Ahab into the city of Jezreel. What's he doing? He's saying this, Ahab, I'm a man of God, and I hate sin.

I hate idolatry. However, out of respect for the office, I am willing to submit to you as my king, as you submit to God as yours.

[21 : 52] Catch that again. I'm willing to submit to you as king, as you're willing to submit to God as yours. You know, we look at the government officials we have now, and there are times we're just kind of like, ah.

But God says to pray for them, to honor them. So as long as they will follow God, he says, follow them.

They're there. God knows all about it. He knows why they're there. He has a purpose in their being there. So he says, follow them as they follow me.

He wanted Ahab to know that he was against Baal. He would never have anything to do with Baal. So it wasn't personal against Ahab per se.

It was the fact that Ahab had allowed the worship of Baal, and he wanted to make sure that Ahab understood, no. I follow God and everything.

[23 : 00] So think about it. We allow God to work in our lives. And as we do that, we don't need to be mean.

We don't need to be cocky. We don't need to be. We just need to follow God and set an example for others to see. Humility should be revealed in the fact that we desire to serve others.

Ahab's purpose, Ahab, I mean, not Ahab, Elijah's purpose was what? To follow God and do whatever God asked him to do and to be a help to others, to get Israel back on the right track.

What did he do? He started out on Mount Carmel with all these people who wouldn't say anything about anything, to by the time he was done and God had sent the fire, there are the Lord, he is God.

The Lord, he is God. He's got the people back to where they're looking at God. Not Elijah. Did you notice that? They weren't going, oh, Elijah, he's got the fire to come down.

[24 : 11] He did it. No, Elijah wasn't trying to do things for himself. It was pointing people to God. He got their heart back there. So the battle had been won.

But now he's showing us the work is not done. You know, there are times we're going to win things, and we're going to do things right, and we're going to stand for God, and we're going to, but the battle is never done.

We keep on going day after day our entire life. We need to make sure we follow him no matter what. And we're finally done with chapter 18.

So, all right. Pray requests.