

On the Job Training Part 2

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Date: 15 May 2024

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[0 : 0 0] to those of you that have been here. 1 Kings chapter 17. 1 Kings chapter 17. We've been talking about Elijah.

And we started last week talking about his on-the-job training. The fact that he went to Ahab and Jezebel, gave them the pronouncement that there was not going to be any rain until he said so. God had given him that opportunity to be able to say when the rain was going to come and when it wasn't. And after that he fled from there.

Excuse me. And then he wound up at the brook Cherith. Then he wound up in Zarephath and with the widow woman.

And he's there and a lot of things are going, you know, he's delivered the pronouncement. You think okay, he's got all the power and all these different things and stuff and things are not going completely his way.

He's having to hide from Jezebel and Ahab. And you think that, okay, God's not correcting him though. God's perfecting him, getting him ready for other things that are going to come his way. And last week we talked about the fact that Elijah faced some trials. Look at verse 17 and 18.

[1 : 3 9] It says, And it came to pass after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick. And his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him.

And she said unto Elijah, Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son? Elijah has a test that's taking place here.

And it starts off with a dead body. That's a test for him. Let's have a word of prayer and we'll talk about what's going on here. Dear Heavenly Father, pray that you would help us learn from the life of Elijah.

Lord, we've already learned that he's an ordinary person just like us. He was a man from the mountains, a man who this was not his normal thing to do.

It was just being an ordinary person but you called him. And Lord, we're ordinary people. You've called us. And Lord, I pray that you would use us. Lord, that you would help us to be ready to do whatever you call us to do.

[2 : 4 7] Lord, that we'd be ready to serve you in whatever capacity you want. Lord, may we look to you completely and follow you just like Elijah. In Jesus' name.

Amen. He's dealing with a dead body first of all. And here's a boy, you think about it. We talked last week the fact that he has been there with them all along.

God has been supplying the meal. God has been supplying the oil. God has made sure that they stay alive. And all through this, the boy is part of this. He's seeing what God is doing.

He's seeing that he's a part of God's miracles taking place there. And now all of a sudden, he passes away. Why would God take him now after supplying the things to keep him alive during this drought that's taking place?

We talked about Isaiah 55, 8 and 9, where it says, My thoughts are not your thoughts. My ways are not your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

[3 : 55] And we talked about Psalm 37, 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. We need to keep our eyes focused on God and what he is doing.

We need to keep our eyes focused on him and trust him with everything that we have. So often, we just kind of, Well, God, why are you doing this?

Why are you doing that? Why are you doing the other thing? Just trust him. Just follow him and what he is doing. Second thing he deals with is the distraught parent. The distraught parent, one who has been right there.

She has been helping. She's been doing what God called her to do. Matter of fact, she knew what was going to happen in the first part of this. In chapter 17, look at verse 9. Arise, get these to Zarephath, which belongeth unto Zidon, and dwell there.

Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. She knew what was coming. She knew the drought was coming. She knew that Elijah was coming. God had prepared her for that.

[4 : 58] But, he had not prepared her for verse 17 when it says, And it came to pass in these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick. And his sickness was so sore that he had no breath left in him.

She was prepared for the one thing. She was not prepared for the other. And here, she accuses Elijah of remembering her sin that she had and making sure that God judged her sin by taking her child.

You know, has there ever been a time in your life that you look at things and you go, God, why are you doing this to me? God, why am I finding this happening? Why is this going on in my life?

And there's a lot of times that people of the Lord have seen God do things. Now, I mentioned last week, you know, Job, in the first couple of chapters of Job, the things that he found happening to him and he had no idea why.

Abraham, in Genesis 22, God calls him to sacrifice his son. Why, God? What's the, what do you want here? Joseph, winding up being thrown into slavery and then wind up in prison.

[6 : 11] Why are all these things happening? And we had to remember that sometimes we think we're in a storm of correction, but really we're in a storm of perfection.

God is helping us to be ready for things that are going to come our way. And then letter C, we had a discouraged prophet. Think about Elijah. He's been there.

He's, he's had to go to the Brook Cherith and he's had the ravens bring food to him. He's had the water there and then that dries up. Then he has to go to this widow woman and basically his, his survival depends on this widow woman taking care of him and meeting his needs and stuff.

He's watching all these things and now this son dies and he doesn't have a clue why. God hasn't told him anything and he's like, why is all this stuff happening? He's discouraged.

And let me tell you from a pastor's viewpoint, discouragement is the biggest thing this pastor's face. Discouragement about what's going on, what's happening, what people are doing, what people are saying, what people are, you know, what's happening in your life.

[7 : 17] And we're never more vulnerable than when we are discouraged. God says, look, you're going through some things but trust me.

How many times have I said that in recent months? Trust me. God says, trust me. Follow me. No matter what the valley is that you're going through, no matter what you're facing, trust me.

I talked about W.A. Criswell last week and when he got saved, there was a man by the name of John Hicks who was having revival meetings at his church when he was 10 years old.

And that John Hicks man was preaching and Criswell got saved during that time. And you all have heard the name Criswell, you've probably not heard the name John Hicks.

And John Hicks, when he was passing away, was talking to a friend of his who was also a friend of Criswell's and he says, look, I haven't accomplished anything. I haven't been able to do anything for the Lord.

[8 : 19] I haven't, you know, really done anything that's worthy of God's blessing on me. And Criswell's talking about this man and how he influenced him to be saved and how Criswell went out and did all these great things.

You know, sometimes we do things that we don't ever know. But God uses those things to bless many, many more. Just by being faithful and being yourself.

So tonight, Elijah's trust. Elijah's trust. Look at verse 19. It says, And he said unto her, Give me thy son.

And he took him out of, into a loft where he abode and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon this widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her son?

And he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come unto him again.

[9 : 28] And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came unto him again and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down unto the chamber into the house and delivered him unto his mother.

And Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. Stop there. Think about, Elijah up to this point hasn't had to do a lot.

What did he have to do? Trust God. God. Again, by the brook Cherith. God supplied him with everything he needed by the ravens bringing food to him.

He had the water there of the brook. When that dried up, go to Zerath. What did he have to do there? Trust God.

Meal in the barrel, oil in the gruse. Just trust that God was going to take care of it and meet the need. He hasn't had to do a lot other than just trust that God was going to be God.

[10 : 33] He hasn't had to do much. Now comes a time where it's like he's going to have to get involved and he is going to have to do some things with this child.

Notice, first of all, his calmness. His calmness. Did you notice she's confronting him there in verse 18 about the fact that you're judging me for my sin and stuff and God is doing this to me and you're part of his plan and he doesn't argue with her.

He doesn't attack back. He doesn't get upset. He doesn't do anything other than merely ask her to allow him to take the son. And he takes the son and takes him up to his room and places him on his bed.

First of all, think of the lesson for you and I. when people attack, how do we treat them? When people come after us, what do we do?

You know, there are sometimes things happen that are unexpected. Sometimes there's things that happen that we're just not anticipating or prepared for and we worry and we fret.

[11 : 50] Someone attacks us, we get upset. we attack back. Elijah doesn't do any of that. He just leaves it in God's hands and he's allowing God to do something that nobody has seen up to this point.

In Philippians 4, 6, it says, Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving and let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

He's allowing the peace of God to take over. He's allowing him to put his trust in God to allow God to do his work in his way.

So often, we don't do that. We don't allow God to do his work. Remember when we were talking earlier in Matthew 6, verses 25 to 34, where it talks about how he clothes the fields with the lilies and things and how he takes care of the birds and meets their needs.

And he talks about the fact that he will take care of our needs if we just trust in him. He will take care of everything that we need. And then, later on in 2 Timothy 1, 7, he talks about remembering that it's not by power, it's not by spirit of fear, but by power and a love and a sound mind that things happen.

[13 : 13] We keep our focus on God and let him do his work. You know, when the widow gives her son to Elijah, she is acknowledging an evidence of having some faith in God by allowing him to take him and do what is impossible.

Notice Elijah's compassion. He's calm. Notice his compassion. Verse 20 and 21. It says, And he cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon this widow with whom I sojourned by slaying her son?

And he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

Notice what he's prayed there. He's full of compassion for the woman. She has been taking care of him. She has been meeting his needs.

She has been a major part in God's plan for Elijah by taking care of him. And he's concerned about her. He's enjoyed her hospitality and he is moved because she has been so gracious to him.

[14 : 36] He wants to help her. And it can be seen, first of all, in his prayer. Excuse me. Notice his prayer on behalf of the widow.

He's revealing a heart of somebody who knows God and cares about others. Do we know God? And do we care about others?

He is, as it talks about in Galatians 6.2, about fulfilling the law of Christ. He's bearing a burden for someone else.

He's bearing her burden. So in the way he prays for her, we see that he cares about what's going on. Look at the position. Seen in his position as well.

He humbled himself and he stretched himself out on the body three times. Think about what is happening here. He has a dead body laying in his bed.

[15 : 43] He is laying himself on top of that body three times. Now, Elijah knows the law. Elijah knows the word of God. And in Numbers 19.11, He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

He's knowing that he's going to be unclean. He's going to not be able to go into synagogue or temple or anything like that. He's not going to be able to have that fellowship with others for seven days because of what he is doing.

But he's willing to do it. He's willing to humble himself and to reach out for another. He's willing to do things that he normally wouldn't do but it's in order to help this lady and repay the kindness that she's shown to him.

He's willing to suffer loss so that she can gain. That's kind of the heart of ministry. We're willing to do whatever God wants us to do in order to be able to reach others.

Notice I said it's what God wants us to do. Not what we want to do. What God wants us to do so we might reach others. He's learned to feel the need of others and that's kind of what Christian service is about.

[17 : 07] When we look at people out in the world do we see them and have the compassion for them? They're lost and on their way to hell. And we have to have compassion for them and reach out to them.

It's also seen in verse 21 in his petition. Look at what he asked. Look at what he asked for. He's asking God to do something that has never been done before.

He's asking God to do something that no one has ever seen. First time in the Bible there's a recording of a body being raised from the dead.

First time. He's asking for something really special here. It's an amazing prayer that he's praying here. The faith and the trust he has in God is unbelievable.

He trusts God for things that no one has ever seen. He's trusting God. Nothing is impossible Elijah is saying. Nothing is impossible.

[18 : 17] You know you think about it. Elijah's world has been turned upside down since he went to see Ahab and Jezebel to deliver God's message to them and his life is never going to be the same.

and he's had to run he's had to hide and yet he still trusts God for everything that's taking place in his life.

And you think of how he might feel. You know how to get over those feelings that you've been abandoned how to get over those feelings that things aren't going your way how to get over those feelings that everything is wrong.

start working with somebody else. Start helping someone else. That's the surest and quickest way to get over worrying about what's going on with you is start helping someone.

And here's what he's basically saying Father I trust you to take care of me now use me to help another person. And Elijah's been doing that. God's taking care of him taking care of him taking care of him Lord now help me to help this lady.

[19 : 21] Philippians 2 4 says look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others. Be concerned about what others are facing and what they're seeing. Too often we're wrapped up in ourselves.

Too often we're wrapped up in what's going on with me. We don't even think about the needs of someone else. Next thing Elijah's conquest. Elijah's conquest.

Elijah sees God do great things. He sees him do the impossible before his very eyes. He sees it because he was prevailing in prayer. He understood the necessity of prayer.

He understood the importance of praying and spending time with God. God is honoring the faith of this prophet. God's God.

God is honored by God. God is honored by God. Because Elijah trusted God by faith. You know, a faith that honors God is a faith that is honored by God.

[20 : 24] A faith that honors God is a faith that is honored by God. Matthew chapter 21 verse 22. John 14 verse 23.

John 14 verse 23. John 16 verse 23. John 16 23 and 24. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto shall ye ask nothing in my name, ask, and it shall be given unto you, you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

1 John 5 14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us, and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Notice the difference in 1 John. We ask anything according to his will. Make sure that you remember it's not, I can just ask God anything, my old idea, Lord, I'd really like a Lamborghini.

[21 : 42] Do I need a Lamborghini? No. Is it going to help me anyway in my ministry? No. Am I probably going to get picked up for speeding? Yes.

So I don't need a Lamborghini according to his will. Make sure you ask according to his will. I know there are some people who go, oh, that will never work for me.

No, you're probably right, it won't, because you're not asking in faith. Remember in James, James chapter 1, starting at verse 6, he says, but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like the wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. God's not going to honor a lack of faith. We want to see our prayers answered.

We have to come like Elijah, believing what he's going to do. James 5, 16, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

[22 : 52] It's talking about Elijah, what he did. Let me close tonight with a little story. There was a small town where there were no liquor stores.

That would be nice. But, huh? East Machias, Maine? Okay, there's no liquor stores, okay. But they're close by in Machias. Eventually, they built a nightclub there, right on Main Street.

And members of the church in the area, churches, were disturbed by the idea that there was going to be a nightclub in the area serving liquor and stuff.

So they held some all-night prayer meetings. Not too long after those prayer meetings, the nightclub was struck by lightning and burned down. And the owner, knowing that the churches had had all-night prayer meetings, praying that the store would burn down, he sued them for damages.

And his attorney claimed that the prayers of the people of those churches were the cause of him losing his nightclub. and so he hired a lawyer to sue them.

[24 : 11] Well, the churches hired a lawyer as well to fight the charges. Think about that for a second. After it was all said and done, the judge said, it's the opinion of this court that wherever the guilt may lie, the tavern keeper is the one who believes in prayer while the church members do not.

Think about that. Do we believe in prayer? We're about to have prayer time. We're about to go to prayer here in a few minutes.

When we do, do we believe that God is listening? Do we believe that God is going to answer? Do we believe that God can do the impossible?

Do we believe God? Do we trust him? Again and again and again. Do we trust him to do what he says he will do? We'll stop there for tonight.