

Lessons from the life of Elijah

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[0:00] Let's go to James chapter 5 if you've got your Bibles. James chapter 5. And we'll just get that ready. There's all these technical things I'm trying to do at the same time. The Lord is good, isn't he?

Who's had a good week? Amen. Praise the Lord. Somebody has. Praise God. We're going to look at the life of Elijah.

Now, Elijah is a very special person in the Bible. The name Elijah is very special to me because it's the name of my first grandson, Elijah. And we can learn some lessons from Elijah, can't we, through the Word of God.

I love preaching on Elijah. And what is it that we can learn from the life of Elijah? Elijah, it translates, and it can translate into the 21st century.

What we can learn from this ancient prophet, we can translate that into the 21st century. Elijah was a mighty man of God, a great prophet of God.

[0:55] Now, our previous speaker had five points, breaking all the Baptist tradition of a three-point sermon. Five points. And I've got five points as well. But mind you, my sermon might go a little bit longer.

I know people were thanking me at the men's breakfast that my sermon was so short and to the point. And it was just 15 minutes. So that might be why they liked it, because it was short.

But this one will be a little bit longer, so bear with me, because we're going to look through some scriptures together and just touch on the life of Elijah. Elijah was a great prophet of God.

His name means, my God is the Lord. All set. My God is the Lord. And so we're going to learn some things about the Lord, Elijah's God, as we travel through 1 Kings together shortly.

But firstly, James will cover that. Elijah, he was a bit of an unknown. He kind of came out of nowhere. He was kind of a nobody coming out of nowhere. And our Lord talks about John the Baptist as being the greatest man ever.

[2:01] And it says of John how he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. That's Luke 1.17. Elijah's ministry was a turning point for Israel.

It marked the beginning of the end of Baal worship, as Elijah started the challenge against the false worship of the false god Baal. And the Lord used Elijah mightily to bring a needful message of repentance and of warning.

Elijah's life's journey took him through various stages. At times he had powerful victory, and yet at other times he had weakness. We can relate to him, I trust.

Elijah saw the power of God at work, and at other times he was weak. He knew depression and fear, yet God used him. And James described Elijah for us when he described how to pray.

He encourages us to pray. In James chapter 5, we read, Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that you may be healed.

[3:03] The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain.

And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

I know it was kind of coincidental. The first song that we sang, which was on the theme of revival, was talking about the abundance of rain. The showers of rain, the showers of blessing.

We could do some tangible showers of real physical H₂O at the moment, but this is talking about that sense of God's refreshing, of God's blessing. And we see revival in Elijah's life as he prayed.

As we take a look at Elijah's life, we see that he was empowered by prayer. And God will use such a man. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

[4:11] A righteous man and effectual fervent prayer. Here's how the story unfolds. If you turn with me to 1 Kings 17, where Elijah arrives on the scene.

And this was about 100 years after the time of King David. David had set this high standard of faithfulness, of integrity in serving the Lord, the one true God.

But things were now different. King Ahab was on the throne of Judah. And under his leadership, the nation had fallen deeper and deeper into idolatry, into idol worship.

And the nation he led was in darkness following after Baal. We see that in 1 Kings 17 from verse 1. 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.

This was quite a confrontation. Elijah, this unknown prophet, before Ahab, the king of the nation. And Elijah spoke on behalf of, notice, the living God.

[5:22] Elijah spoke on behalf of the living God. Not just some idol made of wood or stone or metal, but the living God, the God who is alive.

And Elijah's God was the God whom he served. He said he stood for him. He stood before him. He stood for him as a servant of God. Ahab had done more to provoke God to anger than all the kings of Israel before him.

It says that in 1 Kings 16, 33. Ahab had provoked God to anger. So Elijah stood boldly now before this wicked and godless king.

And he gave it like it was. He hid him between the eyeballs. He was very brave to eyeball Ahab, to confront this king of the nation like this. Imagine if we were to come and confront some politician or, you know, not that they're anything like a king.

But you think of someone who's kind of got authority over you. Maybe authority to put you to death if you displease them. This was Elijah's situation. As he confronted the king face to face.

[6:32] And Elijah declared that the rain would not fall. This was really an attack on the false god of his day because Baal, as people considered him, was the rain god.

The rain god. And Elijah told how the living and true God was going to bring a severe judgment on the nation to stir them to action. Elijah proclaimed that it would not rain.

And next God warned Elijah to go and hide. And notice, really, you could say, my first point, the word of the Lord.

Elijah, his name means my God is the Lord. And notice, firstly here, the word of the Lord. One of the things that stands out to me in Elijah's story.

1 Kings 17 from verse 2. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, get thee hence and turn thee eastward and hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan.

[7:39] Elijah went out into the wilderness. Notice, he separated himself from the evil around him. You know, don't hang around evil. He could not fellowship with the evil king and his wickedness.

Don't stick around the evil. Get out of it. The word of the Lord said to Elijah, get out. And Elijah obeyed the word of the Lord. And he went out into the desert.

And God supplied his needs there. We see from verse 4. 1 Kings 17 verse 4. Notice here again, and it's repeated, a repeated theme.

That Elijah heard and he acted upon the word of the Lord. He went and he did according to the word of the Lord. Whatever you do in life, be sure of this.

Be sure to be led by the word of the living God. Be sure to be led by the word of the Lord. Make it your guidebook for life. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

[8:54] Get the message, the message of the book, the book of God, the word of God, the Bible. Find the saviour it tells you of. Receive his salvation. He offers to you in his word, the word of the Lord.

Verse 6 it says, and the ravens brought him bread. And that was quite an unusual thing. Imagine a raven come and bring you your breakfast in the morning and your evening meal.

It says that the ravens brought him the bread, the food and the flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening. And he drank of the brook. What an amazing account we see here that Elijah drank from the brook.

And every morning and evening he was miraculously fed by the ravens. The Lord sent those ravens and the Lord sustained him in a miraculous way.

In this time of great trouble and drought and famine, he trusted in the Lord and God took care of him. Friends, trust in the Lord and he will take care of you.

[9:56] Trust in the Lord and he will take care of you. And now he was to face another test as we read from verse 7. And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up.

The brook dried up. And because there had been no rain in the land. Notice the word of the Lord came to him again in verse 8. The word of the Lord came unto him saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon and dwell there.

Behold, I have commanded a widow, woman, there to sustain thee. The Lord says, get up and get out again. Get out, get out to Zarephath.

The Lord sent Elijah to Zarephath. This was the home of Jezebel. It was the capital city of Baal worship. This was right, really in hostile enemy territory.

You could say it was a dangerous place that the Lord sent Elijah to. Yet God was with Elijah. And Elijah went, of all people, to a widow, woman.

[11:04] Why would God send Elijah, you know, this man of God, to a woman with scarcely nothing? She had next to nothing.

She was poverty stricken. Verse 10, we read of her. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow, woman, was there gathering of sticks.

And he called to her and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

Verse 12, and she said, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruise.

And behold, I'm gathering two sticks that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die. She was a poor woman.

[12:10] Her last meal here, about to die. All hope was gone. It was hopeless.

A hopeless situation. Now, I was reflecting as I was thinking about some, as we like to alliterate and make points as preachers, we think Elijah asked for a little cake.

And she said, I've just got a little oil. Later we'll see he saw a little cloud. And you see his prayers were quite little as well.

Just a thought. It was very little. Very small things in Elijah's life made a big difference. Amen. And here was this little, poor little woman in this hopeless situation.

She said, I've only got this tiny little bit, just this tiny little bit that I've treasured and held to this time. Everything else has run out. My pantry's bare. I've got nothing but this little bit.

[13:12] And it's for me and my son. It was her last meal. And she said, we're going to eat it. And then we're going to die. Here she was faced with a choice.

Obey God and give it to Elijah. Or just eat it herself and feed it to her son. And it's all over. Red Rover. It's like one preacher put it.

God doesn't look at how much we give, but how much we give in proportion to how much we keep. God was asking her to give everything over to God. To give everything over.

Verse 13. And Elijah said unto her, fear not, go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first. Make me thereof a little cake first.

And bring it unto me. And after make for thee and my son. Sorry, and for thy son. Would she choose fear or faith? Would she believe God?

[14:12] Would she believe the word of God through the man of God and receive the blessing of God, the promise of God? Or would she doubt and despair and disbelieve?

The woman believed God. Friends, you can believe God, whatever your situation, can't you? You can put your trust in him, can't you? Simply trust him with the little that you have.

She believed the word of God. And Elijah told her, don't be afraid, but go and bake a small cake for him first. And thereafter, the God of Israel would provide for them all an unfailing supply of both oil

and food.

Notice she took that little oil, that little substance that she had, the meal, the, I guess, the grain that she had to bake into that little cake.

And notice we consider first what the Lord would have us do. Consider firstly that. Set your affection firstly on things above.

[15:17] Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Everything else is secondary. Our first consideration. Seek God. Seek God's will. Seek God's way.

Seek to please God. Let God rule in your heart first. Put God first. Let God rule there. Let him have the glory. Let him be preeminent.

Because he is. He is preeminent. In all things, let him be preeminent. Let your faith conquer your doubts and fears. And she believed the word of God. And the prophet gave God's word to her in verse 14.

For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste. Neither shall the cruise of oil fail until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. The prophet, the word of God through the man of God said, God will not fail you.

He will supply. He will provide. And she believed God. She obeyed the prophet's command. She obeyed the word of God. She trusted in the Lord. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

[16:23] Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him. He shall direct thy paths. We see verse 14, 15. That she went and did according to the saying of Elijah.

And she and he and her house did eat many days. She gave and God gave back to her manifold more. She gave and God provided her son, the prophet and herself in a supernatural way.

The woman chose to obey God in faith. When we obey the Lord, he will make the way. He will provide. Verse 16. And the barrel of meal wasted not.

Neither did the cruise of oil fail. According to the word of the Lord. The word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. And it ended up she didn't run out of food for the whole time of this famine.

Three years. The situation looked like it was desperate, impossible for God to provide. This was her last meal. This was the end of everything she had.

[17:30] Trust him. Only trust him. With the little that you have, trust him. Next up, the woman's son becomes sick and dies. And when we step out for God, it's not all plain sailing.

You'll face some hardship. You'll face some testing times. This was true for this widow woman. Her little son became sick and died.

Step out for God. And keep on stepping out, even when things aren't how you want them to be. Keep on believing.

Elijah prayed for him. And by God's grace, her son was restored back to life. And we see verse 21. How it happened is he cried unto the Lord. And he said, Oh, Lord, my God, I pray thee.

Let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah. And the soul of the child came into him again. And he revived. Notice, sir.

[18:28] Just a little prayer from Elijah. You might say, Oh, I find it hard to pray. Just pray a little prayer. Amen.

Just pray a little prayer. You know, to pray some big, long, flowery, impressive prayer. Pray to God, your Father. Pray a little prayer. A prayer of faith.

A prayer from your heart. And God heard the voice of Elijah in that little prayer that he prayed. Pray and God will answer.

God will answer. God hears us when we pray. The Lord heard this little prayer of this man. And God will hear your voice when you pray.

The widow woman had doubted, but now she saw that Elijah was a man of God. And we see 1 Kings 17, 24. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know.

[19:27] That thou art a man of God. And that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth. Dear saints of God, keep on believing. Keep on believing.

When you've given your all and still something goes wrong. When you face disaster and trouble and travail. Keep on believing. Don't stop believing.

And keep on praying. Keep on trusting God for your situation. Let nothing rob you of the victory that you have in Christ.

By faith. Claim it. You see, chapter 18, verse 1. And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord. There it is again.

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.

[20:25] And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria. The word of the Lord directed Elijah, Get up and go. Get up and go.

Get up and go to Ahab. Back into the danger zone. Into the very heartland. Into the very presence of the king.

And Elijah faced up to the king again. He stood before the king Ahab again. And when Ahab saw Elijah coming, he said, Oh, here comes trouble. Verse 17.

When it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? You're that troublemaker again. You're back here again to cause more trouble. But Elijah said, No.

It's not my fault. As much as Ahab tried to put the blame on Elijah, Elijah said, No, it's not my fault. But you and your father's house.

[21:23] That's why God's bringing his judgment here against this land. Because of your evil actions. Verse 18. And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou, you king, you and your father's house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord.

And thou hast followed Balaam. You've gone and followed these false gods. These idols. These Baal idols. You followed after Baal. That's why you're in trouble. That's why the nation is in trouble. That's why Australia is in trouble. Isn't it? We're following idols. It's a heathen, pagan land. Far, far from God. Elijah next faced this great contest now with the 850 false prophets on Mount Carmel. It would show how Baal had no power at all against the God of Israel. And it would show to Israel who was the true king. As we see from verse 19, Elijah called for this contest, this great competition between Baal and the Lord God, the living God.

Between the idols of the pagans and the living and true and alive God. The Lord God. And he said, send.

[22:38] He said this to the king. He says, send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel. And the prophets of Baal, 450. And the prophets of the groves, 400. Which eat at Jezebel's table.

Here was Elijah, outnumbered. 850 to one. Verse 20. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets together to the Mount Carmel.

This was coming now to crunch time. A great contest. This was, you know, bigger than the biggest wrestling match or boxing match or the biggest footy match. This was life and death.

This was truth and error. This was darkness and light. This was a fundamental encounter.

Verse 21. We see Elijah came unto all the people and said, how long halt ye? How long are you going to muck around? That's the Andrew Craig version. How long halt ye between two opinions?

[23:38] How long are you going to sit on the fence? How long are you going to be doing this argy-bargy where you're not deciding who you're going to follow? How long are you going to be this double-minded nation?

How long are you going to be stuck in this non-decision? How long halt ye between these two opinions? And if the Lord be God, follow him.

But if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him, not a word. And so the contest began.

Verse 22. Elijah said unto the people, I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men.

Let them therefore give us two bullocks and let them choose one bullock for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on wood and put no fire under. And I will dress the other bullock and lay it on wood and put no fire under.

Notice here what Elijah says. What he says here, verse 24. We've seen the word of the Lord. Now we've seen, on the second point already, the name of the Lord.

[24:44] The name of the Lord. This is the prophet of God who says, name means my God is the Lord. We've seen that he cared about the word of the Lord. Secondly, we see he cares about the name of the Lord.

And it says, Elijah tells them, call ye on the name of your gods. And I will call on the name of the Lord. And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.

And all the people answered and said, it is well spoken. Elijah said, I will call on the name of the Lord. You know, the Bible tells us today, for whosoever, that means absolutely anybody, shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

S-A-V-E-D. You can be saved today. Simply call on his name. Put your trust in him. Call on the name of the Lord and you shall be saved.

That's a great promise that's still available today, isn't it? The name of the Lord. It makes every difference to your heart to know the name of Jesus, the saving name of the saving living God.

[25:58] Call on his name, the name of Jesus. You know, that's the name that's above every other name. It tells of this name, neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name under heaven given among men.

Whereby we must be saved. There is power in the name of Jesus today. There is power to set you free. There's power to save your soul. There's power to secure your eternal destiny of heaven.

And your name can be written down if you know the name of Jesus. If you call on that name and receive his saving grace, there is power in his name today. And there's none other name, none other name, no other name of a religion, no other name of a so-called God, no other name of a so-called religious movement or a so-called religious book, but that name, the name of Jesus.

Verse 25, it goes on. Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, choose you one bullock for yourselves, dress it first for you many. Call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

Verse 26. And they took the bullock which was given them and they dressed it and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us.

[27:12] But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. They started to get really excited here, started to really enter into this.

And verse 27, and it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them and said, Cry aloud, for he is a God. Either he is talking or he's pursuing or he's on a journey or peradventure he's sleeping and must be awakened.

You know, it's as if their God's gone to sleep. There's just nothing. There's just nothing happening. And Elijah kind of had a bit of a go at them because he could see it was all in vain.

Verse 28. And they cried aloud and they cut themselves. You know, they started to slash themselves with knives and lancets, stabbing themselves, cutting themselves until the blood gushed out from them, upon them.

And verse 29. And it came to pass when midday was past that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. There was neither voice nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

[28:19] It was quite a show. This was a religious show. All of the nation of Israel was here. This was like a big gospel rock concert. You know, there were some religious people there these days. And there was much excitement.

There was much noise. There was much entertainment. And yet God was absent. God wasn't in the picture. And these prophets of Baal, they were leaping around, jumping around. There was all this hullabaloo.

And these zealous devotees of Baal, they were carrying on feverishly, madly screaming to their God all day long, rain down the fire, rain down the fire. But nothing happened.

There was much commotion, but there was no unction. No divine unction. It's a lot like churches these days, where there's a form of a show, there's a form of religion, yet the gospel is missing.

The true life, the name of the Lord is missing. Verse 30, we see, and Elijah said unto all the people, come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him.

[29:18] And notice they're seeing, we've seen the word of the Lord, we've seen the name of the Lord. Thirdly, we see the altar of the Lord. They'd forgotten about that. There was cobwebs all over it.

It was just needed a lot of dusting off. It was kind of crumbling and falling over. And Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

When we want to get closer to God, repair the altar, repair the altar, repair the altar. There's some need for repair work. When the altar is broken down, when we're not in communion with our God and King, when we neglect to worship, we neglect to pray.

The altar of the Lord was broken down. Much damage was done. Idle worship to repent of. And there was an altar to repair. They'd neglected their God. What about us?

What about us? An altar, what does it speak of? Speaks of sacrifice, of letting go, of yielding ourselves, and of giving over. How is the altar?

[30:23] Do we need to rebuild the place of prayer? Have we yielded ourselves on the altar? Ourselves on the altar? Have we yielded our life, our heart, our life, our future, our circumstances?

Have we yielded ourselves on the altar to God? Do we need to renew our devotion? To build up spiritually what's been neglected, what's broken down?

Let's determine, brother, sister, determine, rebuild the altar, rebuild the altar. That is broken down.

Verse 31, And Elijah took 12 stones, according to the number of the tribes of the son of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name.

And with the stones, he built an altar, in the name of the Lord. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as he would contain two measures of seed. This was a big structure.

And he put the wood in order, and he cut the bullocks in pieces, and he laid them on the wood. Now notice here, I know some preachers sort of comment about the latter part of verse 33 there, that perhaps Elijah, if he had been a boy scout, he probably failed his campfire badge.

[31:39] Because he started to pour water on the altar. He started to pour water on it. He says, fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

This is crazy. We're about to have a fire here, and he's wetting the wood, he's wetting the beast, and he's wetting the stones, and he's wetting the trench all around it.

And this is just madness. Verse 33. And then he says, verse 34, do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, do it the third time.

And they did it the third time. And the water ran around the altar, about the altar, and he filled the trench also with water. So the wood and the altar and the sacrifice were well and truly sodden.

It was wet through. They're about to have a fire, and he's wetting it all. Now, some of us folk that live out in the scrub, we know, we kind of hate it when it rains, when we've got a fire about to start, and burn the rubbish, to start the fire.

[32:44] We think, oh no, it's raining at the wrong time. And this is, why was the water here at the wrong time? This just didn't make sense. But the point was, that they had to trust the Lord. Elijah had to trust the Lord.

And Elijah wanted to demonstrate, my faith is greater than the circumstance. My faith is greater than the water that's over this wood, and over this sacrifice. Elijah believed God that he would send the fire.

He would send the fire on the wet wood, and later he would believe God to send rain on the dry ground. We serve a God who can do beyond, above and beyond, beyond what is humanly possible.

And he can overcome the obstacles in your life, in mine, and he can help you to overcome. And he can send the fire from heaven still, can't he? He is still the living God, isn't he?

He's alive, as we've heard. He's a living God. He's the living God. The living saviour. And he can send the fire still, from heaven. Notice what happens next, verse 36, and it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, another little prayer.

[33:53] Just a little prayer. Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day, that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I've done all these things at thy word.

Hear me, O Lord, hear me, hear me, that this people may know, that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. He was concerned about the nation.

He was concerned about the people of God, to get things right. And Elijah prayed a prayer. It was only a short prayer, a simple prayer, a little prayer. You can pray such a prayer. You can pray a little prayer. Don't be afraid to pray, even just a few words. A little prayer. But it was a powerful prayer, wasn't it? You have the power of prayer. The power of prayer. Don't you, sister, brother? The power of prayer. And we have the same privilege to pray. We've got the same God that Elijah prayed to. And we can know his same working on our behalf.

[34:57] And where does it happen? It happens at the altar. And that's not meaning that we set up some crucifix, or some kind of religious, kind of holy, some idol worship, or something such as that.

No, you can go to the place of prayer when you're driving a car. You can go to the place of prayer when you're at the work site. You can go to the place of prayer when you're talking, when you're lying, resting in bed.

You can go to the place of prayer, wherever it be. When you're walking the dog, when you're watering the garden, you can come to the place of prayer. Because Jesus is there. It's where Jesus is.

That's what matters. Go to the altar. Go to the altar. And it was just a few short words, but powerful words. To the all-powerful God. Amen? To the all-powerful God.

Isn't he still such a God? Amen. The living God, the all-powerful God. And Elijah didn't have to resort to the antics, or the theatrics. He simply prayed. He simply prayed.

[36:02] He prayed. He prayed through. He believed God. Elijah trusted in the Lord God. We've seen the word of the Lord.

Believe it. We've seen the name of the Lord. Call upon it. We've seen the altar of the Lord. Rebuild it. And now we see what happened next. The fire of the Lord. The fire of the Lord came.

Verse 38. Then the fire of the Lord fell. And consumed the burnt sacrifice. And the wood and the stones and the dust. And licked up the water that was in the trench. When we pray, we see God move.

We see God move on our behalf. The fire of the Lord fell. And verse 39. It says, The people fell on their faces. When they saw, they fell on their faces.

And they said, The Lord, He is the God. The Lord, He is the God. God works in answer to believing prayer. And there is worship. When we trust Him, it leads us to worship.

[37:02] They didn't fall on their backs. They fell on their faces. They made confession. They said, The Lord, He is the God. The Lord, He is the God.

God answers by fire. And He answers prayer. Brother, sister, He can answer your prayer. You might say, Oh, I don't feel, I don't know how to pray.

Pray a little prayer. Just like Elijah. But believe when you pray. You shall receive. The fire of the Lord will consume some things. He will purge us. He will remove the dross when the fire comes. As it were, we might suffer some fire. And sometimes it's the fire of the Lord. But guess what? It says you're going to come forth as gold.

Doesn't it? There's some gold, there's some gold standard Christians here this morning. You've been through some things. You're gold. Gold. And what you've been through is gold.

[38:01] That kind of secular saying, Oh, that's gold. You know, that's something really important. That's precious. That's really something important. When we look back through those fire times, it's when it was the making of us, wasn't it?

You can think of that. I know there's people who can testify of that here this morning. I've been through the fire and I'm better for it. And the fire of the Lord will consume it, will purge, will remove the dross, the rubbish.

It'll help us to be stronger. It'll help us to be firmer. We shall come forth as gold. The trying of your faith is much more precious than of gold. That perishes. Next, we see that Elijah takes the strong action to deal with the false worship.

This is pretty heavy stuff here. And Elijah, verse 40, said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal. Let none of them escape. And they took them, and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and he slew them there.

People rounded up, and they executed their false prophets. They seized them. They put them to death. Error has to be firmly dealt with. Next, we see another answer to prayer.

[39:08] By faith, Elijah heard the sound. You know, we've had some sound problems here this morning, but Elijah heard that sound. Oh, that still, small voice.

That sound. The pitter patter. Sometimes I think that at night, but it's just the leaves. I think, oh, I wish it was the rain. But no, Elijah could hear the sound of an abundance, a rain.

Nobody else could hear it. But he could hear it. By faith, he heard the sound. And so, here was another answer to prayer. In verse 41, it says, that Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

Elijah proclaimed faith in too hot Ahab, how that the rain was on the horizon. Get ready for it. Elijah had not yet seen the rain. By faith, he heard it. And he had his servant go and get a weather report, as it were.

And he did this eight times. Go and have another look. Go and have another look. Go and have another look. Meantime, Elijah was praying, praying, praying. Finally, there was a little cloud.

[40:22] Just a little cloud. God can use little things. God can use little Christians, little prayers, little clouds, little cakes, little oil, little poor widow women.

God can use the little, because he will be powerful in your circumstance. Little is much. If God is in it. Amen. A small cloud can become a mighty flood.

God will answer your prayer. By fire, by flood, he will answer your prayer, one way or the other. And there is a sound of abundance of rain. Brother, sister, believe God as you pray.

Trust in him as you pray. Trust his promises. Trust that he will answer your prayer. Elijah told Ahab, you better get off, you better get moving, because there's some rain coming here, and it's going to slow you down.

And at this point, Elijah took off running to escape the torrent of rain and the anger of the king. And the long-awaited rain came pouring down. And next we see another, I think this is the last point.

[41:25] Yeah, the hand of the Lord. The hand of the Lord. We see this. My next point is here. Notice next, the hand of the Lord. It says of Elijah that he had the hand of the Lord with him, on him.

Verse 46, and the hand of the Lord was on Elijah. And he girded up his lines. You know, he got his, he tucked himself in and got ready. And he ran.

He got his running shoes on and he ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. If you're looking for direction, there's one place surely you must endeavor to be wherever that is under the hand of the Lord.

Let's stay under his hand. Amen. The hand of God. It's interesting. You could look at this, a repeated phrase, the hand of God, the hand of the Lord. It's an interesting phrase that is in the Bible numbers of times.

For example, we read in 1 Peter 5, humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time. Sometimes the Bible speaks of the hand of the Lord as being like a judgment.

[42:32] The hand of the Lord came on people and there was judgment there. The hand of the Lord, it speaks of his power. The right hand of the power on high. It speaks of God's authority of his power.

The hand of the Lord, it speaks of his direction. He points with his hand. Maybe he pushes us sometimes with his hand. As it were, he holds our hand. He takes us through as the shepherd would lead us.

He guides us with his hand. His hand speaks of his presence, of his blessing. And we want to be a church that is under the hand of God, under the hand of the Lord.

We see in Acts 11, the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord. How we want this? That the hand of the Lord is upon us. That God is upon us.

That God is leading us. That God is touching us. That God is holding us. That God is leading us. That God is taking us by his hand. And sometimes he's going to take us through the valley of the shadow of death.

[43:31] His hand will lead us. He will lead us. He will guide us. He will take us through. And we see God's hand on our lives, on our church, God helping us. Now we see with Elijah, as we come to a close, that Elijah was very human.

You might think, oh, I'm nothing like Elijah. Wow, what a man of God. Elijah was just like you and me. Amen. Brother, sister, just like you, just like me.

And we see him with Elijah. He was very human. The hand of the Lord was upon him, yet he suffered deep discouragement. Now some people think, oh, Christians don't get depressed.

Oh, that's, only unspiritual Christians get depressed. No, it's not true. It's the, we're human beings, aren't we? We're still flesh.

We still have the weariness of the flesh at times, the troubles of life, the rain falls on the just and the unjust. We're still human.

[44:31] And Elijah suffered deep discouragement. Don't think you're out of the will of God if you're feeling like you're going through something hard. The story goes on to tell how Elijah was himself an imperfect man.

He knew what it was to be overwhelmed, to be fearful, to be weighed down. He suffered threats. The son, the queen of the nation was threatening his very life.

And it says in 19 verse 3 that he ran for his life from Jezebel. He fled to the wilderness. He was exhausted. He was emotionally drained. It was like everything was going wrong.

And he knew that he was in danger. And in verse 4, Elijah sat glumly under a juniper tree. And he said, he requested for himself that he might die.

Now, sometimes we pray and God doesn't answer the prayer. This was a prayer of Elijah that God didn't answer. Amen? He requested for himself that he might die.

[45:30] And he said, it is enough. Now, O Lord, take away my life. Now, this is real for people. I met someone just a couple of days ago.

He showed me the slash in his arm. He tried to take his life. People can get that low. That was before he was saved. Now he's been gloriously saved.

God's transformed him. People can get desperate. Elijah was down and out, overwhelmed, fearful. Take away my life.

God's love. Certainly, Elijah was a man of like passions, wasn't he? Of like passions, like as we are. Yet the hand of the Lord was on him, yet he's still in your human weakness.

Brother, sister, we are weak. Vessels of clay. God has not left you.

[46:30] Even if you're sitting under a juniper tree right now, you might feel like, I can identify with Elijah here. I'm under that juniper tree, feeling just like him.

God has not left you. He's still with you. He's with you. He says, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. We see the human side of the man and it helps us think, wow, I can relate to that.

These were certainly discouraging days for Elijah. And what did he do? He cried unto the Lord. He said, I've been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down on altars and slain thy prophets with the sword.

And I, even I, only am left and they seek my life to take it away. And the Lord answered with this encouragement. If you need encouragement, tune into the word of the Lord.

Tune into that. Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, says the Lord, all the knees of which have not bowed unto Baal and every mouth which hath not kissed him. Interesting that here, unbeknownst to Elijah, there's seven thousand.

[47:46] Seven thousand men at that very time who were still true to God. They had not bowed to Baal. They'd refuse to worship Baal. We can feel, I'm on my own.

It's just me left. I just feel so alone. I'm on my own some here. There's nobody else who wants to stand up and do what is right and godly and true.

But there's others all around about you, brothers and sisters. And they can go through juniper tree times too, can't they? There's brothers and sisters all around you and they want to get alongside you.

You can get alongside them. Perhaps they have held back. You know, I think sometimes, perhaps in Elijah's day, they were standing back instead of standing up.

Where were the seven thousand? I haven't heard about them up until this point. They're all out there, but where are they? You know, they were standing back instead of standing up. We can make that mistake too.

[48:44] Being an unduly quiet Christian that we kind of blend in and no one knows we're a Christian. Perhaps they had held back from action when they also could have acted like Elijah did.

Will we be like the seven thousand? At least they did not bow the knee to Baal, but better still, be like Elijah. Amen. We can be like the seven thousand or we can be like Elijah.

It's better that we're in one of that number, but rather to be like Elijah. Be willing to take action. For all his weaknesses, he was willing to do something. And as his ministry drew to a close, he then passed it on.

As it were, he passed the baton on to Elisha as he threw his mantle in verse 19. And through his life, we see he encouraged others to come behind him.

We can see the provision of God. We can see the miracles of God. And then at the end, he was raptured in this whirlwind. In chapter 2, verse 11, he was raptured, gloriously taken.

[49:47] Friends, today God is looking for some Elijahs, people who will pray. Even little prayers. You know, some people call it like sentence prayers, don't they?

You can only get a sentence out. That's okay. God hears your prayer. It doesn't have to be long. It can be a little prayer. And God is looking for people who will pray. God is looking for people of courage.

There were 7,000 believers, but only one Elijah. May we be like Elijah. He showed courage. He stood boldly for his faith.

He announced the drought to Ahab. He challenged the false prophets. He showed courage in talking straight to Ahab and Jezebel. How we need people with Elijah's courage today.

People of faith. You are such a people. Elijah was a man of faith. He trusted the Lord to care in the wilderness and in the widow's home and God did. Friends, just think about these things as we close now.

[50:53] May we, like Elijah, know these five things. May we, like Elijah, know the word of the Lord. Be where the word of God is. Get where it is.

Get where it is. Let it enter your heart. Hide it in your heart.

Keep the word. The word of the Lord. Believe it. Faith comes by hearing. Hearing by the word of the Lord. The more we hear it, the more our faith can increase and strengthen.

The word of the Lord. Believe it. The name of the Lord. Call upon it. No other name can save. If you're not saved this morning, these words cannot help you.

But the name of the Lord can save you. The name of Jesus. Call upon it. Have you trusted him? Do you know him? The one who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

[51:57] No other name. No other religion. No other philosophy or thinking or values is going to do you any good. Only that one name. One name. The name of the Lord.

There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The name of the Lord. Call upon it. Trust Jesus as your Lord. Saviour. Receive his gift of salvation. The altar of the Lord.

Rebuild it. If you neglect it, your fellowship, your worship, your prayer life, rebuild it. Build it again. Ask God to restore that faith and strengthen it as you pray.

Even those little prayers at the altar of the Lord. The fire of the Lord. See God's answer. He will answer. He's the God who answers by fire. God will answer your prayer and he will amaze you.

And the hand of the Lord. Know his power. Know that you're under his hand. His hand is under you. Underneath of the everlasting arms. He says, no one can take you out of my hand and the Father's hand.

[52:58] He's got you covered by his hand. Be under the hand of the Lord. Know his power. And through it all, realize like Elijah, yes, I'm human.

I've got my weaknesses and they're only too real to me and I know them so well. I struggle with my humanity. But that's not to say, as Elijah under the juniper tree, thinking I'm all alone.

You're not. There's a whole body of people here around you that care about you, that are struggling like you are, that other human beings who by God's grace have called on the saviour.

And we're a body. We're a people, a family. There's a people all around you. You're not alone. You need not fear. And Elijah, he endured much.

Think of his life, long waits and long stretches of just leaning on God's strength. Three and a half years of famine. Three and a half years of a raven feeding him, a little widow woman feeding him.

[54:02] But God was supplying and Elijah teaches us to persist, to endure. When things are difficult, don't quit. Don't quit. Endure.

Persevere. The heartening thing is that the Bible tells us Elijah was a man just like the rest of us. Isn't that good? You think, as we know, the Bible is very honest.

It tells us warts and all. It doesn't paint people as being some superhero, some man or woman wearing a cape, as if they can, you know, that nothing can touch them.

But Bible heroes are human people. And we see the large number of them actually messed up badly. Elijah is just like the rest of us and we can relate to that.

He struggled with the same passions, the same doubts that we have. What made the difference? It was believing prayer. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

[55:02] That prayer that's effectual, it's empowered prayer, it's fervent prayer, it's vibrant prayer and it's the prayer of a righteous man. You might say, well, that counts me out, I'm not righteous.

Jesus is our righteousness. He is our righteousness. It's not of works that we have done. It's according to his mercy he saved us. God can make you brand new inside and outside.

He can fill your heart and soul and give you a clean heart, a clean mind. He can clean you up from the inside out. And Jesus will make you brand new again.

For the one time he makes you brand new and it's the brand new life from there on. And you can be a man like Elijah who is subject to like passions as we are and yet he prayed earnestly.

He prayed earnestly And God acted. Will we resort to prayer like Elijah? Let's be encouraged that way. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you.

[56:02] Your grace is oh, so, so sufficient. so, so sufficient. Lord, that you, our sufficiency is of God. And Lord, we see that you acted for Elijah in so many wonderful ways.

And Lord, these are not just stories we can read but truths that we can tell and we can act upon and make live in our own shoes. Lord, help us to be such a people. To be at least among the 7,000 that haven't bowed to Baal.

We're not going to bow to the false gods and idols of this world but we're going to bow our will and our hearts to you and help us by your strength to be like Elijah.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.