

Elijah – Prophet of Confrontation #7

Elijah and the Rain

1Ki 18:41-46

Introduction:

1. The battle was over and Jehovah was proclaimed as God
 - a. God has answered by fire
 - b. The prophets of Baal have been slain
 - c. Sin has been punished, and now God can bless the land
2. Rain is now on the way
3. If sin is causing our problems, then we must remove the sin to get rid of the problems
 - a. The people saw God answer and they gave Him the praise
 - b. The people killed the prophets of Baal at Elijah's command

I. The Passions of the Flesh – vs 41-42a

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,

A. The Revealing of Ahab – vs 41-42

1. Ahab's weakness is evident on Mt. Carmel
 - a) *Elijah was in control of the situation even though Ahab was king*
 - b) *Elijah ordered the 450 prophets of Baal killed*
 - c) *Perhaps the prophets looked to Ahab for help, but he was probably scared himself that he might be the next one killed*
2. He had probably not eaten all day
3. Ahab's quick compliance to the command showed how much he was controlled by the flesh
 - a) *He has just lost 450 prophets yet he is worried about eating and drinking*
 - b) *The drought was over the land and he was looking for grass for his horse and not worried about the people*
 - c) *Elijah had not eaten all day, but he went to prayer not to a banquet*
4. Often we are like Ahab
 - a) *A moving, challenging service goes a little long and our minds are on lunch, or the ball game that afternoon*
 - b) *Have a special prayer time and few show up, have a potluck dinner and see the crowds*

B. The Rejecting of Ahab

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. Elijah's command tells us that Ahab was not wanted for the time of prayer that Elijah had planned
2. Those dominated by the flesh are of no help in spiritual things
3. Nothing cuts us off so quickly from blessing and privilege as letting the flesh rule in our life

II. The Persistence of the Faithful

A. Persistence in Interest

1. Elijah's performance in front of the crowd was spectacular
2. When the crowds were gone, Elijah and his servant were dedicated to spiritual excellence
3. Elijah's attention span was not short, he didn't lose interest in spiritual things
4. Elijah has prayed in public and now he prays in secret
5. This would be like someone attending church Sunday morning and evening and then going home and having a prayer time
6. Our attention span is often not long when it comes to spiritual things

B. Persistence in Faith

1. Before He Prayed – vs 41

41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

- a) *Though the sky was empty of clouds, Elijah said there was a sound of abundance of rain*
- b) *“geshem” is used here which is a heavier rain than “matar”*
- c) *Elijah boldly predicted a heavy, abundant rain*
- d) *Faith has better hearing than the flesh*

2. After He Prayed – vs 43-44

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. 44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

- a) *Elijah's faith continued to show after he prayed even though he saw only a “little cloud”*
- b) *Even with a small cloud visible, Elijah warned Ahab to travel before the rain comes*

C. Persistence in Reverence – vs 42

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. When Elijah prayed he cast himself down upon the earth
2. His forehead was to the ground
3. This is the most humbling position one could take
 - a) *He met Ahab in righteous sternness*
 - b) *He stood before the thousands with grace and firmness*
 - c) *He met the prophets of Baal with mocking*
 - d) *He fell on his face before the Lord*
4. Elijah's victory did not cause him to lose his reverence for God
5. It is easy to get a promotion, have a few successes and then think that we don't need God anymore

D. Persistence in Prayer – Ja 5:17-18

17 Elias 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. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

1. Elijah prayed that it wouldn't rain and then prayed that it would rain
2. He continued to pray even though the assurance of rain was given
 - a) *Why pray when God already promised to send rain?*
 - b) *Promises are not given to stop praying, they are given to inspire prayer*
3. Elijah prayed even though there was a delay in the answer
 - a) *8 x he sent the servant to check for clouds*
 - b) *Finally one cloud appeared, but it was a little one*
 - c) *Elijah experienced what we all experience, delay in answers to prayer*
 - d) *Delay is not final denial*
 - e) *Delay checks our sincerity*
 - f) *Nothing kills praying like lack of persistence*

III. Pace of the Feet

A. Forced to Run

1. The dry, parched ground would turn into a sea of mud once the rain started
2. Iron chariot wheels would quickly sink into the mud unlike our pneumatic tires
3. Ahab left for Jezebel and Elijah is left standing there
 - a) *He should have offered Elijah a ride in his chariot*
 - b) *Elijah spared his life and proved he was the prophet of God*

B. Enabled to Run

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. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. 46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

1. Elijah ran and beat Ahab to the city
 - a) *He wore sandals -- had poor roads - had not eaten all day /tired*
 - b) *The distance could have been 26 miles – a marathon*
2. Elijah could do this because the hand of the Lord was upon him
3. We cannot do the work of the Lord well unless the hand of the Lord is upon us
4. We can't do it alone, we need God

C. Prepared to Run

1. Human responsibility is never left out in serving God
2. God will help us, but we must perform the duties ourselves
3. The hand of the Lord was on Elijah, but he girded up his loins and ran
 - a) *The loose flowing robe would hinder his travel*
 - b) *We are told to lay aside the weights so we can run unencumbered.*

Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
4. Many believers are so loaded with interests, pursuits, obligations that we can't even walk for God let alone run for Him
5. Note that in his excitement, Elijah did not enter the city with Ahab, but waited at the gate then went in later

Conclusion – Five components in Elijah's prayer

1. He separated himself - "top of Carmel"
 - a. Have a place where you meet with God
 - b. Have a place that is quiet and free from distractions so you can pray
2. Elijah humbled himself - "cast himself down on the earth"
 - a. Humility does not readily follow a great achievement or a great victory
 - b. Elijah had won the victory on Mt. Carmel, but he was still humble
3. Elijah was specific - vs 43 - "Go up look toward the sea"
 - a. Be specific in prayer
 - b. If you need a job, then pray for a job
 - c. If you are in sales, then ask for a sales job
4. Elijah was persistent - vs 44 - He sent his servant 7x
5. Elijah was expectant - vs 44 - a small cloud was seen
 - a. vs 44b - Ahab better leave for the rain comes and he gets stuck