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**2020: THE YEAR OF 2020 VISION**

## **Effective Prayer in Faith – We can do it too!**

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Sermon Notes from September 27, 2020

### **Effective Prayer in Faith - We can do it too!**

- **Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops (James 5:17-18). I've been reading through the Old Testament, and I came upon the stories of Elijah. Over the last few years, Elijah has become one of my favorite biblical characters. But as I read through the stories of his life yet again, I began to reflect on the biblical truth that Elijah was a human just like us. And yet, his life was so powerful, full of supernatural occurrences through Faith and prayer!**
- **Elijah lived an amazing life. He was fed by ravens. He saw the widow's supply of oil and flour miraculously never run out. He raised her son back to life. And he faced down the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel.**
- **What was it about Elijah that made his prayers, his life, so powerful and effective? What can we learn from the life of Elijah to help our own prayer lives?**

### **Elijah learned to be completely dependent on God**

- **After Elijah's first confrontation with King Ahab, God sent him to the Kerith Brook. There Elijah sat, no food, no provisions. But God saw his needs. It was there, with everything stripped away, that God sent ravens to bring him food. So Elijah did as the Lord told him and camped beside Kerith Brook, east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. 1 Kings 17:5-6**

- **Elijah was in hiding from the evil King Ahab. He had no way to meet his own needs. He was completely at the mercy of God himself, doing his best to walk in obedience. And God, Jehovah Jireh, provided as only He can.**
- **Even when the brook dried up, Elijah had no need to fear. His source of provision dried up, but his Faith in God didn't. He went to the widow of Zarephath, completely convinced of God's faithfulness to provide for his needs. And, as before, God did what only He could do.**

### **What seems impossible to you is not impossible with God**

#### **1 Kings 17:7-12 New International Version (NIV)**

7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food." 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." 12 "As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

### **God's Favor on your life will help take care of others as well if they trust and obey God**

#### **1 Kings 17:13-16 (NIV)**

13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.'" 15 **She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.** 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

### **Elijah prayed boldly for God-sized miracles**

- **Elijah didn't mess around with small requests for God. He went straight to big requests. Pray for a drought in the land. Raise the widow's son from the dead. Call down fire from heaven to consume the offering on Mount Carmel.**
- **At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. Immediately the fire of the Lord flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! 1 Kings 18:36, 38**

- **Elijah was bold. He asked with incredible faith, believing that God was able. He believed that God was faithful, that He answers prayers. He called on God with enough faith to believe God would answer even the most audacious prayer.**
- **And, without fail, God answered those audacious prayers. He poured out His power repeatedly, giving Elijah opportunity to proclaim God's greatness.**

### **Elijah prayed fervently until he saw the answer**

- **Elijah knew that sometimes an answer doesn't come immediately. He knew that we must pray until we see the breakthrough. And, he was committed for the long haul.**
- **Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his face between his knees. Then he said to his servant, "Go and look out toward the sea." The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, "I didn't see anything." Seven times Elijah told him to go and look. Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, "I saw a little cloud about the size of a man's hand rising from the sea." Then Elijah shouted, "Hurry to Ahab and tell him, 'Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don't hurry, the rain will stop you!'" And soon the sky was black with clouds. A heavy wind brought a terrific rainstorm, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel. 1 Kings 18:42b-45**
- **Elijah had prayed the drought into existence. Now, it was time for the drought to end. He began to petition the God of the universe for rain. Not a little rain, but enough rain to quench the thirst of the land. He asked. No response. He asked again. Still no response. Seven times he asked and sent his servant to look for an answer. He prayed expecting an answer.**
- **Finally, after seven times, a small cloud began to form. Even just a small indication that God had heard his prayer was enough. He knew a small cloud indicated God was moving in response to his prayers. And, God did exactly what he asked. He ended the drought. He sent rain on the land.**
- **Elijah prayed through until he received an answer. How can we tap into God's power? How can we, everyday-people just like Elijah, experience the power of God moving in response to our prayers?**
- **Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. James 5:16**

## **Effective Prayer in Faith - We can do it too!**

- **We must be willing to confess our sins. We must admit our weaknesses, our failures. It's in admitting our sins, in being honest and vulnerable with others, that we find healing. It's through praying with others and for others that we find ourselves focusing on the character of God, on his faithfulness. It's through confession and prayer that we position ourselves to live righteous lives, to see answers to our prayers.**
- **We must pray earnestly, fervently. We must not give up. We must continually come before the Father asking Him to hear us, to answer. We must have an attitude of expectation (Psalm 5:3), believing that God is able and willing to answer our prayers.**
- **We must remember that it is God's faithfulness that we are calling on, His character. It's about a God who longs to connect with us, to help us in our time of need. We must have faith that He is willing and able to do far more than we could ever ask or imagine.**
- **We must remember prayer is about ordinary people calling on an Omnipotent God in faith trusting His Word above our circumstances. Is today your day of being part of a miracle?**