

# PRAYER THAT WORKS

**PRAYER SECRETS FROM ELIJAH ON MT. CARMEL  
THAT STILL WORK TODAY**

James 5:16,18/1 Kings 18:44-46



## **MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING**

- ◆ THE PASSIONS OF ELIJAH
- ◆ THE PRAYING OF ELIJAH
- ◆ THE PRIZE OF ELIJAH

**“Elijah cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,  
and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.  
And he went up and looked and said, There is nothing.” (1 Kings 18:42,43)**

Bill Kirk

# PRAYER THAT WORKS

**Text:** James 5:17,18/I Kings 18:41-46

**Subject:** MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING.

## INTRODUCTION

**Fact:** Saul, David and Solomon had ruled Israel for 120 years.

**Fact:** After Solomon's death, his son took action which divided the nation.

**Fact:** His son (greedy for power and wealth) had an arch rival in the north named Jeroboam.

**Fact:** Jeroboam was the first of 19 wicked kings to rule before Israel was destroyed in 722 B.C. by the Assyrians.

**Fact:** There were seven kings leading up to Elijah's appearance (Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri and Ahab).

- ◆ Ahab married Jezebel (an unlawful marriage according to the Mosaic Law).
- ◆ Ahab accepted Jezebel's god (Baal was the deity of the Canaanite pantheon which was supposed to have controlled both rain and fertility).
- ◆ Ahab worshipped this pagan god Baal and constructed a "House of Baal" in Samaria.
- ◆ Ahab's wickedness was greater than all of his predecessors. (I Kings 16:33)

### In the midst of Ahab's reign – Elijah appears

1. Elijah's name means "God is my strength".
  2. Elijah's birthplace was the village of Tishbe.
  3. Elijah's boldness is seen as he pronounces the judgement of God upon Ahab in I Kings 17:1.
- ◆ The drought was God's wrath because of the false prophets of Baal in Israel.
  - ◆ The false prophets had been holding the people of God in spiritual bondage.
  - ◆ The Lord would vindicate His truth, His people and His servant, Elijah.

**Question:** Was it easy for Elijah? (Not hardly)

1. In **Cherith**, the water dried up.
2. In **Zarephath**, the widow's son died.
3. In **Beersheba**, the weariness of Elijah.
  - ◆ As Jezebel threatens to kill Elijah and Elijah is at an all time low; I Kings 19:4; "And Elijah requested for himself that he might die." But,
4. In **Carmel** Elijah prays and waits for rain.
  - ◆ And in the New Testament (James 5:17,18) the Lord promises to honor praying like Elijah's kind of praying!

**Question:** How many of you want to see answers to your prayers?

**Question:** How many of you still believe that prayer sees God's will be done on earth?

## I. The Passions Of Elijah

(James 5:17) "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are."

**Question:** What does it mean that Elijah was subject to the same passions as myself?

**Answer:** It means something that encourages us all:

- ◆ It means that Elijah had the same nature we have.
- ◆ It means that Elijah had the same feelings we have.
- ◆ It means that Elijah had the same hurdles we have.

**Question:** What did Elijah face that encourages you in prayer?

1. He encountered **disappointments**.

- ◆ God told Elijah to go to Cherith and that the brook would sustain him. (I Kings 17:4,7)
- ◆ Yet, after he went, over time the brook dried up.
- ◆ And God never told him in advance that the brook would disappear.

**Question:** Has your heart been disappointed by something unexpected?

2. Elijah faced the **unknown**.

- ◆ After Cherith, God told Elijah to go to Zarephath, and that a poor widow would take care of him.
- ◆ Zarephath was 100 miles from Cherith, and Elijah would face uncertain provisions.

**Question:** Are you facing some unknown things before you and you are not sure what to do?

3. Elijah experienced **depression**.

- ◆ Following the miracles of fire and rain on Mt. Carmel, wicked Jezebel promised that Elijah would be killed in 24 hours.
- ◆ So, Elijah runs in fear for 18 miles into the wilderness and prays a suicidal prayer in I Kings 19:4; "It's over God, take my life, I quit, I'm done."

**Question:** Has discouragement or depression found its way into your heart?

- ◆ You mean, I don't have to be on top of the world to pray?
- ◆ You mean, I don't have to have it all together to pray?
- ◆ You mean, I can be disappointed, uncertain and not jumping with joy to press into God in prayer?

**That's what James 5:16 & 17 is all about**

- ◆ (V. 16) The effectual fervent prayer of the saved availeth much, and

- ◆ (V. 17) Just look at Elijah and be encouraged that God who answered his prayers is going to answer your prayers.

## II. **The Praying Of Elijah** (Now remember)

- ◆ King Ahab and his queen had led Israel away from the Lord.
- ◆ God judged the nation by withholding the needed rain.
- ◆ For 3 ½ years there was crop failure because of drought.
- ◆ Elijah then challenged the priests of Baal at Mt. Carmel and,
- ◆ God sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice and vindicate His name,
- ◆ Yet, the nation was still in desperate need for rain.
- ◆ So, Elijah went to the top of Mt. Carmel and believed something.

**Question:** What was it that Elijah believed?

**Answer:** He believed that God wanted to answer his prayer!

**Question:** What kind of praying did Elijah do?

**Question:** How does Elijah's praying encourage me?

**Question:** Why did God tell me to look at Elijah's answer to find answers for myself?

### IN I KINGS 18:41-46, PRAYING SECRETS FROM MT. CARMEL

#### 1. There was **separation**. (V. 42A)

- ◆ In V. 42, King Ahab went back to the palace to eat, but Elijah went off to pray.
- ◆ Elijah heard in his spirit (in prayer) that God wanted to send rain.
- ◆ In fact, in V. 41, Elijah said "There is a sound of abundance of rain" even before there were any clouds, signs, drips or drops.

**Question:** How did Elijah hear the rain before the rain ever arrived?

**Answer:** Because Elijah learned there (and teaches us now) that our ears get opened in the prayer closet.

- ◆ You hear from God in your closet things that people who don't pray ever hear!
- ◆ You gain an audience with God in secret, when you separate yourself in public.

#### 2. There was **humility**. (V. 42B)

- ◆ Ahab goes up to feast while Elijah goes down to pray.
- ◆ (V. 42) "And he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees."
- ◆ This posture tells us that Elijah came to God with boldness, but in humility.
- ◆ No casual familiarity or carelessness,
- ◆ But absolute dependence upon God for the answer.

#### **You might say:**

I'm not going to bend my knee before God.

You'll never see me in front of the church on my face before God.

### **Remember:**

- ◆ If you are ashamed for God to see you now, God will be ashamed to see you later!

### 3. There was **expectation**. (V. 43)

- ◆ Elijah said to his servant, "Go up now and look toward the sea." (In other words)
- ◆ Elijah sent his servant to look for the clouds.
- ◆ Elijah's servant said (in V. 43) "I went, but I didn't see anything."
- ◆ Elijah said "Go back again." (Why?)  
Because Elijah believed that God could make something out of nothing!

### **I love what Elijah didn't do:**

1. He didn't pack it up and go home!
2. He didn't let the devil steal his promised rain!
3. He didn't blame the drought on those who really caused it!
4. He didn't let what he saw (nothing) rob him of what he couldn't see!
5. He didn't let his faith die with the discouraging report of his servant!

### **#1 – There was Separation, #2 – Humility, #3 - Faith**

### 4. There was **perseverance** (V.43B)

- ◆ The last two words of V. 43 are "seven times"
- ◆ Seven times can kill your expectations.
- ◆ Seven times can cause you to fizzle out.
- ◆ Seven times can make you say "what's the use?"

### **But Elijah said "Go back and check again."**

**Question:** Why did Elijah persevere, refuse to quit and send his servant back seven times to look for the answer?

**Answer:** Romans 4:16-18

V. 17B "Abraham believed God against all odds. Why? Because God **calls those things which are not, as though they were.**"

### **In Other Words**

- ◆ Abraham didn't know where to go or what to do.
- ◆ But Abraham believed that God, through prayer, could make something out of nothing!

## **III. The Prize of Elijah (I Kings 18:44)**

**Question:** What happens to those who persevere?

**Answer:** The servant tells Elijah:

"I see a little cloud the size of a man's hand rising from the sea."

**Fact:** Elijah tells his servant seven times, "Go back, I know the answer's coming."

**Fact:** The servant then tells Elijah,  
"It's here, it's here, it's here." "A cloud is coming up boss!"

**Question:** What's the Holy Spirit saying to you?

**Answer:** He is saying, "What God has for you is coming up!"

◆ A cloud is coming up! ◆ Prayer has been rewarded! ◆ Your answer is on the way!

### **What's the danger? Three words:**

- ◆ V. 43, "There is nothing" can kill your expectation.
- ◆ "There is nothing" can thwart God's objective.
- ◆ "There is nothing: that can dent your enthusiasm.

### **But V. 45 says "It came to pass."**

**Question:** What came to pass?

**Answer:** The answer that proves that prayer still works!

**Question:** What is God saying to us here?

1. The cloud is coming up!
2. Just go back until you see the cloud!
3. Rain from God is about to pour!
4. Don't be deterred by the size of your visible picture.

### **Why not?**

- ◆ Because God is a specialist at making something out of nothing!

### **CONCLUSION**

**Question:** What happens when I commit myself to pray until?

**Answer:** Two things take place.

1. V. 45, There is an **answer** to prayer. ("There was great rain.")
2. V. 46, There is an **anointing** to prayer. ("And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah.")

**Question:** Do you want this?

**Answer:** Is this your desire? "The hand of the Lord upon you."

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