

[my\\_prayer@JC.GOD4](mailto:my_prayer@JC.GOD4)

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Godspeed - 1 Kings 18:41-46

Pastor Matt Messner

Faith Center

## Communion and baptisms

### Spoken word from Dave

*"Jesus died for our sins, we gotta give an amen. I had some problems before and some knew ones I'm in that made me work on my faith, Jesus died for our sins, no depending on friends, can't depend on my kin, so I give thanks up to him, I thank God and I pray. (x 2)  
First thing I say is thank God, second thing is thank God, because he's better than my ti-83 when comes to problems. The Fourth thing is thank god, fifth thing is thank god, cuz with out him I couldn't see and would still be in the blind. The Seventh thing is thank god, and nothing can replace him. When it comes up to my faith and me giving an amen,  
I done been through a lot, like the car of which I'm wishing, life lessons come and I'm trying to learn to deal with them. Because Jesus only had faith during times of his tempting, and I'm going to try me the same til the lord say im finish. There's no games or gimics, if there's no guts there's no glory, so I got to give thanks to one up above me. Because he constantly loves me, when they all stepped back, that's why I listen to the word before I listen to rap. The lords blessings make wealth, with no sorrow added, and I can't take possessions with me, but my faiths everlasting."*

### Introduction:

How long do you pray for something before you're done praying? How many times do you pray for a healing? How many times do you pray about your job? How many times do you pray for your family member who is struggling? How many times do you ask God to bring about a breakthrough in your life?

Once? Twice? Five times?

Today I am going to share two stories from the Bible that address these questions, and then we are going to let God apply them to our lives.

- I. The first one is found in the book of 1 Kings. In 1 Kings 17 a prophet by the name of Elijah had gone to king Ahab and had announced that it would not rain, for several years, except by Elijah's own word. Ahab and his wife Jezebel had the distinction of being the worst kings in the history of Israel and change needed to happen. Ahab

and Jezebel had tried to make Baal worship the official religion of Israel and had killed the prophets and priests of God. Baal worshippers believed that their god was the one who controlled the weather and by worshipping him they would have rain.

Sure enough, as Elijah had predicted, the rains ceased. Without rain, the crops withered and the drought became a famine. This went on for three years. It was as if Baal had died.

Then God spoke to Elijah and said, "Go present yourself to King Ahab and I will send rain on the land" (1 Kings 18:1).

After receiving that promise, Elijah has the great confrontation with the prophets of Baal, at which time Yahweh reveals Himself as God and the pagan priests are killed. Before you feel sorry for these priests of Baal, I should mention the fact that they incorporated human sacrifice into their "worship" and were guilty of murder, even the murder of innocent children.

In that showdown on Mount Carmel, the religious problem of Israel is powerfully and swiftly dealt with. Yahweh is again recognized as their God, which brings us to our story in 1 Kings 18:41

<sup>41</sup> And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain."

- A. (Vs 41). ***Step out in faith*** and get ready for the rain. There were no clouds. There was no rain falling. No one else could hear the rain. But God had spoken to Elijah, and he was confident, so he says, "Go, and get ready for the rain". In other words, ***prepare for what God is about to do.***

Don't live as if He hasn't spoken. He has spoken. Don't live as if God doesn't care. God does care. Put your house in order.

**Anticipate the breakthroughs that are promised in the Bible.** Before you can anticipate anything, you must be listening. Listening is a big part of praying. Praying is having a conversation with God, and the worst kind of conversation is one where only one person is talking the entire time.

<sup>42</sup> So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

<sup>43</sup> "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

"There is nothing there," he said.

Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

<sup>44</sup>The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea."

B. Vss. 42-44a: **Pray with passion and persistence.** (Persevering prayer)

Elijah has his servant look at the sky and he turns his attention towards God. It is easy to obsess over what we see and how we feel.

If our lives are based on what we see and feel, we can easily lose hope.

Elijah takes a posture in prayer that reflects passionate prayer.

He doesn't pray just once, or twice or three times. He keeps going to the Lord.

This is the most difficult place to be – the place between the promise and the fulfillment of the promise.

**Persevering prayer** is prayer based on the promises of God that have not yet been fulfilled.

Persevering prayer is based on future hope. **Repeated persevering prayers are steps towards the answer to your prayers.** They are steps along the way.

So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"

C. Vs. 44b: **Get ready for change**

- Prepare for growth. Prepare for freedom. Prepare for promotion. Anticipate a new season. The drought is over. (There was a girl named Lily who had been asking her parents if they would take her to Disneyland for a long time. She really wasn't prepared for her request to come true: Show Lily's Disneyland surprise. )
- "Small signs precede mighty works".
  - Great things have small beginnings
  - It's easy to get accustomed to having no answer, but then, suddenly, things can all come together at once.

<sup>45</sup>Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup>The power of the Lord came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

D. Vss. 45-46 **Move forward in His power**

The power of the Lord came upon him to do the impossible. He beats the chariot back to Jezreel,

and distance of approximately 14 miles. Roger Bannister wasn't the first man to break the four minute mile barrier. No. It was Elijah. Why did this happen? The Bible doesn't say exactly why, but I think it was important for him to get there ahead of Ahab in order to be the first one to deliver the news to the people regarding the defeat of Baal, so that everyone would know what really happened before they Jezebel reacted again. He had to get there first in order to proclaim the victory of God.

Isaiah 40:30-31.

Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;  
<sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the Lord (wait upon the Lord)  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.

When God answers your prayers, don't get stuck standing there as if nothing has changed. Get unstuck and move forward. Answered prayers are times for our lives to change.

II. The second story is found in Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.<sup>(a)</sup> <sup>2</sup>He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. <sup>3</sup>And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice<sup>(b)</sup> against my adversary.'  
<sup>4</sup>"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"<sup>(c)</sup>  
<sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Read vss. 1-8, and tell the story as you read it. (She is really upset. The judge is eventually afraid of her. She is desperate. She is persistent.)

#### Prayer lessons from the persistent widow:

- A. Give God time (keep praying) – We don't know how long the gap will be between our asking and the answer.
- B. Don't lose heart or give up – Have quiet patience and joyful confidence.

C. God is just and He is fast.

**Persevering prayer is powerful**

- Keep praying with confidence and faith
- Hold onto hope. (It's easy to lose hope while waiting. But waiting isn't standing around doing nothing.)
- The time of waiting is the time for praying. "Will he find faith on the earth?"

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*Other material:*

***Life demands patience and without patience we cannot enjoy the journey.***

***It took forever to graduate. It took forever to find a job. It took forever to...So many things take forever yet ironically we don't have enough time to do the things we want. Enjoy the "forever" feeling that waiting creates. Waiting slows down time in a world that is moving way to fast. In a world of instant gratification, patience is a quality that is hard to come by.***

*Patience is the art of hoping, the preserver of peace, the cherisher of love, the teacher of humility; Patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, refrains the hand, tramples upon temptations, endures persecutions, Patience produces unity in the church, loyalty in the State, harmony in families and societies; she comforts the poor and moderates the rich; she makes us humble in prosperity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by calumny and reproach; she teaches us to forgive those who have injured us, and to be the first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured; she delights the faithful, and invites the unbelieving; she adorns the woman, and approves the man; is loved in a child, praised in a young man, admired in an old man; she is beautiful in either sex and every age. Behold her appearance and her attire! Her countenance is calm and serene as the face of heaven unspotted by the shadow of a cloud; and no wrinkle of grief or anger is seen in her forehead. Her eyes are as the eyes of doves for meekness, and on her eyebrows sit cheerfulness and joy. Her mouth is lovely in silence; her complexion and color that of innocence and security; while, like the virgin, the daughter of Sion, she shakes her head at the adversary, despising, and laughing him to scorn. She is clothed in the robes of the martyrs, and in her hand she holds a sceptre in the form of a cross. She rides not in the whirlwind and stormy tempest of passion, but her throne is the humble and contrite heart, and her kingdom is the kingdom of peace.*

*BISHOP George HORNE, Discourses on Several Subjects and Occasions*