

## Prayer: Communicating with The Father Series: 6

### Elijah and the Prayer of Faith

#### James 5.13-18

**Prayer of Faith** - We see in the prayer-life of Elijah classic examples of the use of the Prayer of Faith

This isn't just the case of believing prayer as we need to believe for every prayer we pray.

Prayer of Faith is a particular type of prayer where the person praying has an unwavering faith in God and uses it purposefully in a way which will produce results. Faith is operated by words, of course not just any words but the basis of this prayer is the Word of God.

Before we turn to Elijah, let us take a look at what Jesus said about prayer and faith:

*"Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."* Matthew 21.18-22

He said a similar thing in Mark's gospel:

*"Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it..... Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."* Mark 11.12-14, 20-24

The keys -

- Jesus released words and spoke to the fig tree – He did not just say whatever He wanted, He only spoke what the Father told Him to say (John 8.26-32)
- He believed the words that He spoke
- He did not doubt that He would see the result he was expecting.

He went on to teach that we too should:

- release words and speak to the mountain (of difficulty, problem) – the word of God, that which God has already revealed.

- not doubt the words that we speak, but believe the words that we speak
- believe that we have received already – giving thanks

Notice that Jesus connected this speaking to the mountain with 'asking in prayer' (Matthew 21.22, Mark 11.24)

## 1 Kings 17.1, 14, 21-24

1 Kings 17.1 introduces very abruptly Elijah the Tishbite, a prophet of God. Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord, he did more to provoke God than any other king that had gone before him. Under his authority Jericho was rebuilt, which itself was a direct contravention of God's command (Joshua 6.26)

And Elijah... this connects the subject of this verse to the thought of the previous one. God spoke through Joshua and God spoke through Elijah

No Rain (v1) - *"As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand..."*.

- Here Elijah states that he is approaching Ahab on behalf of the Lord God. God had sent him to speak to Ahab, as He had sent Moses to Pharaoh.
- 'Before whom I stand' – a reference to prayer, standing before God in prayer. God revealed the things he was to say to Ahab as he prayed. Elijah prayed earnestly that there would be no rain
- '*According to my word*' - as God would it reveal to and through me

Flour Bin and Oil Jar (v14)

- Elijah declares to the widow what the Lord had revealed to him.

Child Revived (v21-24)

- (v24) The words in the mouth of the prophet were the words of the Lord God

## 1 Kings 18.20-38

Mt. Carmel Challenge.

- Elijah challenges the false prophets to a showdown on the mountain. Was he being presumptuous here? Was this a foolhardy thing to do? If he hadn't heard from God, then yes.
- (v36) *"I have done all these things at Your word"* - He did all these things as the Lord had spoken to him.

## 1 Kings 18.41-45

It Rains Again

Elijah sent his servant to look for the rain cloud. He expected rain. He expected an answer to his prayer.

## Lessons from Elijah

- Bold  
Elijah made bold statements, He knew His God.  
Look how many gallons of water were poured on the sacrifice – in the natural an impossibility to light
- A man who believed his own words  
We will have trouble believing God if we don't believe our own words. He expected God to honour his words, because they were also God's words.
- Short prayers  
We don't read of any long prayers that Elijah prayed e.g. the prayer he prayed on the mountain (v37)  
A man is not heard by God because of the many words that he may pray or the complexity of his prayer. God hears the prayer of a sincere heart prayed in faith.  
  
Peter didn't have the time to pray a long prayer when he was sinking in the sea. His prayer 'Lord, save me' was enough.

## James 5.13-18

- A man with a nature like ours.  
Suffered the same frustrations and temptations as we do. We see a little of his nature in 1 Kings 19. 2-4, 10
- He prayed earnestly  
We read in 1 Kings 17 that Elijah spoke, the apostle interprets that as prayer.
- God answered his prayer  
God honoured the word of Elijah