

The power of prayer in the life of Elijah (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Tyler, John Sperling (1912-1989)

[0 : 00] Let us read our text in the first book of the Kings, chapter the 19th, verses 11 and 12, with a special reference to the last clause.

The first book of the Kings, chapter the 19th, verses 11 and 12. And he said, And after the wind an earthquake, that the Lord was not in the earthquake.

And after the earthquake a fire, that the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a still, small voice, according to the inspired testimony of his servant James, the case of Elias, as he is termed there, in relation to an eminency of the Holy Ghost in prayer, was proverbial in the New Testament church.

The Church of God, obviously, has one glorious exemplar, our blessed Savior himself.

The one great spiritual objective of all those who are taught of God is to live to his glory, to honor him, to serve him, to follow him, to obey him, and to be made like him, and always to follow by grace his wondrous example.

[2 : 28] The Church also has those who are noble examples to her in the various aspects of the work and operations and power and graces and virtues of the Holy Ghost.

And it is very clear from the analogy used concerning the amazing creation of the human body by its great architect, God himself, as to the co-relationship between all the members of that body.

Consequently, in the higher analogy of faith, this co-relationship between all the members of Christ's mystical body, so you have your eye and you have your foot, and all the members set in the body according to his wisdom and grace and goodness, all under the divine influence and power of the glorious head divine, the Lord Jesus.

Now, what the point I want to make is this. It is therefore quite obvious that the various people of God have an eminency in various things.

When we go to our rest, when the Lord glorifies the justified in the annals of the Church, there is this divine record and remembrance of his saints.

[4 : 24] You would say, this dear man had an eminency in prayer and his special gift and grace to pray.

You will say, here was a great burden-bearer of the Church. Here was a pillar. Here was a man of great discernment.

He was a matriarch, a true mother in Israel, eminency. So, it is clear from the epistle of James that Elias or Elijah, his case was proverbial to them for this eminency in prayer.

how wonderful it is to be blessed with special grace and wonderful access and sweet liberty and power in prayer.

Let me now take the further step, the testimony of James the Holy Ghost concerning prayer in relation to Elias would be a complete enigma to a graceless person or to a dead professor and also might appear initially to the unlearned, mysterious, even to those with the life of God in their souls.

- [6 : 07] I cite, Elias was a man subject to life passions as we are and he prayed earnestly. You'll say amen. Wonderful to pray earnestly. That is with all the fervency of the Spirit. Now the mystery.
- And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain. Can you understand that? Would you be able to define the meaning of that?
- This great prophet in Israel and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain having due regard to the effect of a prolonged route and let us take the scripture and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.
- His prayer was answered. What is the answer to that enigma? That is, to human sagacity it is. Whatever would you say if such a prayer ascended with fervency to God in Britain today that it might not rain.
- [7 : 37] All you who are engaged in husbandry in this rural area will appreciate the result of a prolonged route.
- There was a famine. What I am endeavouring to do is to work out the background with you of the scripture that is before us so that you may see it in its beauty and wonder and clemency divine.
- Three and a half years of drought. Why did he pray that it might not rain? Antecede me.
- See if you can answer it. Well, it is quite obvious. Two things stand before us. One is, Elijah, this great prophet, had an overwhelming and overriding concern for one thing.
- Namely, the glory of his God and the public and universal vindication of the holy, righteous, just character of his God.
- [9 : 03] Have we this overwhelming desire for the glory of God? We lack this. Everything is moribund. to God's people, especially to his ministers, to great leaders, to all those divinely anointed, there will be this overwhelming concern and wish for the glory of God and that his great name and his holy, righteous, just character should be publicly and universally vindicated around the whole planet.
- Now, that is one thing. The other is this. Being in the reign of wicked Ahab, there was gross iniquity and wickedness in Israel.
- Now, you may well see why he was led, taught, inspired to pray earnestly that it might not rain. That this sin-laden people so perverse and so determined to continue in their course of rebellion that they should know that God reigns and that he is a holy, just God.
- That you cannot just sin against him and he winked at it. Consequently, the three and a half years of drought, the Lord knows what this meant to me a few years ago when we had that prolonged drought.
- when all the green nests disappeared almost from the landscape. No rain.
- [11 : 07] You will remember that season. And actually, this scripture, I believe, the Lord enabled me to plead before him.
- That is concerning the still, small voice, especially that little cloud and so on. So, we just underline a truth that is sometimes forgotten, the judgments of God.
- And those judgments are sent to nations, to the human race, to towns and cities and counties and families and people.
- Judgments, God's judgments. And they're in relation to their behavior, their conduct and so on.
- Let us therefore pause this morning in our discourse to thank God for his amazing mercy and compassion and clemency vouchsafed to us so far in the United Kingdom.

[12 : 21] Nothing catastrophic has come to the shores of these islands. No tidal wave, no earthquake, no erupting volcano, no vast destruction of life, no two or three years of famine.

Just think of the mercy and clemency of God toward us when we are so wicked as a nation. But now he prayed that it might not rain.

This people, remember they were God's people, that is his nation. I do not mean that they were all his people by election, but they were his nation.

Now they're going to know that he is God. He visits for transgression, for iniquity. I'm sure that the young people here, the dear younger friends, are well instructed in the ways of truth, at least mentally, and I hope spiritually so.

The Lord ever help you girls and boys to walk in moral rectitude, to walk in those ways that are laid out in the word of God as pleasing in his sight, because if there is a departure from these ways, one day God's judgments come.

[13 : 57] Do any of you feel, any of you boys and girls feel to be great sinners this morning? Are any of you fearful that because of your sins you will go to hell?

And you cannot tell anyone. We have in our text a day, that is, when we have developed the subject and reached this, we have a sweet word, the still small voice.

There's no wrath, no vindictive anger, nothing penal there, that the word of warning is issued.

The Lord help you to walk in all his statutes and commandments, in all that is right and acceptable in his sight.

So, the three and a half years of drought came, famine, and, consequently, the famine. Because, just for a moment, go back in this, take the settlement of man upon the earth, the creation of Adam, and how the world was populated, and if you go back in history, in the word of God, you'll find one thing, and that is, human beings always made a settlement where there was water.

[15 : 39] They dug a well, and there was water, and this is how all the cities and the towns sprang up, where there was water, and that is why forest folders flourished, because you've had living streams of water, that is spiritually.

In early civilization, in the history of mankind, they always settled where there was water, because it's futile to be in a place where there's no water.

You cannot survive. It is one of the essential elements. Now think of the three and a half years, no rain or dew, the famine, terrible famine, water, and the water.

I'm not, of course, on this, but it is worthy of mention, my mind often travels to, what is it, the something like 60 millions of people crowded in these islands.

And I think this, every morning when they open their eyes, think of the food they need, the milk, everything they need to feed that 60 millions of people. people. You see, we take things very much for granted, so much is on the doorstep and so on, but all the amazing goodness of God to supply our providential needs from the wells of creation and our spiritual needs from the wells of salvation.

[17 : 12] Just think of London with its nine millions of people, and they've all to be fed and nourished. think even of the, those who are hospitalized, at all times there are a million people in the hospitals of Britain alone.

All have to be nourished and so on, cared for. Now think of three and a half years of drought, famine. He prayed earnestly that it might not rain.

Now this is the amazing thing, and if you are following me in depth, you will begin to perceive this. It is something very attractive to me, namely, with God, and you see just the same thing in reference to the first destruction of the earth by the element water.

You see this. Presently, divine vengeance retired, and out came sweet mercy.

Vengeance that had called for the just doom, retired to make sweet mercy roar. Mercy comes out. So, presently, the great prophet prays again.

[18 : 36] You see, you cannot pray just as you think you're going to pray. The Lord's people are under the influence and power of the Spirit, and you'll pray, that is, when you truly pray, you will pray according to the mind of the Spirit.

And you may not even be able to pray for what you thought you were going to pray for. You may have gone many times to the throne of grace, and your anticipation was that you would pray that God would take something away that is troubling you, or rather distressing.

And when you get to the throne of grace, you can't pray for it. You have to say, Lord, sanctify it, and let thy grace be all sufficient. And let me fall into thy blessed hands, and in thy time mercifully deliver me.

But we're not our own, you see. You can't just pray. You might say, oh, I'm going to pray about this, I'm going to pray that a certain thing should take place, and you can't pray for it.

And one day you'll know why. So look, you look at Elijah for a moment, to use a term that is explanatory. he was polarized.

[20 : 04] He was praying that it might not rain. Presently, he prayed again, and then he prayed that it might rain. And the Lord heard that prayer.

For he sent the rain, and the earth brought forth her fruits. You see, if I could emphasize this point, it is by the inspiration of the Spirit that the people of God seek to pray, not according to their natural inclinations.

So now he prays that it might rain, and it did rain, standing as we do in the name of the Lord, and seeking his glory and honor.

How we seek now and at all times to magnify and extol and adore him, and think especially of this for his amazing mercy, the mercy of God.

It is so astonishing. It so surpasses all our powers, that is, the powers of the body, the mind, to conceive of the mercy of God.

[21 : 26] He's so merciful, and especially to the penitent. And so the Lord sent the rain again, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

What a woeful thing it is to have no rain, no moisture. rain. But now the Lord sends rain.

And if I just use the analogy of faith, and the equation, how this is applicable to the church of God, and to his dear people, and his ministers.

You may have times, you may not even be cognizant of the fact, at the time, but you may have times when you have really come into a degree of barrenness.

When you have tended to depart from the Lord, not externally, I don't mean, but before him, in his holy sight, you have grown rather lukewarm.

[22 : 38] Now, what a wonderful thing it is when the Lord again sends the rain, the dew, the unction of the Spirit upon your soul. Now, when there is a special season in the church, the Lord's sending rain, heavenly unction, and so much is accomplished amongst the flock, and souls quickened into life in the streets and passages of the city and in the highways and hedges, and the Lord sends rain, and the earth brings forth her fruit.

The earth brought forth her fruit there. Very sweet. I hope the Lord will bless you, boys and girls, that the work of the Holy Ghost may be in your souls, and that if any have departed, that this word may be fulfilled, a word that some of us have proved, and proved the power and love and goodness of God in an overwhelming degree, namely the parable, what man of you having an hundred sheep, if he should lose one?

No, I don't know, do I? But in this congregation this morning, you may have lost one. There may be one who is not here, who has departed, who has gone off into the wilderness and is entangled, but he will go after that one and disentangle it and lay it on his shoulder and come home and say rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

And the scripture says concerning this, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

So see the wonder what I am now dilating upon briefly is then the amazing nature of the season of rain, the dew, the coming of the Spirit, the return of the Spirit, so that your soul is blessed and the church is blessed.

[25 : 14] The earth brings forth her fruit, sweet to see the fruit in the church of God. In that beautiful chapter that we have quoted from, St. Luke 15, you have four things that were lost and are found.

They're all found. You have the lost sheep found. That's a wonderful thing, isn't it? When you come to ponder that, and you have the lost piece of silver, the three things, the lost piece of silver, the drachma, lost, and found.

And you have the poor, spendthrift son, lost, found. Beloved Newton, sailor and preacher, oh how he loved this.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

So what a remarkable thing this is. There are the lost things and they're found. We are able to speak with a special authority concerning this because we've proved it.

[26 : 50] found. May this therefore be a word of grace to your souls and also a happy harbinger concerning the things to come.

Now you may say to me at this stage, how does this harmonize with the text? Perfectly. All this is the still small voice.

It's mercy. not wrath, not vindictive anger, but the mercy and compassion and clemency of our God.

I just want to go aside. I have felt in my spirit just to lift up and highlight some of these beautiful things with the prophet.

You will know therefore that in this season of drought how the Lord cared for him, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

[27 : 58] Is there anything sweeter than that? And so he gave him a directive by the brook careth, and there the ravens would banquet him.

He would drink of the brook and also feast upon the banquet. Do you see the providence of God, his goodness to you?

Presently the brook dried up. There is of course a wealth of matter there for his beloved people, for faith, to realize that the dear Lord indeed washes over and loves and cares for his beloved people.

There is the brook cureth, there is the banquet, to think that ravens should come and feed him in this amazing manner, and the brook dried up.

And you see there are these chapters in life, things change in that way. You pass on from one chapter to another, one chapter closes, another chapter opens.

[29 : 11] But the Lord was the author of it all, and the Lord gave him the sweet directive, he said arise, and go to Zarephath.

There is a widow woman there, poor widow, and the Lord will command her to sustain the prophet. And he comes according to the divine directive.

Let me say this to you, dear friends, how amazing it is to have the Lord as your father. You never need have any fear if he is your father.

So he sends him, and there she is, gathering sticks. They're going to make the last cake. and die.

That is the human outlook. Often the devil wants to cross my path when I speak of what I shall speak of now, and he says to me, well, with social security and the welfare state, and high wages, and plenty of money, of course, this really isn't very relevant.

[30 : 24] relevant. Now, it is. It is relevant. I know that the income of a household may be very high in some cases now, but I'm quite sure that there are some of the people of God, and I know it because I've walked it myself, who come into this place where they're squeezed and pressed, even providentially.

Businesses fail. The financial state of the Western world is precarious in many ways. Many are unemployed.

It is a state of flux. The mountains are carried into the midst of the sea. The earth is in a state of convulsion.

now for the Lord's people. What a sweet word. He said, yes, go, make the cake, but make one for me first, it's for the Lord first, and then you'll go on doing it.

For this crows of oil, very vital, this barrel of meal will neither waste nor fail until the Lord sends rain on the earth and the Lord fulfilled it.

[31 : 49] What a sweet thing that is. Many of you have been pressed in Providence, hard pressed. I know that the application of that word is really amazing, that is to say it covers a broad spectrum.

You may feel the same about your prayers, and we may feel the same about our preaching, sometimes so tried, as if you are making the last cake.

You may feel the same about your strength, but go on, he says it will not fail or waste, and the Lord did it. He accomplished it.

Now you may say, what about the text then? Cannot you see the skein of truth running right through the hole?

what is this? Is it the fire, the wind, the earthquake? No. It's a still, small voice. Mercy.

[32 : 54] Go on. And so the Lord fulfilled it. Wonderfully fulfilled it. All these miracles that the Lord performs for his waiting people.

And after the fire, a still, small voice. Blessed be God. May we close our worship this morning with hymn 939.

Jesus, immutably the same, thou true and living vine, around thy all-supporting stem my feeble arms I entwine.

I can do nothing without thee. My strength is wholly thine. Withered and barren should I be if severed from the vine.

pton I keep 19 down me and him I may remove the horse again in the have Thank you.

[34 : 55] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[37 : 18] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And, O Lord, Thou hast wrought divine miracles.

There are those who have declared that not even God Himself would be able to change them.

But the appointed time has come, and so may it be this day. Grant us Thy divine blessing through the interval of worship and bless the Sunday school and be with us in the afternoon divine service and bless our own beloved flock and be with dear friends in a state of deprivation that as they are denied the public ordinance that Jesus Himself may draw near and go with them.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.

[39 : 12] Amen. Amen. Amen.