

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING TO HAPPEN?

Text: 1 Kings 18:41-44

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." 42 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.

43 "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."

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

Introduction: Elijah and the children of Israel are facing a big time challenge. It has not rained for three years in a land that requires the former and latter rains to produce.

Let us observe from this story some powerful truths that we may need to put into effect to witness the move of God that we so desperately need.

I. A Nation in Trouble.

A. A drought had been prophesied.

1 Kings 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

1. No dew in the morning.
2. No rain at any time.

B. Rain is a symbol of God's blessings and favor.

1. It was part of the blessing given to Isaac.

Gen 27:27 So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed.

28 May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness — an abundance of grain and new wine.

2. God's promise of blessing for obedience.

Lev 26:3 "If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands,

4 I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit.

3. No rain is the curse of rebellion to God's law.

Lev 26:18 "If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over.

19 I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze.

Deut 11:17 Then the Lord's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the Lord is giving you.

C. A Godly solution.

1. Deal with the cause of the rebellion.

1 Kings 18:19 Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

2. Fire will be the sign of power.

1 Kings 18:23 Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it.

24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire — he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

D. Victory comes to Elijah.

1 Kings 18:37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

E. Here is the problem.

1. The fire has fallen and it is an awesome display of God' power.
2. But there is still a drought.

F. This is the problem many Christians are facing.

1. There has been a move of God that has displayed God's power to deliver.
2. But the circumstances they are facing are still lingering.

G. Somebody is hearing me right now!

1. You've been in the prayer line.
2. You've hit the floor sprawling.
3. You've got up dancing and singing.
4. But you went home to the same old problem.

II. Deal With the Cause. Steps to victory

A. The children of Israel had drifted away from true worship of God.

B. Step one:

1. Choose your god.

1 Kings 18:24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire — he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

2. Chose the only God who can answer by fire.

C. Step two: rebuild the altar in your lives

1 Kings 18:0 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins.

1. "Pastor, I don't know what to do. My family seems to be so divided and we are having a lot of conflict."

2. DUH!! If your altar [prayer life] is in ruins, your house will be in ruins also.

D. Step three: Remove the evil influences [prophets of Baal]

1 Kings 18:40 Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

E. Step four: Seek God for the breakthrough.

1 Kings 18:41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain."

42 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.

1. Believe there will be a breakthrough –
“...for there is the sound of a heavy rain.’
2. While you wait, pray in faith.
3. James described Elijah’s prayer.

James 5:16b “...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Conclusion: We have reached the place our sermon is for. What are you waiting for? What size answer are you expecting? Look at what brought assurance to Elijah that day.

1 Kings 18:43 "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."

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

Notice, the servant went to look for the prophet seven times.

Note, also that the cloud was in comparison to the size of a man’s hand.

44b “...So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"

Think about it! A major drought and Elijah believes that the rain from one little cloud will do the job.

Learn a powerful lesson from this story. Quit looking for big, over-sized evidences of God's divine intervention. Remember this, any cloud meant the possibility of rain.

Hitch up your little wagon; God has heard your prayer!