

The Sound Of Abundance Of Rain

1 Kings 18:1-2,41-46 NASB - Obadiah Meets Elijah

18 Now it happened *after* many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will provide rain on the face of the earth.” ² So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. Now the famine *was* severe in Samaria.

⁴¹ Now Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a *heavy* shower.” ⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bent down to the earth and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, but he said, “There is nothing.” Yet *Elijah* said, “Go back” seven times. ⁴⁴ And *when he returned* the seventh *time*, he said, “Behold, a cloud as small as a person’s hand is coming up from the sea.” And *Elijah* said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Harness *your chariot horses* and go down, so that the *heavy* shower does not stop you.’” ⁴⁵ Meanwhile the sky became dark with clouds and wind *came up*, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. ⁴⁶ Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he belted *his cloak* around his waist and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

- Elijah had a vision after 3 ½ years of drought.
- Elijah’s vision called for an abundance of rain.
- That vision was given directly by God.

Now, the interesting thing is that immediately after God spoke to Elijah, the Bible states that there was severe famine in the land.

- ***What a paradox! God steps into famine and promises flood!***

God has a way of stepping into the bleakest situation and promising victory!

In fact, it’s in those times that God chooses to work the most often, because ***when God brings flood out of drought, or feast out of famine, everyone around knows it was God!***

It was to Gideon that God said: Judges 7:2 NASB - And the Lord said to Gideon, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to hand Midian over to them, otherwise Israel would become boastful, saying, ‘My own power has saved me.’

It was **Jairus’ daughter** that **Jesus allowed to die**, so he could raise her from the dead.

- God delights in working where man can’t work!
- God delights in bringing answers to situations that stump men!
- God delights in doing what man says can’t be done!
- He said, **My glory I won’t share with another!**
- **God specializes in doing the impossible!**

Matthew 19:26 NASB - And looking at *them*, Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible.**”

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, MANY TIMES THAT GOD SPEAKS INCREASE AND MULTIPLICATION TO US, THE TIME THAT WE’RE IN IS ONE OF LOSS AND BARRENNESS.

- ***This is where faith comes in.***
- ***This is where the promise of God will be tested the most in our lives.***

- 1.) God spoke to Abram and gave him a great promise between Bethel and Ai, and then immediately there was a famine.
- 2.) Joseph was given a dream by God, and then immediately thrown into a pit, and sold into slavery.
- 3.) David was anointed King of Israel, but then sent back to the pastures to tend his sheep.
- 4.) The widow woman was promised increase by Elijah when she was preparing to die!
- 5.) God promised that he would bring a living, breathing army back to life while Ezekiel was staring at their dry bones scattered across the valley floor
- 6.) Jesus was baptized to fulfill every bit of the law, and then immediately led into the wilderness.

God's promise is always followed by God's proving ground.

- **It's easy to trust God in time of surplus, but can you trust him in time of barrenness?**
- **It's easy to trust God in time of feast, but can you trust him in time of famine?**
- **It's easy to trust God when the economy is good, and overtime is plentiful, but can you trust him when you're laid off?**
- **It's easy to trust God for great revival when the music's playing and the church is full, and hopping, but can I still trust him when people are leaving?**

The greatest test of our faith comes when God says I will, and we look around but He hasn't!

- ***But, just because He hasn't yet doesn't mean He's not going to!***
- ***But, in every case, no matter how long it took, God's promise always came to pass!***

2 Peter 3:9 NASB - The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

- Sometimes when we can't see it, **we think it never will happen.**
- **We think that God has forgotten His word, and His promise.**
- But, **that's where faith comes in.**

God's promise always requires a step of faith!

Faith is not sight, faith is acting on something you cannot see!

In fact, the very definition of faith is found in Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:1 NASB - The Triumphs of Faith - Now faith is *the* certainty of *things* hoped for, a proof of things not seen.

(Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.)

Faith is simply disregarding my current circumstances and believing God for what He promised me, no matter how wild it might seem!

Faith is:

Abraham, as **Romans 4:19** – Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now *as good as* dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;

Faith is simply not giving up on the promise of God, even if it takes 3 ½ years to fulfill!

- Or in Joseph’s case, 13 years.
- Or in Abraham’s case, 25 years.

Faith is simply realizing that I may not see it, I may not feel it, I can’t touch it yet, but God said it, and I believe it!

And, **not only do I believe**, but I’ll act on it even when others think I’m crazy.

Because God said it, I’ll do it!

I may be like Peter when Jesus told him to throw his nets out again,

- I may not believe anything will happen, but
- “Nevertheless, at THY WORD, Lord, I will!”

NOW, LET’S GET BACK TO ELIJAH.

Elijah’s vision called for an abundance of rain.

- Not a sprinkle, not a heavy dew, not a quick shower.
- **But, an abundance!**
- But, **immediately after the vision was given, *the servant saw nothing.***

Now, let me bring out a couple of things about this story that apply today.

1.) There had been a drought for 3 ½ years already.

The first obstacle that the man of God had to overcome to instill faith in his servant and everyone around him **was the obstacle of history.**

- **“It’s not rained in years, what makes you think it will rain now?”**
- ***This is the way it’s always been***, what makes you think things will change?
- ***We are accustomed to famine***, don’t try to make us think we can feast now!
- **The way it’s always been is the way it always will be!**
- We’ve had plenty of people thru the years tell us they thought it was going to rain, and nothing happened. Don’t get our hopes up!

Whenever God desires to move in a group of people who have been used to things being a certain way, **He has to overcome that mindset that things can never change!**

Somehow ***we have to be able to believe that God can do more for us than He’s ever done before!***

God can’t do anything in the midst of people who won’t believe!

- **Often it’s in the church that HE can’t work!**
- In the midst of the people He loves,
- the ones he desires to bless,
- Many times ***He encounters the most resistance!***

It was in His own hometown that the Bible says:

Matthew 13:58 - And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

Because the things HE did had never been done before,

- The people who had watched Him grow up said,
- ***“Nope, sorry, too much of a stretch to believe that this carpenter’s son can heal the sick, raise the dead, open the blind eyes.”***

But, once the curse of history has been broken, then God can bring abundance!

Genesis 23:19 NASB - After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron), in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 24:1 - Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way.

Genesis 25:1-2 - Abraham's Death - Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. ² She bore to him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

Abraham said, "Hey, I know I'm old, but I was old back then and God blessed me with a son, and if He did it then, He can do it again, and again, and again, and again, and again!"

Once the curse of history has been broken, then God can send abundance!

Even after the promise came from God, for the first six times that the servant went to look, there was absolutely nothing on the horizon.

- This is when it's hard to believe.
- You've been in a drought, and a guy comes along, gives you a fresh hope, a new glimpse of glory.
- A preacher comes and preaches a message and builds your faith and says, "Things don't have to be like they've always been! Rain's on the way!"
- *And you get up the next day, full of faith, full of expectation,*
- *eagerly rushing to the kitchen window to witness the deluge,*
- *and there you see again, just like every day for the last 3 1/2 years,*
- *cloudless skies, bright sunshine, hard baked ground, no crops,*
- *dust swirls twisting along the brown tundra that you used to call a yard!*

And, your faith plummets again, even lower this time, because you've had your hopes so high that maybe today will finally be the day that things change for good!

And, just as the Bible says that AFTER the promise there was a severe famine in the land,

AFTER the promise that God makes you and I there may be famine in our lives!

CLOSE: AFTER COVID - I keep going back to the pulpit day after day, scanning the horizon, waiting for the rains of revival, and I don't see them!

But, today, and I can't explain why, but today, **I think I see something!**

It's not all that big, it's pretty small, about the size of a man's hand, but sure enough I see a cloud!

I'll tell you the next thing, I'm stepping out on faith again and where other's see smallness, I see abundance!

2.) SECOND, when the cloud so small it was likened to a man's hand appeared, it excited Elijah so much he said, this is it! Abundance!

Others saw smallness, but Elijah looked at a small thing and saw abundance!

- We have a hard time looking at tiny things and thinking abundance!
- But small things quickly become big things when God is in them!

Zechariah 4:10 - For who has shown contempt for the day of small things?

- *God promised Abraham seed as the sands of the sea, and the stars of the sky, but He started with one baby boy!*
- *Jesus fed 5000 people on a hillside one day, but He started with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread!*
- *God created this vast universe and all that is in it in 6 days, but He started on the first day simply creating night and day from nothingness.*

Things that look small through the eyes of the natural become huge when you look thru the eyes of the spirit!

PRAISE TEAM:

I wonder if anyone today in this place is starting to hear what I'm hearing?

IS there anyone who will go just one more time to the horizon and look for the promise?

I know you've been six times already, but this time's different – ***I HEAR THE SOUND OF ABUNDANCE OF RAIN!***