

The Prophet Elijah
1 Kings 18:36-45
Elijah's School of Prayer

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

³⁶ And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. ³⁷ Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back." ³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. ³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God." ⁴⁰ And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.

⁴¹ And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." ⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. ⁴³ And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." And he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go again," seven times. ⁴⁴ And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'" ⁴⁵ And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. (1 Kings 18:36-45)

Introduction

- As we have seen in previous studies...
- In the NT the **apostle James** offers the **prophet Elijah** as an example of prayer...

¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. (James 5:17-18)

- At the beginning of **1 Kings 17**, we saw Elijah pray **that it might not rain**.
- **And today**, at the end of **chapter 18**, we'll see him **pray again** and **heaven will give rain**.
- And **James** doesn't even mention the fact that **when Elijah prayed...**
- God raised **the son of a widow from the dead** and **sent fire from heaven**.
- **So, we can be certain that Elijah was a man of prayer.**
- And today we're going to **attend his school of prayer**, which I think we all need!
- Because, let's be honest, we often find **prayer to be difficult work, even drudgery**.
- **And why is that? Well, there may be a number of answers.**
- But I'd say we struggle with prayer because it's an intensely **spiritual activity**.

- In fact, Paul says it involves...

18 praying at all times in the Spirit... (Ephesians 6:18)

- But the problem is we tend to be much more focused on **the flesh** (the things of this world) ...
- and less on the Spirit **or spiritual things**, the things of **God's Kingdom**.
- Which **means** we are much more interested in **doing than praying**.
- And so, when we get busy, or find other things, even good things, to occupy our time,
- **Prayer is the first thing to go**, and this is a problem.
- Because there is no other way to receive **the blessings of God except through prayer**.
- All the **spiritual blessings that God** has to give come through a life of prayer.
- If we want the **good things that God loves to give**, we must ask him for them.
- As **James teaches...**

2 ...You do not have, because you do not ask. (James 4:2)

- If you are seeking wisdom for **life's decisions**,
- Or if you long to experience **growth in your faith** and **God's presence in your life**,
- Or if you want those you know and love to come **to come to faith in Jesus Christ**,
- Or if you desire revival in this **nation... YOU MUST PRAY!**
- When we look back at great movements of the Spirit of God, **we will always find prayer**.
- Consider the **Moravian revival of 1727**.
- It began in a **prayer meeting**, in fact, of this time Henry Blackaby writes...

So overwhelmed were the people with the Presence of God, they were convicted to pray 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—and this lasted over 100 years, with astounding results around the world. (Henry Blackaby)

- Or consider the effective ministry of **William Carey**, the **father of modern protestant missions**.
- What was the secret of his success?
- Well, when asked, Carey's supporters included a **paralyzed, bedridden sister** who faithfully prayed for him for **fifty years**.
- **Spiritual blessings** come **from God through prayer**; there is no way around it.
- There is no other way to receive **spiritual blessings** but to pray for them.
- We cannot have the power of God in our lives, our worship, our evangelism, our families,
- our church, or our nation without **a commitment to prayer**.
- But you might be thinking...
- Pastor, I know prayer is important,
- but I'm just a regular Christian, I'm not prophet like Elijah or a missionary like William Carey.

- Well, remember James was writing **to a lot of ordinary Christians in the early church**,
- And he was **encouraging them to pray** by telling them and us...

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently

- His point being, **like Elijah (a great man of prayer)**
- **Every Christian can and must be a man or woman of prayer,**
- **We must be people who pray fervently.**
- Because prayer is the means that God has given his people to **both** enter into fellowship with him and to impact our world.
- The only way we will keep and thrive in our faith,
- The only way we will be able to confront and impact our culture for Christ.
- The only way we will be able to bring Christ centered change to the world.
- Is through **God's amazing gift of prayer.**
- And to help us grow in our understanding, commitment and activity of prayer...
- Today we're going to look at **two of Elijah's prayers**,
- His prayer for fire that we touched on last week, **and his prayer for rain.**
- And by examining these prayers, this **great prophet** will teach us **at least 7 lessons.**
- But before we go to school, **would you join me in pray.**
- *O LORD, God of Elijah and God of us all, I pray that today you will use your word to instruct, encourage, motivate and inspire us **to be men and women of prayer.** In Jesus Name AMEN!*
- Now our first point is not only **first in order**, but first priority.
- **Because, before we can pray effectively...**

1. Prayer Must be Preceded by a Sacrifice for Sin

- Elijah did not **dare** enter **the presence of God** without **offering atonement for his sins.**
- In fact, his challenge to the prophets of Baal was more than **contest between gods.**
- **It was a sacrificial offering for sin.**
- That's why the prayer was **for fire.**
- In **1 Kings 18:24** Elijah says **to the Prophets of Baal...**

24 And you call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, he is God."... (1 Kings 18:24)

- If you think about it, **fire** seems to be **the last thing that the people of Israel needed.**
- **What they really needed was rain.**
- Remember, it had not rained for **three and a half years.**
- You can imagine someone listening to Elijah's challenge and saying,
- "Say, Elijah, **couldn't we make that rain instead of fire?**
- How about, **'The god who answers by rain—he is God'?"**

- After all, back in **verse one of Chapter 18**, God had promised to send rain...

¹ After many days the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth.” (1 Kings 18:1)

- If God promised rain, **why did Elijah pray for fire?**
- Elijah prayed for fire because **before the people could receive any other blessing from God,**
- They needed to receive **atonement for their sins.**
- They needed to get right with the LORD before they could **get any rain from the LORD.**
- Remember that the reason there had been no rain in the land was **that the people had sinned against God by following other gods.**
- And Deuteronomy tells us **that drought and the resulting famine** was God’s particular punishment for **idolatry:**

¹⁶ Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; ¹⁷ then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you. (Deuteronomy 11:16-17)

- The reason Elijah took a bull up the mountain,
- The reason **he rebuilt an altar out of twelve stones, arranged the wood,**
- and cut the **bull into pieces** was **to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people of Israel.**
- Only then could **God’s judgment** be removed.
- First comes **repentance** and then the **forgiveness.**
- First comes the **removal of the curse** and then **the bestowal of the blessing.**
- First comes **the sacrifice for sin** and then **the showers of rain.**
- Elijah knew something about the **holiness of God.**
- He knew that God’s people **cannot enter his holy presence (and live)** without a sacrifice for sin.
- He knew that there was no sense asking for rain until the fire consumed their sacrifice.
- And in a similar but much greater way...
- Those who trust in Christ **bring a sacrifice every time we pray.**
- When Christians get to the end of their prayers, we often say, **“In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”**
- This is not **just a traditional way of ending a prayer.**
- Like saying, and they lived happily ever after. The End”.
- Instead, it is **a serious recognition** that the only **reason we can pray to God,**
- **the only way we can enter God’s presence,**
- is because Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins.
- Now of course, we don’t offer **a new sacrifice when we pray.**
- But we remember and recognize **the once-for-all atonement of Jesus Christ** as the basis for our coming before the throne of God’s grace.

- As the author of Hebrews tells us...

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus. (Hebrews 10:19)

- The only reason we can pray at all is because Christ died in our place for our sin.
- **And that should fill our hearts with gratitude!**
- But also, it should remind us that Christ died, not only to save us from our sins,
- but so we can enter into **the holy places**.
- **Because of Christ's sacrifice**, we can enter **into the presence of God**.
- We can **pray great prayers**, to a holy God.
- And I pray that this understanding of why we can pray,
- Would motivate and encourage **us** to spend more time in prayer.
- Knowing that coming before the LORD is a great privilege,
- Knowing that we have been given this privilege through the death of Christ.
- Knowing that to continually disregard this privilege is to disregard Christ's sacrifice for our sin!
- So, our **first lesson** in Elijah's school of prayer is that **Pray is preceded by a sacrifice for Sin**.
- Then **the second lesson** Elijah teaches us is that we must...

2. Pray in the Name of God

- In verse 36 we read...

Elijah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel

- In other words, Elijah prayed to the right God, and he **prayed to the God he knew**.
- Remember... **Elijah said to Ahab...**

1 ... "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand..." (1 Kings 17:1)

- Elijah **had an intimate relationship with God**.
- He knew **his name**, he stood in his presence, **and he knew that the LORD was GOD**.
- This was the whole point of the **confrontation at Mount Carmel**.
- Elijah didn't pray in the **name of Baal** because **Baal** was busy at the time.
- He didn't pray to Baal because there is no such god as Baal.
- The prophet prayed **instead to the living and true God**.
- He prayed **to the God who never slumbers or sleeps, who hears and answers prayer**.
- He prayed to the God who made a **covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel**.
- **How wonderful it is that God has given us his name!**
- He has revealed himself to us so that we may know him and **call upon him whenever we need him**.

- **And He has given us a number of names to use.**
- Any of the names or titles that God uses for himself in Scripture **are appropriate** for us to use in prayer:
- **Yahweh**, I Am, Almighty God, **the Lord**.
- We can pray **to the God of Abraham**, the **God of Moses**, and the **God of Elijah**.
- Or we can pray the way **Jesus prayed**, simply calling **God “Father”**.
- The point is **do you truly know his name?**
- Not just **what Scripture calls him**, but who he is.
- Do you **like Elijah stand in his presence**.
- Because if you do, you know that he desires you to use his name,
- to come to him in prayer, **calling out for his intervention**, his help, his encouragement.
- As the apostle Paul makes clear...

⁵ ...The Lord is at hand;

- The Lord God is there for you, he has revealed his name, himself to you, **therefore...**

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:5-7)

- So, the second lesson from Elijah's school of prayer, **is to pray in the Name of God**.
- Knowing that he desires to answer the prayer of those who know his name (who know him).
- Then third, **Elijah teaches us to...**

3. Pray for the Glory of God

- Elijah prayed:

O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel

- With these words, Elijah was praying that God would be known to be God.
- He was praying that **God would glorify himself**.
- He was praying that God would **reveal the glory of his divine nature to the whole nation**.
- The goal of his prayer was the goal of all goals...
- **solī Deo gloria**, or **“to God alone be the glory.”**
- According to the **opening answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism**,

man's chief end is to glory God and to enjoy him forever.

- But on Mount Carmel, **Elijah prayed toward the chief end of God**.
- Which is not, **as many Christians people think**, to save us or to meet our needs.
- Yes, he does those things, **but they are a means to a much greater end**.

- That is, God's chief end is to glorify himself and to enjoy himself forever.
- And therefore, we should pray for the glory of God.
- This has been called "kingdom prayer."
- Kingdom prayer is directed toward **the greater glory of God**.
- It is prayer for the **expansion and extension** of the **rule of God**.
- It is the kind of prayer that **John Piper** writes about in his book, "**Let the Nations be Glad**".

Prayer proves the supremacy of God... This is why God has ordained prayer to have such a crucial place in the mission of the church. The purpose of prayer is to make clear to all the participants in this war that the victory belongs to the Lord. Prayer is God's appointed means of bringing grace to us and glory to himself. (John Piper)

- And you don't have to take **John Piper's word** for it.
- Because kingdom prayer is the kind of prayer that Jesus prayed...
- At the beginning of his High Priestly Prayer in John 17 Jesus prays...

¹ ..."Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you... (John 17:1)

- Jesus prayed for the glory of God.
- And when he taught his disciples to pray, he said...

⁹ Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10)

- True disciples pray for the coming of God's kingdom,
- for the **glorious rule of the Lord Jesus Christ** to spread throughout **the whole universe**.
- We spend too little of our time in prayer, and much less in **kingdom prayer**.
- Most of our **prayers are** earthly emergency prayer.
- It has to do with what is **happening to us right now**.
- We thank God for **his goodness to us**, we pray for the sick,
- we pray for our own immediate needs,
- and even the needs of others, **and that's about it**.
- And there is nothing wrong with such prayers, of course, **but prayer can be so much more**.
- We need to **expand our prayers** to include kingdom prayer...
- Praying for the glory of God through **the extension of the rule of Jesus Christ**.
- At least some of our petitions must be devoted to praying for the glory of God to be revealed throughout every corner of the earth.
- Kingdom prayer is prayer for conversions, for missions, for churches, for cities, for nations.
- **It this kind of prayer...**

Father God, I pray that you will be glorified and your name will be exalted at Bridges Church, in the city of Riverside, in our nation and to the ends of the earth. **In Jesus name I pray Amen.**

- And God loves to answer kingdom prayer. **F. B. Meyer** writes:

Whenever we so lose ourselves in prayer as to forget personal interest, and to plead for the glory of God, we have reached a vantage ground from which we can win anything from Him. (F. B. Meyer)

- But do not just take **F. B. Meyer's** word for it; listen to the amazing promise of Jesus Christ...

¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)

- **Do you see what the promise is?**
- Most people fail to understand this promise, **thinking Jesus promised to do whatever we ask.**
- But we need to realize that Jesus is talking about **offering kingdom prayer,**
- **prayer for the glory of God,** rather than satisfy our own desires.
- So, I would challenge you as I challenge myself,
- don't stop praying for your immediate needs or the needs of others,
- In his love and mercy, God will answer our temporal earthbound requests.
- But we must add kingdom prayers, prayers for the glory of God,
- Praying that his work in this world and in our lives will bring him glory,
- and will cause people from every tongue tribe and nation to worship HIM!
- So, **our third lesson** from **Elijah's School of Prayer** is to **Pray for the Glory of God.**
- And then **fourth Elijah** teaches us to...

4. Pray for the Servants of God

- Not only did Elijah pray that God would be known to be God, **but he also prayed...**

Let it be known this day... that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word (1 Kings 18:36)

- This prayer may make us a little uncomfortable.
- After praying for the glory of God, is Elijah now praying **for his own glory?**
- No, he's simply praying that God would **let people know that he is a servant of the Lord.**
- **And that everything he's done has come in response to God's word.**
- Put simply, **Elijah** wants everyone to know that he serves the Living God.
- And that his ministry is done on the basis of what God has revealed to him, **God's word.**
- He wants the world to know that what he has done was only what God had told him to do.
- Now admittedly, some of the things that Elijah did seem a little strange.
- It was strange for him **to oppose the religious leaders of his day,**
- strange to mock the religious establishment,
- and it is strange to pour water all over a sacrifice.

- But because the prophet did these things in obedience to God,
- he rightly asked **God to make that known**.
- Elijah prayed that it would be widely known that however unpopular his ministry may have been, he himself was a faithful prophet of the Lord God.
- And in following Elijah's example, it is right and good for us to pray for **God's Servants** as well.
- Specifically, those who, like Elijah, **represent God by publicly declaring His word**.
- We should first pray that they, like Elijah **are bold and faithful in declaring God's word**.
- But also, that people understand that the message they proclaim is from God.
- So, churches should pray that **they would be known to be faithful servants of God's Word**.
- The success of the preaching of the Word of God in any particular place depends on the prayers of the people of God.
- That's why on a number of occasions in his letters Paul asks that the church pray for him.
- For example, **to the Ephesians he asks...**

19 and also [Pray] for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, (Ephesians 6:19)

- We should pray, therefore, as if our pastor's ministry depended on it, because it does.
- **By and large**, when it comes to a preaching ministry, **congregations get what they pray for**.
- The great preacher **Charles Spurgeon** was asked why he had such a successful ministry.
- He would take guests down to the basement of his church where hundreds of parishioners gathered before the Sunday services to pray that the God's word would go forth in power.
- Behind every faithful preacher there is a **praying congregation**.
- And I would just like to express my thanks to this congregation,
- I don't know how **successful my preaching ministry has been** (that is up the LORD)
- But I can attest to the fact that I **am blessed by God** in my preaching because you pray for me.
- With regards to my Sunday morning preaching of the Word.
- Most every **Thursday** someone in my small group prays for me.
- Most every **Saturday night** my wife prays for me.
- Most every **Sunday morning** in our Church prayer time (9:15-9:45 downstairs in room XXXX) someone prays for me.
- Most every **Sunday** during the Pastoral Prayer an elder prays for me.
- Most every **Sunday** before I stand up to preach, the worship leader prays for me!
- And I know others in the congregation pray for my preaching ministry **on a regular basis**.
- **And not to get greedy** but I would ask that if you don't regularly pray for **me and others** who bring God's word to **this congregation** that you would begin.
- Pray that like Elijah we would be **true servants of God**.
- That everything we do and say will be **based not on our own opinions or desires for personal glory**, but on the WORD OF GOD and for the GLORY OF GOD.

- So, our fourth lesson from Elijah's School of Prayer is to **Pray for the Servants of God.**
- And **fifth Elijah teaches** us to...

5. Pray for Conversions

- Notice how Elijah ended his prayer for fire...

³⁷ Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back. (1 Kings 18:37)

- We can sense Elijah's **fervency** from the way **he repeated himself**:
- **"Answer me, O LORD, answer me."**
- The reason the prophet was so urgent was that **he was praying for conversion of His people.**
- Like Moses before Him and the Apostle Paul after him Elijah loved his wayward people.
- And so, he prayed that God would turn their hearts back again, from Baal to the Living God.
- which is exactly what happens whenever **someone becomes a Christian.**
- The Holy Spirit takes the heart of a sinner and turns it back to God.
- To Titus, **Paul describes it this way...**

⁵ [God] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)

- When someone is converted, when they come to Christ in faith.
- The Spirit changes their heart, he brings about washing, regeneration and renewal.
- And this is **what a true disciple of Jesus Christ desires and prays for.**
- Not only **their own spiritual growth,**
- but they want to see the **Spirits saving work** take place in the hearts and lives of other people.
- And this too is **kingdom prayer.**
- When we pray for someone's to put their faith in Jesus Christ,
- We are really praying that God would rule in that person's heart.
- We are praying for the kingdom of God to come into and take control of their life.
- We are praying that Christ would be their SAVIOR and LORD!
- And that they would live for the glory of God.
- I remember in the late 1990s when my wife and I were Missionaries in Thailand,
- Along with several other missionaries, we were doing outreach among Thai college students,
- and there were several young ladies who had trusted in Christ.
- But no young men, **this is a problem in a lot of places throughout the world.**
- Women will become Christians but not men.
- And so, the call to prayer went out, we asked our supporters, we asked our church,
- All to pray that God would bring **just one young man,** to faith in Jesus Christ.
- And people prayed, I know this because it wasn't long before, God answered,
- first with one young man, then a second, a third and more.

- So many young men and women (and even some older people) came to Christ during this time that we **started a new Church**.
- In fact, one of the young men who came to Christ back in 90s currently serves as the pastor of this same church.
- God will answer our prayers for conversions, **both on and off the mission field**.
- And one good way to remember to pray for conversions is to keep a list of non-believers that you want to pray for.
- This was the regular practice of **C. S. Lewis**, who once wrote to a friend:

I have two lists of names in my prayers, those for whose conversion I pray and those for whose conversion I give thanks. The little trickle of transferences from List A to List B is a great comfort. (C. S. Lewis)

- So let me suggest that each of **us keep a list of non-believers that we can pray for regularly**.
- And that when we come together, in our small groups,
- we spend some of our prayer time, asking God for the salvation of **these people**.
- **Praying that God the Father would draw them to his Son Jesus Christ.**
- So, our **fifth lesson from Elijah's school of prayer** is to **pray for conversions**.
- **Now** these **first five lessons** have come from **Elijah's prayer for fire**.
- The next two lessons will come from Elijah's **pray for rain**. **The sixth lesson is...**

6. Pray the Promises of God

- Beginning in **verse 41** we read...

⁴¹ And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain." ⁴² So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. (1 Kings 18:41-42)

- Elijah was praying, of course, we know this because of **his posture**.
- He was **bent all the way to the ground**.
- He was in the **same position** that all Israel had been in **only a little while before**, when

³⁹ ...they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God." (1 Kings 18:39)

- Now, it was Elijah's turn to **put his face down** in the dust and pray to the Lord God.
- Prayer may not always involve the **prostration or our bodies**,
- **But it must always include the prostration (the bowing down) of our hearts** before the true and living God.
- And what is Elijah praying for? He is praying for the rain to fall.
- Now this may not seem necessary,
- because in verse 1 of chapter 18 God had already promised to send rain upon the land.

- In fact, Elijah could hear it coming.

Go up, eat and drink,” he said to Ahab, “for there is a sound of the rushing of rain

- Although Elijah could not yet see the rain, he could hear it with the ears of faith.
- Nevertheless, Elijah prayed.
- He prayed diligently and persistently until the promise was fulfilled.
- For Elijah, the promise of God did not make **prayer unnecessary**; it made it **mandatory**.
- In fact, it is the very **promises of God that teach us what to pray**.
- It was because God had promised rain that Elijah prayed for rain. **A. W. Pink** explains:

As far from God’s promises being designed to exempt us from making application to the throne of grace for the blessings guaranteed, they are designed to instruct us what things to ask for, and to encourage us to ask for them believingly, that we may have their fulfillment to ourselves. (A. W. Pink)

- So, I would encourage you to learn the promises of God from the Word of God,
- and then turn them into prayer.
- For it is when we pray the promises of God that we can be confident,
- we are praying the will of God.
- And let me give you just one of many examples of this, God’s word promises...

⁶ ...that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

- This is a promise that God will never forsake us and will continue to work in our hearts,
- that he will bring about our completion, our maturity in Christ.
- And so, we can pray with confidence that God would work in our lives,
- that each and every day we will grow in our faith and become more and more like Jesus Christ.
- That is a prayer that God will answer, **because he has promised to do it!**
- **And that’s just one example of the many promises we can turn into prayer.**
- So, our **fifth lesson from Elijah’s school of prayer** is to **pray the promises of God**.
- And finally, Elijah teaches us to...

7. Pray Persistently

- **Keep on praying.** Elijah did not give up, but persisted in prayer until God answered

⁴³ And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again,” seven times. ⁴⁴ And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.’” (1 Kings 18:43-44)

- Six times Elijah's servant went and looked toward the sea.
- Six times he came back with bad news.
- **"There is nothing," he said.**
- The sky was blue; there was not the slightest vapor of a cloud to be seen.
- But Elijah did not give up.
- He did not abandon his trust in the promises of God.
- He watched and prayed right through until God answered:

45 And in a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain... (1 Kings 18:45)

- How many times have we prayed and prayed without receiving an answer?
- Perhaps we have prayed **six times** and are **still waiting** to see the small cloud rising from the sea with the rain of God's blessing.
- We've prayed for the salvation of a child or grandchild, for example, **but we're still waiting.**
- We've prayed for a **good job**, or for the Lord to reveal his will for our lives, **but we're still waiting.**
- We've prayed for the Lord to deliver us from some sickness, **but we're still waiting.**
- We've prayed for the Lord to give us a **spouse or a child**, and we're still waiting.
- We've prayed and prayed, yet we continue to receive **the bad news Elijah received:**
- "There is nothing."
- Do not stop praying! In fact, Paul tells us to...

17 pray without ceasing, (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

- If we have prayed six times, we should pray a seventh time and more.
- Elijah's prayers were powerful and effective because he kept praying until they were answered.

He prayed fervently,

- and fervent prayer is persistent prayer.
- We should not let our prayers come to an end, **until God answers one way or another.**
- What I mean by that is if you are praying the promises of God (as Elijah was) you must keep praying indefinitely, **for God will answer such prayers.**
- But there are other prayers, **things we desire**, things we believe are good,
- but things that have **not been promised to us in God's word.**
- **Yes, we can certainly persistently pray such prayers,**
- but there may come a time when God gives the answer,
- and the answer may be different from what **we are praying!**
- For example, we can pray and pray for a new job,
- but God may at some point show us his desire that we stay in our current job.

- Or we may pray and pray for healing for ourselves or others,
- but God may at some point show us that his desire, for our good and his glory,
- is that the sickness remains and even result in death.
- We are not promised new or better jobs.
- We are not promised freedom from sickness and death,
- God may certainly give us these things when we pray, but we must always pray as Jesus did when faced with the cross...

42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (Luke 22:42)

- We must humbly submit all of our prayers to the will of God.
- Trusting that he always knows what is best.
- OKAY!
- So formal teaching in Elijah's school of prayer has concluded.
- But there is homework.
- I would assign you, whether you are in a small group that is studying Elijah or not.
- To go through the discussion questions this week.
- Look again at these 7 lessons and ask yourself, are there changes God is calling me to make in my prayer life, **do I need to spend more time in prayer**, specifically kingdom prayer.
- Do I need to spend more time in **God's word that I know what to pray about**.
- Are there things or people I have been neglecting to pray for?
- Take these questions to God and allow him to move you along the path to becoming a person of prayer.

Let's Pray!