

Life and Times of Elijah - Part 1

by Stephen Kaung

Elijah was a true servant of God, willing to sacrifice his life for the right of God, and he was a powerful example of the importance of prayer, obedience, and commitment to God.

Duration: 1:08:26

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:1-16, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Elijah"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sitting and waiting before God before taking action. He highlights the need to seek God's guidance and direction before running around aimlessly. The speaker also discusses the story of the widow who gave out of her poverty, emphasizing the spirit of giving and the faith required to give sacrificially. Additionally, the sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God personally before proclaiming His message to others, whether it be a message of judgment or restoration. The speaker encourages listeners to seek God first and trust Him to provide for their needs.

Transcript

Will you please turn to 1st Kings chapter 17. 1st Kings chapter 17. We'll begin with verse 1. Actually it will be good if we can read the whole chapter.

1st Kings chapter 17 verse 1. And Elijah the Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead said to Ahab, as Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years except by my word. And the word of Jehovah came to him saying, get thee hence and turn thee eastward and hide thyself by the torrent Cherub. And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the torrent, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

And he went and did according to the word of Jehovah. He went and abode by the torrent Cherub, which is before the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the torrent.

And it came to pass after a while that the torrent dried up, for there had been no rain in the land. And the word of Jehovah came to him saying, Arise, go to Zarephath, which is by Sidon, and abide there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to maintain thee.

And he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the entrance of the city, behold, a widow woman was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink. And she went to fetch it, and he called to her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a muzzle of bread in thy hand.

And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruz. And behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and for my son, that we may eat it and die. And Elijah said to her, Go, do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it to me, and afterwards make for thee and for thy son.

For thus said Jehovah the God of Israel, The meal in the barrel shall not waste, neither shall the oil in the cruz fill, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the face of the earth. And she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her house ate a whole year. The meal in the barrel did not waste, neither did the oil in the cruz fill, according to the word of Jehovah, which he had spoken through Elijah.

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell ill, and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath in him. And she said to Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to me to call my iniquity to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said to her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of a bosom, and carried him up into the upper chamber where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

And he cried to Jehovah, and said, Jehovah my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourned by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried to Jehovah, and said, Jehovah my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And Jehovah heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he lived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and delivered him to his mother.

And Elijah says, See, thy son lives. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is. God willing, we will like to fellowship together this time on the life and time of the prophet Elijah.

As we read the word of God, we find Elijah the prophet came to the scene suddenly. We heard nothing of him before. We knew almost nothing of his past.

Then suddenly Elijah came upon the scene. He went to a King Ahab, and he declared the judgment of God over the nation of Israel to the king. Now who was this Elijah? At what time did he live? We know King Ahab was king over the nation of Israel.

He was a wicked king. And in the preceding chapter you'll find God said he was more wicked than any of the kings that preceded him in the nation of Israel. Why? Because the other kings, they all may follow King Jeroboam in worshipping golden cows in the name of Jehovah, the King Ahab, under the influence of his wife Jezebel, the daughter of the king of the Zidonians, introduced foreign gods into the nation of Israel.

Instead of worshipping God, Jehovah, the God of Israel, he led the whole nation away from their own God to worship bells foreign into idolatry. So he was more wicked than any of the kings that were before him. And Elijah lived in that time.

You know the very name Elijah is a testimony. Because the name Elijah means whose God is Jehovah. When the whole nation went away from Jehovah, Jehovah is the name of God in covenant with his redeemed people.

You remember when Moses was in the wilderness? God appeared to him, sent him back to Egypt to deliver his own people. And Moses says, what's your name? And God said, I am that I am. I am Jehovah.

The memorable name. A covenanted name with his redeemed people. But at that time the whole nation went away from Jehovah, their God.

And yet Elijah took the name of whose God is Jehovah. You can understand the difficulty that Elijah must be in. He was alone as it were among the multitude, among the people of Israel.

He was the only one who stood up and declared even with his name. He was not in any sense a hidden believer. He was very open.

He even in his name declared that there is no other God but Jehovah. Jehovah is God. God is Jehovah.

Now that was Elijah. The Bible says Elijah the Tishbite. We know Tishbite was in Galilee.

In other words, he was born and reared in the nation of Israel. He was under the dominion of King Ahab. And yet the Bible said again, of the inhabitants of Gilead.

He was a native of the Tishbite. And yet he dwelt among the inhabitants of Gilead. And if you study Bible geography, you will find that Gilead is on the eastern side of the river Jordan.

It was not under the dominion of King Ahab. Why? It must be that his public testimony was such. He couldn't live in his native land.

He had to flee for his life. And he crossed the river Jordan and dwelt among the inhabitants of Gilead. He was an exile for the sake of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

We do not know how many years he spent among the inhabitants of Gilead. But one thing we are sure of, even though he had escaped to the eastern shore of the river Jordan, but he had not forsaken his own people. It must be that during the time of his hidden life in Gilead, he gave himself to prayer.

We know that Elijah was a man of prayer. Not only from the Old Testament, but even when you read the New Testament. In the book of James you will find Elijah prayed and God did this.

And Elijah prayed again and God did that. Elijah was a man of prayer. Now a man of prayer did not come by accident.

A man of prayer came by practice. We often say the best way to pray, the best way to know how to pray is to pray. There is no other shortcut, no other secret.

If you want to be a man of prayer, what you need to do is to pray and pray and pray. And certainly Elijah was such a person. Even though he was not able to remain in his native land, to testify to the fact against all the people, including the king, that only Jehovah is God, and yet in exile he was still standing on that ground.

He did not give up that ground. He was still praying and standing for the right of God over his own people. How did he do it? He did it by prayer.

Brothers and sisters, how much more can be done through prayer than even speech. Elijah as it were was silenced because he fled. And yet he prayed.

We do not know how long he prayed. He must love his own people dearly. He must love God dearly.

He was zealous for the honor of God. He was jealous with the jealousy of God for his own people. And having such a spirit, he could only discharge it in prayer.

He prayed and prayed and prayed until the word of God came to him. And the word of God was sending him back to the nation of Israel to speak to King Ahab, to deliver a message to King Ahab. And the message was, as Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years except by my word.

Tremendous. Elijah did not go back on his own. Elijah did not proclaim the judgment of God on his own.

He went back because God sent him back. He was willing to sacrifice his life in going back to Ahab. Because a prophet of God had no consideration of himself.

A prophet of God was one who obeyed God to the uttermost. If God said go, he went. If God said hi, he hid.

There was absolutely no self in this man Elijah. He prayed until God's mind was revealed to him. And when God's mind was revealed to him, he did not hesitate to declare it.

He was sent by God to declare judgment upon the nation. And you know how he did it? He went back and said to Ahab, as Jehovah the God of Israel liveth. Even though you, King Ahab, did not recognize Jehovah.

Even though the whole nation of Israel did not acknowledge Jehovah. Yet Jehovah is still the God of Israel. Now that's faith.

Not because of the circumstance. Not because of the change of situation. Therefore, the right of God had changed.

Not at all. Israel might rebel against God, but God was still the God of Israel. And Elijah stood on that ground.

He did not give in an inch. Brothers and sisters, this is not easy. How often we are governed by what we see.

How often we are influenced by our circumstances. The reason is, we do not see God. If we see God, no matter how the circumstance may change, no matter what we see, God remains the same.

Yesterday, today, and forever. And that is the truth. So here you'll find when Elijah went back, he did not give in an inch to Ahab.

He told Ahab that Jehovah is the God of Israel. And Jehovah the God of Israel liveth. He has not died.

He is still living. Elijah knew God still liveth out of his personal exodus. It was not just a bookish knowledge to Elijah.

To Elijah, he had a hidden life with God. He had a prayer life with God. And in that hidden life of prayer with God, he knew that God lived.

God spoke to him. God revealed his mind to him. God sent him out on a mission.

So when he declared to King Ahab, he said, and Jehovah the God of Israel liveth. You think God has died? He hasn't died. He lives.

He hasn't changed a bit. Before whom I stand. Elijah was a true servant of God.

Because he stood before the presence. You know, you cannot stand if you haven't sat. You have to sit before God first.

And then you will be able to stand before God. You have to sit before God. That is to say, you have to commune with God.

And after you have communed with God, then you will be able to stand before Him, to wait upon Him, and to serve Him. You know, the problem today is, people do not sit. Neither do they stand, but they run.

They think that they are doing God's service. And in doing God's service, you have to run hither and thither. And run all over.

Without really knowing what God's mind is. Where does God want to send you, and what does He want you to do? You have no knowledge whatsoever. A true servant first sits before God.

And then stands before God. Wait upon the Lord. And because he waited upon the Lord, the Lord's command came to him.

He wouldn't move before God gave the word. A true servant of God. And you know, it wasn't easy for Elijah to bring such a message.

We all like to bring a good tiding. Because if you bring a good news, not only people will be happy, but they will be happy with you too. If you bring bad news, people will be very unhappy, and of course, somehow it reflects on you.

Nobody likes to bring such a severe message. As Jehovah the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain all these years. What a judgment.

You know the land of Israel is so made by God, that it is not like Egypt. You know in Egypt you have the river Nile. And every year the river Nile will overflow.

And bring all this rich soil on the two banks of Egypt. And there they can sow and they can reap. And even when there is no rain, you know, they use their feet to paddle the water out of the river Nile.

But not so in the land of Israel. In the land of Israel, that land was so created, God created that land in such a way that it depended entirely upon rain and dew. If there was no rain nor dew, the earth will become powder.

And nothing will grow on it. It will be completely barren. It was a land that depended upon heaven.

And God brought his people purposely to such a land. So here you find when Elijah brought that message to King Ahab. All these years there will be no rain nor even dew.

No moisture whatsoever over the whole land. That means drought. That means famine.

That means starvation, barrenness, death. Who would like to bring such a message? Humanly speaking, Elijah certainly wouldn't like to bring such a message. Because he loved his people dearly.

And yet, as a servant of the Lord, he was faithful. Do you think that God brought such judgment upon the nation of Israel because God hated them? God had tried every means to restore them to himself in order that he might bless them, but they wouldn't listen. As God had exhausted every means, he had to resort to judgment.

And even his judgment is out of love. The Bible says in judgment there is mercy. God used judgment upon his people in order to awaken them.

For the sake of restoration, not for the sake of punishment. Oh, if we only know the heart of God. So here you'll find Elijah brought that message to King Ahab.

There will be no rain nor dew all these years. How many years? Nobody knew. But there will be years.

Except by my word. Isn't that presumptuous? For a man to say that, my word, without my word, the heaven will not rain, nor will there be dew. But when I give my word, then there will be rain and dew.

Now what a person are you? Isn't that presumptuous? Elijah said there will be no rain nor dew all these years except by my word. Why? Because he had the word of God. Because he was one with God.

He was a person who was in full sympathy with God. There was absolutely no self in that person. He represented God fully.

And as the Bible in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 said, he was powerful before God. There is such a thing as powerful before God. What does it mean by powerful before God? It simply means that God hears you.

That's powerful before God. Why does God hear a person? Because that person hears God first. If we want God to hear us, there is a prerequisite.

And the prerequisite is you must hear God first. If you do not hear Him, you cannot expect Him to hear you. If you do not commit yourself to Him, how can you expect God to commit Himself to you? It cannot be.

Every time God hears a person, when that person is powerful before God, you know that behind it is a life. A life of obedience. You know that this person is fully committed to God.

And to such a person God commits Him. As if God will do what He says. But of course we know it is not presumptuous.

But because He would never say it if God hadn't told Him so. But you find this is a tremendous thing. A tremendous thing.

When Elijah brought that message to King Ahab, if he was a little bit conscious of himself, if he was a little bit considerate of himself, he couldn't do it. Why? Because if there should be no rain or dew upon the land, what will happen to him? He too will suffer. And he certainly was not a man of means.

He never would be. And who will support him? So you find when Elijah declared the judgment of God, he forgot himself altogether. And dear brothers and sisters, this is the one condition if you want to bring God's word to His people.

You have to forget yourself. If you do not forget yourself, you will dilute God's word. You have to change God's word.

Either you change it or you refuse to bring it. But a person who is totally, utterly committed to God, so selfless as Elijah, he was a true prophet. Dear brothers and sisters, we are living at a time when there is apostasy falling away.

Even though people name the name of God, and yet, in the very center of such system, there is the theology of God is dead. But is God dead? Who is able to stand up and say God lives? Who is able to bear the testimony of Jesus in the time of general falling away? You will be alone. You will be persecuted.

If you want to stand for the full right of God, if you will not give in an inch, not for yourself, but for God. If you want to declare that Jesus lives, He has died, but He has risen from the dead and He lives forevermore. He is Lord of all.

Now if you want to declare this, even among God's own people, you will find it is difficult. Not to say such things to the world who do not know God. But even if you want to stand for the right of God, the full right of God, and bear such a testimony, even among God's people, you will find people will say you are fanatic.

There is no such thing. People will use God. But who can be used by God? God needs people like Elijah.

God needs prophets. God needs people who stand with God absolutely, without consideration of themselves. God needs people who are willing to sacrifice, lay down their life for the right of God over His people.

God needs people who are willing to declare the whole counsel of God without reservation, without dilution, without consideration of themselves, whether they will be popular or unpopular. No consideration whatsoever. Brothers and sisters, in our days, God needs people like Elijah, who were so utterly abandoned.

I have no better word but the word abandonment. You know, God is looking for people who are abandoned to God. You abandon everything, as it were, and abandoned to God, and only with these people God is able to speak.

God is able to reveal His mind. And God will use these people to recover His testimony. And that was the Spirit.

After Elijah declared such a judgment, where did he go? You find that his movements were completely governed by God's word. He was hidden for we do not know how long. And God sent him into the limelight, to the king's palace, to declare to the king the judgment of God.

And after that, God took him away, and hid him by the torrent. You know, humanly speaking, if you live a life of hiddenness long enough, you will not like to be exposed to the world again. You would rather live in the wilderness tending a few sheep, like Moses.

When God came and wanted to send him to Egypt, he lived in the wilderness for 40 years, in seclusion. And he loved the silence, he loved the seclusion. He didn't want to leave the wilderness anymore.

And that's human nature. Or if God should expose you into prominence, you did not want to hide again. You want to continue under the limelight of the world.

That's human nature. It's very difficult to find that you can change so quickly and without murmuring. When God took him out of seclusion, he came into prominence.

And after he shone as a light, immediately God took him away and hid him for another 3 years and 6 months. What a prophet! Perfect obedience to God. God's word came to him and said, you get your things and turn you eastward and hide yourself by the torrent, which is before the Jordan, and it shall be that thou shalt drink of the torrent, and I command you, the ravens, to feed thee there.

Dear brothers and sisters, if we obey God, we do not need to be afraid. What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And what shall we be close with? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. How? God knows.

God sent him to the torrent Jerusalem. Now the torrent Jerusalem is in the north, beyond Jordan. Why? Because the torrent Jerusalem is one of the sources of the waters of the river Jordan.

It was a small stream, and yet you know, lots of rivers came from small streams, as sources. So instead of sending him to river Jordan, where there was abundance of water to begin with, and that's where people usually would go, God sent him to a little stream, to the torrent Jerusalem, hidden in the hills. God sent him back to the sources of water.

And you know, this always happens. Whenever God does anything, he always leads us back to it. People look for great rivers, but God sends us to the little stream torrent, little stream Jerusalem, because that's the source.

You know, Ahab was very angry with Elijah, because he delivered such a severe message. And when rain did not come, he got angrier. And you know, through all these years, he tried to find Elijah to kill him.

He thought Elijah was the trouble of Israel. He wanted to get him. He tried to find him all over the land.

But where would he look for Elijah? Probably he would look for Elijah at great waters. Because he thought that would be where people should be. But no, he was in that little stream Jerusalem.

He didn't look at that. That's the wisdom of God. God sent him back to the source.

Dear brothers and sisters, every time we come to a drought, God will send us back to the source. And then how was he to be fed? God said, I will send ravens to feed you. Isn't that strange? In the time of Elijah, even though he thought he was the only one who stood for God, yet God has his 7,000 hidden ones.

And among the 7,000, actually one was in the palace. You know, Obadiah, Ahab's steward. That was the closest one to Ahab.

And strange enough, he was among the 7,000 men. Obadiah was a person who feared God from his youth. And when Jezebel wanted to kill the prophets of Jehovah, he hid a hundred of them in two caves.

And he fed them with water and bread. Just like in Nero's household, God has his own saints there. Strange.

But the stranger thing is, God would allow Obadiah to feed a hundred prophets, but God found Obadiah was not fit to feed Elijah. The anointed of God. Because Obadiah himself was a compromised person.

And Elijah was utterly for God. No one in the whole land of Israel was fit to the use of God to feed God's party. Think of that.

You know, God usually uses his own people as his instruments. But no one was fit in the whole land of Israel to feed Elijah without compromising God's testimony. What a pitiful situation.

But was it because of that Elijah had to starve to death? Not at all. If people, God's own people, was unusable, God could use what we consider as impossible instruments. The ravens.

Ravens were unclean birds. Ravens are ravenous. Very greedy.

In the time of famine, if a raven should find food and meat, certainly the raven would devour the whole thing. And yet God can control the appetite of a ravenous raven to bring food and meat to Elijah. And not just one raven, but ravens.

Morning and evening. For a long period. God can use the most unlikely instrument.

You know, often times we think, when God's people are so unusable, then there is no way. There is a way. God has his ravens.

So I remember one brother wrote a kind of, not poem, you know, in China we have a kind of contrast. He wrote a contrast. And in the contrast he said, ravens fly everywhere.

Manas fall every day. God has his ravens everywhere. So why should we need to be worried? If we walk in the will of God, God can send his ravens to feed us.

God can use the most unlikely things to supply the needs of his prophet. So there you'll find God fed him and he drank of the torrent until even the torrent, the source, was dried up. Then God sent Elijah away.

Elijah did not make the move himself. He saw the torrent get drier and drier. The little water became, you know, smaller and smaller.

But he stayed there. He stayed there. He didn't move.

And he was completely dried. And at the right moment, God's word came. You go to Sidon.

To the city of Zarephath. There I have prepared a widow to supply you through most unusual. You know, Jezebel, she was the daughter of the king of the Sidonians.

And yet God sent Elijah to Sidon. Why? Because Ahab looked everywhere. Not only in Israel, but in the nations.

And if any nation said they could not find Elijah, he had to have them take an oath that they couldn't find Elijah. But certainly Ahab would never think that Elijah would go to Sidon. You know, that's the wisdom of God.

God sent Elijah to Sidon where Ahab would never look at. Because that was the source of evil. Yet God sent him there.

Not to a wealthy person, a person of resources. No. There were many widows in Israel.

But none was serviceable. You know, when Christ mentioned that, the Jews were so furious they wanted to stone Christ. There was no widow in Israel that was usable.

God had to send his prophet to a widow in a foreign country. We would think Sidon being the source of idolatry or apostasy in Israel. Where could you find a godly man or woman in that kind of situation? But God had his hidden wonder.

This woman, even though she was a Sidonian, he was a foreigner, she was a foreigner, and yet she feared God. She knew Jehovah, the God of Israel. And you could see her faith.

God knew where his hidden ones are. God knows whom he can use. So dear brothers and sisters, you know we often look in a natural way.

If we feel that there is a need somewhere, we probably look to some people who are with means, resources. Or probably we will look to some people who seem to be very active. Who knows? Only God knows.

Only God knows who is usable, who is not usable. Some people may be serviceable in some things, but they may not be serviceable in deeper things. But God knows exactly whom to use.

Where will be a person who is usable? And often times you find it is out of our expectation. God surprises us all the time. He is God.

You never cease to be amazed. God used a Sidonian widow. Did Elijah argue with God and say, God, you sent me to a widow? No.

He went. He went. When he came into the city of Zarephath, he met that widow woman.

She came out to pick two sticks to cook her last meal for herself and for her son. And Elijah said to that woman, give me some water to drink. And she gave him water to drink.

And Elijah said, make me a little cake. And the woman said, as Jehovah your God liveth. See, she knew the Lord.

She knew the prophet. He said, as Jehovah thy God liveth, I have only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruz. I came out to find two sticks to cook my last meal for myself and for my son.

And then we died. Then Elijah said, make me a little cake first. And then you make your own cake.

The word of God says, the meal in the barrel will never fill and the oil in the cruz shall not be wasted until the drought. And look, that widow had faith in God. You know, when you come to your last handful, when you come to the last oil of the cruz, that is more precious than all the silver and the gold in the whole world.

If you give out of abundance something extra, it doesn't affect you too much. But when you only had a handful and a little, that handful, that little was much more than what a rich person may have. Because it is your last meal and you hang on to that.

Even though it is the last and you wouldn't part with that last. And yet that woman had faith. This is the spirit of giving.

She was willing to give out of her poverty. And God first. Oh dear brothers and sisters, if we do not give until it hurts us, we don't know what giving is.

The true spirit of giving on the one hand, give cheerfully. Yet on the other hand, it hurts. It really hurts.

But this woman had faith in God. She knew that if she gave to God first, God would keep his promise. And you know, it was not only hard for the widow to give, it was really hard for the prophet to receive.

You know, sometimes you think that to receive is easier than to give. Not at all. It takes grace to give.

It takes grace to receive. For a prophet to say to a widow who had only a handful of meal, cooking his last meal, and say give me a little cake first, what kind of person you are, what kind of prophet you are. You would say he must be a false prophet.

And being a true prophet, it must be very hard for Elijah to say that. If he is a false prophet, he will say it. Because he is a false prophet.

But if he is a true prophet, it will be most difficult for him to make that request. Most difficult. But Elijah had the grace to receive.

A great prophet was humble enough to receive a little cake from a widow. And you find these two things work together. Work together for the glory of God.

If that widow shouldn't keep back that handful of meal, and a little oil in the cruise, and cook her last meal, it will be her last meal. No doubt. If Elijah was too proud to receive from that widow, and say God I couldn't do that, you better send a raven, God would not send a raven.

But because both of them were obedient to God, both of them had enough grace to obey God, God was able to work out his wonder. For a whole year, this handful of meal, and a little oil in the cruise, supplied all the needs of Elijah, the widow, and her son. Oh dear brothers and sisters, the whole thing actually comes down to one thing.

And that is, are we utterly dependent upon God? If we are utterly committed to God, there is no end of God's working. No end. But the strange thing, strangest thing was, while Elijah sojourned with that widow, the widow's son died.

Now that was really embarrassing. God sent Elijah to that widow, and that widow was gracious enough to give Elijah hospitality, and yet God struck that widow's son and he died. So the widow came to Elijah and said, oh man of God, your presence here, may God remember my iniquity.

And so my son was killed. And what can Elijah say? Instead of bringing blessing to this house, Elijah brought courage to this house. It was most embarrassing.

But Elijah knew God. He took the boy, went to his room on the roof. You know the way they build their house? The house, and then there's a stairway from outside, you go to the roof.

And Elijah lived on the roof, in the chamber there on the roof. So he took the boy to the roof, to his room, put in his bed. Then he prayed, oh God, why do you do that? You cannot do that! Let this child, soul, come to him again.

He stretched himself on the child, three times, and cried to the Lord. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he left. You know what? God was teaching his prophet a deeper lesson.

Here was Elijah. He was so jealous and zealous for God. He knew that God is the God of judgment.

You cannot play with God. If you want to play with God, there will be no dew, there will be no rain. He knew that God was the God of judgment.

But Elijah yet to know that God was also the God of resurrection. Sometimes you know that God is a God of judgment, but you fail to know that God is a God of resurrection. But this is not a bookish knowledge.

This is something you have to experience yourself first. Unless you experience in your own life that God is a God of resurrection, Elijah was not fit to be sent back again to bring blessing and rain upon a nation of Israel. God was going to send Elijah back, to send rain to the nation of Israel.

That's resurrection. But Elijah knew nothing about resurrection. He only knew judgment.

So God used this incident to teach both Elijah and the widow that God was not only the God of judgment, the God of supply, but God was also the God of resurrection. What a lesson! You know sometimes when things happen, we draw our conclusion too quickly. You know whenever we see something happen, immediately we give our verdict.

Oh we say now this is because of the iniquity of this widow. No doubt about that. Otherwise, how can it happen? The holy man of God exposes the hidden iniquities of this widow.

Therefore, judgment came upon that house. Oh how quickly we pass judgment. And sometimes even upon ourselves.

Not necessarily. You know one day when our Lord Jesus came out from the temple, and the disciples saw a man born blind, and the disciples turned to the Lord and said who sinned? His parents or he? Must be someone had sinned. Either his parents or he.

In his womb. In his mother's womb he had sinned. Because he was born blind.

Neither his parents nor he. Now not because his parents had never sinned or he had not sinned. Not that.

But the Lord said it is not because his parents sinned or he had sinned. It is for the glory of God. And here you find in this incident the widow thought it was her iniquity.

And if she was a God fearing woman certainly that would be her first reaction. But God said no. It is for the glory of God.

That the prophet and the widow should know God as the God of resurrection. And with this experience immediately after this experience the next chapter you find God sent Elijah back with a second message. And the second message was not of judgment but of restoration.

Dear brothers and sisters, we need to know God. We cannot declare God to his people. We cannot bring God's message to his own people if we do not know him first ourselves.

If God is to use you to bring the message of judgment to God's people. Brothers and sisters, if you do not know God's judgment in you first you are not fit to bring such a judgment. People who are quick to bring judgment to people are those who are most unfit.

If you know judgment in your own life it will be very difficult to bring judgment to other people. But you will if God wants you to. And the same thing is true if you want God to use you to bring the message of restoration, of resurrection to God's people.

You have to know resurrection in your own life. Otherwise it is a theory. A word.

It will not work. It does not operate. God must first work in us his message.

Then he will send you to bring his message to his people. And that is the basis of prophetic ministry. The life of a prophet is the basis of the ministry of the prophet.

So may the Lord use these words to help us. We believe that in our days we need, God needs many Elijahs. People who are fully committed to God that God could use in whatever way he wants to.

To bring whatever message he wants to send. And there will be no alteration. No dilution.

But faithfulness. Shall we pray. Lord have mercy upon us.

Do lay thy hands upon us. Use us as thy vessel. As thy voice in these last days.

If thou dost desire to bring judgment, Lord help us that we may bring thy word faithfully. If it is thy will to bring the word of comfort, of encouragement, of resurrection, enable us to do that. Lord it is only by thy grace we just give ourselves to thee and invite thee to work in us that which thou dost desire to work through us and bless thy people.

In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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