

The Sound of Abundant Rain

[Jas 1:12 ESV] 12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

[1Ki 18:41-46 ESV] 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. 46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he gathered up his garment and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

I. Intro

- A. James is a jumping off point for today's message, we will get back and unpack James 1:12 soon.
- B. Characters:
 - 1. Elijah: Prophet, bold, troubled, faithful
 - 2. Ahab: King of Judah, divided mind, not faithful to the Lord
 - 3. Jezebel: worshipper of Baal, caused much damage to the kingdom, eventually devoured by dogs as Elijah prophesied
- C. Timeline:
 - 1. Our story is just after the spectacle of the destruction of the prophets of Baal
 - 2. And Just before Elijah flees Jezebel and asks for God to take away his life
- D. **Our story: the sound of abundant rain**
 - 1. **When God gives you a vision, follow it to completion**
 - 2. **When God says rain is coming, count on it.**
- E. **Abundant Rain:**
 - 1. **Sometimes abundant rain is predicted for weeks, and it comes. You can see the storm on radar, and follow the pattern. Rain comes through natural circumstances**
 - 2. **Sometimes there is nothing but the promise of God, and no other evidence, yet that is enough.**
 - 3. **It applying this to today, God has given you a promise and a vision:**
 - a) **We see the signs in our county, people are coming, we need to be ready**
 - b) **We also have a mission to go and serve based upon the promise of God to SAVE SINNERS.**
 - c) **Sometimes we see the missional direction in the physical, sometimes we rest solely in the promise of God.**
 - d) **But our response is simply: Prayer, Obedience, Action**
- F. **Spiritual truth for today:**
 - 1. **God will bring glory to himself through whatever situation His servant finds himself in.**
 - 2. **God can bring glory to himself in the tough time, or the times of refreshing.**
 - 3. **We are to respond to God's plan with: prayer, obedience, and action.**

II. Text

- A. Verse 41:
 - 1. The sound of rushing rain, there had not been that sound in three and a half years based upon the words of Christ.

2. [Luk 4:25 ESV] 25 But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,
- B. Verses 42-43
 1. Ahab went to eat and drink, we see the value in that for preparation
 2. Elijah went off by him self...
 - a) Head between knees...uh oh
 - b) He went to hear from God
- C. Verse 44: lest the rain stop you...
 1. It was still a small cloud
 2. It was going to flood the place
 3. They went on down the mountain
- D. Verses 45-46:
 1. It rained
 2. The most important thing...The hand of the Lord was on Elijah.

III. Points

A. The Prophecy

1. The Prophet had a message and a vision:
2. Get prepared, The Lord's promise is coming.
3. The Background:
 - a) Rain had not come to the land for three and a half years or so:
 - (1) [1Ki 17:1 ESV] 1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."
 - (2) [1Ki 18:1 ESV] 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."
 - b) The famine was severe, just as promised
 - c) But the "Sound of Abundant Rain" was declared from the Prophet
4. **When God said it would happen, it was as good as done**

B. The Process

1. **Prayer, Obedience, Action**
 - a) **Prayer and Solitude.**
 - b) **Alone time with God**
 - c) **Obedience:**
 - (1) **do the thing 7 times**
 - (2) **Obedience begins before the actions of obedience**
 - d) **Action: Don't just talk about it, do something**
2. The process didn't really make a lot of sense, but this is not the only time that has been the case.
3. **The Jericho Principle:**
 - a) **God's plan will often be in direct contrast to the wisdom of man.**
 - b) **Victory was won in a way which only God could get glory, there was no doubt here**
 - c) **God does the winning, we are called to follow in direct obedience.**
4. **Don't get distracted by the things of this world, follow God's plan.**
5. **God's process for His work is different from ours:**
 - a) **Promise, Provision, and Manifestation are all as good as complete**
 - b) **We are to respond by remaining steadfast no matter where God is in His process.**

C. The Production

1. **The rain came as promised**
2. **But the rain was as good as done before it started dropping**
3. **The challenge is trust:**
 - a) **A divided mind will keep you from experiencing the fullness of your calling.**
 - b) Fight against the divided mind
 - c) [Jas 1:5-8 ESV] 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
4. So, what has he promised?
 - a) Jesus saves!
 - b) Jesus sustains!
 - c) Jesus secures!
5. How do we miss this:
 - a) We forget we are not the savior
 - b) We forget we cannot sustain, and make people respond to Him, to stay in their place of ministry and service
 - c) We forget that security is not based on our ability to prove ourselves to be worthy of God's favor
6. Our ministries WILL produce:
 - a) Through the work of prayer
 - b) Through the work of discipleship
 - c) Through the demonstration of LOVE and TRUTH
7. Our calling is to walk in obedience, and believe God to provide the ministry
8. Our calling is to serve our people with diligence, and excellence
9. Our calling is not to save, but to point them to the savior!

IV. Close

- A. The statement of fact, and the SOUND of rain happened before the storm clouds had even developed
- B. The reality of the rain had nothing to do with the physical elements of this world, but were SPIRITUAL in reality
- C. How does this truth apply:
 1. Stay the course and see your ministry through to fulfillment
 2. Believe God
 3. Obey God
 4. Wait on God