

God is up to something

Text: 1 Kings 18:41-46

Introduction:

I love to read about men like Elijah.

James 5:16-18

“16b ... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”

He was a man with the same nature as ours – not exempt from faults, often fears, he even had a severe bout of depression a one stage. The Bible doesn't hide the fact that Elijah had weaknesses like the rest of us. However, he knew how to pray effectively. He knew the authority of prayer. He was someone who absolutely trusted the promises of God.

Again, in 1 Kings 18, Elijah so trusted what he had heard from God that he went to this evil king and declared that the drought was over and that it was going to rain.

He was so confident that he spoke the word of God without any evidence in the natural.

I believe that God honours our faith when we trust Him like that. I believe that God is looking today for people who will listen to Him and believe His Word like that.

In today's message, I want to talk about what to do when you have faith like Elijah, you have heard from God, you have received His promise, spoken it out, prayed fervently and yet nothing has changed.

Look again with me to **verse 43:**

1. Go up now

I want us to look at these three words first. These three words came out of expectation. Expectation is the birthplace of miracles!

I believe that one of the keys to effective prayer is expectation. He told the servant to look up. He was expecting some visible manifestation.

However, the second part of the verse says: *“so he went up, and looked, and said, there is nothing”*.

2. There is nothing

Those 3 words full of expectation were met with 3 words that negated that very expectation: *'there is nothing'*.

- a) **3 scary words:** *'there is nothing'*. These were the last words Elijah wanted to hear, especially because there was so much at stake.
- b) Elijah heard those same words 6 times!

Elijah said, *'look up now'*. He thought the answer was going to come *'now'*. However, it didn't happen *now*, and it didn't happen for a while. However, Elijah didn't give up, he didn't stop believing, he didn't stop looking, he didn't quit.

3. God knows how to deal with nothing! He created the universe when there was nothing.

- a) You see, Elijah was not the first person to encounter *'nothing'*. He was not the first person to call those things that don't exist as though they did.

Romans 4:17 says that God *"gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did"*

- b) We already knew that God could do something with *'something'*: for instance, in **2 Kings 4**, we read the story of Elisha and the widow's oil. She just had a little bit of oil to start with, but God multiplied it in such a way that all her vessels and those of her neighbors were filled. Also, we all remember how a multitude of 5000 was fed in the desert with a little boy's lunch. 5 loaves and 2 fish were multiplied to thousands. God did something, with something.
- c) We already knew that God could create something out of *'something'*. However, **here we can see that God can also create something out of *nothing!***

Psalms 78:16...19,20

16 *He also brought streams out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.*

19-20 *Yes, they spoke against God: they said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?" ²⁰ Behold, He struck the rock, so that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed. Can He give bread also? Can He provide meat for His people?"*

These were supernatural waters that came out of nothing. This was a desert.

God can create something out of nothing - That is exactly how He created the universe.

4. How to respond when *'there is nothing'*?

How to respond when the confession of your hope is not matched by the report of the circumstances?

- a) **V.42 – he bowed down to the ground and put his face between his knees**

Run back to the presence of God!

- b) What else do we need to do when confronted with a ‘*there is nothing*’ report, especially when it comes to you 6 times?

We need to have a stubborn faith and persevere! Someone once said that “tough times never last but tough people do”!

Elijah said the same thing 7 times: *go up again!*

Hebrews 6:12: *“that you do not become sluggish but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”*

Hebrews 10:23: *“Let us hold fast the **confession of our hope** without wavering, for He who promised is faithful”*

Verse 36: *“For you have need of **endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:”*

- c) When circumstances say, ‘*there is nothing*’ the believer replies: “*there is nothing too hard for the Lord*” (**Jeremiah 32:17**)

When there is nothing, God is up to something!

A couple more verses:

Judges 14:6 - *And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though **he had nothing** in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.*

Matthew 17:20 - *So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and **nothing will be impossible for you.***