

## **Weekly Devotional – In Pursuit of Abundance 7-29-20**

**Scripture – 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. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. [James 5:17-18 NKJV]**

**The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. James, the half-brother of JESUS (he was so humble he does not even bring it up); the servant (slave) of JESUS CHRIST; a great man of prayer (called “Old Camel Knees” – having spent so much time on his knees in prayer, his knees were calloused); reaches back in the Old Testament and utilizes another great man of Prayer; the prophet Elijah.**

**A great theologian, J Vernon McGee, outlines James, chapter five in the following way: Riches Are A Care [5:1-6]; The Coming of CHRIST Is A Comfort [5:7-12]; and The Prayer of the Righteous Is A Power [5:13-20]. The entire chapter deals with prayer. Verse 7 – the “latter rain” (symbolic End Time Harvest of souls into God's Kingdom); verse 13 – are you afflicted – pray; are you happy – sing hymns; Verse 14 – any sick among you – call for the elders; anoint them with oil; Verse 15 – the prayer of faith will save the sick, if sin has been committed it will be forgiven; Verse 16 – confess your faults one to another; pray for one another; the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much; Verse 17 - Elijah prayed; it did not rain for 3 1/2 yrs.; Verse 18 – Elijah prayed; heaven gave rain; earth brought forth fruit (abundance); Verse 19 – Convert a sinner from the error of his ways; save his soul; and Verse 20 – prayer shall hide a multitude of sins.**

**The prophet “Elijah was a human being just like you and me. Elijah prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again, he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.” James refers to 1 Kings 17:1, where Elijah told Ahab that it would not rain “for the next few years.” This drought was punishment for Israel’s worship of Baal. After three and a half years of drought, Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal in a showdown on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:16–40), and then Elijah told King Ahab that it was going to rain.**

**“When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance. [1 Kings 8:35-36 NKJV]**

**“So, Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. “‘Go and look toward the sea,’ he told his servant. And he went up and looked. “‘There is nothing there,’ he**

said. “Seven times Elijah said, ‘Go back.’ “The seventh time the servant reported, ‘A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.’“ So, Elijah said, ‘Go and tell Ahab, “Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.”’ “Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel” (1 Kings 18:42–45).

The point of James 5:13–18 is that prayer is important and GOD answers prayer, so we must make it a priority. We do not have to be “super Christians.” We might be tempted to think of Elijah as some sort of super saint, but James says he was an ordinary man and that GOD answered his prayer. However, sin in the life of the one praying can block prayer’s effectiveness. Certainly, earnest prayer is important, and the prayer of faith is important, but this passage does not seem to indicate that the forcefulness with which one prays determines effectiveness. Rather, the prayer of a righteous person is powerful (forceful) and effective. We should confess our sins and pray, expecting GOD to answer. Of course, the prayer should not be half-hearted or nonchalant.

We learn, at least, seven things about Elijah’s prayer to GOD. 1. It was a prayer of faith, for it rested upon GOD’S own sure promise. 2. It was a prayer offered in the secret place, away from the noise and distractions of the world. 3. It was a prayer which was marked by deep reverence and sincere humility. 4. It was a prayer which was definite and to the point. 5. It was a prayer which was intense, earnest and fervent. 6. It was a prayer which was accompanied by watchfulness. And 7. It was a prayer which persevered until the answer came.

When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if MY people who are called by MY Name will humble themselves, and pray and seek MY Face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land [2 Chronicles 7:13-14]. GOD grants abundance as a result of the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous person.

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May we always have a mind through which CHRIST thinks; a heart through which CHRIST loves; a voice through which CHRIST speaks; a hand through which CHRIST helps; and be a vessel through which CHRIST lives!

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