

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 Have you ever witnessed or experienced a situation where a miracle happened as a result of prayer? How did it impact your perspective on the power of prayer?
- 2 Reflect on a time when you felt led to pray fervently for a specific outcome. Did the situation take a miraculous turn? How did this influence your understanding of faith and God's intervention?
- 3 Have you encountered moments where prayers seemingly went unanswered despite desperate pleas? How did you reconcile this with your belief in miracles through prayer?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.



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SUNDAY WORD

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ELIJAH

PART 2
MIRACLES IN THE
UNEXPECTED



A MOTHER'S SORROW

No one can question the power of God to work amazing miracles today. He is God. God can break into our world any time He chooses to do things that we cannot explain. It's not God's power that is at issue. The issue rests at a much deeper level – the sovereign plan of God for our lives. The question is not, do we believe in miracles? But what kind of miracles do we believe in? And what kind of God do we believe in? Sometimes our understanding of how God works is much too shallow. Miracles are not about us, miracles are about God.

The story begins in: 1 Kings 17:17-18 - "17 Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" (NIV)

The boy gets sick after many weeks and months of miraculous provision by God. After many months of the flour and the oil never running out (1 Kings 17:8-16), suddenly the boy gets sick and dies. The child didn't get sick by chance, and he didn't die by chance. His sickness and his death were both part of the sovereign plan of God. Sometimes, life is like that. We walk with the Lord and we do the best we can, and one day the phone call comes that changes life forever. Or we get a report from the doctor with bad news. Or our children get into terrible trouble. Or our marriage falls apart.



If you go back and read 1 Kings 17:7-14, the mother thought she and her son would die together because of the famine in the land. In her anguish and sorrow, she blames Elijah. 1 Kings 17:18 - "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son (NIV)?" There are at least three problems with her thinking. First, she seems to have thought that having a prophet in the house made her immune from suffering. Who could blame her, especially after all the miraculous provision of the flour and the oil? But she was wrong. Second, she assumed that her own sin somehow caused her son's death. But that doesn't appear to be correct in this instance. Third, she blamed Elijah. It's very human to find someone to blame when tragedy strikes.

ELIJAH'S FAITH

I find Elijah's response very instructive when the mother accuses him of coming to her house just to kill her son. He doesn't get angry. He doesn't try to explain why her son died. He doesn't argue with her. He doesn't make any excuses. Instead, he responds with incredible gentleness. He got involved because he saw God in everything, including all the sorrows of life.

When the widow makes her unkind accusation, Elijah responds very simply. All he says is, 1 Kings 17:19a-21 - "19 Give me your son". He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. 20 Then he cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" 21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!" (NIV)

There is no easy way to explain what happens next. Elijah lays down on top of the body of the child. Foot to foot. Leg to leg. Chest to chest. Arm to arm. Hand to hand. Face to face. He does it not once, not twice, but three times. Perhaps Elijah understood that to do anything for this boy, he was going to get very personally involved. On a side note, since the boy was dead, he was now unclean under Jewish law. It was wrong for a prophet of God to touch a dead body. But extreme cases call for extreme measures. And so by lying down on the body of the child, it's as if he is saying "Oh Lord, take some of the life from within me and give it to this boy." He prayed for a miracle because he believed in a power greater than death.

Take note of what Elijah did: He went to his private room where he could be alone with God. He prayed fervently. He relied on his personal experience, calling him "My God." He recalled God's sovereignty in causing this child to die. He prayed sincerely and persistently. He appealed to God's tender mercy toward this poor widow. He made a definite request - "Let this boy's life return to him."

When Elijah prayed, he submitted himself completely to God. In himself, the prophet had no power to bring this child back to life. He doesn't demand anything from the Lord nor does he "name it and claim it." He humbly asks God to "let this boy's life return to him." That was as much as he could do. The rest was up to God.

GOD'S RESPONSE

Now we see how God responds to Elijah's boiling prayer. 1 Kings 17:22 - "The Lord heard Elijah's cry (NIV)." It does not say the Lord heard Elijah's prayer, though he prayed. It says, "The Lord heard Elijah's cry."

James 5:17 says "Elijah was a human being, even as we are." He had the same fears, same doubts, same worries, and the same concerns. The King James Version of James 5:16 states: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (KJV)." The word fervent comes from a Greek word that means boiling.

The boiling prayers of the righteous avail much with God. What's a boiling prayer? It has nothing to do with standing or sitting, kneeling, or lying down. It has nothing to do with lifting your voice or speaking in a whisper. It has nothing to do with how loud or how long you pray. When they take your loved one away for surgery, you'll discover what a boiling prayer is. When your children are in trouble, you'll pray boiling prayers to God. It's what happens when you pray like there's nothing else in the world that really matters. Have you ever prayed like that? My wife and I prayed boiling prayers whenever our children or parents were sick. We prayed boiling prayers when members were desperate and asking us for prayers.

When the Bible says, "The Lord heard Elijah's cry," it means that when he stretched himself out on that boy's dead body, something happened. God spoke from heaven and said, "All right, man of God, it shall be done." The application is simple. Pray like that and you will see heaven open on your behalf. The effective boiling prayers of the righteous avails much. The boy's life returned to him and he lived. That boy who was dead came back to life. It's a pure miracle of God.

A MOTHER'S TESTIMONY

Seeing that her son has come back to life, the grateful mother declares to Elijah in 1 Kings 17:24 - "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth (NIV)." The miracle happens to authenticate Elijah as God's anointed prophet. God had promised to sustain all three of them - mother, son, and Elijah - until the rains came and the drought ended. Let's read 1 Kings 17:14 - "For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land (NIV).'" God does not forget His promises to His people and He fulfills them. I'm not talking here about promises we are just claiming casually as we twist God's promises to match our desires. I'm talking here of promises God impressed upon you in your prayer and devotion.

On the basis of that promise, Elijah believed that God would bring the boy back to life. Strange as it may sound, the miracle is less about the boy and more about God's power working through Elijah. It is a miracle of sovereign grace, given this one time in Elijah's life and never again given during his ministry. God answers prayer in a particular way and at a particular moment in time as He desires. Remember, God is sovereign. For Elijah, God did it for His own purposes. There is no other way to understand the story. This is a lesson about the Sovereign God of the universe moving in a miraculous way in answer to the prophet's fervent prayers.

What did Elijah learn from these three training sessions? At the brook, he learned, "God can take care of me." From the empty jar, he learned, "God can use me to help others." From the boy that died, he learned, "God can work through me to do the impossible."

It's not by chance that in verse 1 of 1 Kings 17, he is called "Elijah the Tishbite". But in verse 24 the woman calls him a "man of God." God's preparation is finished. Elijah is now ready for the ultimate challenge. No one becomes a man of God by chance, and no one becomes a man of God overnight. God must bring us to the end of ourselves so that we learn it's all about Him and not about us. When that truth finally breaks through, we are ready to be used by God in a mighty way.