



THIS IS THE START OF
S O M E T H I N G

B I G

S E R M O N G U I D E

No Limits with Pastor Delman

This Is The Start Of Something Big

1 Kings 18:40-45

INTRODUCTION

In our text, we are looking at the end of the story of Elijah’s great showdown at Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal. Baal was the Canaanite God of rain who had miserably, publicly, and embarrassingly failed to come through by creating rain. Yahweh, on the other hand, the true and living God, came through on Elijah’s behalf and exceeded all expectations. He set the altar on fire even though Elijah drenched the altar with water leaving no doubt in the minds of people that God did this. Elijah prayed, and God opened the portals of heaven, and it began to rain! It happened because God had the power, and Elijah possessed the faith. And the good news is that the same can happen for you. I don’t know what obstacles or adversaries you’re facing, but if you pray by faith, a door that has been shut can be opened, and a way that has been blocked can be cleared. I do not know how. I do not know when, but I do know who. God’s going to do something great, something big, something phenomenal, something major. And we’re going to see specifically how that can happen by diving into Elijah’s story and seeing what steps He took that we can apply to our own lives.

KEY POINTS

1. Elijah fasted.

As verse 41 opens, scholars tell us that both Elijah and Ahab had been going without food and drink during the time they were appealing to their respective deities for fire. After Yahweh won the contest, Elijah told Ahab that he could end his fast and return to eating, while he himself went back to the top of Mt. Carmel to pray. Since Elijah was seeking a major move of God and the outpouring of rain, he keeps fasting or abstaining from food and drink so that he can better hear from God. He fasts while he prays so that he could tap into something in the spirit realm and better hear from heaven.

That’s the historical, biblical definition of fasting. It is simply the act of self-denial. According to Jesus in Matthew 6, it should be motivated by sincerity and not selfish ambition or public recognition. Fasting is necessary for believers to practice because there are some demons that can only be cast out by prayer and fasting. Fasting must always be God-centered, God-initiated, and God-ordained.

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In his acclaimed book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster says that the goal of fasting is not frustration, but freedom. It seeks to establish that the desires of our flesh are not on the throne or in control of our lives. In other words, fasting is a matter of exchanging one form of hunger for another. And if we want to position ourselves for God to do something big in our lives, we might need to consider adding fasting to the mix.

2. Elijah walked by faith.

Without any hint of a cloud being seen in the sky, Elijah says he hears that what he's been praying for is on the way. The sun was still shining, and yet, the man of God says he hears a storm coming. It's a rushing rain. Not a sprinkle. Not a drizzle, but a storm. He tells Ahab you better grab something to eat before you get caught in this flood that God is bringing. Elijah doesn't speak what he sees. There has been a drought for three and a half years, but he brings his speech into alignment with what he hears. And that's faith.

The Bible says, "faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). He starts acting like it was raining, even though a drop of rain had yet to fall. And that's what faith is. Faith is when you want something big to happen, and you start acting like it has happened even before it actually happens.

3. Elijah prayed with faith.

One gets the impression that prayer for Elijah wasn't haphazard or random. Instead, it seems to have been in lifestyle. It was not merely something to which he resorted when things got tough. But isn't that often what we do? We only pray when we get in a jam.

Well, that was not the case with Elijah it seems. Elijah tells his servant to go and look out over the sea seven times. It is a picture of the frequency and fervency of his prayers. Looking for clouds and not seeing them one time would have been discouraging for most people. But Elijah does not give up on God. He persists in prayer, anticipating something was going to take place. As people of God, we've got to remember that God's timing is not like ours, and we've got to keep believing, keep pressing, keep pushing, and keep praying, no matter what!

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have you ever fasted before? If so, what was that experience like for you? If not, what is holding you back from fasting?
2. When was a time you struggled to have faith? What external circumstances affected your faith?
3. Is there something you need to pray about faithfully in your life right now? If so, spend time today in prayer asking God to answer you in His way and in His timing, and ask Him to give you patience as you wait for Him to come through.
