

The Word and Prayer

1 Kings 17

INTRODUCTION: We are a series of sermons where we are looking at the Tabernacle old Testament Tabernacle as a pattern for prayer. Remember you are the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit in this age. We said last week the Tabernacle consists of the 3 parts:



1. The **Outer Court** - Points to the Son
2. The **Holy Space** - Points to the Spirit
3. The **Holy of Holies** - Points to the Father

HISTORY OF THE TABERNACLE:

- **TABERNACLE - NOW** Remember, this tabernacle traveled with ISRAEL throughout the years until the conquest of Canaan. Then as the Monarchy was established, David had a vision for creating a permanent tabernacle or **TEMPLE**. Same design, same purpose, just a permanent structure.
- **FIRST TEMPLE** - God did not allow David to construct the Temple, but gave that assignment to his son Solomon. This first temple was destroyed about 400 years after it was built by King Nebukanezer of Babylon.
- **SECOND TEMPLE** - The temple was rebuilt and rededicated during the time of Ezra, this is called the second temple. However the second temple was much more modest. It possessed nothing of the grandure with which Solomon built.
- **HEROD'S TEMPLE** - When Herod the Great came to power, he renovated the Second Temple and made it much more glorious - something more akin to what it had been in the days of Solomon.
- **ROMAN DESTRUCTION** - But then in 70AD, the Romans destroyed the Temple in fulfillment of the Prophecy Jesus made in Mat. 24.
- **THE BELIEVER** - So today, we don't have a temple that we go to in order to worship. We are the temple. We are the place that the Holy Spirit has chosen to take up residence.

With that in mind - studying the tabernacle is like studying an operators manual for life.

The Tabernacle was a shadow of which you are the substance.

What do we know about this tabernacle? According to Jesus, it was primarily a house of **PRAYER**. **Luke 19:46 (ESV)**

46 ... "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."

Jesus loved this house of prayer so much that ZEAL for it consumed Him. The only time we see Jesus pouring out his wrath on mankind during His earthy ministry is when they missed the point of the TEMPLE.

Have you ever considered that what Jesus is wanting for you is for you to get it right. Make your body, your temple, a house of prayer?

We began a couple of weeks ago looking at the Outer Court.

1. The Outer Court - Pointed to God the Son

- The **Brazen Altar** - where sacrifices were made, reminds us that we can only pray by way of the cross of Christ - the lamb of God who takes away our sin. As a matter of fact that's why we pray, "In Jesus Name" - because we are able to come to God in Jesus's reputation.
- The **Laver** - where washing took place symbolizing the *appropriation* of grace. We said - if we cherish iniquity in our heart the Lord will not hear us... but the fervent prayer of a **righteous** man avails much.

Last week we came to...

2. The Holy Space - The Holy Space points to God the Holy Spirit

- The **7 branch Candlestick** which is symbolic of the 7 fold Spirit of God - We talked about Praying in the Holy Spirit.

• Today we are at Table of Shewbread - Pointed to the Word of God

- The table was two cubits long.
- It was overlaid with pure gold.
- On the Sabbath day the Levites made twelve loaves, of unleavened bread (1 [Chronicles 9:32](#), [Leviticus 24:5](#)).
- These cakes were placed on the table hot, each Sabbath day ([Leviticus 24:8](#); [1 Samuel 21:3-6](#); [Matthew 12:3-4](#)), arranged in two piles, six in a row, with pure frankincense on each row ([Leviticus 24:6-7](#)).
- During the entire week the bread lay on the table in the presence of God.
- At the end of the week it was removed and eaten by the priests ([Leviticus 24:9](#)).



When Satan tempted Jesus in the desert to turn a stone into bread, it says in [Matthew 4:1-4 \(ESV\)](#)

⁴ ... "It is written, " 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Jesus is quoting from **Deuteronomy 8** and making the point that man is not primarily sustained by the physical bread he eats, but by ***feasting on spiritual nourishment God's Word***.

Now why in the HOUSE OF PRAYER do we find a Reference to the Word of God?

There is an inseparable link between the Word of God and Prayer.

In it's simplest form -

- Prayer is our primary means of talking to God, and the
- The Bible is God's primary means of talking to us.

But God intended for there to be a beautiful dance that takes place between GOD'S WORD and OUR WORDS.

TEXT: Look with me at 1 Kings 17:1 (ESV) This was written at a time when Israel had become very idolatrous and God is about to discipline His people.

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.**"

Ok, so it's not going to rain... fast forward to chapter 18... which is 3.5 years later, incidentally the same length of Jesus earthly ministry.

1 Kings 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.**"

Now the Word of God said, "I'm about to send rain on the earth". Do you see that? This is the unalterable, irrevocable, promise of God. It **WILL** happen.

Now you know the story - Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal and called fire down from Heaven. Then he called for the executions of the false prophets. Now look at Chapter 18.

1 Kings 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.

Now Elijah the Prophet is calling on God - what is he praying for? He's praying for it to rain. How do we know? **James 5:17-18 (ESV)** ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

ELIJAH IS PRAYING FOR THE RAIN GOD PROMISED IN VERSE 1 Kings 18:1.

Do you see it? Elijah had an absolute promise from God Himself that rain was coming. But we find him fervently praying for rain at the end of the chapter.

QUESTION - why ASK for something God has already PROMISED?

Very simply, because the God who ordained the END (RAIN) also ordained the MEANS TO THE END (PRAYER). Do you see?

Take nothing for granted - do not expect a single unique blessing in your life that you do not pray for. James said it this way - "you have not, because you ask not".

ILLUSTRATION: Mr. Jones died and went to heaven. Saint Peter was showing him around, he saw all the magnificent building, then he saw one large but rather dark warehouse in one corner of heaven. Mr. Jones asked, "What's in the building?" Peter said, "don't worry about it, let's move on". After the complete tour Mr. Jones asked again, "Peter what's in the building". Peter opened the door and from floor to ceiling were large boxes each with a name in alphabetical order. He found the J's, then the Jones' and then he found his box. He tore off the ribbon, opened the box and then Peter saw the same disappointed look he had seen so many times before. In that box were all of the things God was willing to do for and through Mr. Jones, but Mr. Jones never asked. James said, "You have not, because you ask not"

If 18:1 wasn't enough - Deuteronomy 11:13-15 (ESV) ¹³ "And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴ he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. ¹⁵ And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full.

So there are two promises -

- General Promise - Deut. 11:13-15
- Particular Promise - 1 Kings 18:2

The promises of God shouldn't **RESTRICT** your prayer life -
they should **RELEASE** your prayer life.

Elijah knew the power of God, Elijah knew the will of God... so Elijah prayed.

Well - surely it's an quick and easy prayer - I mean God promised...No look at verse 43...

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."

Now - that is where most of us give up. We say, "Oh well, maybe this is a spiritual interpretation, or worse yet, maybe the Word isn't entirely inspired". Not Elijah -

And he said, "Go again," seven times.

Do you know what that means? That means Elijah fervently called out to God for SEVEN extended seasons of prayer. This may have taken hours.

WHY? Why does God wait for seven periods of prayer before answering? I don't know but perhaps...

***Through Prayer, God isn't just doing a work in the heavens,
but a work in the heart.***

I'm convinced we tap out too soon.

GOD WAS GOING TO DO IT... if He couldn't get an Elijah to pray fervently he could raise up someone else.

44 And at the seventh time he said, "Behold, a little cloud like a man's hand is rising from the sea."

That means if you hold your hand up to the sky.. that's about how big the cloud was. Elijah prayed for a torrential downpour. That little cloud wasn't big enough for a decent fog. But look how Elijah responds...

And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.'"

Imagine what the servant was thinking... "Elijah... I think I'll be fine".

The Physical Eye saw a tiny cloud.
The Spiritual Eye saw a torrential downpour.

The Physical Eye saw a little boys fish sandwich
The Spiritual Eye saw a feast for 5,000

The Physical Eye saw five smooth stones
The Spiritual Eye saw a dead giant

Oh friend, despise not the day of small beginnings. Perhaps it for personal sanctification or perhaps our God simply has a flair for the dramatic.. but answers typical come first as tiny clouds.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember in college when God had revealed to me that Julie and I would be married. I had prayed, I continued to pray... but my prayer changed from...

GOD I KNOW YOU CAN to GOD I KNOW YOU WILL

That next week I was going home after church and I looked in my rear view mirror and it was Julie flashing her lights for me to pull over. She gave me a series on biblical dating. What was that? A cloud the size of a man's hand. I went ahead and started planning for a wedding!

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.

The Word Builds our Faith for Prayer

James 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.

Mark 11:22–24 (ESV)

²² And Jesus answered them, **“Have faith in God. ²³ Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. ²⁴ Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.**

Faith-filled prayer is answered prayer. How do I pray in faith? Do I grit my teeth, or work up my emotions... no friend you need to learn to separate emotional faith from true faith.

Romans 10:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Faith comes through God's Word.

DEFINITION: Faith is the conduit of God's Word through which every spiritual blessing flows.

Faithless prayer is a waste of time.

Did you know that they only time success is promised is in Joshua 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

God ONLY plants his greatest seeds in the SOIL OF FAITH.

Mark 6:1–6 (ESV)

¹ He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ² And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴ And Jesus said to them, **“A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.”** ⁵ And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

John 15:7–8 (ESV)

⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

LISTEN:

- God is unfolding his plan in this glorious drama we call history.
- He wants you to be a part of it.
- He will accomplish His purpose with or without you.
- You are invited to participate.
- You engage with God through the Prayer of Faith.
- Genuine faith is always a response to God’s promise.
- We grow our faith by time in the Word.
- The life God has for you is found in this beautiful dance of God speaking to you through His Word and you responding with FERVENT, Faith filled, prayer.