

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



"Until the Rain Falls"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): James/Jacob 5:16-20; 1:2-8; 2:14-26; 4:7-10; 1 Kgs. 17-18; Lk. 4:25;
2 Chr. 7:13-14

Enduring the Dry Season. A drought rarely feels dangerous on its first dry day. At first, the ground still holds yesterday's moisture, the leaves remain green, and life continues almost as usual. But as one dry day becomes a week, and a week becomes a month, the effects begin to show. The earth hardens. The plants weaken. What once seemed full of life begins to look barren. The hardest part of a drought is often not the dryness itself, but continuing to believe that rain can still come when there is no cloud in sight.

The closing words of James/Jacob are written for people who are learning to endure through spiritually dry and difficult seasons. He has already told them to be patient like a farmer waiting for the precious fruit of the earth and for the early and late rains. Now, as he closes the letter, he shows us what faithful endurance looks like *while we wait*. We bring what is hidden into the light, continue praying when the answer seems delayed, and pursue those who are wandering from the truth. We remain faithful through the drought because God is working toward restoration. The rain *will* fall.

1. STAY IN THE LIGHT WHILE YOU WAIT

Jacob writes, *"So confess your offenses to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous person is very powerful"* (Jas. 5:16). The word translated "confess" carries the idea of bringing something outward and speaking a word that agrees with the reality. It is the opposite of hiding, pretending, or living in duplicity. We are called to bring our sins and struggles into the light within a trustworthy community so that others can pray over us and walk with us toward restoration. During a drought, the temptation is often to protect appearances—to keep acting as though everything is healthy while something beneath the surface is slowly drying out.

Jacob does not allow us to separate prayer from honest relationship or faith from action. He does not say, "Keep everything private, maintain the appearance that you are fine, and deal with it alone." He says to confess to one another and pray for one another. The prayer he describes is powerful when it is exercised—when it is *actually offered* and lived out. It is more than saying, "God bless you," and sending someone away to carry the burden alone. Faithful prayer moves us to care, minister, and remain beside one another through the dry season. While we are waiting for the rain, God strengthens His people as we speak truth, carry burdens, and pray for one another.

2. KEEP PRAYING THROUGH THE DROUGHT

James continues, *"Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain. And it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. He prayed*

again, and the sky gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit”(Jas. 5:17–18). Elijah was not a different kind of human being. He had the same nature, the same struggles, and the same experience of suffering that we have. Yet “in prayer he prayed.” He prayed earnestly, and then he endured. Three and a half years passed between the beginning of the drought and the falling of the rain. Elijah had to remain faithful while the heavens were closed and the land around him became increasingly barren.

It is significant that James chooses this prayer from Elijah’s life. In the context of praying over the sick and the Lord raising them up, we might expect him to mention Elijah praying for the widow’s son to be restored to life. Instead, James points to the drought and the rain because the purpose of that drought was to turn the hearts of God’s people back to Him (2 Chr. 7:13-14). Elijah’s prayer was ultimately a prayer for restoration. He prayed, he waited, and then he prayed again. At last, the heavens gave a heavy downpour, and the earth sprouted its fruit. This is the same picture James gave earlier of the farmer waiting patiently for the rains. Prayer is the place in which we faithfully wait for God’s work. We continue praying through the drought because the absence of visible fruit does not mean that God has abandoned His purpose.

3. KEEP CALLING WANDERERS HOME

James brings the letter to its conclusion with these words: *“My brothers and sisters, if any among you strays from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that the one who turns a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins”* (Jas. 5:19–20). The drought in Elijah’s day was not merely about dry land. It exposed the spiritual condition of a people whose hearts had wandered from God. In the same way, **the dry seasons of life can reveal where someone has begun to drift**. James says that someone “among you” may wander from the truth. They once walked on the path, but they have strayed from it and are moving in the direction of death.

Yet the wanderer is not beyond restoration. Someone can turn them back. Throughout his letter, James has spoken firmly to those whose faith had become divided and lifeless. They were using their words destructively, showing partiality, fighting for their own way, and living according to an earthly and demonic wisdom. He called them sinners, double-minded, and lovers of the world—not to discard them, but to awaken them and turn them back. Calling someone home is not accomplished through gossip, grumbling, or condemnation from a distance. It requires prayer, endurance, truth, humility, and love. Sometimes we must keep reaching through a long season in which there seems to be no response. We continue because God can use a faithful person to turn a wanderer from the path of death and bring them home when the rain finally falls.

CONCLUSION

Faithful Until the Rain Falls. The ending of James/Jacob takes us back to the beginning of the letter. He told us to let total joy lead the way when we face trials of many kinds because **the testing of our faith produces endurance**. Endurance must complete its

work so that we may become mature and complete, lacking nothing. The drought is not wasted. The waiting is not meaningless. God is using the season to expose what is hidden, deepen our prayers, strengthen His community, and turn wandering hearts toward home. He is not merely making one outward part of us appear better. He is working to make us wholly whole.

Perhaps you are living through a drought right now. You have prayed, but the heavens still seem closed. You have waited, but you cannot yet see the fruit. Do not stop praying. Perhaps the dry season has revealed something within you that needs to be confessed and brought into the light. Do not keep pretending that everything is fine. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands and purify your heart. Perhaps someone you love has wandered, and you are tired of praying, reaching, and hoping. Ask the Lord for the strength to continue pursuing them with truth and love. Bring the drought, the hidden struggle, and the wandering heart before Him. Submit yourself again to God and determine, by His grace, to remain faithful until the rain falls.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why does James connect confession, prayer, and restoration with one another in Jas. 5:16?
2. What does Elijah's three-and-a-half-year wait teach us about enduring when prayer does not produce immediate, visible results?
3. Why is Elijah's prayer concerning the drought and rain especially appropriate as James prepares to speak about turning wanderers back to the truth?
4. What has a recent or present "dry season" exposed about your faith, relationships, habits, or dependence upon God?
5. Is there someone who appears to be wandering from the truth whom you are tempted to give up on? What would it look like to continue praying and reaching for that person with humility and love?

CLOSING PRAYER:

ADONAI, give us grace to remain faithful until the rain falls. When the heavens seem closed and the ground beneath us feels dry, keep us from losing heart. Bring every hidden place into the light, and give us the humility to confess our sins and receive prayer from one another. Teach us to pray with trust, confidence, and endurance—not merely speaking words, but exercising a faith that acts in love.

Search our hearts and reveal every place where we have become divided or begun to wander. Draw us near to You, cleanse our hands, and purify our hearts. Strengthen us to keep praying for those who have strayed and to pursue them with truth, mercy, patience, and love. Let the rain of Your presence fall upon every barren place. Restore what is broken, bring forth the fruit You desire, and make us wholly whole.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.