

Touching Heaven – Touching Earth

Tuesday morning bible study on prayer with Cindy Smith

May 13 , 2008 Session 10

Let's review James 5:13-18 one more time. We want to look at Elijah-since he was a human like us. Elijah knew how to call upon God and I would like us to review some highlights of his life since he certainly was a righteous man and prayed prayers that had an effect, one being that which was recorded again in the book of James, where his prayers effected the weather over a whole region of the earth for a specific period of time. Authority over the weather triggers someone else in my mind. I believe someone else named Jesus, illustrated authority over the weather as well. Let's look at I Kings 17:1-6, 18:1-2, 18:41-46. Elisha was Elijah's successor as prophet of the Lord in Israel and He had a double portion of miracles-Elijah had 10 and Elisha had 20. If you look in 2 Kings 8:1-2. What caused the famine the crops to not grow? Drought-no rain-for twice the amount of time that Elijah predicted.

If you notice that in both of these stories, the word of the Lord came through a prophet, there was a response of obedience by the prophet to give the word, and then a response of obedience was asked by the people to whom it was given. Look back at I Kings 17:2-6. God gave very specific direction to Elijah. And it said: "so he did what the Lord had told him." Let's look in another prophetic book, Mal 4:5-6. What does this say about the Spirit of the prophet Elijah. The mantle to know the word of the Lord and to obey it without reservation will again be given to those who know their God before he comes to judge the earth. The came 400 years of prophetic silence, a famine of the word of the Lord, of prophetic revelation and declaration. An angel of the Lord brought God's word which embraced His will, came to Zechariah the high priest, the one who was selected to make atonement for the people. Then came John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord whom thought to be Elijah because the word of the Lord and the authority to preach repentance came on him so strongly. John 1:19-23 speaks clearly that many recognized the Spirit of the Lord to bring the right word for the right season.

Let's look at the ministry of Jesus in Luke 8:22-25. He also demonstrated the authority of His Father as Hebrews said He was the exact representation of God in Hebrews 1:3- "the exact representation of His being." In Luke 4:32, it says about Jesus: "They were amazed at His teaching because His message had authority." Also in Matt 7:29) Why are we looking at this example of authority over the elements in the lives of OT prophets and in the life of Jesus? It says in Matthew 28:18 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." We have been given the same authority in the name of Jesus as was given to the disciples that followed Him. The word of authority in His name because of His love toward us and toward the world. When Jesus ministered to people it was in very dark and hopeless circumstances. We will be called to do the same. In John 14:12 : "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. You may ask anything in my name, and I will do it."

We looked at an example of authority over weather. What about “sickness” since we have studied during these season together in this area through the scripture in James 5:13-19. We know God’s will for us in 3 John 2 “I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.” Another version says, “Be in health and prosper even as your soul prospers.” Sickness is not from the Lord. It is an oppression from the enemy. Jesus came to destroy the works the devil. I John 3:8 is very clear about that. It is the devil who comes to steal, kill and destroy but it is Jesus who brings abundant life (John 10:10).

Let’s look at Elijah in this area of healing in I Kings 17:17-24. The boy was brought back to life, for he was sick until he died and the Lord raised him up. Look at Elisha in 2 Kings 4:8-37. A woman was healed of infertility and a boy was raised from sickness and death. There is another story of Naaman who was healed of leprosy in 2 Kings 5:1-15. Now look at Jesus in Luke 4:38-39, Peter’s mother-in-law was healed of a fever-instantly as Jesus prayed. We have already looked at the leper that Jesus was more than willing to cleanse and to heal him of leprosy in Luke 5:12-13. The Roman centurion’s servant in Luke 7:2-9. Luke 7:21-22-many deaf, blind, lame and demon-possessed and even the dead raised. In Luke 13:10-13, a woman was healed of infirmity in which she was bent over for 18 years. So the length of time that a person has had an illness does not prevent our prayers from having an effect. God is looking to partner with our faith. God wants his sons and daughters to walk in miraculous power. He wants us to press into Him for the faith we need to command, loosen and bind in His name. Can God work sovereignly without us... yes, but we have the privilege of joining in His work to bring heaven to earth.

We could look at Elijah and Elisha and Jesus in the area of provision as well. Elijah prayed and the oil and flour did not run out for the widow of Zarephath. Elisha prayed and there was a multiplication of bread in one instance and in another-the double portion promised to Elisha, a widow’s oil never ran out so she could repay her debt and live on the remainder. Jesus provided for his disciples and their ministry with twice recorded the multiplication miracles of bread and fish, the provision of the wine at Cana, a fish holding the tax needed and a miraculous catch of fish that amazed the expert fisherman, Peter.

Do you want to pray in such a way that God is glorified? Then you need His power to do what you have already been authorized to do. An anointing of power-it’s happening all over the world. There are those who obtain the promises because they dare to believe that God can do it again. Will you be of those who walk by faith and not by sight? I am challenged and I know you are. We must be people of the Word, people filled with His Spirit, be available, and walk in faith. I am standing on two promises in His word. The first is in Zechariah 9:12 “Return to your fortress, o prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.” The second is in Isa 61:7 “Instead of their shame, my people will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace they will rejoice in their inheritance; and so they will inherit a double portion in their land and everlasting joy will be theirs. For I the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness, I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the Lord has blessed.”