

## House On The Rock Life Group Study outline 2023

### March: Revived to Reign

#### Outlines for the month

Week 1: The man who prayed for rain ✓

Week 2: The power of prayer

Week 3: The Spirit-filled life

#### Introduction

Do you ever pray about the weather? If you have, when was the last time that prayer was answered? When you do pray about the weather, is your focus on relieving your personal inconvenience, or are you thinking about how this would impact those around you – your community, city or even the nation?

As important as it may be to pray for the physical weather, it is even more important to pray about the spiritual weather in our land. Elijah was a godly man who lived in times that rivalled our times for ungodliness. But he prayed and his prayers made a significant difference in the history of Israel. When the apostle James wrote to the church about Elijah almost a thousand years later, he first wrote about Elijah as a person (a man just like us); and then about his impact through prayer. It is as though James was saying to us that the nature of the person praying is central to the power and impact of their prayer. We therefore should learn much from the character of this man who prayed, as God uses Elijah's life to stimulate us to pray for His glory to be revealed through us.

#### Pilot text

***1 Kings 17:1 [NLT] Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!"***

***1 Kings 18:17-18[NLT] 17 When Ahab saw him, he exclaimed, "So, is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?"18 "I have made no trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "You and your family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the commands of the Lord and have worshiped the images of Baal instead."***

***James 5:17-18 [TPT] 17Elijah was a man with human frailties, just like all of us, but he prayed and received supernatural answers. He actually shut the heavens over the land so there would be no rain for three and a half years! 18Then he prayed again and the skies opened up over the land so that the rain came again and produced the harvest.***

- Looking at the pilot scriptures, what characteristics do we see in Elijah that applies to us as godly people?

- **Knowing the living God and His power.** Elijah’s opening line with Ahab was, “As surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!” (1 Kings 17:1). God was no figment of the imagination or an abstract theological concept for Elijah. He knew God as the living God, the all-powerful God who made the universe and thus who easily could control the rain. Elijah knew experientially how to trust in this living God.
- **Accountability to God.** Elijah knew God as “the God I serve”; the God “before whom I stand” in the KJV translation. To stand before God meant to wait upon Him as a servant waits upon a master. Elijah realized that he was under God and would have to give an account to God for his life. So even though he was standing before a powerful, wicked king, who had killed many prophets, Elijah could speak boldly because he knew that God, not Ahab, was the ultimate judge to whom he would answer.
- **Zeal for the kingdom of God.** Elijah had a zeal for the things of God. When he met Ahab after the three and a half years of drought, Ahab said, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?” (18:17). Elijah shot back, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals” (18:18).
- **Struggling against propensity to sin.** James 5:17 tells us that Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. He had his emotional ups and downs. Matthew Henry points out how God often raises up rough characters like Elijah for ministry in rough times. It took a rough man like Martin Luther to break the ice in the Reformation. It took an Elijah to stand against the likes of Ahab and Jezebel.
- For more reading on the subject, see [here \(provided by bible.org\)](#).
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
  1. How can we break out of “routine Christianity” and know the living God and His power?
  2. How do we reconcile being godly with accepting our human imperfections?
  3. What human factors can prevent us from experiencing true revival?

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James 5:17 can be a double-edged sword. Even for long-time Christians (let alone new believers), it can be daunting to imagine that the standard of prayer that we should aspire to is that of Elijah! However, looking again at that scripture, the apostle leads with Elijah's frailties for a reason. The aim here is to motivate us, wherever we're at with the Lord, to pray more. The only basic qualification is that you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. You must be reconciled to God through faith in Christ before you can rightly pray. Jesus must be your personal High Priest, whose blood has washed away all your sin. Then the invitation of Hebrews 4:16 applies to you: "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

If you have trusted in Christ as Saviour, then you need to pray more. (We all do!) As with everything in life, motivation is the key. And to motivate us to pray, James tells us about the power of prayer, with Elijah as the illustration.

#### Pilot text

***James 5:16b-18 [TPT] ...tremendous power is released through the passionate, heartfelt prayer of a godly believer! 17Elijah was a man with human frailties, just like all of us, but he prayed and received supernatural answers. He actually shut the heavens over the land so there would be no rain for three and a half years! 18Then he prayed again and the skies opened up over the land so that the rain came again and produced the harvest.***

- What is the source of prayer power?
  - The prayer of the righteous is as powerful as the God to whom we pray. There is no inherent power in prayer itself, but rather that prayer links us to God who is all-powerful. In James 5:16b, James begins the sentence (in Greek) with "much" to emphasize how much prayer can accomplish. The point is that prayer is not just wishful thinking. When we pray, we communicate with the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, who loves us and invites us into His presence to receive grace. And so, as E. M. Bounds puts it, "Prayer can do anything that God can do" (Purpose in Prayer [Moody Press], p. 96, plus the title of Chapter 11, pp. 97-114).
- How and where should we pray?

- The power of prayer is not limited to prayers offered in church buildings on Sunday mornings, or to prayers offered by ordained ministers, or to prayers given in eloquent language. If you know Christ, then wherever you are, in whatever need you find yourself, call out to God and He will hear and answer according to His will. You may only have time for a quick, silent prayer. But God doesn't weigh the value of the prayers by their length or by how many people get together to pray the same thing or by how much you agonize in your prayers. God answers our prayers on the basis of His grace through Jesus Christ, not on the basis of our working up certain feelings.
- For more reading on the subject, see [here \(provided by bible.org\)](#).
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
  1. How would you advise a Christian who said that he/she didn't feel worthy to pray?
  2. How can we pray in faith (Mark 11:22-24) when we don't know God's sovereign will in advance?
  3. How long should we continue praying if God doesn't seem to be answering? Is there a point at which we should give up?
  4. Where is the proper balance between prayer and proper methods? Does dependence on God in prayer mean that we should neglect effective methods?

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We live in a day of increasing energy shortages. The world has ever-increasing energy demands in the face of ever-decreasing energy supplies. Power outages are becoming more frequent. The cost of heating or cooling our homes and driving our cars continues to escalate. Under these conditions, it would be utterly inconceivable if a great number of people had access to a free and readily available source of energy but failed to use it.

And yet, many Christians seemingly do this very thing with regard to the Christian life. God has provided us an inexhaustible, free, readily available source of power to live the Christian life. And yet many Christians do not use the power that God has given to overcome temptation and sin. Christian families fall apart because the family members manifest the deeds of the flesh, instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit in their daily relationships. Many Christian workers burn out serving the Lord because they do not avail themselves of the power that God offers through His indwelling Holy Spirit.

And so the subject of our text, the Spirit-filled life, is vital for every Christian to understand and practice. As often has been said, the Christian life is not difficult; it is absolutely impossible, apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said (John 15:5b), "apart from Me you can do nothing." But in the same context, He repeatedly promised to send the Holy Spirit to live in us as the divine Helper (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13). So the Christian life must be the Spirit-filled life. To walk wisely, to redeem the time in these evil days, to understand the will of the Lord and live in light of it, we must be filled with the Spirit.

#### Pilot text

***Eph 5:18 [TPT] And don't get drunk with wine, which is rebellion; instead be filled continually with the Holy Spirit.***

***Col 3:16-17 [TPT] 16Let the word of Christ live in you richly, flooding you with all wisdom. Apply the Scriptures as you teach and instruct one another with the Psalms, and with festive praises, and with prophetic songs given to you spontaneously by the Spirit, so sing to God with all your hearts! 17Let every activity of your lives and every word that comes from your lips be drenched with the beauty of our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One. And bring your constant praise to God the Father because of what Christ has done for you!***

- What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
  - Every conscious area of your life is yielded to the Holy Spirit (Eph 3:18)
  - The word of God permeates every area of your life (Col 3:16)
  - Your relationship with God is ever-deepening (Col 3:17)
- How can we experience the Spirit-filled life?
  - [You must first be born again – see previous weeks' outlines]
  - Repent of and forsake sin/rebellion (Eph 5:18)
  - Recognise and acknowledge that you need to be filled continually, in the same way that you will continually need to drink water (Eph 5:18)
  - Spend time in the word of Christ, and let it dwell in you (Col 3:16)
  - Spend time with God and in His beauty (Col 3:17a)
  - Walk by faith based on the finished work of Christ, not feelings that are ever-changing (Col 3:17b)
- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
  1. If the Holy Spirit were controlling us, wouldn't we be perfect, just like He is? How would you refute this biblically?
  2. If the filling of the Spirit is not an emotional experience, how can you know that you are filled?
  3. Does being filled with the Spirit mean that we are not interested in non-spiritual things?