

Home Group study: week beginning 31st January 2021

Limitless Faith Pt2

Can you remember a really significant answer to prayer in your life?

How has it affected your faith since? Are other members of the group encouraged by it?

Read: 1 Kings 18: 41-46

Discovery

What does anyone know about King Ahab? *(Son of King Omri, who, according to*

1 Kings 16: 25: 'did evil in the eyes of the Lord and sinned more than all those before him', and was even more evil than his father. 1 Kings 16: 30/31: Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat [who divided the kingdom and brought back idol worship to Israel], but he also married Jezebel [a name we still use today to describe 'certain types' of women...] daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him.' He particularly hated Elijah whom God was using to challenge Ahab's evil ways and refers to him as 'you troubler of Israel'.)

What is remarkable about Elijah's statement that 'there is the sound of a heavy rain'?

(They are into the third year of a drought that God has brought about to show his supremacy over Baal, the god of storms: and as we see from verses 43/44 there is as yet not any sign of cloud in the sky.)

Elijah is trusting that God will bring rain. Why is he so confident in his trust of God at this particular point in time? *(It comes immediately after the most famous part of the story of Elijah, where he has challenged the prophets of Baal to bring down fire and burn up a sacrifice: which of course the prophets of Baal fail spectacularly and God succeeds even more spectacularly.)*

What do verses 43-44 tell us about Elijah's faith and how he approaches it?

Given what we know about King Ahab, what would be the consequences for Elijah had his faith in God failed him?

Understanding

For Elijah, God coming through for him was literally a matter of life and death. Not only that; God's own honour was at stake. If Elijah had got it wrong the effects would have been devastating. How would we react if so much depended on our faith?

Elijah knew that God would also show his power by ending the drought; indeed he had already told Ahab that he could hear the sound of rain. Have a look at verses 42 and 43.

Why do you think Elijah acts the way he does in verse 42? What does this tell us about the way we should pray?

How do you think Elijah feels in verse 43? What does that tell us about the way we should act when we've prayed and not seen an answer? Do you find it easy to go back to someone when you've prayed for them to find out if anything has changed? What should we do if nothing has changed for that person?

How would you react if you were in Elijah's shoes when on the seventh occasion of going back you saw a lovely clear blue sky with just a cloud the size of a man's hand? And how does Elijah react? What does that teach us about faith? And what would your response be when the heavens eventually opened (beyond getting your umbrella out!)?

Application

We are facing difficult circumstances and people are seeking answers. One question they may be asking is 'where is God in all this?' At this stage in the story Elijah has just seen God's power at work in the most mighty way: how can we have faith in the situations that confront us right now? Do we have the confidence to give people answers?

Romans 1: 20 tells us that God reveals himself through creation so people are without excuse. Does creation help you to see God more clearly? On Sunday Tim quoted Sir David Attenborough, probably the most respected and influential naturalist in the world, as saying our 'Perfect Planet' is a result of 'cosmic good fortune'. What do you think of that statement? How does it affect people's ability to see God?

Tim told us that in the story of David & Goliath, David knew who God was, Elijah in this episode knows who God was. Creation may be proof to us of God being who he says he is. Can you think of other ways we can reassure ourselves that God is who he says he is? Does that help us to have a stronger faith?