

Theme: The sound of abundance of rain

Main text: 1 Kings 18:41, 46

Beloved in Christ, it is great to meet once again after our harvest feast last Sunday. While reflecting on today's Bible passages, several other related quotations came into my mind, and I further reflected on those ones too. Then suddenly, I wondered why those verses immediately came up. Upon sober reflection, I realized that they emanated to direct my path. For instance, "*Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*" - **Luke 6:38**. In this scripture, God assures us that once we fulfill our mandate of giving, we will receive breathtaking rewards in return. One significant point here is the fact that what we shall receive in return will be multiple folds of what we freely gave from the depths of our hearts and out of our own free will and volition. This reminded me of the breakthrough that manifested in the life of Isaac when he fulfilled the part of his bargain with God. The scripture reports that he reaped in multiple folds from what he planted. "*Then Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him.*" - **Genesis 26:12**.

It is no surprise that in one of Paul's epistles he wrote: "*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.*" - **Ephesians 3:20**. These confirm the greatness, awesomeness, and magnanimity of our God. Elisha operated on the basis and tenets of **Luke 6:38** during the account of his encounter with the widow recorded in **2 Kings 4:1-7**. We witness here an abundance or put differently, an overflow of blessings (oil, in this case). In an analogous incidence, Elisha prophesied concerning abundance of oil in the land (**2 Kings 7:1-20**) and this manifested in the lives of God's people. These occurrences are no coincidence, magical, or myths, and one cannot pitch it to any other than the sovereign authority, power of Elohim. Other occurrences such as, the resurrection of a dead boy by Elisha (**2**

Kings 4:8-37), the healing of Naaman by Elisha (**2 Kings 5:1-14**), restoration and the latter glory stories recorded in (**Psalms 32:8; Joel 2:25**), Jabez’s breakthrough prayer (**1 Chronicles 4:10**), all points to the power of God which encourages us not to worry, but instead cast our burdens unto Him for solutions.

Following that, another pivotal scripture came into mind. *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* - **Hebrews 11:6**. From this I pondered on what faith really means, and later, how one can diligently seek God. I leave these for you to further ponder/meditate upon them. Before we get into the main details of today’s passage, let us take a quick look at the encounter between Ezekiel and God in the valley of dry bones - **Ezekiel 37:1-14**. I summarized the entire encounter as finding new hope to fulfill our dreams, which is symbolized by the rising of dry bones, in other words, speaking life into one’s situations. What’s unique here is that God Himself chose the setting (a valley full of dry bones) for Ezekiel, and asked him some interesting questions, which Ezekiel had no personal capabilities to manifest them in real life. He, however, knew that God certainly had answers to them as He is the all-knowing one. What’s intriguing in my opinion is that the fact that at the end of the encounter, the dry bones were really restored and made whole (with flesh and breathe) again. This is a testimony that whatever God promises or instructs us to do, He sees to the realization/manifestation of it. You might have spent all your fortunes during the harvest with the faith and hope that God will replenish and restore to you all that you lost. This was based on your conviction that what God did through Elisha for the poor widow, He can do same for you now. What God did through Ezekiel when He asked him to prophesy hope to the dry bones, He certainly can accomplish the same for you in this generation, and even what He did through Elijah when he prophesied about abundance amid drought and famine, He can equally do the same for you. These convictions are not in vain, as we would see success stories as we zoom into **1 Kings 18:1-2, 41-46**.

Background and general overview

1 Kings 18 records two prayers that Elijah prayed: one was in public - for fire (**verses 36-37**), and the other was in private - for rain/water (**verses 42-46**). For three and half years there had been no rain; now Elijah goes before the Lord and asks Him to send the rain, on the basis of God's own sure promise - **1 Kings 18:1**. God had said to Elijah, "I will send rain...", and now Elijah asked Him to do that which was clearly His will. Prior to that, in **chapter 17 of 1 Kings**, we witness the declaration of drought by Elijah. He categorically suggests that except at his word, the drought will continue unabated. The whole land, therefore, suffered from food and water scarcity. They struggled to get food and water for man and animals as the crops had yielded no fruits for more than three years in a row.

A closer look at most books in the Old Testament reveals that **rain** was symbolically used to represent God's favour to His people. Hence, its absence was a clear indication of God's fury upon them usually because of their sins. In that sense, the sound of "*Abundance of rain*" implied that the neglect or curse was over, and in its place, the blessings and the glory of God is expected again. It is an indication of supernatural restoration. It also symbolizes an end to sufferings, wars, pains, scarcity, and hardship, and a new season of joy, peace, and comfort is about to open for the people of God. Now, let us look at three significant topics under today's theme.

1. The declaration of the abundance of rain

When Elijah announced to Ahab, "*I hear the sound of the abundance of rain.*", no sound audible to the human ear could be heard. Nothing around could suggest that a great change and transformation was about to occur, but the word of the Lord had gone forth. Probably, Elijah might have heard this sound through faith, or in a vision. **Galatians 3:2; Psalm 25:14; Amos 3:7; Acts 22:9.**

Another interesting perspective was that there was no cloud in the sky. It was just as clear, hot and dry as it had always been; no sign of any rain. Yet Elijah sensed in his spirit the Advent of rain. He was bold enough to announce it, particularly, instructing the king in these words, “Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* the sound of abundance of rain.”

2. The Prayer for/Action towards the Abundance of Rain

Elijah got himself in the birth position, *i.e.*, head/face between his knees, and began to labour in prayer for what he heard in the Spirit. Elijah was on the mountain top, alone with God and praying for the showers to be poured out upon the land, after making the declaration of the abundance of rain. The Bible refers to the prayer of Elijah, challenging us that since he is a man of like passion like us, we need to emulate and learn from the prayer of Elijah and believe God for outstanding success in our prayer life as he did. Refreshingly, our dispensation has the good news that we are under a better covenant with God than Elijah was.

When Elijah gave Ahab the message, the next line of action was Ahab’s. He had the free will to decide what he wanted to do with it. He could have doubted the message with the following statements, “I don’t believe this, Elijah! There is even no cloud in the sky.” Simply put, we can doubt God’s words by saying “Jehovah, I don’t think I can pass my exam as I feel unprepared, rumors of staff lay off are ripe at my workplace, the global economy is crippling, inflation is on the rise, business is slow, there are pockets of wars all over the world, COVID is still gradually surging, my medical report doesn't look good, etc.” Instead, Ahab dared to believe and put action behind his faith. The next verse says, “*So Ahab went up to eat and drink.*” You know, it took a lot of nerve to prepare a feast in the midst of the drought. While other people were complaining, depressed, and bitter, Ahab chose to celebrate. Beloved in Christ, this is what faith is all about! You can’t wait to see it before you believe. You have to believe and let your faith open the door so you can see it! Based on this exemplary action by Ahab, I urge you today to

follow Ahab's example. Get your hopes up! Start celebrating what God is about to do! Do not make excuses. Be a believer; not a doubter, have faith and not fear. Make daily declarations that "Father, I want to thank You that all that I am doing is successful and blossoming. Thank You that You are going to surprise me with abundance of grace, glory, blessings, etc. in every sphere of my life. Lord, thank You that I'm going to see promises come to pass." Abundance of joy, abundance in health, abundance in finances, etc. will all manifest in my life. I believe and declare it's going to be an exceptional season for me and my family because I hear the sound of abundance coming my way!

You may be in the middle of the drought, you may not see any evidence of rain in the sky: Remember, Elijah didn't say he saw, he said he heard. There is no situation you are passing through that God has not spoken about. What has God said concerning your case? Can you hear the sound of abundance of rain? It is time for your supernatural restoration and recovery of all that the enemy has stolen and destroyed in your life and family in Jesus' name. Your Divine Help is on the way, the answer to your prayers of many years is on the way, the breakthrough you long waited for is on the way. Essentially, though the rain was envisaged, some work by both Elijah and Ahab was required. Hence, while Ahab went to feast, Elijah went to pray alone with God.

3. The Implementation of the Abundance of Rain

Delightfully, on the seventh time, the servant of Elijah came back and said, "Elijah, this time I saw a small cloud in the sky. It is vital to stress that God doesn't need the whole sky to be filled with clouds. Elijah was excited at the news of the seventh time. Most people would dismiss it. "It's nothing. It's insignificant". Yet God can bring a rainstorm out of it. God can take something small and turn it into something great. You might have remained in the same position for seven years, but your story will change for better, an overtaking anointing. God will give you a new song and a great testimony in Jesus' name.

That dry season is not going to last forever. Why? The word of the Lord had gone forth, the rain is coming. Struggle and lack is not your destiny. It is temporary. Your situation is not defined by what you see or feel, it is determined by what God says: There is a sound of abundance of rain. It's not going to be a drizzle, or a sprinkle, but a downpour. The scripture says, "*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning*"- **Psalm 30:5**. God is set to close the season of lack and scarcity and open a season of abundance for you. God is about to rain down His favour in abundance. He is going to turn your mourning into dancing, your sorrow into joy, your loneliness into companionship, and your scarcity into abundance. He is going to give you beauty for those ashes. The drought is coming to an end. There is a sound of abundance of rain, and you shall experience a season of refreshing in Jesus' name. You hear abundance, but you may see lack. You hear work but you are unemployed now, you hear health, but you may see sickness. You hear rain but you may look around and see drought. Let men be liars and let God only be true.

Personal experience

Personally, I have experienced seasons of emptiness, hopelessness, scarcity, and even sadness. One classic example in recent time was when my family had to renew their residence permits. It metamorphosized into a period of exchange of emails between the city authorities and myself with no clear sign that the extension will be possible or granted for even a few weeks. Despite the ambiguity and lack of clear sign of any breakthrough, we remained positive as we called on God and reached out to other Peace Church friends. Apparently, there appeared some glimpses of hope as we got some assurance of help from friends. This further strengthened our resolve even though the communication from the immigration office was still negative. I am glad to report that as Elijah and his servant did not give up but continuously looked/searched for that little sign, we also unknowingly held on and of course, God's glory was manifested in our lives. Many of us here

can give several examples of such breakthroughs in our lives. This clearly shows the sovereignty, faithfulness, and capabilities of the Lord in whom we live, move, and have our being. May those who are yet to witness the restoring blessings of our Lord receive testimonies to that effect soon and may all of us continue to put all our faith and cast our burdens unto Him so that these kinds of experiences may continue to be seen in our lives.

My message to you today is very simple. Go enjoy a good meal because I believe you are going to see His promises come to pass. I believe God is going to surprise you with His favor. It may get darker in the world, but that's okay. For you and me, God's people, it's going to get brighter and brighter. To conclude, sometimes the season of disappointment is a time of recruitment, and in every desert of despair, God has an oasis of comfort. No matter what damage might have happened, God can bring about supernatural restoration by the mercy and power of the name of Jesus. Amen!