

Intro: 22 Years ago I was asked to bring the Annual Sermon for the MD/Del Baptist Convention. Big Deal 2000 450 or 500 hundred churches. Great honor: I prepared a wonderful sermon, Go into all world preach Gospel. Think of it as Baseball, Mom and Apple Pie! About a month before, all done, Downstairs watching TV Never Do
Charles Stanley: Sampson and Delilah: Read passage... All at once: Complete sermon: *"Loving What Destroys You"*
Sampson loved Delilah SO much, Continued to pursue her...even to the point of costing him everything: His life!
Opened Sermon: Good News and Bad News: Good: Turn of a New Century we are ready! Bad: Last not this one!

Went on to talk about things that Churches love...Wonderful in Past...Killing Them Today: Never Asked Back!

Today continue our series on "The Whisper Of The King" Hearing God's Voice 1st Notice

1 Kings 17:1-10

1. Be Prepared: What You Hear From God Is Not Always Easy! Vs 1

Elijah has a message for Ahab, the King of Israel: And it is NOT a happy message! NO RAIN: DROUGHT!

- Judgment: Drought Food Shortages Starvation Struggle

Sometimes we are under the misconception that when God speaks it is always going to be "good" message! And it is...Ultimately...But as in this instance, the Good that was coming resulted from Judgment! Walk through trouble

- Jesus models: Sometimes it is the Beatitudes: Sometimes Prodigal Son: Sometimes: White washed tombs!
- When Elijah spoke, and the drought came...it ushered in 3 ½ years of trial and tribulation: Yes, ultimately it worked out for the good of the nation...But God's message was not EASY! Yet Elijah had to speak it!
As you seek to hear God's voice in your life more clearly...keep in mind...What He says will not always be easy!

2. Be Strong: When You Hear From God It Will Stretch Your Faith! Vs 2-4

When the God of the universe speaks...Seldom: *How is the weather!* (Now YOU can ask! Darlene and I 2 months)

When God speaks...it is about something IMPORTANT! And When HE speaks...it will STRETCH YOU!

- Elijah: No rain for YEARS! Leave and Hide (No support) Drink from Brook: Birds bring you food!
ELIJAH MUST HAVE THOUGHT: GOD...ARE YOU SURE!

Ahab isn't known for being a very forgiving and kind King! I don't think he will take this well!

And...BTW...I would much rather stay HERE...where there is at least a LITTLE food! WILDERNESS!

- Jesus: Constantly Stretching His disciples: Feed the 5000; Go catch a fish for taxes; Bring the sick to ME!

Illus: I remember when I first heard God tell me: Take 300 pastor libraries to Cuba: Best friend, Translator, Directiva

Even the very first night, I remember saying to God: You HAVE heard about this thing called EMBARGO?

None of that matters...what matters is: HAVE YOU HEARD FROM GOD! If you have...Done!

It may take time, it may stretch your faith further than you ever imagined, probably not easy...can be done

If you aren't willing to be spiritually stretched...then don't ask God to speak...because He will stretch you!

It may take a lot of time...It may take a lot of prayer...It may take a lot of work...sacrifice...struggle...

3. Be Obedient: It's Not Enough To TALK: You Have To ACT On What God Says! Vs 5

"So he went and DID according to the word of the Lord!"

Elijah heard God...and ACTED on What God told him to do. Not a single indication of struggle: God spoke: He acted

Here is one of the breakpoints for many of us: We think we are in a negotiation with God! God you speak...If I like it...

If that is your attitude...you will NEVER hear from Him! Why is He going to waste His breath?

Term: PROACTIVE OBEDIENCE: GOD...BEFORE YOU SPEAK...I SAY YES!

What we have to develop is an attitude of submission and unconditional obedience: God...WHATEVER YOU SAY!

Illus: Peter had to learn that lesson early in his relationship with Jesus: Mt 5

Peter, put out to deep water and let down your nets! Lord...we have fished all night...

I'm the fisherman...and you are the preacher...Stay in your lane *"But...because YOU say so...I will!"*

4. Be Open Handed: RELEASE The Blessing Of The Past So You Can RECEIVE The Blessing Of Future! Vs 6-10

This is one of the key elements in this passage that we often overlook. Christians, Churches, Families, Ministries: Stuck

In Order to RECEIVE the blessing God has for you...You have to let Go of the Blessing you have.

Vs 7: *"And after a while the brook dried up!"*

- Brook had been a place of provision: Place of Blessing: Place of Miracle: Place of Safety: NO MORE! DONE
- God is moving on...He is going to do a new thing...and Elijah has to be willing to let go of past blessing!

- Listen: Had Elijah not released the past...Had he said: God...This is place of blessing...STAYED: DIED THERE!!!
- In order to receive the NEW blessing...you have to open your hand and let the PAST blessing go: RELEASE IT!
- Just because God worked ONE way in the PAST...is no guarantee God is going to CONTINUE to do same thing
In fact: Greg Hudson: Chairman of Elders: Says A Wise Thing: *God SELDOM does the same thing twice!*
God delights in doing things in surprising and different ways! He is a God of variety and change
Vs 4 and 9: Same Word! I have *commanded* Ravens: I have *commanded* Widow (Appointed)
God is STILL feeding Elijah: He is just doing it in a different way!
Isaiah 43:18-21 *Remember NOT the former things! Behold...I am doing a NEW thing!*
- Notice Something: Vs 2-4 and Vs 8-10 have EXACTLY the same pattern: Same words in Original language
Vs 2-4: Word of Lord came: Elijah went and did according to word of Lord
Vs 8-10 Word of Lord came: Elijah went to Zarephath:
There is not one single bit of hesitation in EITHER account: God spoke: Elijah Went PROACTIVE OBEDIENCE!
He never once said...God...Why do I have to leave this place of blessing...can't you start the brook up!
Of course God could have: But listen: There is a WIDOW IN ZARAPATH than needed to be blessed!
It wasn't JUST about Elijah! God's perspective is bigger : STARVING WIDOW THAT NEEDED HELP: ELIJAH IT!

5. Be Full Of Faith: Step Out In Faith BEFORE You See The Future Blessing. Vs 10

Heb 11:1 *"Now Faith is the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for, the evidence of things NOT YET SEEN!"*

Elijah could not SEE the widow of Zarephath from the side of the brook! But do you know what He COULD SEE!

- He could SEE that it was 100 miles away give or take...A LONG hard journey!
- He could SEE that it was 8 miles south of Sidon: The hometown of someone he knew: Jezabel! Price on him!
- He could SEE that it was A central manufacturing town for idols to a false God: Baal! (Not Popular There!)

Illus: I KNOW what I would have said: God...SERIOUSLY! Through her home town...to the place that I just put out of business? From this place of safety and provision hidden out in the desert...right into the heart of people who hate me! But guess what...NOT ONE SINGLE HINT OF THAT IN ELIJAH'S life!

Why?

Prepared: Strong: Obedient: OpenHanded: Full of Faith!

CONCL: I have a couple of questions for you this morning:

1. What price are you willing to pay...what sacrifice are you willing to make if God speaks to you and calls you to something hard? Are you willing to step UP your obedience and lay DOWN your life? If God calls you to something hard...are you willing to do it? If God calls you to speak into a situation that is hard...are you willing to do that? Are you willing to sacrifice your comfort to be obedient to His direction in your life? Sometimes He requires that. In fact, many times we don't hear what God is saying...because we don't WANT to hear...We don't want to obey: Be Prepared

2. Are you willing to be stretched? Are you ready to step outside your comfort zone...and go to a place, be involved in a ministry, do something that you don't feel comfortable with, or don't agree with...or don't WANT to do...in order to obey Him? Are you willing to go father than you think you can go when God directs you to do so? When you hear Him...and you think to yourself...I could NEVER do that...are you willing to step out in faith...and try?

3. Are you willing to be obedient? Can you echo the words of Peter...*"But because you say so...I will"* Can you go that far? Are you willing to tell Him that in advance? God...It doesn't matter what YOU call me to do...If you call me...if you speak to me...if you say I should..then I will!

Illus: My very first mission trip: China: Rick: NO OK...One day in shower...God said: What if Rick calls says: I can't go

4. HAS YOUR BROOK DRIED UP TODAY? What do you need to release today? As I was writing this message I KNEW...there are some people listening to me that need to RELEASE past blessings in order to RECEIVE God's best for you today. Listen to me...as long as you hold tightly to what at one time was God's best...and refuse to let it go...you will never be able to grasp the future. That past is gone...it's over...Your brook has dried up:

Relationship: Job: Ministry: Dream....Hope you have: Desire: Let it Go!! God has something better!
HOW? Come down here...release it to the Father: THANK HIM FOR PAST: CELEBRATE IT: HONOR IT: LET IT GO!

5. Start walking toward the future God has for you. You can't see: That's OK you don't have to see it HE CAN God can see the future that you can't see: As long as you stay by the brook...that's not flowing...never find future blessing