

1 Kings 18:41-46

January 29, 2023



INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

In teams of two or three, create lists for the top ten things you hate waiting for (test grades, fast food drive through lines, etc.). Share your list with the whole group.

Why is waiting hard?

Think back to last week's study in 1 Kings 18 when Elijah put the prophets of Baal to a test with fire on Mount Carmel. As the prophets of Baal prepared their altar, danced, and called out to Baal all day long to bring down fire on the bull they planned to sacrifice, Elijah probably couldn't wait for his turn to call on the name of the Lord. But he did wait, and he even encouraged them to try harder after they had spent the whole morning trying to get Baal to answer them. When evening came, Elijah got his turn and God proved that He alone is worthy of worship. You might think Elijah wouldn't have had to wait on God again after that, but he did. In today's passage, we'll learn that God's timing is always perfect—even when it doesn't match ours.

DISCUSSION

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 KINGS 18:41-46.

What must Elijah have believed about God to have the confidence to make this request?

What do you know to be true about God that gives you confidence to pray boldly to Him?

What did Elijah's posture (see verse 42) say about his devotion to God? About his faith in God?

Elijah didn't see immediate results, but he kept praying. Think about your own prayers. Are you persistent when things are not going your way, or do you move onto something else?

What is the most you have ever prayed for something? How did this impact your faith?

What have you learned about God through waiting in prayer that you wouldn't have learned if God had answered you immediately?

Elijah trusted that God was working when he saw a cloud the size of a man's hand, and that was the only proof he needed. Do you ever miss God's work because you are looking for something bigger than the "smaller" signs He is showing you? Share an example.

When God responded, it was so fast that the storm overtook Ahab's chariot. When has God given you more than you ever expected?

APPLICATION

Why is it important to always remember that God is faithful to His promises—no matter what it looks like?

What are you learning, or have you learned, about the need for continued prayer?

PRAYER

Thank God for always working to bring renewal and life in His perfect timing, even when it seems like you have to wait. Ask Him to help you endure in prayer and trust Him completely in that process.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study of the life of Elijah.

February 5, 2023 --- 1 Kings 19:1-9

COMMENTARY

The Lord next revealed himself as the God of rain. He had promised Elijah in 18:1, “Present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.” With the coming of rain, the defeat of Baal would be complete. His claims would be shown to be bankrupt and God’s claims to be authentic.

Elijah’s confidence in the Lord was revealed by his instructions to Ahab: Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain. While Ahab went to eat, Elijah climbed to a high point on the mountain where he could look westward toward the Mediterranean Sea, the direction from which a storm would come. Elijah took a position of humility and concentration, bent down with his face between his knees, and began to pray for rain. He used his servant as a lookout, to peer out into the cloudless sky over the Mediterranean. Elijah’s prayer for rain was based not only on God’s promise in 18:1 but also on God’s covenant promise for repentance in Deuteronomy 28:12.

Six times the prophet sent his servant and received the report that there was no sign of rain. Still he continued to pray, and the seventh time he received the report that a cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea. Elijah’s confidence that God would answer his prayer was so great that this was all the evidence he needed. He sent the servant to advise Ahab to head for home as quickly as possible, before the storm overtook him. Torrential rain after a drought presented the likelihood of swollen streams, mudslides, and flash floods that would make charioteering dangerous.

The rain that followed was not just much-anticipated drought relief; it was visible evidence that God, not Baal, was sovereign over nature and life. Once again, the power of the Lord came upon Elijah, enabling him to run the seventeen miles back to Jezreel, arriving ahead of Ahab.