

Bay City Wesleyan Church -- Bay City, Michigan

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Sunday Morning Worship Celebration 01-28-2024

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Psalms 103:1-6 NIV

[1] Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. [2] Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— [3] who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, [4] who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, [5] who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. [6] The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

Psalms 103:8 NIV

[8] The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. [10] he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. [11] For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; [12] as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. [13] As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; [14] for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. [15] The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; [16] the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. [17] But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children— [19] The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

Series: Make Room for Jesus
Series Big Idea: We often view prayer as a task or an action we perform. We teach children that it is a way of talking to Jesus and asking God to fulfill our desires. We strive to improve our prayer practices to

receive more from God. But what if prayer is more than just a simple act? What if prayer is about creating space for us to know Jesus better and become more like him? What if the primary goal of prayer is to connect with Jesus and develop a stronger relationship with him? How would this change our approach to prayer?Text: 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:1-46Title:Human Like Us

1 Kings 17:1 NET

[1] Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As certainly as the Lord God of Israel lives (whom I serve), there will be no dew or rain in the years ahead unless I give the command."

What gives someone the boldness to say, "It won't rain unless I allow it"?What is the source of their power and authority to back up their statement, given that there has been no rain in three years?What kind of person is this?

1 Kings 18:1-46 NET

[1] Some time later, in the third year of the famine, the Lord told Elijah, "Go, make an appearance before Ahab, so I may send rain on the surface of the ground."
[2] So Elijah went to make an appearance before Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. [3] So Ahab summoned Obadiah, who supervised the palace. (Now Obadiah was a very loyal follower of the Lord. [4] When Jezebel was killing the Lord's prophets, Obadiah took one hundred prophets and hid them in two caves in two groups of fifty. He also brought them food and water.) [5] Ahab told Obadiah, "Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grazing areas so we can keep the horses and mules alive and not have to kill some of the animals." [6] They divided up the land between them; Ahab went one way and Obadiah went the other. [7] As Obadiah was traveling along, Elijah met him. When he recognized him, he fell facedown to the ground and said, "Is it really you, my master, Elijah?" [8] He replied, "Yes, go and say to your master, 'Elijah is back.'" [9] Obadiah said, "What sin have I committed that you are ready to hand your servant over to Ahab for execution? [10] As certainly as the Lord your God lives, my master has sent to every nation and kingdom in an effort to find you. When they say, 'He's not here,' he makes them swear an oath that they could not find you. [11] Now you say, 'Go and say to your master, "Elijah is back."' [12] But when I leave you, the Lord's spirit will carry you away so I can't find you. If I go tell Ahab I've seen you, he won't be able to find you and he will kill me. That would not be fair, because your servant has been a loyal follower of the Lord from my youth. [13] Certainly my master is aware of what I did when Jezebel was killing the Lord's prophets. I hid one hundred of the Lord's prophets in two caves in two groups of fifty and I brought them food and water. [14] Now you say, 'Go and say to your master, "Elijah is back,"' but he will kill me." [15] But Elijah said, "As certainly as the Lord who rules over all lives (whom I serve), I will make an appearance before him today." [16] When Obadiah went and informed Ahab, the king went to meet Elijah. [17] When Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is it really you, the one who brings disaster on Israel?" [18] Elijah replied, "I have not brought disaster on Israel. But you and your father's dynasty have, by abandoning the Lord's commandments and following the Baals. [19] Now send out messengers and assemble all Israel before me at Mount Carmel, as well as the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah whom Jezebel supports. [20] Ahab sent messengers to all the Israelites and had the prophets assemble at Mount Carmel. [21] Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long are you going to be paralyzed by indecision? If the Lord is the true God, then follow him, but if Baal is, follow him!" But the people did not say a word. [22] Elijah said to them: "I am the only prophet of the Lord who is left, but

there are 450 prophets of Baal. [23] Let them bring us two bulls. Let them choose one of the bulls for themselves, cut it up into pieces, and place it on the wood. But they must not set it on fire. I will do the same to the other bull and place it on the wood. But I will not set it on fire. [24] Then you will invoke the name of your god, and I will invoke the name of the Lord. The god who responds with fire will demonstrate that he is the true God." All the people responded, "This will be a fair test." [25] Elijah told the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls for yourselves and go first, for you are the majority. Invoke the name of your god, but do not light a fire." [26] So they took a bull, as he had suggested, and prepared it. They invoked the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "Baal, answer us." But there was no sound and no answer. They jumped around on the altar they had made. [27] At noon Elijah mocked them, "Yell louder! After all, he is a god; he may be deep in thought, or perhaps he stepped out for a moment or has taken a trip. Perhaps he is sleeping and needs to be awakened." [28] So they yelled louder and, in accordance with their prescribed ritual, mutilated themselves with swords and spears until their bodies were covered with blood. [29] Throughout the afternoon they were in an ecstatic frenzy, but there was no sound, no answer, and no response. [30] Elijah then told all the people, "Approach me." So all the people approached him. He repaired the altar of the Lord that had been torn down. [31] Then Elijah took twelve stones, corresponding to the number of tribes that descended from Jacob, to whom the Lord had said, "Israel will be your new name." [32] With the stones he constructed an altar for the Lord. Around the altar he made a trench large enough to contain two seahs of seed. [33] He arranged the wood, cut up the bull, and placed it on the wood. [34] Then he said, "Fill four water jars and pour the water on the offering and the wood." When they had done so, he said, "Do it again." So they did it again. Then he said, "Do it a third time." So they did it a third time. [35] The water flowed down all sides of the altar and filled the trench. [36] When it was time for the evening offering, Elijah the prophet approached the altar and prayed: "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. [37] Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are the true God and that you are winning back their allegiance." [38] Then fire from the Lord fell from the sky. It consumed the offering, the wood, the stones, and the dirt, and licked up the water in the trench. [39] When all the people saw this, they threw themselves down with their faces to the ground and said, "The Lord is the true God! The Lord is the true God!" [40] Elijah told them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Don't let even one of them escape!" So they seized them, and Elijah led them down to the Kishon Valley and executed them there. [41] Then Elijah told Ahab, "Go on up and eat and drink, for the sound of a heavy rainstorm can be heard." [42] So Ahab went on up to eat and drink, while Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel. He bent down toward the ground and put his face between his knees. [43] He told his servant, "Go on up and look in the direction of the sea." So he went on up, looked, and reported, "There is nothing." Seven times Elijah sent him to look. [44] The seventh time the servant said, "Look, a small cloud, the size of the palm of a man's hand, is rising up from the sea." Elijah then said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up the chariots and go down, so that the rain won't overtake you.'" [45] Meanwhile the sky was covered with dark clouds, the wind blew, and there was a heavy rainstorm. Ahab rode toward Jezreel. [46] Now the Lord energized Elijah with power; he tucked his robe into his belt and ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

What kind of person is this?

Daniel 9:1-3 HCSB

[1] In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, a Mede by birth, who was

ruler over the kingdom of the Chaldeans: [2] In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the books according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet that the number of years for the desolation of Jerusalem would be 70. [3] So I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and petitions, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

Jeremiah 25:11-12 NET

[11] This whole area will become a desolate wasteland. These nations will be subject to the king of Babylon for seventy years.' [12] "'But when the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation for their sins. I will make the land of Babylon an everlasting ruin. I, the Lord, affirm it!

John 5:19-20 NET

[19] So Jesus answered them, "I tell you the solemn truth, the Son can do nothing on his own initiative, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. [20] For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does, and will show him greater deeds than these, so that you will be amazed.

John 8:28 NET

[28] Then Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and I do nothing on my own initiative, but I speak just what the Father taught me.

John 12:49-50 NET

[49] For I have not spoken from my own authority, but the Father himself who sent me has commanded me what I should say and what I should speak. [50] And I know that his commandment is eternal life. Thus the things I say, I say just as the Father has told me."

Sermon in a Sentence: We can pray like Elijah, Daniel, and Jesus!

We trot [prayer promises] out like formulas or contracts, believing if we do our part then God is somehow in our debt to do his part, all the while forgetting the inconvenient truth that we owe God everything and God owes us nothing. The thought that human beings, by their actions, can somehow move or manipulate the actions of God is the height of self-deception and the very essence of idolatry. This idolatry shows itself by the way people commonly reference the power of prayer. Prayer is not powerful. God is powerful. Prayer doesn't change things. God changes things. Prayer merely opens up the pathway of faith that leads to the mysterious unfolding of God's will being "done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Prayer has no power in and of itself. God alone has power. And somehow, faith mysteriously unlocks and unleashes the power of God on earth.... prayer is the primary portal of faith and the primary practice of love. Prayer is the doorway into Jesus' relationship with his Abba. This is the house of God, which is the house of love, which is the place where miracles happen. Prayer is not a mechanistic movement or a dutiful discipline. It's an abiding place in which we dwell. Jesus ... wants to lead

us to a radical kind of intimacy with God and each other that becomes the very labor and delivery room of the kingdom – the birthplace of divine love in the world. It's the place where prayer and justice and mercy and faith become inextricably intermingled and unleashed like a flood ... onto a parched land.Citation:Right Here Right Now, Jesus: MOVING FROM A PRAYER LIFE TO A LIFE OF PRAYER, JD Walt, SEEDBED PUBLISHING, Franklin, Tennessee (emphasis added)

<http://bible.com/events/49204383>