

***Do not be Surprised***

***Part Three - “The Prayer***

***of the Righteous”***

***1 Kings 16-18 & James 5:16b-18***

**Sermon Study Guide**

**April 5, 2020**

**Opening:**

Previously in this series called “Do Not Be Surprised”, we learned that this could be “A Time of Purging”. Hopefully, you have begun the process of asking God to purge you of any sinful habits/behaviors in your life. The grace of God and the Holy Spirit are more than capable of helping you to overcome any sinful behavior that has a grip on your life. This week, we learn about “The Prayer of the Righteous”.

**Read 1 Kings 16:29-34**

*Background*

A rebellion in the kingdom started after King Solomon passed away. Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, sought counsel about what should be the rate of taxes in the Kingdom. The older wise men recommended that the tax rate was too high, but the younger men gave counsel to raise taxes even higher. Rehoboam raised the taxes.

The people revolted and followed the leadership of Jeroboam, who formed the Kingdom of the north. The ten tribes were called Israel, and Jeroboam created a worship place in the high places. This kept the people from worshiping God in Jerusalem. Each of the twenty Kings of the north made the high places a place of idol worship. They turned away from the living God and turned to ever greater evil. But God, in His mercy, gave the people the prophets – who would speak God’s words to the Kings and people. The king at the time of this story is Ahab and his wife is Jezebel. The prophet is Elijah. Ahab was the 8th king of the 10 tribes of the north.

* How does God describe King Ahab? (1 Kings 16:30)
* What do you observe about King Ahab and his wife Jezebel? (16:31-33)
* Elijah was the first in a long line of important prophets God sent to Israel and Judah. Israel, the northern kingdom, had no faithful kings throughout its history. Each king was wicked, actually leading the people to worship pagan gods. Elijah gave King Ahab a message from God. What was it and how did it affect the Northern Kingdom? (17:1)
* How did God provide for Elijah? (17:2-7)
* Because of the drought, even the creek dried up, but God remembered His prophet. God sent him to the widow in Zarephath in Phoenicia. When Elijah encountered the widow- what did he ask of her? Was it a request that was easy for her to grant? Why? (17:8-12)
* Share a time when you had been down to the last dollar and it didn’t seem like you would make it. Then, something happened that surprised you.
* What miracle does Elijah do for the widow and her son, in return for her showing hospitality to him?
	+ 1 Kings 17:14-16
	+ 1 Kings 17:17-24

**Read 1 Kings 18:1-46**

Although Elijah was alone in his confrontation with Ahab and Jezebel, he was not the only one in Israel who still believed in God. Obadiah had been faithful in hiding 100 prophets who were still true to the Lord.

* -God told Elijah to go and see King Ahab and to tell him that God was about to send rain. What kind of trust does Elijah have in God facing Ahab and Jezebel? Has God ever called you to speak to someone you feared? How did you have the confidence to speak? (18:1-2)
* Why did Obadiah hide the prophets from Jezebel? (18:3-6)
* As the Lord directed, Elijah set up a contest with Ahab at Mt. Carmel. What was to be accomplished at this showdown? (18:17-19)
* Why did Ahab send word all over the northern kingdom for people to come witness the showdown at Mt. Carmel? What would the showdown prove? (18:20-24)
* Elijah challenged the people to take a stand—to follow whoever was the true God. Why did so many people waver between the two choices?
* What was the contest? (18:23-24)
* The showdown begins – the prophets of Baal had first try to bring down fire from heaven. What happened? What comments did Elijah make? (18:25-29)
* The Baal prophets could not get Baal to respond. Elijah invited all the people to draw near him and see. Describe the altar that he built and give reasons for the additional features to God’s altar. (18:30-35)
* -Elijah prayed – calling God to answer His prayer, so that the people would know He was the living God and so that his people would turn their hearts back to Him. What happened next? (18:36-40)
* After killing Baal's prophets, Elijah ran from the furious Queen Jezebel. He fled to Beersheba, then into the wilderness, and finally to Mount Sinai. There, like Moses centuries earlier, he met with God. (18:41-19:3) Share a time when you had expended your energy for a great event – then, after it was over, you collapsed and felt used up. Elijah was spent. How did God restore him? How does God want to restore us?

**The Prayer of the Righteous**

James 5:16b “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

James 5:17-18 calls Elijah a great prophet, though he was a man with a nature just like yours and mine. He was broken and at times weak

-yet God answered his prayer and God will answer our prayers.

The prayer of the righteous person has great power and will accomplish much. We need to be people that pray!

As we pray for our nation at this time of crisis, we need to target the high places that need to be torn down.

**Places that needs to be torn down:**

**1. Sexual Sin**

 -Pornography

 -Sex Trafficking

 -Sexual Abuse of Children

 -Sexual Abuse of Women

 -Societal Embracing/Permission to Perversion

 -Pre-Marital Sex among those in the Church

**2. Addictions**

 -Alcohol

 -Drugs

 -Technology

**3. Poverty**

 -the fact that so many of us are unaware of the realities and needs here.

**4. Racism**

 -rooted in the pride of thinking “less than” of other people

**5. Busy-ness that Battles Godliness**

 -Sports

 -Entertainment

 -Pursuit of Money

**Matt. 26:36-46**

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was betrayed, beaten and killed. The disciples fell asleep instead of praying with Jesus in His hour of darkness.

After being asked to labor with Jesus in prayer, the disciples fell asleep 3 times. Would their prayers have changed Jesus arrest and crucifixion? No, Jesus had to go to the cross.

Would their prayers have changed their reaction? Yes, for possibly they would not have been gripped by fear and run for their lives

Will our prayers change America? Perhaps. Will we fall asleep like the disciples in this dark hour for our nation, or will we pray?

Let’s make a commitment to pray.

**Tuesday Night prayer**

**7:00pm Livestream**

**Closing:**

This kind of goal is not for the ‘casual’ Christian. We have been in a spiritual war in America, and we have been losing. Let’s take back the ground we have lost and move the cause of Jesus Christ forward in prayer and with love. Let’s present Jesus Christ to people who desperately need Him.