**Pastor Lloyd’s Sermon Notes for the 30th of January 2022**

**WHAT DO YOU SEE? PART 2 – A CHANGE IN YOUR HORIZON – 1 KINGS 18:41-45**

Last week Zechariah’s vision asked you to recalibrate your thinking….about where *true power is found* – not by force or coercion, not by wealth or plausible articulation –

But in the Spirit and by the Spirit. And we were reminded that lasting change happens in this World by the Spirit of God who supplies us with strength for each day, who watches over our lives intensely, who completes what He starts in our lives and grows things from small beginnings. Today in this second message I’m going to ask you to ***review your horizon*.** The story centres around one of the epic moments in the prophet Elijah’s life.

**READING HERE. 1 Kings 18:41-45**

There had been no rain for three and a half years. The ground was dry the crops had failed – and it was God who had turned off the rain from the heavens. It was the only way God could get through – sometimes we don’t turn to God unless we have exhausted every other avenue. It’s a hard lesson to learn that God cares more for our hearts than he does our comfort! So here today is a Bible truth that is uncomfortable. This is not something that appears only in some obscure verse in the murky depths of an OT book. It is borne out right through the Bible. And here it is: That God will go to any lengths to secure our affections and bring us close to himself. He will stretch us and bring us even to the point of desperation. Before we get into Elijah’s story today, I want to remind you of what James writes to followers of Jesus about physical sickness. **James 5:13-18** says call for the elders and pray!

**Sickness of Heart and Body is a likely place for God to turn up**

We look for the breakthrough from our pain distress and heartache. But, James reminds us that **we ourselves are the answer** to it. It comes when there is a *new kind of honesty* by people. That the context of this visiting of God answering prayers comes *when people – pray together*, ask God for healing, expose their weakness and sins and even their physical problems….pray for one another – that you might be healed.

Now back to our passage:

**Believing prayer is a likely place for God to turn up – 1 Kings 18**

Now I know all the problems associated with these kinds of verses…

Sometimes we pray and there is *no clear answer* or there is a *different answer* to what we expect – and we struggle with that. ***God doesn’t have to do something just because you believe he can or will, but neither does he do something*** *where* ***faith is not present in some form!*** The core of the story is around Elijah’s prayer for rain. He keeps praying and persisting for a change in the horizon. Today’s message is entitled ‘A Change in your Horizon’.

There’s three parts to this:

1. **He *speaks out* what he thinks God will do.** He is talking with King Ahab. v41 I hear a mighty rainstorm coming! – then he goes to pray up top of **Mount Carmel** – (to the place where God showed his might and power over *Baal* and the big contest of *who is the real God*).
2. **Prays for rain. – tell his servant “**go and look is there anything”? - *What can you see on the horizon*????? Nothing – 7 times Go **look again!**

Sometimes things take time to come about. James tells us that Elijah was *a man like us*. He was very human…you just need to read the chapter 19 to realise that after such a great success on Carmel he runs and hides and flees for his life because of the threat of Jezebel. If things don’t appear instantly keep going!

1. **See’s just a small answer –** and that is enough! It’s a sign of something greater coming. Now I want to pause here – to remind us that it is when Elijah saw a small answer – a cloud just the size of a man’s fist way off in the horizon - He knew God was going to do something. It *wasn’t big but it was significant*…and that is enough for him to dispatch his servant off to Ahab to tell him something big was coming! Get ready it’s going to RAIN!

Here is a message for many of us today. Where has God encouraged you with a small answer that he now wants to fan into a flame of something much greater? **As I said last week, *small is often the way God starts something. Small things can make a big difference.***

The World is not impressed with small. That’s what the disciples said when Jesus was given a **few fish** and loaves of bread…..go and look at the words they said – what is that among so many? I have a **small faith** – if it’s even the size of mustard seed – with the might of the Spirit it can move a mountain….so the size of your faith is not the issue. I have **little giftings** - God’s Word teaches us that God gives greater honour to the insignificant so there is unity in the body. I have **small resources** – give what you have and see what God can do. You see *small comes before greater* every time. Little comes before bigger every time in the kingdom. Small is the way God starts something.

How many times have you heard someone ask for help to do something and you think to yourself – that’s too great, I couldn’t do that, or that would require someone with large experience or great resources. I want you to open your Bible to this story and then tell God why little and small is not enough! We are just like the disciples when confronted by the hungry crowds – we’re overwhelmed and they said to Jesus - What is this among so many? What have I got when all around me there is so much need? Who am I when there are so many more capable experienced people? My gifting is small, my faith is little, and I’m not who God can use! Elijah prayed and saw a cloud – just a cloud – not even a rain cloud! And it was enough for him to know God was going to do something.

Now that’s the message today. Last week I spoke about a **NEW WAY OF THE SPIRIT** Zechariah 4. This week - **A NEW CLIMATE OF CHANGE – ON YOUR HORIZON**. **So what do you see?** Elijah’s servant comes back six times with the same – I didn’t see anything!

Then at last there was this small sign of a cloud. The fifth sixth and seventh time the servant was asked to go look – I bet they were already sure there would be blue cloudless sky yet again…

What is God saying to your life?

**Is there something you have been praying for – for a long time?** Don’t give up

**Is there an encouragement for us today** for those of us who have believed God for things but not ‘seen anything’ – to understand that sometimes answers come slowly and differently than we would like.

**Is there something here for people who are sick** and need prayer for healing from the James passage – to anoint with oil and pray for healing.

**Is there a reminder here for us that even these great Bible characters have times when they struggle,** and have difficulty discerning God’s ways. What do you see? Right now….when you appraise your life, your spiritual journey and your faith? Do you see something alive and growing or something dry and barren?

I see a **change in the climate happening** - I see a **change in the horizon** of our church here at Ranui. Maybe this morning you look and see nothing much on the horizon:

You have prayed but have seen nothing change for a long time. My Word from God today to you is - keep praying and looking. Keep looking for some small sign that God is doing something. And when you see something small – believe it’s a sign of something greater and change is coming!

*Look let’s make this really practical this morning.*

We are seeking a **new senior pastor** for our Church. So far there is little on the horizon! Yes there has been prayer for sure. But can we all agree that we will pray again….until we see something on the horizon that God has for us? ***Is there anything yet*** we should be asking the call committee? Maybe sometime soon we might get a different answer….something is on the horizon! God is doing something…..and then let that inspire our faith to believe that God is bringing someone to us He has selected.

We are seeking some **new leadership in our church for children’s ministry, and for youth ministry**. You think – I have little to offer….pray and ask God what he would have you do. It might be some time before we can meet in our buildings…..but on the horizon of your life there just might be a little cloud….it’s a sign that your time empowered with the Spirit has come. Talk to me or any of the elders – you might become part of a new team we will be setting up.

**Recalibrate** **your thinking** – Not by might, but by my Spirit – Zechariah

**Review your horizon**....God is about to do something by his Spirit.