

CITYWEST CHURCH

31.05.2026 - 10 AM

FAITH FOR RAIN BEFORE THE CLOUDS.

Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go get something to eat and drink, for I hear a mighty rainstorm coming!”

⁴² So Ahab went to eat and drink. But Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his face between his knees.

⁴³ Then he said to his servant, “Go and look out toward the sea.”

The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, “I didn’t see anything.”

Seven times Elijah told him to go and look. ⁴⁴ Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, “I saw a little cloud about the size of a man’s hand rising from the sea.”

Then Elijah shouted, “Hurry to Ahab and tell him, ‘Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don’t hurry, the rain will stop you!’”

⁴⁵ And soon the sky was black with clouds. A heavy wind brought a terrific rainstorm, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel. ⁴⁶ Then the LORD gave special strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt^[a] and ran ahead of Ahab’s chariot all the way to the entrance of Jezreel.

1 Kings 18:41-46 (NLT)

There are seasons in life where everything feels dry.

Dry spiritually. Dry emotionally. Dry financially. Dry relationally.

You pray, but nothing changes. You believe, but nothing moves. You keep showing up, but the heavens feel silent.

Israel knew that feeling.

For three and a half years, there had been no rain. The ground was cracked. The crops were dead. The people were exhausted.

And behind the drought was something deeper: a nation that had turned from God.

Then comes Mount Carmel.

Elijah stands against the prophets of Baal. Fire falls from heaven. The people fall to their knees.

But what's powerful is this: The fire was not the end of the story.

Rain was coming too. Because God never only defeats the enemy. He restores what the drought stole.

1. BEFORE THE RAIN, THERE WAS A STAND.

Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, “How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!” But the people were completely silent.

1 Kings 18:21 (NLT)

Before the rain came, Elijah confronted compromise.

Because sometimes the drought around us is connected to divided hearts within us.

Israel wanted:

- *God and Baal*
- *worship and compromise*
- *faith and comfort*

And Elijah draws a line on Mount Carmel. Who is God really?

The Enemy Must Be Stood Up To

Before breakthrough often comes confrontation.

Not confrontation with people, but with:

- *fear*
- *compromise*
- *apathy*
- *unbelief*
- *idols*
- *spiritual passivity*

Elijah understood:

You cannot bow to Baal and expect heaven's rain.

Some of us are praying for rain while still partnering with things that keep us spiritually dry.

God sends fire first.

Fire represents:

- *purification*
- *repentance*
- *surrender*
- *realignment*

Because God does not just want to refresh us. He wants to restore us.

And sometimes, before God pours out blessings, He deals with the altar.

2. ELIJAH HEARD THE RAIN BEFORE HE COULD SEE IT.

Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go get something to eat and drink, for I hear a mighty rainstorm coming!”

1 Kings 18:41 (NLT)

This is incredible.

There was:

- *no cloud*
- *no thunder*
- *no wind*
- *no evidence*

Yet Elijah heard rain. This is faith. Faith hears what others cannot hear yet.

Some People Need Evidence Before Believing

But kingdom people move differently.

Romans 4 says Abraham believed God “even when there was no reason for hope.”

Faith is not denial. Faith is confidence in the character of God.

Elijah knew: If God sent fire, rain would follow.

Because God finishes what He starts.

The Drought Was Not the Final Word

Maybe you’ve been living in a drought season:

- *prayer feels dry*
- *dreams feel delayed*
- *relationships feel strained*
- *vision feels distant*

But drought does not mean abandonment. Sometimes God is preparing the ground for a fresh outpouring.

3. KEEP LOOKING FOR THE CLOUD.

Then he said to his servant, "Go and look out toward the sea."

The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, "I didn't see anything."

Seven times Elijah told him to go and look.

1 Kings 18:43 (NLT)

Elijah tells his servant to check for rain.

One time. Nothing.

Twice. Nothing.

Six times. Still nothing.

Imagine the tension.

But Elijah keeps praying. Keeps believing. Keeps sending the servant back.

Because mature faith keeps looking even when nothing has changed yet.

Don't Stop at "Nothing Yet"

Some people quit praying too early. Quit believing too early. Quit worshipping too early.

But Elijah teaches us persistence.

Galatians says:

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

Sometimes breakthrough is one more prayer away. One more act of obedience away.

*One more Sunday away.
One more surrender away.*

Then Came the Small Cloud

Finally the seventh time, his servant told him, “I saw a little cloud about the size of a man’s hand rising from the sea.”

Then Elijah shouted, “Hurry to Ahab and tell him, ‘Climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don’t hurry, the rain will stop you!’”

1 Kings 18:44 (NLT)

It looked insignificant.

Small cloud.

Massive promise.

Because God often begins revival small:

- *a small prayer meeting*
- *one surrendered person*
- *one healing*
- *one breakthrough*
- *one moment in worship*

Do not despise small clouds.

Small clouds can carry heaven’s rain.

4. WHEN THE RAIN COMES, RUN WITH GOD.

The rain finally comes. The drought breaks. The heavens open.

And then something unusual happens.

Then the LORD gave special strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt^[a] and ran ahead of Ahab’s chariot all the way to the entrance of Jezreel.

1 Kings 18:44 (NLT)

Elijah outruns Ahab's chariot.

Why? Because when God sends rain, He also gives strength for the next season.

The same God who breaks drought empowers movement.

Rain Is Not Just Comfort — It's Commissioning

God refreshes us so we can move again.

Dream again. Build again. Serve again. Believe again.

At Citywest we believe:

- *God still sends rain*
- *God still revives hearts*
- *God still pours out His Spirit*
- *God still restores dry places*

JESUS AND THE GREATER RAIN

In the Old Testament rain represented blessing and life.

But in the New Testament Jesus promises living water.

At Pentecost the Spirit is poured out like rain on dry ground.

And today Jesus still meets thirsty people.

Not polished people. Not perfect people.

Thirsty people.

1. Deal With the Altars

Ask: What competes with God in my heart?

2. Keep Praying Even When Nothing Changes

Faithfulness matters in drought seasons.

3. Look for Small Clouds

Celebrate small signs of God moving.

4. Prepare for Rain

Do not prepare for permanent drought when God has promised renewal.

Elijah stood on Mount Carmel with confidence because he knew something powerful:

*If God could send fire,
God could send rain.*

And maybe today you've been staring at dry ground for too long.

But the story is not over. The cloud is coming.

The drought is not forever. The silence is not permanent. The delay is not denial.

Keep praying. Keep worshipping. Keep looking toward the sea.

Because sometimes all heaven needs is one surrendered person willing to believe for rain before anyone else can see it.

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS:

What idol or competing allegiance can subtly draw your heart away from wholehearted trust in God?

Have you ever experienced a season where you had to believe God's promise before you could see any evidence of it?

What small "cloud" might God be showing you right now that could be the beginning of something bigger?