

**HEARING GOD'S VOICE SERIES**

**THREE BLOCKAGES TO HEARING**

*I Kings 17:7 And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. Then the word of the Lord came to him, "Arise go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidom, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you. so he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand. And she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a cruse; and now, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.*

Elijah just went there in time for her funeral. Isn't that good that God send a man there to interrupt a funeral that was going to take place?

*Verse 13 And Elijah said to her, "Fear not; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord the Go of Israel, "The jar of meal (flour) shall not be spent, and the cruse of oil shall not fail, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth." And she went and did as Elijah said; and she, and he, and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not spent, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke by Elijah.*

How does this apply to what we are talking about hearing God's voice? Although this is in the Old Testament there are some principles that are similar that are applicable to us today. Elijah had just pronounced some time back to Ahab that there would be no rain except according to his word. And God told him to go to the brook and the crows brought his breakfast and his dinner. And he ate of it every day but the brook dried up.

Some times we become so established and so familiar with certain things that God does that when God changes you don't change with Him. You are in a state of panic. God is a creative God. He keeps changing and moving in creative ways continually. There are some things that are the same yesterday, today and forever. But there are some things that will keep changing so that you don't get too comfortable and trust in your own strength and don't lean on God. It's what God demands that we be willing to change when He moves in a new way.

Some of the songs that we sing carry an anointing. I think last year's top tune was "I Worship You" and everybody were worshiping "When I look into your loveliness" This morning that song was sung in the Spirit and it was wonderful. But have you notice that when you sing a song of God after some time you found it joyous to love Him? You sing it as you get into your car or your motorbike "I worship you." You are just caught up with that song. After for about a month do you realize that you still sing it but some thing changed. Because you are so used to that song that you are singing it for the sake of singing it not like when you first learned it. So you lost your anointing although you can still remember that song. Those of you who learn new songs you notice it at first you like to sing that song. But after several months it seems to get dull but the song never changed, the tune was the same and as lovely as can be. But you changed.

God never wants us to be comfortable in an area where we are not willing to change and where we are depending on our own strength. Whenever you reached that point even if you are an Abraham God will ask you to sacrifice your Isaac to Him. God always demands our surrender. And so there are songs that we learned in the Lord. Some times after a long time we didn't sing it then we bring it forth O

it's beautiful. That has to do with how God wanted us to be fresh in Him. The bible says in Psalms sing a new song unto Him. Sing it fresh unto Him. There are always new dimension we can enter into.

And Elijah had seen the power of God working. It is a miracle for the crow to bring him his breakfast and his dinner. You might not have realize what sort of miracle it is. But how many of you have ever had your breakfast and dinner served by crows. Those are the most stingy birds in the world. You know how stingy those crows are. And yet God performed a miracle. I tell you if you think you are hard to change and hard in life, if God can change a crow He can change you. If God can use a donkey He can use you. If God can change that crow and make it useful He can change you. God's methods changed.

The brook had dried up. At that point most people would give up. That is why the people of God must learn a certain tenacity like a bull dog. You know how a bulldog bite. When a bull dog grabs you, you can shake all you want and he won't let you go. When we grab hold of the promises of God we have to have the tenacity of a bull dog and you don't let it go. You put your trust and your faith and grow your roots into God and hanging onto God. Be as tenacious as a bull dog but don't look like one. Have that strength of that dog to hold on persistently.

So when Elijah saw the change his trust in God was unfailing. He listened to God. If you can hear God's voice all the time you never panic. You may lose your job. As long as you hear God's voice, you can say, "O fear where are thou, O death where is thy sting." You can say, "O fear where is your torment." There is none because you hear from God. In every situation we face in life if we can only hear God we would have the most perfect peace. The most secure position in the whole world is to be in the secret place to hear God. Take time to pray and hear Him. As long as you can hear God there will be nothing that will shake you up. It's a firm foundation to hear God's voice.

So God said to Elijah, "Go to Zarephath," but notice God said some thing else, "I have commanded a widow to feed you." So Elijah goes and meet the widow and

what a welcome he received. When he went in the widow was all ready not to feed Elijah and the tears were running down her cheeks with a long face. And her son was also so sad. Her whole household was sad. Because all they had was this little flour and this little oil. And they were all ready to make a little cake and then die. But God said, "I have commanded her." I would have thought anyone who had heard from God would say, "Halleluiah, glory to God." When Elijah came she should have said, "Welcome glory to God."

If you are not used to shouting amen and glory to God we got good news for you. You better learn it here because in heaven its quite noisy. The bible says here the angels all sing glory, glory to God. Heaven is filled with the praises to the Lord. John Osteen when he was first new in the Pentecostal area he was a Baptist minister. So he went to this Pentecostal meeting he always asks, "Why must they sing glory to God?" Why can't they just say like the Baptists' way. Anyway after several tongue talking sessions John was speaking glory to God. He was in. When you have the joy of the Lord it comes out.

You would have expected that widow at Zarephath would have said to Elijah, "Glory to God." Instead there she was in a long face. And her problem was God had spoken to her and she didn't hear it. What did God told Elijah? "I have commanded her" but she never heard it. She never knew that salvation, deliverance, was on the way in the form of the man of God Elijah. God commanded but she never hear.

I tell you God is speaking to many people today and they are not hearing. And if you don't hear God you may even die in your situation without coming out of it. To hear God is deliverance. Some people live and die and they die early because they don't hear God.

Thank God Elijah heard God. What happen if Elijah didn't hear God? He would have died too. Instead of having one funeral there would have been two funerals, including Elijah's. Elijah heard God and he went there. And this woman didn't hear God. Praise the Lord for people here today seeking the Lord in prayer and

hearing from God. If in the church of God people don't hear God today all you have is a religion. But because people can hear from God you have a living worship. That's what is life. Life comes when you hear God. Not just having rituals.

She didn't hear God. That would be our text why she didn't hear God. And there are several reasons behind the statement. And it had to do with some areas that knowing them would help us to renew our mind. We have concluded definitely that she did not hear the Lord. And within that statement that she made, it tells us why she didn't hear God. She said to Elijah when Elijah went there. I Kg.17:12 *And she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a cruse; and now, I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.*

Have you noticed how many "I" and how many "my" and how many "we" were there? I, I, I, we, we, we, my, my, myself. Her problem was she was self-centered. If you are self-centered, centered on yourself you can never hear from God. Some people think that they can please God and get what they want by being self-centered, selfish and greedy and covetous, no way. Self-centeredness will prevent you from hearing when God speaks to you. And the blessings come only when you hear and obey.

She was so absorbed in her life, her son's life, her own situation, *my problem, my lack of food, my this, my that*, in the end *my funeral* too. Self-centeredness will kill you. Christians do not realize it but to be born again is to be born out of self into Christ, where it's no longer you who live but Christ who lives in you. In the world they would define the opposite of love as hate. The opposite of love will be hate. But in the bible in I Cor. 13 the opposite of love is self for *love seek not her own*. So the world doesn't understand what the bible talks about love.

You want to know what love is like you have a perfect demonstration in Jesus. He didn't think about Himself when He was down here. All He cared for was for our salvation even to the extend of laying Himself down on the cross. And when He hung on to the cross, it was not the nails that hung Him there because the bible tells

us that Jesus answered His disciples when Peter took the sword to protect Him. He said, "Put the sword down for I can call the Father and He will give me 12 legions of angels." One legion is nearly six thousand. He could have come down from the cross. The people were calling onto Him, "If you are the Son of God come down." He could have come down. But He did not think about Himself or His suffering. When He was dying on the cross He saw you and me. I can prove to you that in John 17 when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane His prayers did not just cover the disciples. He said, "*Father I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.*" (John 17: 20) He looked far and beyond. Ephesians one says before the foundation of the world He saw us. And all He was thinking about was us and not Himself.

The opposite of love is self. Love means pouring out yourself. That's the bible definition of love. So God wants us to be absolutely Christ like without self-centeredness. Self-centeredness will hinder us from hearing from God. Get rid of self-centeredness and you will have one block less that prevents you from hearing from God.

Look very carefully the same statement that she said in verse 12 she said I do not have bread only a handful of flour and a little oil. And see I am gathering a couple of sticks. Her eyes only saw what she has. Her eyes were on the natural. She saw the flour, she saw the oil. She saw her situation. When we are self-centered we will begin to look at our circumstances. And incidentally if you ever get hurt in your life, it is due to something within you that has not died yet. Because a dead man doesn't feel any hurt. Rom. 6 tells us if you are dead in Christ that you are dead and buried in Christ. If a person is dead and crucified with Christ you can curse him, you can spit at him, that person doesn't feel any thing. Remember any hurt that you feel in your life is your pride being pricked. If your name gets run down why are you concerned about your name? You are dead in Christ. Be concerned about Christ's name. If you are dead in Christ you wouldn't be bothered.

And as a result being self-centered she was surrounded by her circumstances. If you look at the natural circumstances you would never be able to hear from God. If your eyes and your perception are only on what you see physically you are not able to hear God because the things you see will hinder you. Even if you have heard from

God once upon a time it might even hinder you from performing what God spoke to you. Like Peter walking on the water. When his eyes were turned on the waves he started sinking. When our vision began to go into the natural, disaster is the next one to come. We do know that all of us have natural circumstances to content with as we reign in life with Christ Jesus. But our inward eyes must not be affected we must look towards God.

She didn't see God. Her ears were not towards God. Her eyes were not towards God. Remember this was the Old Testament where the bible said in Deut. 28 there will be no poor among you. Wasn't this promise for her since was also a daughter of Abraham? Wasn't she an Israelite? The covenant of God belongs to her. But she didn't appropriate that covenant. Even in the old covenant not everybody appropriated it. Same way in the new covenant many people don't appropriate of the new covenant, which is a greater and better one. All prosperity belong to her. When Moses said you shall be the head and not the tail, wasn't it meant for her? She was an Israelite. Moses never testify just for a few people. He testified for all the Israelites. It's for her but her eyes were not towards the God of Israel. Her eyes were not there. If you turn and look at God no matter how big your problems are they become small. Your circumstances may be as tiny as a mole hill but that mole hill will look like Mount Everest to you if you don't have God. But when you have the Lord, when you keep looking to the Lord, then you will say, "This is nothing." They are just like the dust that can be blown away by the breath of God because you see God.

She did not see God. Her eyes were not towards God. She saw the circumstances. She didn't see the Lord. If there is any situation any one of you right now is facing that seems to press you down, whether it be for healing or finances or any area in your life, if you see God those problems become very small. And every problem and temptation you ever face on this earth somebody somewhere has faced it before. And somebody somewhere has conquered it before. And those who did it sees God and conquered their problem.

See God in your situation. See God in your finances. See God in your family life. See God there and then you say it is not there any more. When the doctor comes up to

you and say, "This medical sickness is incurable," and you let those words keep ringing in your heart and in your mind, you lose your hope. The negative words will prevent you from having God work in your life. But we are giving you the good news Jesus is alive. He still lives today. He still cares for you. His love is still reaching to you. And He is saying, "Nothing, nothing is impossible to Me." If you can see Jesus then you can hear God's answer for you. And you will not be like Moses when he faced the Red Sea. Moses just cried onto God. God asked, "What is that in your hand?" It was the staff. Lift it up and salvation came. If we are so engrossed in our problem we don't realize what privilege we have in God. Have you realized we are living in the time when we can come to God so freely? When Jesus is available to everybody. When the Holy of Holies that was shut up to many is now opened. Everyone can come to the Father God in the name that is above every name the name of Jesus. You can come in that name and have your requests heard by God if you see Jesus.

The third problem that the widow has is when she says that they may eat it and die. When you become self-centered you will come a person affected by your circumstances looking to the natural. When that happens you will lose your hope. This woman has lost her hope. She don't even have any hope left. The fragile hope that was burning bright has been quenched by the fires of self-centeredness. So extinguished that she said we are ready to die. You have hope for and then you have faith. Faith is the substance of things you hoped for. If you don't have any hope there will be no faith. She don't even have any hope left. She has lost her hope.

Faith comes from substantiating your hope. Even if your faith is not that strong to conquer that situation, but if you will let your hope be maintained, let your hope remain high in God, your hope will develop into strength in God. When there is a God there is a hope. When there is no God there is no hope. The epistle of Peter says once we were people without God, without hope, but now we are the people of God with a new hope in God. If you have God you have hope. If you have hope faith will develop and come. If you keep that hope up without failing you will see the fruits one day. Through the years build on the Word. Get the Word. Faith come by hearing and hearing the Word of God. Get the Word. The Word will build the faith up to get the hope into the present for you to taste your victory today.

So these were the things that prevented her from hearing from God. What is the key? What is the solution? Look at the words that Elijah delivered by the word of the Lord to her. Elijah says, "Do not fear go do as you have said but make me a small cake for me first. Bring it to me and afterwards make some for yourself and your son." Most people when they read these words they cannot understand why Elijah is so selfish. How dare he tell that widow that way? Here is a widow so sad, so destitute, so poverty stricken, so hopeless, and Elijah said, "Go and make a cake for me." How rude.

But you don't understand the ways of God. The woman was self-centered. God has to make her act against her self-centeredness, serve others first before yourself. God was dealing with her self-centeredness. God was causing her to be concerned for another person's need before her. Brethren some of the greatest miracles have taken place when people have forgotten about their problem. They begin to be concerned for others and give their lives to others.

There has been many people in Kathryn Kuhlman's meeting. Many people come who are incurable. And they have a whole section for people who are in wheel chairs. Some of the people have been coming over and over again. Something was being done in their life. And when the Spirit of God began moving all over the auditorium and the healings were being called out the power of God was flowing. Some people were healed some were not. But some of those who were not when they saw some other sicknesses besides them they say, "This is worse than mine." And they began to be concerned for the others and pray for the others. Suddenly the power of God came upon them and suddenly they were healed. When you began to turn away from your self-centeredness, when you stop being concerned for yourself, began to pour your life to others you put yourself in a position to receive the power of God. You put yourself in a position to be blessed by God. You put yourself in a position to be a blessing to others. You put yourself in a position to be healed by the power of God.

The woman had a self-centeredness to be dealt with. Serve others before you serve yourself. Every thing within her cried no because her whole life has been struggling

for a living. This is beyond her. God will sometimes ask you to do things that your whole natural man says no. But if you will be obedient and willing and go ahead you put yourself in a position for blessing. The self-centeredness has to be dealt with. And in the same situation the bible tells us verse 15 she went away and did according to the word of Elijah. How did she deal with her natural circumstances? Remember the second problem was she looked to the natural. She acted contrary to the natural. Faith is a fact, faith is an act. Sometimes when we are in that situation God requires our faith to act out. You say, "Why should it be that hard for me?" It's not because of that but if you could conquer it you would be able to help others too. Why can't God just heal me? Why can't some prophet just pick me out from the congregation and say, "Thus says the Lord you are healed?" God has many ways to deal with each one, as many ways as we all have different fingers on our hands. Remember this God is concerned for your whole life not just for your immediate needs. Sometimes God knows that you must get your healing in a certain way so that your whole life will be changed. But we are just concerned for the immediate blessings. God is interested in changing our life not just in giving us a blessing. Because if He can change our life we will not only have blessings, we will be the blessed.

And so this woman took the flour, took the oil, I can imagine when she saw it she said, "This is all I have." She had to act against the situation. Some people don't have it easy but if you can go through it you will be a blessing. Kenneth Hagin was a young teenager about 16 years old lying down. Doctor pronounced him with three incurable sicknesses. And they called a pastor. The pastor came and said the last prayer. When the pastor came and prayed, "O Lord let your will be done. Give the mother's strength to take it, to bear the circumstances that will be coming." His spirit man awoken and said, "No, no, I want to live." And in the end he read God's Word, he saw in Mark 11:23-24 that if I believe I receive. And so everyday he was thanking God, "I believe I am healed, I believe I am healed." One day he heard from God. If you are healed, "What are you doing on the bed?" So he pulled himself up and he struggled. When he pulled himself up he saw for the first time he stood after nearly a year. The whole room spinned around him. He could hardly keep himself p. But he said, "I am healed." And then everyday he just walked a little bit round the room. Brethren he is a mighty man of God today. The day he got healed when he was about 16 years old, Jesus was interested not only in his healing. Jesus saw the many years of ministry and that many people will be blessed by his life.

You see God is interested in changing our lives and developing our lives to be a blessing not just in healing you. He wants to heal you, yes. But He wants a change of your whole life. And today many have been blessed by his life. But he had it the hard way. There were no angels singing, no choir singing, no lightning striking, no glory clouds when he got healed. He was healed by faith. Sheer faith with a tenacity of a bull dog. And everyday he walked a little bit. And he timed that one day he is going to walk right down to the breakfast table. And one day he walked right down sat at the breakfast table and his grandpa looked up and saw him and said, "Has Lazarus been raised?" He said, "Yes, he has been raised." God wants us to act against the circumstances, to act in faith. God demands that we give Him an act of faith to demonstrate our faith before He moves on our behalf. There has been many times that God has moved me. If you want financial prosperity I can tell you one simple thing. If you are down right to your last dollar don't spend it. Give it away. Then you will see the miracle of God. God has moved me many times in situation that way. And I had seen the hand of God. Act against the natural like Peter walking on the water. It's not natural to do that. But when you act against it with the word of God you will come up victorious.

**And lastly when she had no hope. You know where she got her faith and hope from? Elijah came and said verse 14 thus says the Lord God of Israel, the flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth. Thus says the Lord, Elijah gave the word of the Lord. Verse 15 the woman acted on the word of the Lord. If you have no hope, if you have no faith, there is a source of faith and hope that God has given you. There is a source where you can draw from the rivers of hope and faith into you. Where you are dry and thirsty for hope and faith and meaning, there is a fountain that is for you – the word of the living God is freely available today for all who will reach it and take it. When you do this thing blessed are you for you can hear the voice of God speaking.**

