

## 2020.09.06 Sunday Sermon <Keys to Open Heavens>

### **Psalm 115:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> *All you Israelites, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.*

<sup>10</sup> *House of Aaron, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.*

<sup>11</sup> *You who fear him, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.*

### **1Kings 8:35-36**

<sup>35</sup> *“When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, <sup>36</sup> then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.*

#### **\*Image of a door with lock and keys:**

- **1Kings 8:35a**

*When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you*

In 1 Kings 8 - Solomon builds God's temple in a specific design much like the tabernacle. The ark is brought in, and God reinstates his covenant promise with Solomon. Solomon's faith is sadly compromised because of idol worship. He remembers God in his old age, but Israel's kingdom splits, beginning a tragic spiral of sinful kings.

- As we look around us and around the world right now, we may feel like the heavens are closed. We are filled with fear, heaviness, and darkness. This is due to all of our sins. So how can we open the heavens?

### **1. EARNEST PRAYER**

- **1Kings 8: 35b-36**

*and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, <sup>36</sup> then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.*

- **Luke 3:21-22**

<sup>21</sup> *When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened*

<sup>22</sup> *and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*

- **James 5:16**

<sup>16</sup> *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

- **Acts 10:11**

<sup>11</sup> *He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.*

- Just putting the key into the lock doesn't open the door. In order to fully open the door, we have to PUSH the door. Similarly, we must ACT with PRAYER to open the heavens - just like Elijah.

### **2. WHOLE OBEDIENCE**

- **Deuteronomy 28:12**

<sup>12</sup> *The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none.*

- Image of Widow at Zarephath from (1 King 17:7-24)  
The Prophet Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath illustrates the biblical story of the encounter between prophet Elijah and a widow and her son gathering sticks when he arrives at the town of Zarephath. Elijah asks her for a piece of bread, and the destitute widow invites him to her home where she uses her last bit of flour and oil to bake for him. The prophet then blesses the woman and her child, and assures them that their supplies of flour and oil will never be diminished. Shortly thereafter the son dies, but because of Elijah's fervent prayers, God returned the boy to life.
- **Exodus 16:20**  
*<sup>20</sup> However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.*
- **Exodus 16:27**  
*<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather it, but they found none.*
- The Widow (1 Kings 17) vs Complaining Israelites (Exodus 16) - Through these two stories, we can understand how important prayers and obedience work to open the heavens. We see complete obedience through the widow and receives blessings from God. On the other hand, we see the Israelites complaining to Moses and receives no blessing from God. The door will not just open from praying - you need to obey the Lord's will at the same time to receive the right password.

### 3. COURAGEOUS FAITH

- **Acts 7:56**  
*"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*
- Image of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1Kings 18:16-46)  
In the Books of Kings, Elijah challenges 450 prophets of a particular *Baal* to a contest at the altar on Mount Carmel to determine whose deity was genuinely in control of the Kingdom of Israel.  
  
The same Lord that watched over Elijah on Mount Carmel, is the same Lord watching over us right now. We must pray and obey, but we must also have courageous faith in this difficult times to open the heavens above.
- Story of Tanzania (East Africa)  
A lion appeared in the village and killed a child and the mother. The lion entered the church, and the congregation started to panic. The missionary said to the congregation, "Remember the story of Daniel - he was in a lion's den and God protected him. That same God is here with us!" The missionary went in-front of the lion and proclaimed out loud, " In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, you will be cursed!" All of sudden, a lightening came down and killed the lion.
- Image of Jesus Healing a Sick Woman (**Mark 5:34**)  
*He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."*  
  
Image of Jesus Healing a Blind Bartimaeus (**Mark 10:52**)  
*"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.*  
  
As we see from these chapters, both the sick woman and blind Bartimaeus had courageous faith in Jesus Christ. The same Jesus Christ can heal us and help us if we show our courageous faith in Him.
- Story of a Woman with Hives  
After she gave birth to her child, she started to get hives all over her body. Not only the hives were visually unpleasant, the itchiness was very severe. She tried everything the doctors told her to do - restricting diet, putting ointments, getting shots - she was practically living in the hospital. One day coming back from a hospital visit, she put her fears aside and cried out to the Lord. "Lord, I am your

child and as you see I am filled with a skin disease that can't be healed. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, please heal me." She continued to cry out to the Lord as she touched her skin. In few months, she started to see her skin healing. It was the faith she had in the Lord that healed her.

**\*In Summary - The Keys to Open Heavens**

- 1. Earnest Prayer**
- 2. Whole Obedience**
- 3. Courageous Faith**

Let us take this time to examine ourselves and pray so that the heavens will be open!