

Coach House Church **BEACONS**

UP FROM THE ASHES

2ND JUNE 2020

I want to begin with a story of someone that was resurrected. This is in the old testament, in the book of 1 Kings and it involves the prophet Elijah. He is a pretty well-respected prophet in Judaism. God had sent Elijah to go to Zaraphath to a widow there. She had no oil or flour left for bread and was expecting to die but Elijah prophecies and God saves the woman by not letting her oil and flour run out.

Then we read this:

After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill.

And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. And he cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this child's life[b] come into him again." And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

Elijah really was a man of God, and because he listened and acted so faithfully God blessed him by allowing him to get involved in His plan and see some amazing things. It will not always work in this way. God doesn't work with recipes and we can't control God or make Him do anything, but He is able.

I think there are a few things to note about this story. The first is how honest Elijah is with God about how he feels. He's angry. Why would God let this happen when He had brought Elijah to this woman's house and He had saved their lives by giving them flour and oil, so they didn't starve. It's ok for us to not understand what's happening and cry out to God. He cares.

Secondly, Elijah keeps praying through the suffering. He doesn't give up because things don't look to be going his way. He carries on praying and follows God's lead to pray for the child to live. The reason I say that is because when he went up to the upper room it didn't seem that he even thought it possible, Elijah was just asking why. But then he suddenly asks God to revive the child. Sometimes God leads us to pray for a miracle.

When this virus hit, just before lockdown, we had a time of prayer in church. I felt led to share a story that I had heard a couple of weeks before. In the middle of the lakes there was once a flood. In the middle of this flood, there was a church that looked like it would be hit. A man who was part of this church was concerned so went to the building and prayed and prayed that it wouldn't be damaged. As it turned out the area was flooded, but the flood went around the church and missed it. Not one part of the interior got wet. I felt that I should pray that the virus would avoid our church and that we would not be hit. This took a lot of courage to pray. Miracles take courage because by their very nature they are impossible by our standards. But God is able. I've struggled whether to say that no one in our church will get the virus because it's not always easy to believe that we have heard God right or that He will do it but He is able to do more than we could imagine.

Thirdly, this miracle confirmed to the woman that Elijah was a man of God. Part of the reason for miracles is that they show the world God's glory. But miracles can't happen without us praying for them. So let's have the faith and the courage to pray for miracles, even though they don't always happen, even though they seem impossible.

There are nine named people that were recorded in the bible as resurrecting. Some of these were spoken over, some of them had people stretch over them and once all it took was a touch of a prophet's bones. There were also several that resurrected when Jesus died on the cross.

Another notable occasion of resurrection in the bible was when Jesus resurrected a little girl. Her father was a synagogue leader and had come to Jesus because his daughter was very sick. By the time Jesus and Jairus (the girl's father) had got to his house, the girl had died. Jairus was brave and chose to believe when Jesus said He could heal her. We read about it in Mark 5

When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.³ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Now the people here laughed when Jesus said she was just asleep. They had enough medical knowledge to know when someone was dead. They understood death and life and found it ridiculous to imagine that Jesus could save this girl. They thought she was beyond redemption because she had died.

This gives us so much hope for today for two reasons. Firstly, anyone we love that has died or is dying that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and saviour will be resurrected. There are modern reports of resurrection where people had died and were prayed for and they came back to life. These miracles are rare, but sometimes happen. But this is not what I'm talking about. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul talks of Jesus being the first fruits of the resurrected. Paul goes into great detail about why this is so important and the type of bodies we will have after we are resurrected and if you are interested then I recommend you have a look. But, the key is that death is not the end. We have a great hope when we die and when those we love die. We will be resurrected.

The other key reason for hope is that if God can save a person that's dead on the outside, He can save us, who were once dead on the inside. The little girl that was dead and all thought was beyond hope, Jesus didn't give up on. And He won't give up on us. We were dead in our sins, hopeless, unable to help ourselves or get out of the situation we'd put ourselves in.

But Jesus died so that we could be reconciled with God, so that we could have new life. We have been spiritually resurrected, and we are being transformed into His likeness by the Holy Spirit. It might not always happen as quickly as we would like and we will never be perfect unfortunately, but God is working in us to make us more like Him.

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So God doesn't work to a method, He won't be controlled by our rituals but He was and still is able to perform miracles. These miracles require our prayer and faith that they will happen, and sometimes God leads us to the situation. God can do it and it will show His glory to the world when He does. He can even save the dead and He saves us when we are dead in sin.

We need to be honest with God in our emotions and cry out to Him if that's how we feel, but no matter what happens we have a future hope that is unshakeable. Our hope is in Him.



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