

Richard Ray: Pray with expectation of blessing

November 7, 2014

This past week, I was honored to participate in the Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer in Lampasas. The associational Woman's Missionary Union invited me to open and close their meeting in prayer. During the gathering, Camille Langford led a Bible study about the life of Elijah, as told in 1 Kings. She did a wonderful job presenting the gospel through the eyes of the prophet Elijah.



Richard RayThe story of Elijah is a story of prayer. In 1 Kings, we learn Elijah spoke to Ahab, the king of Israel. Elijah announced the Lord said no rain would fall on the land, because the Lord decided to judge Israel for its idolatry. After God judged Israel in 1 Kings 18, the Lord told Elijah rain would come. Elijah went to the top of Mount Carmel to pray for rain. As he started to pray, he told his servant to look toward the sea for any sign of rain.

When we pray, we need to learn to pray with expectations of things to come. It is easy to pray, "Your will be done." But those prayers are not prayers of hope, change or expectations. When we pray, we must look for the rain, the hope and the promise. God told Elijah it would rain, so when the prophet prayed, he told his servant to look for the rain, and the rain came. When we pray, we must pray expecting God to answer that prayer as

Jesus promised he would in Matthew 21:22, “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

As pastors and ministers of the gospel of Christ, we must begin to pray, and then look for the promise. We may have to keep looking, as the servant did for the rain Elijah asked God to send. That reminds us God answers our prayers at the right time and in the right measure, but rest assured, the rain is coming.

I get to spend quite a bit of time with farmers where I live, and they always are praying for rain. At Fairy Baptist Church, there a farmer named Rusty Harris. When Rusty prays for rain, he prays for the exact amount of rain he needs for his fields. He may pray for two inches of rain or an inch and a half of rain. When he prays, he knows God is going to send the rain. In the 49 years that I have known him, God never disappointed him.



Let us begin to pray for our churches, our pastors, our conventions and the wonderful women of the WMU who always pray and look for rain. Let us pray for one another with a prayer of expectation of things to come. Let us pray for the rains to fall from heaven, and then let us wait for the drops of blessings to fall. The rain came for Elijah, and it will come for us, too.

Please do not forget, your Texas Baptist Bivocational/Small Church Association invites you to attend the annual Bivocational/Small Church Luncheon during the upcoming Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in Waco.

The luncheon scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 11:30 a.m. in Texas Room 117/118 of the Waco Convention Center. This year's guest speaker will be Jan Daehnert. This luncheon honors small-church ministers and their servant leaders. Seating is limited, so if you would like to reserve your

tickets, you may email me your name, church and how many tickets you need. Then pick up your free tickets at the Bivocational/Small Church Exhibit booth located in the Waco Convention Center.

Until next time, please visit our website, www.bivocational.com.

Richard Ray is executive director of the Bivocational/Small Church Association and director of missions for the Tri-Rivers Baptist Area. You can reach him at brother_ray@juno.com.