August 12th, 2018

ICA Sunday Pulpit Message

**The Me that follow the Word of the Almighty One**

**(1King.17:1~17)**

**<Intro> Instruction Manual, Navigation, Tour Guide**

When you buy a product, it comes with a set of instructions. Now days, there are a lot of products that are created by consumer feedback. If you follow the instructions that come with the product, then you can make the product. However, let’s say that you are assembling a product instead of reading the instructions, you just quickly gaze through the pictures and try to assemble it because that is not enough you might have to re-assemble it. These days, a lot of vehicles comes with navigation system. If you follow the provided direction you can reach your destination. If you are aboard and are apart of a tour group, there is a leader a tour guide that will guide that group. Often, they are holding a flag and leading that group. If you are not following that tour guide you might be lost. Children at a young age who follow their parents’ instructions very well are the ones who are complimented often. In the same way, we need to follow the words of God as children of God. Why? It is because the word of God is coming from the almighty creator. It is different form the words of people. If you listen and follow the word of God, the word will be fulfilled by God. That is why the title of todays pulpit message is the me that follow the word of the almighty one. How can we follow the word of God? Of all the great figures of faith, today we will be looking at Elijah.

**1. Elijah, who was the historical servant of God who was comparable with Moses**

**(1King.18:1~46; 2King.2:1~15; Mt.17:3~4)**

What kind of person was Elijah? He was a historic servant of God who was a comparable figure with Moses. If you look in the bible, all his deeds are recorded. If you look in 1Kings 18 there is a very famous event. This was when he was on top of the mountain and was battling those who were idol worshiping. He asked the people, who is the one who sends fire from above? Over 800 prophets who worshiped idols prayed and could not receive fire from the sky. When it was Elijah’s turn to pray, he prayed and there was fire sent from above. Not only that the doors of heaven opened and rained. It was rain that ended a long famine at that time. He had the strength that was powerful enough to open and close the doors of heaven. If you look at 2Kings 2, this is where it describes the death of Elijah never dying but ascending to the skies. Its says that the chariots of fire took him up in the skies. With the clouds of wind, he was taken. This is like a scene that would show up in a Chinese movie, but this happened. It means that God’s power and strength was upon him. If you look at Matthew 17:3-4, Jesus appears to the disciples to prove to them that he is the Lord by showing them his powers. It says that the clothing and the body of Jesus was shining with light. The disciples were shocked. That is when two other disciples of Jesus appeared. The two disciples who directly spoke with Jesus was Moses and Elijah. The disciple was so shocked that Peter insisted to build their houses here. Peter was saying we need to build one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. This is what Peter said in response to the conversation that was held between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Moses and Elijah are the ones that Jesus kept close to him. He had equal treatment towards Moses and Elijah. They were great servants and workers to the Lord. If you look at the books of James it says, Elijah’s temple was aligned with us. What this is saying is that Elijah was on the same level of all people. However, if you look in the bible, in times of crises Elijah had so much fear that he contemplated on suicide. What this means is that the great power that Elijah had is not his but God’s. If Elijah is the same as us, how is it possible for him to receive such power from God? We need to question. We are all the same people but imagine that God’s power came upon you. halleluiah. We are all the same people. We eat the same things, do the same things, enjoy similar things, but on top of that lets say that we received the power of God. Would you be happy? That is what will make us happy and filled with thanksgiving. Just like Elijah, we have the right to receive the power of God as well. I bless you that this power of God will show through you. Let’s says that you are going through some troubles because of your children. What that means is that the power of God needs to show through you so through you your children will be blessed. Let’s say that you are upset because of your husband or wife. Then all you need is the power of God to show through you so that you can see the evidence of your spouse changing. In your work places or your businesses if the power of God is shown in those places, then the answers within that work or business will come. If you do not need the power of God in your life, then raise your hand. However, if you need to power of God in your life then raise your hands. If we are sick or diseased the power of God will make us healthy. How was Elijah able to receive the power of God show through him? That is the answer we need to find today.

**2. Elijah, who followed the word of the Almighty One in any situation**

**(1King.17:1, 2, 8, 18:1)**

Where ever he went, Elijah held on to the power of God. That is how he was able to receive the power of God. Today’s scripture is 1Kings 17. There is a passage we need to look at very closely. In verse 1 this is when Elijah approaches the King Ahab and makes this proclamation that he promises the living God, there will be neither rain nor dew except at my word. In this part of the land they have a drought. Even though there is no rain, the morning dew is what provides enough water for the plants at that region. Elijah makes this declaration, without my word or prayer, not even the dew will be there and there will be a drought and disaster will occur. Elijah is standing before the king saying words of judgement. Of course, this was the message that he received from God and without any hesitance he is saying it. If it was for me I would have been to afraid to be bold and would apologize and say, king I’m so sorry to say this but there might be some hardships in the future. That is not how Elijah approached it. He is saying that without his words or prayer there will not be dew nor rain upon the land. What does it say in the next verse? This is what God tells Elijah after the event with the king, you must leave. Turn eastward and hide in the cave east from the Jordan. Through a raven I will supply you with food and drink. At first, God wanted Elijah to be bold with his message in front of the king. After that God tells him to hide inside the Kerith cave. From Elijah’s point of view, how did the situation turn? He was told to be bold then to hide. If it was for us we could complain to God. We might say, you told me to be bold but now you are telling me to hide? It makes me look foolish, weak, and afraid. However, God tells Elijah to hide. If Elijah was a type of person who seeks his own personal passions, then he might have reacted differently. He might have said, no, I will continue to be bold and defeat King Ahab and save my people of Israel so that I may leave my name. For Elijah he followed the word of God to be bold and to hide. For most people it is easy to follow the words of being bold however, for the command to hide and stay back, how many of us can do that? To be front stage and leading a crowd is not hard to follow. However, to be told to stay back and hide is not easy to follow. Why do you think God told him to do this? God wanted Elijah to realize something important. He wanted him to realize that before being bold and courageous it is more important to follow the word of God. That is what Elijah did so well. How was Elijah able to follow the word of God where the commands were so opposite from each other?

**3. Elijah, who had the time of deep meditation towards the Almighty One in any situation**

**(1King.17:5~6; James.5:17)**

Regardless of the current situation, Elijah was able to deeply meditate on the word of God. This is what Elijah did the best. Elijah’s most precious time was the time where he focused and mediated upon God. That was only possible because he had this deep meditation and focus to God every day. If he did not have this time of concentration to God, it would have been very difficult for him to hide away in the Kerith cave. This is how important it is for us to have personal time with God because that is when you can experience and trust in God and posses the faith to follow God’s word in any situation. Elijah who was the exact same as us, held on to his mystery. I pray that we will have the strength to focus on God and have our secret time with him. Are you familiar with the book titled, “Pilgrim’s Progress”? This book is second most read after the bible. The authors name is John Bunyan. John Bunyan was a person who had a regular time of concentration on God. One day in his life he had a situation where is had to go to prison. It was an unfortunate time for him, but he didn’t have any options. However, for John Bunyan it turned out to be a great opportunity. When he was locked up in prison he had no choice to focus upon God. During his time of concentration, he was able to create this masterpiece called the Pilgrim’s Progress. He was able to overcome all the hardships that came to him because he was able to concentrate upon God. In the same way, Elijah was able to overcome the hardships because he had deep concentration to God. Because of that time, Elijah as able to obey God’s command of being bold and being reserved. I pray that you will also have the faith that will make it easy for you to follow the word of God. I pray for you to have the strength to overcome any hardships or hesitancy to follow the word of God. The answers of God followed because Elijah had this kind of obedience. In verse 4, this is God’s detailed promise to Elijah, I will send a raven to supply you with food. In verse 5 and 6 is the fulfillment of God’s promise according through the raven. If you look in the bible, raven usually signify a bad coming. If Elijah wasn’t a person who enjoyed fellowship with God daily, then Elijah could have complained about why God was using a raven instead of a dove. Of all the birds, why do you think God used a raven? Because God wants to break our preconceived notions we have. He wants to nurture the faith of obedience that will enable us to follow his words in any circumstances. If you look in the bible, there are several examples of this case. Moses, who was a comparable figure to Elijah, when God was training him, where did he nurture him? He raised him from the sister princess of King Pharaoh of Egypt who was the number one enemy of his people of Israel at that time. It is very contradictory, and it doesn’t really match up. Look at the early church. When the early church grew in numbers it was time for them to spread out and reach to the gentiles. Who did God use to evangelize to the gentiles? God used Paul who was the greatest persecutor of the early church at that time. Do you believe in this? He showed the faith that enabled him to follow the word of God regardless of the circumstances. Believe in the fact that, if we follow the word of God then as long as we have the faith to follow, regardless of our circumstances, the power of God that is strong enough to feed us through ravens will appear. He absolutely guides us whether it is through his absolute ways and in realistic or non-realistic ways, God will guide us. During the first worship today, we looked at Genesis 24. This is when Abraham was very old in age and wanted to find a wife for his son Isaac. He makes this command to one of his dedicated servants. He tells his servant, I need you to go out and find a wife for my son, Isaac. The servant goes a very long journey to find the wife of the son of his master and makes this prayer before God, I praise Abraham my master who is a servant of the Lord. I thank God for endlessly providing his blessings and grace upon Abraham who is my master. May the Lord, who my master server, also guide me to the path that will lead me to this house. The servant of Abraham followed the orders of Abraham. He also had faith towards the Lord who guided him, and he went and returned. He did find a wife for Isaac and returned. In this way, if we have faith in God word then it will be God who will guide us in every step of the way. Do you believe in this? Follow the word. Then it will be God guiding you. God guided Elijah step by step. Have you guys heard of the pastor named Billy Gram? He was a very famous evangelist of his times. There was a co-worker for him at that time and she was Korean. Her name of Kim Works. She was blind. She lost her sight during the Korean War. By the help of American soldiers, she immigrated to the US. She studied at Indiana University and then went overseas to Austria to learn opera singing. She became a very famous opera singer. She believed in God and in all the places she went she made this confession. Billy Gram listened to one of her confessions and that is how he found her and became co-workers. This was her confession, the people around me guide me. However, the people who guided me never told me what was 100 meters away from me. More simply they would tell me what was right before my feet for instances a puddle of water or staircases. Then one that I believe in, he guided me every step of the way. Eventually, that is how I reached my destination. This is the same method when God guides us. We don’t know what 10 to 20 years is ahead of us however, he guides us daily on what we must do that day. Therefore, with faith, if you follow each step, then today that is how God will guide you and tomorrow that is how he guides you until your future and your life. For Elijah, the issue wasn’t what he was going to eat or wear, but it was how he was going to follow the word of God. God used his super natural ways to guide Elijah and if you follow God in the same way, then God will guide you just like he did Elijah. Believe in this and experience this. Hallelujah. There is a very famous seminar school in Dallas, Texas. It is called DTS, Dallas Theology Seminar. There was a moving testimony from there. Today they are a school of great size but, in the beginning, they went through many struggles. In 1924 because they were in debt, they were coming very close to closing the school. At that time, the founder, Lewis Shepherd, like as he did all the time when he faced hardships, he closes his doors and went inside of prayer. All the workers, one by one, went into prayer. They went into deep concentration prayer, asking God whether to close or sell the school. Along the side of the Shepherd, he had co-worker named Harry Ironside. Because everyone took turns praying, it came to the turn of Harry Ironside. He started to pray, Lord, aren’t you a wealthy Lord who is the master of all the hills, the valleys, the mountains, and all livestock? God, can you sell some of your livestock so that we may continue to fund our school and to educate the children. This is how he held on to the word and prayed because in the bible it says that in Psalms that all the things above and below belong to God. That is how he chose to pray but, during this time of prayer, outside of school something interesting was happening. A stranger who was dressed as a cowboy walked in to the office of the school. He introduces himself and says, I am a self-proclaimed Dallas Cowboy. I took my livestock to the market and sold them. I had separate plans of investing what I earned. However, in my thoughts and heart, I had a voice telling me to use this money for something more valuable instead. I was looking for ways to spend this money and I stopped at this near by theology school and I want to give this to you for meaningful purpose. He is telling them to accept his funds. The worker in the front desk was so shocked she goes into the prayer room. Like I said before the prayer room was locked and closed. When she was about to knock on the door she hears them say, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen. She thought they were done with prayer, so she knocked. She goes in and explains the situation. The founder goes and meets this cowboy and hear the story and accepts his funds. He goes back into the room and goes to Harry and pats him on the back. He said to Harry, Pastor, like your prayer, God sold his livestock and provide for us. This is a true event. Do you think its by coincidence? God is precise and detailed. Towards us, he is ever thankful Lord. When we follow the words of the almighty creator, that is when amazing and tremendous answers will come. I pray that you will follow his words. Hold on to his word, pray over it and make choices with it. This is what Elijah did and he was so good in this way. It means that he didn’t base his decision by the situation he was in. The word of God is not a simple decree. We need to have faith in the word of the almighty creator and we must follow his words. On the Lords day as we get together may you hold on to the word of God and follow the word then it is God who will enable you to experience. God can bring back the dead. God is the one who will make the poor to prosper. Those who have problem with their interpersonal relationships, God came solve the relationships. Those who are diseased God will heal. Those who are discourage, God will encourage them. Where is the mystery to all this? The mystery is when you hold on to the word of God and obey the word. Let us look at 2 passages before we conclude.

**<Conc.>** **Make the eternal Word of God into the message towards you.**

**(Ps.1:1~3; Ps.119:105)**

It is Psalms 1:1 and Psalms 119. If you look at Psalms one this is what it says, blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law, day and night. Meditation means that you are thinking deeply about it and reviewing your thoughts. In other words, it is personalizing the word. If you do this it is stated that, that person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither whatever they do prospers. Even if it is against your nature, personality, or philosophy, if it is the word of God then hold on to it and follow through. Then God will give you the answer of prosperity. Even by using ravens, God will answer you. How about Psalms 119? It is stated, your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. What does this mean? It is describing the word of God. I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ that the word of God is the lamp unto my feet and the light to my path. The word of God who belongs to the eternal God make that in to your own even if we are lacking. Hold on to it as the voice of God that is given to you. Then what happens after that God will be responsible for. I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray,**

Dear living God, our precious God, our God who works at our prayers, give us the faith so that we may follow the words of the almighty one. To do this, help us to enjoy our time of deep concentration. Help us to strengthen our self that we will follow your word regardless of where we are and the situation. Help us to experience the super natural method of God. Help us to come to the confession that all of this was done by you. In Jesus Christ name we pray, Amen.