

Words of Life

(April 11, 2007)

*Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him.
And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.*

1 Kings 18:30

The altar of the Lord had been broken down. The people had abandoned the system of worship instituted by God and embraced pagan systems. Their leaders were leading them away from God and the nation of Israel was in trouble. Yet God had not given up on them. He still had seven thousand that had not compromised their faith and He was going to use one of those seven thousand to show Himself strong among the people.

In this account, Elijah requests King Ahab, to assemble all the false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The first thing Elijah did after all the false prophets had been assembled was to repair the altar of the Lord. It must have been an amazing sight as the people watched. Elijah placed one stone upon another until twelve stones were in place representing the tribes of Israel. We are told that he built the altar in the name of the Lord and that he cut the bull into pieces and set it upon the newly repaired altar. He then had the altar drenched with water and declared publicly that he was a servant of God and had done all these things at God's command. Then finally, he called on the Lord at the time of the evening sacrifice and God rained down fire from the sky and consumed the burnt offering. What an amazing demonstration of power! In a split second, God distinguished Himself as almighty God. There was no coincidence here. The timing was precise. The prophets of Baal had danced themselves into a frenzy all day long and received no answer from their god. But in one swift move, at the proper time, Elijah calls out to his God and fire fell from the sky and consumed the waterlogged offering. And it all began with the repair of the altar.

I have found in my life that sometimes God is waiting for the altar within my own heart to be repaired before demonstrating His incredible power. If it has fallen into disrepair it prevents Him from demonstrating the fullness of His power in and through me.

In the case of Elijah and Mount Carmel, God couldn't rain down fire until the offering was in place, and the offering couldn't be in place until the altar was repaired.

It is helpful to backtrack to see what the altar that Elijah repaired represented.....

It represented a place of remembrance.....of God's word to his people (v31)

It represented a place of worship.....it was built in the name of the Lord (v32)

It represented a place of sacrifice.....the bull was cut into pieces (v33)

It represented a place of submission....let it be known that I am your servant (v36)

It represented a place of obedience...I have done all these things at your word (v36)

It represented a place of calling on the Lord....hear me O, Lord (v37)

If the altar of our hearts is in good repair in these areas, I think we will be amazed at the mighty things God will show us and the incredible ways He will reveal Himself to us.

Pastor Ted.

The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

John 6:63