

# The Missing Voice of Authority

by E.A. Johnston

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*The sermon emphasizes the need for preachers to get along with God, be anointed by the Spirit, and speak with divine authority to proclaim the heart of God with a cry of 'Thus saith the Lord'.*

**Duration:** 16:50

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 17:1

**Topics:** "Authority"

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## Description

In this sermon from the 1940s, the preacher speaks with urgency and reverence, delivering a message from God. He emphasizes the importance of repentance and forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The preacher contrasts the seriousness and authority of past preachers like Jonathan Edwards with the casual and relatable approach of modern pastors. He highlights the need for the missing voice of authority in preaching, where the anointed man of God proclaims the heart of God with a cry of 'thus saith the Lord.' The sermon is based on 1 Kings 17:1-16, which demonstrates how God operates in the affairs of man through the calling of a prophet and the fulfillment of His declared message.

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## Transcript

I was listening to a preacher from the 1940s preach a sermon, and he spoke with an urgency to deliver the message he had received from the Almighty. There was a seriousness in his manner and a tone of reverence in his voice, and as he delivered the gospel message, you couldn't help but pay attention to him. This old preacher spoke with the voice of authority, and he commanded your absolute attention, for his message was important and a matter of life and death.

And as this preacher spoke, you were gripped with eternity and the God of that eternity. You saw a holy heaven, and you saw a burning hell. You were pointed to a hill far away where you beheld a bleeding Savior who hung on a bloody cross, and you were told that there was only one way to heaven.

It was a narrow way, and the only pathway there led to that bloody cross and the Savior who died there, and there was a command from God on high for sinful man to repent, to get his sins under the blood of that Savior in forgiveness of sin, and to be reconciled back to a holy God. This old preacher's entire message was serious. His manner was serious.

There was an urgency in his voice, a reverence in his tone as he spoke on the behalf of God while he delivered his message to a mortal man. Like I said, he spoke with the voice of authority, and he

commanded your utter attention. And as I was sitting in the church the other day, listening to a pastor address his audience, a light came on in my mind, and I saw the great contrast between men in our pulpits today as opposed to men of former times.

Here before me was a pastor dressed in blue jeans and an open shirt, and he casually walked about the stage in a casual manner as if he was talking to a golf buddy. He dialogued with his audience on their level and made an attempt to connect with them by being one of them. He made you feel comfortable as you listened to him talk in a soothing, friendly voice as he tried to persuade his hearers to become Christians.

And then he led in a casual prayer to become one of these casual Christians in a day of conformity, and God was a million miles away from that church for was all deadness and death everywhere. And God is a million miles away from the church in America today, friends, because we have put him on our level and we no longer fear him, much less revere him. And we have no authority in the pulpit because we have a casual Christianity and a compromised message of the gospel.

And people come into church one way and they leave the same way because there's no spiritual activity transpiring there and the transformation of lives. We give people today in our churches a little information and then say the benediction and send them along their way so they can go and have their lunch. And as I sat there listening to this blue jean preacher, I realized that the missing link between preaching in our day and preaching in former days is the missing voice of authority whereby the man of God who's anointed by the spirit of God proclaims the heart of God with a cry of thus saith the Lord.

And that's the title of my message today, friends, the missing voice of authority. My text is found in the book of First Kings in Chapter 17. You can turn in your Bibles there now.

I'll be reading from verses one through 16. I want us to see in our passage how God operates in the affairs of man, how God will call out a prophet to himself, give that man a message from the throne room of heaven, and then have that man proclaim God's message with divine authority while God carries out what he has declared. This is seen in our passage today, friends, as we peer into the life of Elijah.

Listen now to the word of God. May the spirit of the Lord attend the reading of his holy word. And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

And the word of the Lord came unto him saying, Get thee hence and turn thee eastward and hide thyself by the brook Carith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be that thou shall drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord.

For he went and dwelt by the brook Carith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

And the word of the Lord came unto him saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath.

And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks. And he called to her and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water and a vessel that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise. And behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not, for I will not go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the sayings of Elijah. And she, and he, and her house did eat many days, and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spake thy Elijah.

I will stop there. Now, friends, I want us to see several aspects from our passage today which pertains to our subject of the missing voice of authority. Number one, the utter need for a preacher to get along with God, by his own brook careth, and abide there long enough until it gets on his heart what is on God's heart.

Number two, once a man of God gets a word from God, he then must go on, burn himself, and declare to the people of God with an urgency of eternity. Number three, as the messenger of God declares the voice of God, he must speak with authority from on high and with conviction in his voice and cry out, thus saith the Lord. Let's look at this first aspect, friends, of which I speak, the utter need for a preacher to get along with God by his own brook careth, and abide there long enough until it gets on his heart what is on God's heart.

Look at verses two and three. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook careth that is before Jordan. O brother pastor, how great is this need to hide ourselves with the God of our Bibles.

How little time we have for him. We are too busy to get along with him and get on our heart what is on his heart. We just don't have the time.

We're pulled in every direction. We are too busy with activity in the name of religion to have much time for God today. This is the main reason why I see so much burnout among pastors in our day.

Just about every time I meet up with a pastor buddy of mine, he looks like he's been rung through the ringer. He's beat up, fed up, and ready to give up, because man has his time, and the necessity of the hour consumes him. But, oh, friends, this shouldn't be so.

I firmly believe our churches in this land today would greatly benefit spiritually if the church shut down for a month or two and sent that pastor of that church to a place where he could leave his cell phone at home and get the hints and hide himself by brook somewhere, shut up with God for a season, taking that time not to watch television or play golf for recreational reasons and unwind, but rather taking that entire time spent on his knees and in his Bible with the God of his salvation and to linger there long enough to get a touch from on high an anointing of the Spirit, a fresh word from Almighty God. What a drastic difference it would make, friends, for a man to return to his church after a season like that where he's been on Mark Carmel with his God and declaring the message to the people of God by releasing that burden. And that brings me to our second aspect of which I mentioned, which is once a man of God gets a word from God, he must go on, burden himself, and declare it to the people of God with an urgency of eternity.

I'll never forget when I was conducting my research on the life and ministry of the British evangelist George Whitefield, I came across an eyewitness account of a man who went to hear the great evangelist preach in Connecticut during the Great Awakening in 1740. He was a poor farmer, and it took him all afternoon, riding his horse Lickerty Split just to get there in time to hear Whitefield preach in Middletown, Connecticut by the river there. He said as Whitefield appeared on the platform, his manner was so solemn and his face shining like he just left the presence of the Almighty, that the evangelist's appearance so unsettled him that he trembled before God as he awaited the message to be preached by the messenger of God in the person of George Whitefield.

Oh, friends, how there used to be a certain solemnity in our preaching of years gone by. There was a holy fear of God by the preacher of God, and he could not wait to unburden himself before the people of God with that urgent message of eternity. Preachers of old spoke with the voice of authority, and people trembled beneath that kind of preaching.

I can think of the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and how strong men would tremble under his mighty search and sermons that the people felt as if hell itself was opening beneath them as they cried out, Oh, what must I do to be saved? But the preachers of your day and mine, the blue-jean preachers of this day, friend, want to be your pal and get you to laugh at their stories and get on your level with them and dialogue with you before you go out and have your lunch. But listen, friends, to our passion today in verses 13 and 14. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not, go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. What we have here, friends, is a description of the supernatural activity of God in the life of an individual and nation. When God comes in revival, all human props are kicked out from beneath us, and we see the Almighty at work doing what man cannot do, performing only what he can perform.

We see a prophet of God here in the person of Elijah speaking with divine authority, and he is not only a mouthpiece for God, but a vessel consecrated for the use of God to perform his mighty works through. And God's looking for a man like that today, friends. And that leads me to our last aspect of our passage today, which is, as the messenger of God declares the voice of God, he must speak with authority from on high and with conviction to cry out, Thus saith the Lord.

Look at verses 15 and 16 as we see the result of a man of God's heart unburdened with the heart of God toward mankind. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and she and he and her house did eat many days and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. In other words, friends, God did what he said he was going to do.

He had a purpose to bring forth through his servant Elijah, and it was the preservation of a family and the turning of a nation back to him. But first, Elijah had to be obedient to the command of God and go hide himself by the brook until he was ready to be part of the activity of God in his generation. And any man who desires to be useful to God in his generation must first shut himself up with the almighty at his own personal brook, careth, get on his heart what is on God's heart, and then with conviction and a burden, go proclaim that message with the voice of authority and cry out, Thus saith the Lord.

Listen, friends, the days of the Lord are days in which we live are too desperate to sit under a casual ministry of compromised Christianity. We need men today who were sent from God. We need men today

who are anointed by God.

We need men today who are on fire for God and who speak with the voice of authority. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into his harvest field, friends, for the sun is waning on this generation of lost souls who live on the brink of hell.

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