

LESSON #9 - THE WATER OF WITNESS - 1 KINGS 18: 36-39

COMING TO THE WATERS - There are times when we feel inferior as Christians. Nevertheless, the Lord has promised to be with us, and He blesses those who hear His invitation to COME TO THE WATERS. Our lesson, the WATER OF WITNESS, shows how God gives us confidence to proclaim Jesus.

THE PRAYER - Dear Lord, there are millions of souls who have turned their backs to You. Allow each of us, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to boldly turn them to the Savior Who urges "all who are thirsty to COME TO THE WATERS."

PARCHED HEARTS - ILLUSTRATION - The tourist to Australia wanted to go swimming in the beautiful lagoon. Showing discretion, he asked a native, "Are there any alligators in this river?" "No, not a single one," was the reply. The visitor, stepping into the water, asked again, "If there are no alligators, what are those gray forms I see in the water? Are you sure there are no alligators?" "Certainly," replied his man who was standing on the bank. "I promise you there are no alligators down there. Those gray forms you see are the sharks who have chased the alligators away."

THOUGHT: Like that fellow who wanted to go swimming, there are many Christians who want to witness about Jesus. Unfortunately, when they get ready to dive in, they start to think of the alligators and the sharks. They know that people will laugh at them...they know that people will cut them off from their circle of friends; they're afraid they'll make fools of themselves.

FIRST APPLICATION It's human nature to be fearful of what others might think. After all, we don't want to jeopardize our social standing, or put ourselves at risk. In contrast to this fear of the sharks, Scripture points out that witnessing to the Savior is a job which is of paramount importance. So that we may be confident of our witness, God has provided numerous Biblical examples which show that He wants us to put away our fears rather than our witness. Let's take a look at one of those examples which comes from 1 Kings 18. Please answer the questions which follow.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH - HUMANKIND'S THIRST - 1 Kings 18

VERSE	QUESTION	ANSWER	
v. 22	Who are the sharks and alligators aligned against Elijah?	The Baal prophets	
v. 22	What was the ratio of God's prophets to Baal's	1/450	
v. 24	What was the test?.....	Whose G(g)od would burn up the sacrifice.	
v. 26	How long did the Baal prophets plead?.....	Morning till noon.	
v. 27	Did Elijah show respect to them?.....	He taunted them. What did Elijah say?	Their god was sleeping/traveling/busy.
v. 28	How serious were the Baal prophets?	They cut themselves to get his attention.	
v. 33	What did Elijah do with his offering?	Poured water over it.	
v. 34	How many times did he do that?.....	Three times What did that prove.....	God could accomplish anything.
v. 38	How did God show His presence?	Burned up wood, stones, soil and WATER.	
v. 39	How did the people react to his witness?	They recognized the Lord is God.	

THIRST FOR AN ANSWER: Pastors and laymen might be jealous of Elijah's ability to call down fire from the sky. We could easily boast, "If I could perform such a miracle, I would be glad to bear witness to the Lord. I wouldn't be afraid." Surprisingly, God has given us the ability to "do" miracles. They are not miracles like Elijah, but if that prophet were brought into our world, what would he say about?

ITEM

- HOW IS IT A MIRACLE**
1. Low cost BiblesLanguage is no longer a barrier/God's entire Word is available to all.
 2. Radio/Television Jesus can't be kept out of unfriendly/unChristian countries.
..... Distance is no longer a barrier to sharing Jesus.

**ISAIAH 55:1 "COME, ALL YOU WHO ARE THIRSTY, COME TO THE WATERS
GROUP BIBLE STUDIES - TEACHER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

- 3. MicrophonesNo longer is the size of a crowd a barrier to sharing Jesus.
- 4. Computers Instant communication to sharing the Lord.
- 5. OTHER:

It doesn't make any difference what kind of miracle He uses, He wants His people to witness, to invite people to "Come to the waters." He wants us to let HIM take care of the alligators.

2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - DEEP DRINKING There are many other situations where God's people were up against the alligators. Look at these passages and see what God's witnesses said to the alligators: (The passages are all taken from the book of Acts)

PASSAGE	WHO SAID IT	WHAT WAS SAID TO THE ALLIGATORS:
Acts 4: 7-10	Peter and John	They had to give an account that Jesus was Savior
4: 33	Apostles.....	They had to testify with great power.
5: 29	Peter.....	Had to obey God rather than men when it came to witnessing.
8: 3	Those who were scattered by persecution Preached wherever they went.

QUESTION - The early church felt it was their job, under all circumstances, to share Jesus. They became, by the Spirit's power, the WATER OF WITNESS that the Spirit used to lead others to Jesus. It is a job that is still assigned to those who follow the Lord. The truth of those words is shown by this story:

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: - In the 1850's, one of God's faithful missionaries, Allen Gardiner, suffered many physical difficulties and hardships as he served the Savior. His witness continued as he said, "While God gives me strength, failure will not daunt me." He died of starvation and disease at the age of 57, while serving on an island off the southern tip of South America. His diary recorded days of hunger, thirst, and loneliness. Yet, the WATER OF WITNESS had sustained him as the last entry, written with a shaking hand, said "I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God."

What would you have done in his circumstances:

- 1. Would you have been frightened by the alligators of disease and starvation?..... YES NO
- 2. Are there alligators who frighten you from your witness?..... YES NO
- 3. In what ways has your family/church been overwhelmed with God's goodness?.....Answers will vary

SHARING THE SAV(I)OR (If you have time in your lesson or wish to work at home)

List two times you have been afraid to share the WATER OF WITNESS. Ask the group to come up with ways that might have helped against the alligators:

EXAMPLE: I was afraid to share Jesus when I went to the last funeral because.....
SOLUTION: I wrote down some scripture texts which provide comfort.

A FINAL STORY: Bold, witnessing Christians are used by the Lord to accomplish His purposes. We dare not let our fears get in the way of our Gospel proclamation. We dare not be like: Rosasio Murat of Valencia, Spain. Rosasio saved her money for twelve years until she could buy her life's dream - a sailboat. That boat sits in her backyard. Why? "I'm terrified of the water," said the lady.

QUESTIONS: How can frightened Christians be like Rosasio?

ANSWER: When they are afraid to "get under sail" in their witness for Jesus.
When they drop anchor at home.

THANKS FOR THE WATERS - Dear Lord Jesus, there are alligators and sharks all around. Like you did for Elijah, You have given me the miraculous tools to witness throughout the world, and right where I am planted. Help me lift my anchor and invite those who are thirsty to COME TO THE WATERS. Amen