

Lessons From The Widow of Zarephath

Lesson 2

1 Kings 17

INTRODUCTION:

To be blessed we must have faith in and follow God's instructions.

1 Kings 17:2-4 *Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."*

- Elijah's needs, both water and food, was "there" where God had already made provision.
- We also have a word from God and we must have faith in what God says and go "there" where the blessings are in order to receive them.
- Elijah is an example of one who did according to God's Word and found his needs supplied.

Vs. 5-6 *So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.*

Vs. 7 *And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.*

Vs. 8-10a. *Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." So he arose and went to Zarephath.*

- Elijah *went and did, he went and stayed*, and then *arose and went*.
- He heard from God, had complete trust in Him, and went to where God had provisions waiting for him.

This widow also had a place called "there" and so do we.

1 Kings 17:10a *So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks.*

- This needy widow also had a place called "there". She was *there gathering sticks* right at the city gate. But, what if she had not been there?

God has already made provisions for everything He has promised.

Vs. 4 *I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."*

Vs. 8 *I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."*

2 Pet. 1:2-4 *May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And*

because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

- It is with you just like it was with Elijah. God has already made provisions for you.

God blesses the giver.

Vs. 10b-11a *And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.” And as she was going to get it,*

- Maybe he was checking her out to see if this was the one to whom he was sent?
- Here she was, out gathering sticks, to build a fire and cook her and her son's last meal, and a foreigner came up and ask her to go get him a drink of water. What would you expect her to do?
- If you are suffering, hungry, facing death, and someone asks you for a favor, how would you react? If this was your best day, your pantry was full and you were out walking, how many of you would go back home for a bottle of water for a stranger?
- What she did says something about her.
 - First, it probably indicated to Elijah that this was the right woman.
 - It seems to also indicate that this woman was an unselfish giver.

God always solicits a response from you before you see the miraculous.

1 Kings 17: 11-12a *And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”*

- This non Jew, living on the coast of Phoenicia, living in the midst of idolatry responded, *“As the Lord your God lives”*.
- Her first response was that she believed. She immediately identified Elijah as a man of God and she believed that his God was real.
- Her next response to Elijah was, *“I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”* 1 Kings 17:12
 - She may have been weak in faith and was just stating the obvious in the natural. That was all the eye could see.
 - Elijah's request for a bite of bread was to get her to step out in faith
 - Or, she may have just been testing Elijah to see if he was the one the Lord commanded her to provide for.

When God asks us to give, He gives us a promise.

- The prophet asked her to provide water and food for him. (Vs. 11 & 12)

- Elijah continued with a promise, Vs.13 *And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son.*
 - He was saying, “Don’t worry about running out of food and starving to death. Trust God and make me some bread first and there will still be enough bread left for you and your son.”
- Vs. 14 *For thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.’”*
 - God said, “Take Me at my Word. You give your last cake and I promise you that you will not run out of food until this famine is over.”

You will always receive much more in return that you give!

- In Lk. 6:38 Jesus says , *Give, and you will receive. You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands—more than you can hold. You will be given so much that it will spill into your lap. The way you give to others is the way God will give to you.”* International Children’s Bible New Century Ver.
- If you give it away, it will not just come back to you, *but it will be given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity.”*TMSG
- In Malachi 3:10 *Bring your full tithe to the ... treasury so there will be ample provisions.... Test me in this and see if I don’t open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.* TMSG
- Jesus said in Mark 10:29-30 that whatever you give up for His sake and for the Gospel will be returned to you 100 times as much in this life. *So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother for wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time (in this life)—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands,...”*
- Elijah took what little bit of food she had and God gave her 3 years of food back.
- God wants you to understand that whatever you give because of Him you are not giving it away, but that it will be multiplied back to you. You are making an investment with promised gain in this life, so you can then give more.
- 1 Kings 17:15-16 *So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah.*
- This widow gave one meal away, and she received in return over 1,000 days of meals. That was a thousand fold return.
- Giving to God is not to hurt you, but to help you. Giving is for your benefit.

- What if she got up one day, made the food, and out of fear fed her son first, and then fed herself??? She had to trust God.
- Giving is an act of faith. God's grace is extended to you all the time, but He still wants you to trust him. Every day she had to trust God. Every day *she went . . . and did according to the word.*
- Giving is like planting seed. God gives a great increase. The miracle of increase is activated when the seeds are planted. 2 Corinthians 9:6-11
 - If you have dried beans you can either cook and eat all of them for temporary results or plant some of them and end up with more beans that you can eat.
 - Planting is a step of faith and so is giving. Every coin you own has the potential of being used up for temporary fulfillment or of being planted for an increase of producing greater like fruit.
 - It's not you responding to God and God rewarding you for what you did. It's you responding to the promise of *give and it shall be given unto you.*

This widow, her son and Elijah were all provided for because they *went and did*. They trusted God and acted upon that trust. Provisions received were more than food. 1 Kings 17:17-24

- Her faith in God was tested. A life of faith does not prevent affliction and death. The prophet was sent to the widow to encourage her faith.
- Tragedy makes us forget and overlook all of God's benefits.
- We, so soon, forget God's past interventions into our lives.
- We so quickly doubt, blame ourselves and forget God's power.
- We recall sins already forgiven.
- We think God's preachers are here to condemn us for our sins
- It is hard to depend on God unless confirmed by miracles.

Conclusion: To be blessed we must have faith in and follow God's instructions.

Deut. 28:2 *And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.*

1 Tim. 6:17 God *gives us richly all things to enjoy.*