

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 1 Kings 17

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through 1 Kings

And in our study last Wednesday night – we began to look at how God raised up the prophet Elijah in order to reveal the spiritual condition of God's people—

Remember,

King Ahab and his wife Jezebel had led the nation of Israel into outright rebellion against God.

They were worshipping the pagan gods of the Canaanites.

Baal and Asherah

The people of Israel were following their example –

And so the Lord – sends Elijah in there – because He desires that the people repent.

And as we saw last week – in order for the Lord to use Elijah – there was this exercising of faith that had to occur.

Elijah had to trust in God's provisions and protection –

whether it was at the Brook Cherith – where God sends ravens to feed Elijah

and then we saw it later when God sends Elijah into Jezebel's hometown and God uses a pagan widow to sustain Elijah.

In our text this evening, we are going to see God continuing to exercise the faith of not only Elijah but also the widow.

Remember what I said last – if we are faithful in what little the Lord gives us – He gives us more.

So – our little faith is exercised – we put our trust in the Lord, He gives us more faith and other circumstances that are going to exercise our faith.

We see this over and over again in scriptures – Abraham is a perfect example of this – before he even got to the point where God asked him to sacrifice Isaac – he had to go through all the other events in his life that the Lord used to exercise his faith.

And God does the same thing in our lives.

Let's pray...

Read Text –

As I was reading the text for tonight –

I was thinking about how God, as He takes Elijah and us – through these faith building journeys –

One of the things that I noticed is how He brings others along as well.

God is working through Elijah – and at the same time He is working through this pagan widow.

The same thing occurs in our life – we are in the midst of having our faith exercised and we often don't realize how the Lord is using the same circumstance to touch the lives of others around us – their faith is being exercised too.

So the same lesson that we may be learning – God is using to teach others.

That is what we see here in ch 17

God is sending Elijah in a journey where he is learning to trust the Lord – and through the same circumstances we see the faith of this widow stretched.

Remember, this widow poor –

She was gathering sticks

She truly felt that she only had enough flour and oil to feed herself and her son one last time before they die of starvation –

And God says – that is the one that I am going to provide for you Elijah.

And we saw that Elijah asked her to make him a cake – before she was to make a cake for her and her son.

And the widow responded –

And we see God's provision in verse 15,16

[1Ki 17:15-16 NKJV] 15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for [many] days. 16 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.

So again – Elijah is going through these circumstances because God is preparing him for the pinnacle of how He is going to use him.

That is going to be chapter 18

All of this is going to help Elijah as he is on top of Mount Carmel

But it is also going to sustain him as he comes down from that mountain top experience and he runs away and hides in the caves.

Remember, everything in life is preparation for what's up ahead.

Everything in life is something to learn from

This is how we are discipled

This is how we grow

This is something we are going to see come to fruition with this widow.

Let's look at our text.

[1Ki 17:17-24 NKJV] 17 Now it happened after these things [that] the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him.

Did the widow in our study last week – respond to Elijah by giving him water? Yes

Did the widow respond to Elijah by making him a cake and bringing it to him to eat before she made one for her and her son? Yes

Here is a spiritual truth that we need to grasp this evening.

Tragedy strikes in the midst of God's faithfulness.

[1Pe 4:12-13 NKJV] 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

After the events that we looked at last week – we would think that this woman and her son lived happily ever after.

Because of God's provisions and God's faithfulness – she has more flour and more oil than she has ever seen.

She is rejoicing.

She is not going to starve. Her son is not going to starve.

And right in the midst of God's faithfulness – tragedy strikes.

Even in the abundance of flour and oil – her son gets sick and he dies.

Now, think about what is going on – because we saw something similar with Elijah last week.

God had sent him to the dessert where he had all the water he wanted because there was a brook that flowed there.

And remember what happened – after a while the brook dried up.

And I said – the reason for the brook drying up was so that Elijah did not put his trust on the provisions – but instead, put His trust on the Provider – God Himself.

God was taking him deeper.

Same thing is happening with the widow.

The widow had all the flour and oil that she needed – provisions.

She got to see God work.

As a widow – her biggest hope is that her son would grow up fast and take care of her – provisions

The brook has dried up – same as Elijah

And now that he is dead – her world collapsed.

So now, God is taking her to a deeper place.

A place where she is going to require her faith to be stretched out.

And so – one of the things we have to understand is that no matter where we are in our spiritual walk – there are deeper places that the Lord wants to take us to.

We may be in a place where we think we understand God and we get it – and we think we are there, and God says, Not so fast - I want to take you into a deeper relationship. I want to take you somewhere else that may be more stressful – a place where you will trust Me more.

And as we begin to yield to Him – God will meet us there and He will do a real work in us and take us to a place where we have never ever been before.

And once we get through that place and we think we got it again – guess what?

He takes us to another one and another one and another one.

You might be asking -

When do the battles end?

Never – not in this lifetime

Because through these deeper places, God is making us stronger.

It is a lifelong process – and it is exactly what God is doing with this widow.

“If you trusted Me before – if you trusted Me with the provisions of flour and oil – look at what I am going to do next.”

18 So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

What the widow is telling Elijah here is –

I thought God was blessing my faith by providing for my son and I – and now, He has taken my son.

This is not a blessing.

In the Hebrew – she is asking Elijah if her son dying was God’s judgment on her for her past sins.

She responds by questioning God’s goodness.

Turn with me to Exodus 14 –

Because I am going to provide you with another illustration where we see the same thing happen as God was exercising the faith of the Children of Israel.

By the time we get to chapter 14 – they had seen the 10 plagues, they had seen God’s provision and protection upon their lives.

And then they march to the Red sea -

[Exo 14:10-13 NKJV] 10 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11 Then they said to Moses, "Because [there were] no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 "[Is] this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For [it would have been] better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." 13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.

This is exactly what the widow is doing -

And many times, it is what we do.

When our hearts are restless – we question the goodness of God

We question, why He has brought us to this place

It is here where we remember the words of Moses –

Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today.

Our problem is that when we are in a stressful situation – we don't want to stand still.

We want to do something

But if we just stand still – we get to see Him in action.

And we get in our heart a confidence that we would not otherwise have.

And we begin to trust Him in ways that we did not trust Him before

And He is able to do things in and through us that He wasn't able to do before.

So, God is bring her to this point.

Look at what happens in verse 19

19 And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.

Had you make a note of the phrase – “Give me your son”

And the reason is that this is what God is saying to each of us this evening –

Give me your situation

Give me your fear

Give me that area in your life that is coming under fire

Let me do this –

Trust Me – take a bigger step of faith.

Remember, in our study last week

Elijah says – bring me a cup of water

Then, bring me bread

Steps of faith

Now, he says – give me your son

20 Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?"

Now, it seems like Elijah's faith is wavering here

But I don't think Elijah's faith is wavering because of what he does next.

I think he may not fully understand what God is doing

I think he may be echoing what the widow might be experiencing.

So he questions God

One of the things we have to understand is that God welcomes when we approach Him with some of the questions we might have.

Elijah is not question His goodness – he just doesn't understand what's going on.

21 And he stretched himself out on the child **three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him."**

Here is proof of that Elijah's faith was unwavering

He knows that the Lord is the only hope for this child.

And notice – he does it three times.

He knows that God is going to answer his prayer

Picture it – he did this once and prayed. Nothing.

Heaven is silent

So he does it a second time.

Same thing. Silence.

Elijah knows that God speaks to him and gives him direction, so there's only one thing to do -keep doing what he knows is right until God responds.

In the New Testament – we have the example of Paul

2 Cor 12

The thorn in the flesh –

Paul knew that God heals –

Paul was the instrument that God used to do many of those healings.

So Paul had this thorn in the flesh

He prayed, nothing.

He prayed again, nothing.

He prayed again – and God finally answered. There will be no healing.

2 Cor 12:9 - **“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”**

Paul’s thorn in the flesh served a more important service – it kept Paul dependent on God daily for the strength to endure.

When we study the gospel we find that Jesus prayed three times for the cup to be removed –

What did Jesus do? He drank it.

God does not always answer the first time we pray.

God does not always answer the third time we pray

But as we pray, many times – instead of doing what we ask, God will give us the strength, the endurance, the capacity and the faith to live with a situation – seeing the hand of God in it and the work of God within it.

22 Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. 23 And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

The Lord heard the voice of Elijah

God hears the prayer of the faithful

And the opposite is true as well – God doesn't hear the prayers of the faithless.

[Jas 1:6-8 NKJV] 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 [he is] a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

If we want prayers answered – then we pray with faith.

But I lack faith – then ask for it.

Because He is the author and the finisher of our faith.

So we pray - "Help my unbelief"

Remember, Jesus in Matt 17:20

if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

God will meet us where we are at

And as we exercise that little bit of faith – it grows.

And next time, we will be quicker to ask, we will be quicker to believe

And it will continue – because that is what God wants to do in our lives.

By the way – this is the first time in the scriptures that it speaks of life coming back to a lifeless body.

Later on in 2 Kings 4 – Elisha does the same thing with the son of the Shunamite woman.

He also lays on top of the child and does a few things similar to Elijah

But then we get to Jesus in the New Testament –

Greater than Elijah, greater than Elisha

All He had to do was speak a word – “Lazarus, come forth!”

And Lazarus did.

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you [are] a man of God, [and] that the word of the LORD in your mouth [is] the truth."

Remember what I mentioned earlier –

We often don't realize how the Lord is using the same circumstance to touch the lives of others around us.

This is what we have here.

What God was doing in the life of Elijah, has enabled God to use Elijah to grow this woman's faith.

And as God was developing Elijah, He was developing the faith of this woman.

So the question is – why did God take the widows son initially.

You see church,

The boy is an object lesson for Elijah.

If God can raise a dead gentile boy back to life in response to prayers of faith, He can also revive the Children of Israel who had become spiritually dead.

Let's bring this closer to home –

If God can do the work of revival in a body and in a nation, can He not do the work of revival in our own lives and in the lives of our loved ones.

Can He not save people that have been written off

Can He not send someone who is going to pray with you and share in your burdens

Of course He can

You see church,

All these true stories we are going through –

They are designed to build up our faith and trust the God who sent His Son to redeem us.

We have more than Elijah had during his time

We have the Spirit of God living inside us

This woman – she got her son back and the end result – I know

Her faith in God was strengthened and she trusted that God will keep His word.

And I pray that this will be our testimony as well.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

