

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

We trust that God will provide, and these are stories of provision, but only after it would seem that all hope has been lost. Elijah has been called upon to be the messenger of God's displeasure with King Ahab. Obviously, kings don't take kindly to such messages and Elijah must 'disappear' for his safety. There is nowhere to turn, no one he can truly trust, except the small voice of God. It becomes clear that trust in the abstract is not the same as trust when that is all that is left to us.

Theology Connection:

It would seem that Elijah rather confidently fulfills God's commands of him despite the difficult circumstances. If we extend the arc of the story, we realize that Elijah reaches the end of his rope as well. He too wishes 'to die' and yet God whispers hope into his ear. In the moment it may seem as if God is not attentive to our circumstances, but we are asked to extend the arc of the story. To see beyond our horizons as we gain witness to God's abundance and grace.

Application:

This is not a 'name it and claim it' form of theology. God is not tethered to our designs or desires. This is a story of call and response. God calls Elijah to take on a hard task and begin a long journey. What are some of the hard tasks that await you? How has faith enriched your response to some of the difficulties in your life?

The Text: 1 Kings 17:1-16

17 ¹Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

²Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: ³"Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. ⁴You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there."

⁵So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. ⁶The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

⁷Sometime later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸Then the word of the Lord came to him:

⁹"Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food."

¹⁰So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?"

¹¹As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

¹²"As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

¹³Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son."

¹⁴For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.'

¹⁵She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So, there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.

¹⁶For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

ADULT

A favorite tool of diplomacy today is to impose economic sanctions against a regime that other nations believe to have gone rogue. These sanctions cause great deprivation among the people, but presumably those in power are always able to take care of themselves. Elijah, at God's command, informs King Ahaz that God is displeased, and a drought will follow. We see, however, in the story of the widow of Zarephath that it is the commoners who suffer most from God's sanctions. While God intervenes on her behalf, there are many others who will continue to suffer.

How do we comprehend suffering today? If we believe that God's blessings result in good, how do we understand this pandemic we are in, or how it is that the USA has the most cases and the greatest number of deaths despite having a top-notch medical system? Are you confident or perhaps confused when asked to reflect upon God's part in a pandemic?

YOUTH

Please read 1 Kings 17:1-16

The importance of this Scripture is the need of God's people and events in our lives. We must think, trust, and act accordingly. The events of life are tools of God. He uses these to get our attention, to change our values, character, priorities, pursuits, and above all, to change our sources of trust for security and happiness.

Never lose sight of the fact that the same events that test us often become the means by which God is able to use us in ministry to others. In other words, our trials often become vessels for ministry and opportunities. This is what we see in Elijah life. His need became a means of meeting needs in the lives of the widow and her son.

Let this remind us that we are not here for ourselves, even in good and in pain.

Remember we are never alone, and God cares for us deeply.

Let us pray:

Dear God, thank you for this passage as a reminder that you are working with us and through us. Help us turn our trials and tribulations into opportunities to serve others. In Jesus name we pray,
Amen.

CHILDREN'S

Many amazing things happened to Elijah during his life. The First amazing thing that happened was that God spoke to him, warning him that there would not be any rain for a few years. Elijah trusted the Lord greatly and followed everything He told him to do. God told Elijah that he could drink water from a brook, and that ravens were going to bring him food every day. That sounds crazy, right? Birds don't bring people food, but Elijah trusted that God would take care of him and he did! Eventually, the brook began to dry up, so God found another way to provide for Elijah. Elijah asked a widow, a widow is a woman who lost her husband, to use all the food that she had to make him some bread. The widow didn't want to do this at first because she only had enough oil and flour to make one more meal and she didn't want to waste her food. But God did something amazing for Elijah and the widow! For as long as they needed, the oil and the flour never ran out! God provided for Elijah and Elijah trusted God without hesitation!

Think:

1. Is there a time in your life that you noticed God providing for you?
2. How can we show praise for how God provides for us?

Remember:

Elijah boldly followed the Lord wherever He led him. We should try to be faithful just like Elijah!

Pray:

Dear gracious God,

Thank you for being our ultimate provider! We are so thankful for all the amazing ways that You care for us. Please help us to shine Your light wherever we go! In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen!