



**Session 1:**  
**Elijah and the Widow--**  
**“Helping a Woman in Distress to be**  
**a woman of faith”**  
**1 Kings 17:7-24**

**Elijah, the Widow and the Bread**

**Summary:**

- Elijah was a prophet that taught about The One True God.
- There was no more rain where he lived.
- There was little food where he lived.
- God said to Elijah, "Go to Zerephath. There is a widow there who will feed you."
- Elijah left to go Zerephath. He found the widow and asked her for bread and water.

"I'm sorry," she said, "I have just enough flour and oil for bread for my son and me"

"Go ahead and bake the bread. God will see that we will have enough," Elijah said.

- She did as Elijah said. She baked a loaf a bread.
- There was still flour and oil left.
- The next day she baked another loaf of bread.
- There was still flour and oil left.
- She baked bread everyday and never ran out of flour or oil.
- God took good care of them.



**Elijah, the Widow and the Son**

**Summary:**

The widow's son, whom she was willing to die for, became ill sometime later and died.

She blamed Elijah and thought Elijah's God was punishing her for her past sins

The widow felt that Elijah and his God was extremely cruel because there was deception in the miracle.

Elijah could not understand God's reasoning for the son's death either.

Elijah's unwavering faith and trust in God's sovereignty believed that God would further show His power.

Not only would God provide food and water for physical nourishment and sustainment of life, He would bring the dead back to life.

God hears a prayer of faith and knows when his followers' faith and trust is genuine.

The widow's faith is restored to a greater depth when she sees her son raised from death to life

1 Kings 17:17-24

Verse 24

"The Word of the Lord is Truth"

### **Can God be Trusted?**

A When Elijah first came to the widow of Zarephath he asked her for everything she had. "Give me everything," said Elijah, "and God will feed you and your son. Submit to God's Word and the jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry." Out of faith the widow submitted. And God did not let her down. She was miraculously fed. Every day the widow saw the power of God at work in her home.

B The miracle was a sign that the Almighty God of Israel was present in the widow's home with His protecting hand. Each day and hour that went by was proof of a special protection that exceeded all human capacities.

All around the widow people were short of food. People were dying in their hunger and misery. But after the prophet Elijah entered her home, the power of Israel's God sustained her life and the life of her son. God was with the widow and protected her just as He promised He would by the word of Elijah. The widow was secure in the shadow of the Almighty and in the Word of His promise.

C One day, however, the widow's son became ill; and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. The widow's son died. This death shattered the sense of security the widow had in the Lord and in the Word of His promise.

The widow had given all that she had to the prophet of the Lord. She had trusted in the Lord and in His promise. But now it turns out that the divine promise could not be trusted or relied upon. Her sense of security gave way to the gnawing anxiety of not being able to trust in the God of promise anymore.

From the widow's point of view it surely must have seemed that the Lord had deceived her. She had been promised life, but she received death. She was promised a reward for obedience, but she received the punishment given to those who disobey. The Lord pulled the rug from under her. He knocked out all the props that were holding her up. The Lord promised life and gave her death instead.

After the death of her son the widow could come to only one conclusion: the Word of the Lord is unreliable and untrue; the God of promise cannot be trusted; someone who puts her or his faith in God will be disappointed.

D Why would the widow think this way? What gave her the right to come to such a conclusion? Because she knew Who took her child, Who was responsible for his death. Neither Elijah nor the widow doubted for a moment that the hand of the Lord was behind the death. It was the Lord Who had taken the boy away in death. They were both in the grip of this conviction.

The mother did not hesitate to declare that the coming of Elijah somehow caused the death of her son. She came right out and said it: (1Ki 17:18) "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" How quickly she forgot that both she and her child would have died if Elijah had not come to live with them.

In the face of this accusation Elijah did not deny that the boy's death had something to do with his coming. He admitted that the widow was right in seeing the hand of the Lord behind this: (1Ki 17:20) "O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?"

## **God's Word Can Be Trusted Even When Things Look Bleak:**

A Both the widow and Elijah were left with a problem: why did God take the widow's son, why did He take the boy's life, what is the message that God is bringing by this sad event?

Living in the presence of the man of God, the widow reasoned, had drawn her life and her past sins into the sight of God, and that had proven fatal. Israel's God was not a God Who could leave a sin unpunished, as His judgment of His own people through the drought showed.

She had first seen God as the God Who brings blessings and life. But now she saw God as the strict and unforgiving Lord Who used the coming of Elijah to extend His judgments beyond Israel's borders.

Her conclusion was that God cannot be trusted. He does not keep His Word. She made a mistake to have faith in the God of promise for His promises are meaningless.

B Elijah also looked and struggled for an answer. He cried out with anguish to God: (1Ki 17:20) "O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?"

In the widow's home there was obedience to the Word. Why, then, this judgment from the Lord? The God of the covenant had sworn the promise of life if only the widow obeyed. Why, then, did judgment strike to shatter her life?

Elijah took the child from the widow's arms and brought the body upstairs. There he struggled and prayed with the Lord. Alone with the dead child he cried out to his God. He stretched himself upon the child three times and three times cried out, "O Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!" (vs. 21). The Lord listened and the child came back to life.

Elijah carried the boy to his mother and gave him to her with the triumphant words, "Look, your son is alive" (vs. 23). He showed the woman the truth of God's Word.

The widow thought she had an answer that had to do with something she had done in the past: (1Ki 17:18) "What do you have

## C What a vast difference between the faith of Elijah and the faith of the widow here.

The widow's son was taken and she abandoned her faith in God – a faith that was stronger than the faith shown by most of those in Israel. It is apparent that the Word of the Lord did not completely dominate and govern the widow's life. The widow's faith, we would have to say, was small, weak, and immature compared to Elijah's.

Think here of Abraham. When he had to kill his promised son, he allowed himself to be led completely by the Word of the Lord even as he clung to the Word of promise. He was told that Isaac was to become a great nation, but before Isaac himself had any children, Abraham received the command to kill him as a sacrifice. In the face of the apparent contradiction between God's promise and God's command, Abraham allowed himself to be led by faith. Hebrews 11:19 tells us that "Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death."

The widow of Zarephath, however, made it apparent that she did not have such faith in God's promises. God had promised life and now her son was taken by God. Therefore, she thought, God could not be trusted. Instead of believing, like Abraham did, she gave up her faith in God.

D Elijah, of course, reacted differently. He wrestled with God in prayer and appealed to the Word of the Lord. He reminded God of His promise. And, in faith, he asked God to restore the boy's life. Elijah, unlike the widow, kept faith in God.

The praying prophet seized the Word of promise with both hands and would not let go. That was the ground on which he could – and had to – base his plea. Clinging to the Lord's oath, he could rest assured that the Lord would hear his prayer. The Lord would hear Elijah for the sake of His Word. So Elijah called out to the Lord to keep His Word of promise.

You know what happened. The Lord heard Elijah and the boy lived. This is the first time that Scripture speaks to us of God's wondrous power to bring people back from the dead.

In Abraham we already encountered a faith in God's power to bring back the dead. It was this faith which allowed Abraham to offer up Isaac to the Lord. But it is in the story of Elijah that we hear for the first time of someone actually being brought back to life.

E Right away when Elijah brought the living child to her the widow realized she was wrong in abandoning her faith in God and His promises. Her living son, after all, was living proof that God kept His promises. Her living son was proof that she could really trust the God of promise. So the woman said to Elijah, (1Ki 17:24) "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth." The woman admits she can believe and trust the God of promise.

The point...we can trust the God of promise. This is why God took the widow's son and gave him back again: to show that we can trust and believe the God of promise. God does not go back on His Word. All that we have to do is have faith and keep to the faith and we will see that God's Word is trustworthy and true. Whether things look good or whether they look bad, we are to trust God and His Word. Whether we face life or whether we face death, we are to trust the God of promise. Topic: Trust

One writer of verse put it this way:

Today Lord, I have an unshakable conviction, a positive, resolute assurance that what you have spoken is unalterably true.

But today, Lord, my sick body feels stronger and the stomping pain quietly subsides.

Tomorrow, and then tomorrow, if I must struggle again with aching exhaustion and twisting pain until I am breathing, until I am utterly spent, until fear eclipses the last vestige of hope.

Then Lord, then grant me the enabling grace to believe without feeling, to know without seeing, to clasp your invisible hand and wait with invincible trust for the morning. As you go through life, I don't know what bumps God has placed or has allowed on your road. But whatever the bumps – whether big or small – I pray that you will keep your faith and trust in God.

John 20:29, Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

## **Conclusion:**

The miracle of her son's resurrection caused the widow of Zarephath to renew her faith in the God of promise. That, of course, is the purpose of all miracles: to lead people to faith in the God of promise.

It is to reveal the Glory of God...for it is in Him that the prophet, priest, king, and ordinary people like you and me that desire to see the glory of God fall.

The widow of Zarephath once again puts God's people to shame. God's Old Testament people had witnessed miracle after miracle; yet, they refused to believe and serve the God of promise.

If Israel would not confess the reliability of the Lord their God before the heathens, then the Lord would allow a heathen to testify to His reliability before His people. That He did by means of the widow: (1Ki 17:24) "Now I know that ... the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."

The Lord has also given us a great miracle, a resurrection from the dead, so that we – like the widow – can testify of His reliability and have faith in His promises. This resurrection is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus first died the apostles and followers of Christ lost hope and wondered if "he was the one who was going to redeem Israel" (Lk 24:21). But when He arose they knew God was true to His promises and that Christ was exactly Whom He said He was – the eternal Son of God, the King, the Suffering Servant of the Lord. The message of the empty tomb is that we can trust the God of promise, that He always keeps His Word, that He always delivers what He promises. He did this with Abraham. He did this with Elijah and the widow. He did this with Jesus. And, He does this for us!

## **Response from us:**

Do we have faith that no matter whether we see a miracle or not, we know that God does not lie...and He knows what is best for us and others as He works all things out for our good?

Do we live in the power of God's might only to listen to reason and not faith?

**God wants us to have faith in time of trouble!**

# **Weave Faith into Life!**

**With your family:**

**Drive Home the Bible point: Learn to Trust God Completely!**

**Key Verse to remember as a memory verse:**

**“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’....But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:31-32).**

**Some Scriptures to read as a family this week:**

**Psalm 9:9-10; Ask yourself and family, Why should we trust God?**

**Psalm 13:5; Why is it important to trust that God’s love will never fail you if you are one of His children?**

**At this time, make sure that your children understand what it means to a child of God.**

**“As many as received Him (Jesus) God gave the right (power) to become the children of God.” (John 1:12).**

**Psalm 56:1; Are you ever afraid? Why...of what and whom? How can God’s Word help us to not be afraid any more?**

**Nahum 1:7; How has God cared for you this week? How have you shown your trust in Him? (God’s longs to see your desire to please and trust Him).**

**John 14:1-2; Why do you think Jesus said this? Why is it important to know that Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare a place just for us?**

**Romans 15:13; What will God do for if you trust Him completely?**

**Commitment to God is placing our mind, body and soul at the mercy of Jesus...the author and finisher of our faith.**

**Be sure and ask and be assured that your children understand true commitment. Use your own marriage, if applicable, to prove the point.**

**As you go to school, work, play, do you commit and trust the God who knows you and longs to help you in everything you do?**

**Based on Faith Weaver Series**

