Elijah Helps a Widow

1 Kings 17:7-24

BIBLE BACKGROUND

God's Judgment on Israel

After a trend of kings who did evil, God sent judgment on Israel in the form of a drought during the reign of King Ahab. The drought was also likely intended to show the powerlessness of Baal, the god worshipped in Israel, who was thought to be responsible for giving rain. In addition, God sent the prophet Elijah away from the land, leaving the Israelites without God's word and blessing. Elijah camped near a brook and trusted God to take care of him. God did take care of him, sending ravens to feed him morning and night.

God's Provision for Elijah

The drought continued, and the brook dried up, but Elijah didn't panic. God had a plan that involved a poor widow in the town of Zarephath.

It's not known if the widow had previous knowledge of or faith in the God of Israel. We do know, however, that she lived in the heart of the land of Baal worship, the religion with which Israel had become infatuated and for which Israel was being punished. In fact, at that time, Sidon, which was Jezebel's own homeland and the region in which Zarephath lay, represented the forces of evil aligned against God's people.

God's Provision for the Widow

Whatever the widow believed, she chose to obey the prophet Elijah. She gave up her last bit of food, did as Elijah requested, and was rewarded by having all the food she, Elijah, and her son needed.

Later, when the widow's son grew ill and died, Elijah was apparently still staying with her. The woman assumed that her son's death was a result of some sin the had committed and that Elijah's presence in her house had alerted God to her sin. So she blamed Elijah.

The child's death was an opportunity for God to lead the widow a step further in her faith journey. Her first response to her son's death was to lash out at God by lashing out at Elijah, God's prophet. The Bible doesn't state that God commanded Elijah to raise the child from the dead. But Elijah had faith that God intended this child to live. Acting on this faith, Elijah cried out to God, and God brought the child back to life. This is the first instance recorded in the Bible of someone being raised from the dead.

The Jesus Connection

A growing faith in Jesus brings peace of mind despite negative circumstances. Through faith in Jesus, you can have the same kind of trust the widow did that God will provide.

What are you most afraid of?

How has that fear prevented you from experiencing God in his fullness?

Pray now to begin the process of releasing that fear and trusting God to provide for you through it. You can write your prayer here.

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Lesson 9

Fall Quarter

Elijah Helps a Widow—1 Kings 17:7-24

▶ Bible Point—Trust God completely.

Key Verse—"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat? or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:31-33).



Talk Topics

- Talk about why we can trust God. What is it that makes God trustworthy?
- Tell about people you know who have placed a lot of trust in God. Talk about how they demonstrate this.
- Share about your fears and apprehensions. Then talk about how trusting God can help in these situations.
- Find the statement "In God We Trust" on a United States coin or bill. Talk about why this sentence is on United States currency and what it means.

Daily Challenges

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week.

- Spend some more time thinking about the areas of your life in which you're not trusting God. What changes can you make to begin giving those things over to God? Make those changes a reality this week.
- Start each morning this week by asking God to help you to trust him wherever he leads you that day. Then be alert to what happens as you let God lead.
- Share with a friend or co-worker how you're trusting God this week. Ask him or her to remind you of your commitment, and encourage that person to trust God, too.

Through the Week

Use the following passages to explore additional biblical perspectives on trusting God.

Monday—Psalm 9:9-10

Why should you trust God?

Tuesday-Psalm 13:5

Why is it important to trust that God's love will never fail you?

Wednesday-Psalm 56:11

Are you ever afraid? Of what or whom? How can this verse help you not be afraid anymore?

Thursday-Nahum 1:7

How has God cared for you this week? How have you shown your trust in him?

Friday-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 you?

Saturday-Romans 15:13

■ What will God do for you if you trust him completely?

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Fall Quarter

Lesson 9

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