**See, He’s Alive!**

**I Kings 17:1-24 (Lesson #14)**

***17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 And the word of the LORD came to him: 3 "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.***

**Vs 1 -**  Here a prophet bursts on the scene. His name is Elijah, he is from the city of Tishbe in the inheritance of Gilead.

To quickly run through some of the initial comments we made about Elijah:

1. His name means **“my God is the Lord.”**
2. We know nothing about his past.
3. This mighty prophet of God will become the central figure for good for the remainder of I Kings, while Ahab will become the central figure for evil for the remainder of I Kings.
4. His short single proclamation that he provides to Ahab had a number of clear rebukes against the King:
5. Yahweh is the rightful God of Israel (not Baal).
6. Yahweh is the living God, we get Elijah’s point, Baal is a dead, false god.
7. Yahweh’s claim is against the supposed specialty of Baal. Baal was the god of thunder, the god of rain, the god of fertility.
8. It is not going to rain or dew for ***“years”*** except by the word of the Lord. Please keep in mind, the prophet is speaking for Yahweh.
9. The draught is not a natural disaster; rather it is the specific judgment of God against the northern kingdom, for their sins, as predicted in Deut 11:16-17:

 *“****16*** *Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them;* ***17*** *then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.” (De 11:16-17 ESV)*

1. We observed that Baal worship, for some people groups, including the Jews, involving sacrificing their children (Jer 19:4-6).

But our point from last week was that Elijah is a man with a like nature just like us. He prayed and it did not rain for 3 ½ years, he prayed again, and it rained.

Now as we come to verse 2, we encounter an idea that will be expressed a few different ways here in chapter 17, namely “***the word of the Lord.”***

**The word of God is the main point of this chapter, let me show you:**

*“Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by* ***my word****."” (1Ki 17:1 ESV)*

*“And the* ***word of the LORD*** *came to him:” (1Ki 17:2 ESV)*

*“You shall drink from the brook, and* ***I have commanded*** *the ravens to feed you there."” (1Ki 17:4 ESV)*

*“Then the* ***word of the LORD*** *came to him,” (1Ki 17:8 ESV)*

*“"Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold,* ***I have commanded*** *a widow there to feed you."” (1Ki 17:9 ESV*)

*“For thus* ***says the LORD****, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’"” (1Ki 17:14 ESV)*

*“And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the* ***word of the LORD*** *in your mouth is truth."” (1Ki 17:24 ESV)*

**APPLICATION:** This chapter if first and foremost about the word of God, the reliability of the Word of God, the accuracy of the Word of God, and the trustworthiness of the Word of God.

*“****16*** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* ***17*** *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2Ti 3:16-17 ESV)*

*“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb 4:12 ESV)*

*“since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;” (1Pe 1:23 ESV)*

**Vs 3 –** We see that the prophet is commanded to depart, leave Samaria, turn eastward, and “hide himself” by the brook of Cherith, which is east of Jordan.

Why is God directing the prophet to hide himself? Most theologians believe this is the judgment of God, not just a famine on the land, but even worse a famine on the land of the word of God.

**Vs 4 –** the prophet is further told that he is to drink from the brook and that Yahweh has commanded the ravens to feed the prophet **“there.”**

**Notice the promise of provisions were there, not simply anywhere!**

**APPLICATION:** The Lord rarely delivers us from the fire, He more often than not delivers us through the fire. Think of Moses (through the flood), think of Israel in Egypt (through the plagues), think of Daniel (though captivity) and now think of Elijah (through the draught.

**APPLICATION::** Even in the darkest hours, the Lord cares for and provides for his people. This ultimately culminates in eternity with Him in heaven.

**Vs 5-6 -** So Elijah did what the Lord told him to do.

He was **instantly obedient.** It has been said that delayed obedience is disobedience.

Sometimes, what the Lord is looking for is **our simple obedience**.

Notice the bread and meat came **twice each day**. The nation of Israel received manna each morning. Elijah receives bread and meat delivered by the ravens twice each day.

**APPLICATION:** The rebukes of God are the mercy of God, for He could have simply judged people. He could have brought final calamity and ushered men and women into judgment. But instead a drought, with the express aim of showing the foolishness of the false god they were following and the legitimacy of the true and living God!

**APPLICATION:** God provides for his people, sometimes in amazing ways and surprising places.

**Vs 6 –** The ravens who God commanded, followed orders and brought food to the prophet. Do not miss the miracle of these birds bringing meat and bread to Elijah twice a day. These are supernatural, miraculous provisions.

So **life is good**, God has made promises to the prophet and God is fulfilling those promises. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***7 And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land. 8 ¶ Then the word of the LORD came to him, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." 11 And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now 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." 13 And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’" 15 And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.***

**Vs 7 –** Elijah obeyed, he was where he was commanded to be and where God told him the He would provide for him there. Then we read **“the brook dries up!”**

Brooks do not dry up overnight, rather the brook (river, torrent, or wadi), becomes a creek, the creek, becomes a small trickle, until one morning there is nothing by dry scotched ground. The impacts of the famine have dried up even this river.

**Please keep in mind, this is the brook that God had told Elijah that he would provide water to him**, as the rest of the land languishes under the drought, this brook even dries up.

**A thought exercise:** If you were Elijah, what would you think and what would you do?

**APPLICATION:** Brooks that we have grown very accustomed to being supplied from can dry up for us too. A job, finances, friends, and even loved ones. If our focus is off, we can find ourselves questioning God’s faithfulness and God’s provisions.

God will let brooks dry up in our lives to help us ensure we are trusting not in his provision, **but in Him to provide.**

**Vs 8-9 –** So we see God’s directions can be clarified as we walk with Him in the details of life!

This seems strange, God sends Elijah on a long journey from the dry brook to a pagan town, a Gentile city.

This is Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon and the Sidonians. This is not just any pagan city!

*“And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.” (1Ki 16:31 NKJV)*

It is noteworthy that this is the same general region where wicked queen Jezebel was from. God is sending Elijah, north, into enemy territory.

**Vs 9b -** Then we read words that normally do not go together…. ***Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you."*** As God commanded the ravens, he now commands a widow to feed Elijah.

When you think of someone to provide support another person, a widow is not normally the person you would choose.

**Vs 10-11 -** Elijah is instantly obedient. He arises and goes. He comes to the gate of the city and sees a widow gathering sticks.

He calls to her: ***"Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink."***

Now keep in mind, more than likely she is a pagan, possibly even a worshipper of Baal. But he calls out to her, and she goes to get water for the prophet.

While she is in the process of getting water, which would have been in short supply, Elijah calls out again, this time, he ups the request: ***"Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."***

**Vs 12 –** Here we see her response.

I want us to draw as much as possible from what she says and make some possible conclusions:

1. She knows the God Elijah worships **(Yahweh)**
2. This also means she recognizes that Elijah is an Israelite (based on how he spoke, his attire, we are not sure, but she knows)
3. It seems to me, that she is not aware that she has been assigned by Yahweh to feed the prophet
4. She breaks the news that she has **nothing prepared** and very little otherwise; just enough for a **small mea**l for her and her son and that is it.
5. She is planning her last meal, if you will, they will eat and die!

**Possible ultimate conclusions:**

This is not the correct woman that Yahweh assigned

or

If Yahweh has assigned her the task of feeding the prophet, she is not aware of the assignment, nor does she have the means to complete the assignment

She is in a dire circumstances, one small meal for her and her son and then starvation.

**APPLICATION:** We are so silly when we see the world around us only with our human eyes and not with the eyes of faith. We are so silly, when we think God’s word has failed because things look grim or even impossible!

*“For nothing will be impossible with God."” (Lu 1:37 ESV)*

How will Elijah respond, a man of like passions and a like nature to you and I?

**Vs 13 –** Elijah said to the widow… **Do Not Fear!** **Do not worry, do not be afraid.**

We do not know what the poor widow thought, when he said that. But let me remind us, by way of application what Paul told the church in Philippi:

**APPLICATION*:*** *“****6*** *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* ***7*** *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Php 4:6-7 ESV)*

**You see we are told not to worry, not be be anxious about anything, instead what we should do.**

**OK,** back to the story, Elijah says **“do not fear”** and then he says:

1. Go and do what you said, (seemingly, make that small meal for you and your son)
2. But first, make me lunch
3. Then after you have made me lunch, then go, and make you and your son lunch
	1. Now if he ended here, this would seem cold, callous, and uncaring… But let’s look at verse 14!

**Vs 14 –** Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, the reasons not to fear:

1. The flour will not be spent!
2. The jug of oil will not go empty.
3. Until the day “the Lord” sends rain!

**Here it is, God’s word is sometimes impossible to believe.** It is not unlikely, it is not improbable. From a **humanistic**, **naturalistic** perspective it is sometimes impossible and indeed even foolish.

This is a test of faith for the widow, will she believe God by believing the man of God, or will she not. Will she accept what is scientifically impossible or believe in a God who is supernatural.

**APPLICATION:** This question happens in various ways, with all of us, all the time! Will we respond in faith, or will we shrink back?

 *“2 ¶ Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (Jas 1:2-4 ESV)*

What a pair of promises. The jug will not run out of flour and the jar will not run out of oil.

But notice, the promise is: I will meet your needs, day by day. **Elijah is calling her to believe that God will provide for her daily needs!**

**Vs 15-16 –** She did what he said!

**APPLICATION:** *“The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.” (Pr 21:1 ESV)*

But it is bigger than that isn’t it? God was working in her life, God had sent his man to her, God was calling her to step out of the boat, in the middle of the storm, and trust him, the mercy of God was being extended to this poor pagan widow.

So the woman that God commanded, had no idea of the command, but responded in faith to the words of Elijah and provides what God commanded her to provide, although clearly she was unaware of the command.

With each day we can imagine that her faith in God grew and blossomed. God is a god of the supernatural and impossible!

Notice it would not run out according to the **Word of the Lord.**

**APPLICATION:** You and I have the words of God. Not one will fail, not one will come up short, not one we fail to arrive at the promised conclusion.

So we can imagine all is well. Elijah is being provided for. The gentile woman’s faith in Yahweh God is blowing up.

**This is such a fun, exciting, faith building story! But it gets better.**

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***17:17 After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" 19 And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. 20 And he cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" 21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again." 22 And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23 And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." 24 And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."***

**Vs 17a –** So life is moving forward, and in the process of time, the widow’s son becomes ill. No problem, right, people become ill and they getter better.

**Vs 17b -** Unfortunately, this illness is so severe that there was “no breath” left in him! He died. During this less than 3 year period, where God is working in the life of this widow and providing for his prophet supernaturally, the boy dies.

I cannot imagine, what went through this widow’s mind. She has been feeding the prophet and her son becomes ill and then the unthinkable happens, he dies!

**Vs 18 -** You sense the weight of her questions, the second which seems to have a conclusion built into it.

**APPLICATION:** Before we unpack her questions. Let’s clear this up for those we run into. When disaster hits, the question that often comes is why did God allow, such and such? That is her question. Like her people come to one overarching thesis and two (often) incorrect conclusions.

**Thesis:**

If God loved me he would not allow this to happen.

**Conclusions:**

1. God does not care, He does not really love me!
2. God may care, but he is unable to do anything about it. He is impotent!

Even before we unpack her questions, this account has already proven both points of conclusion false (in many ways):

1. God cared about her so much he sent Elijah to her! God sent His man, with His words. To her!
2. God has been showing his power over nature throughout this story, the supernatural provision, is one of many pieces of evidence that God is quite capable.

**\*\*\* When you don’t see his plan, when you cannot trace his hand, trust his heart! \*\*\***

**OK, back to the widow’s questions:**

1. ***What have you against me, O man of God?*** What have I done, what do you have against me that you would take my son, O man of God?
2. ***You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!***

You came all the way here to expose my sins, bring them to remembrance, and then bring judgment on me, resulting in the death of my son.

Now her complaint is really against God, although this is all directed at Elijah.

**But let’s be real here!** We feel her pain, it is real and it is raw, we sense her frustration, our hearts bear up under the weight of her confusion.

It is interesting that she saw **her sins** as part of the **possible reason** why things had gone tragically wrong. I would submit to you through her interactions with Elijah, she had come to see herself as sinful and her sins as an offense to a Holy God, when this happens, she draws a seemingly logical conclusion.

As I was reviewing my notes, I still find myself being touched by this story. Not because the window’s son dies. I know how this plays out. I am touched by the patience, mercy, kindness and grace of God!

**God has at least allowed, if not brought this disaster, for grand and glorious reasons!**

**Vs 19a -**  Now, we cannot imagine what the prophet is thinking or planning with this dead boy. But he takes the boy from the mother! Let’s be honest, we cannot imagine what the poor widow is thinking!

**Vs 19b-20 -** So the prophet takes the boy, he carriers the boy to the upper chamber where he lodged. He lays the boy on his own bed.

**By the way** let me just inject here, many theologians, believe she had at one time been a woman who was “well to do” having an upper chamber indicated at some time in the past she had possessed great wealth.

**Vs 20 -** Elijah begins to cry out to God. O Yahweh, my God, have you brought this calamity upon this widow by killing her son?

**Wow, that is a very direct question. Elijah asks God point blank: DID YOU DO THIS?**

**APPLICATION:** God can handle our honest questions. We should not be afraid to ask our Father when we do not understand. Remember, when you don’t see His plan…

**Elijah did not understand.** Ready for this, we have no indication that God answered his inquiry. **There is a lesson there for us!**

**Vs 21 -** The prophet, lays himself out on the child (three times), he cries out to Yahweh. Notice his cry: **"O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again."**

OK, I mentioned this in our meeting Friday night. Prior to this incident, prior to this moment, God has never raised anyone form the dead.

**APPLICATION:** We should not be afraid to ask amazing things of our God, and believe he will do them, and trust Him if He does not.

**APPLICATION:** So should we start praying for people who die that they might be brought back to life. I would submit we should share the gospel, pray that men and women would believe the gospel and be granted eternal life! To come back from the grave is only a delay in the inevitable.

**Vs 22 - *And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah!*** And the life returned unto the boy again and he revived!

**APPLICATION:** This is a picture of what all men and women need. They like the widow need a resurrection!

*“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Ro 6:4 ESV)*

*“1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col 3:1-3 ESV)*

**Lost men and women do not need a self-help plan, they need a resurrection!**

**Vs 23 -** We can picture Elijah, walking downstairs, holding the hand of the young boy, and then handing him off to the mother and saying, see, your son lives! See God is not against you he is for you; see you must place faith in the one who raises lifeless corpses.

I believe that Elijah than began to hum the chorus:

**O praise the one who paid my debt and raised this life up from the dead!**

**Vs 24 - OHHHH, the grade of God!** He allowed this disaster to take this widow over the finish line of faith.

**APPLICATION:** We all have a different story about coming to Christ, mine includes a disaster that God used to call me over the finish line of faith!

**The resurrection changed everything for the widow and it still does today!**

Before we advance, I want to remind you of a three points from the New Testament about this story:

**Luk 7:11-16; Luk 4:16-30; Jam 5:17-18** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_