

Part 4: “Encountering God’s Provision”

1 Kings 17:8-16

Introduction

In 1 Kings 17, the story is told of Elijah’s encounter with the widow of Zarephath – a nameless woman who lived in a city experiencing a dire situation. A drought had overtaken the land and as a result there was a lack of food to eat. But this difficult circumstance only provided an opportunity for God to demonstrate His power through His divine provision. This narrative ultimately illustrates how God supernaturally provides for those who operate by faith. Sometimes believers may feel a sense of drought about their own lives – as if something we desperately need or want is not available. This lack of provision can be emotional, physical, or financial in nature. It can be caused by sin or happen as a result of a trial, but in either case it can lead to a sense of hopelessness. However, the answer to any sense of drought we experience is always the Lord. The source of our solution is God Himself even if God chooses to use a resource He has provided to meet the need. Just like God guided Elijah in the season of drought and instructed him where to go, He is faithful to do the same in the life of the believer who looks to him for help. Just like God used a raven to feed Elijah a few verses earlier (1 Kings 17:4), God can use anything thing He created to be a source of provision for His children.

The means of provision often involves God’s use of people. God told Elijah there would be a widow who would provide for him (1 Kings 17:9). God worked on Elijah’s behalf, making provision for exactly where He had told Elijah to go. Not only must we be open to God utilizing the resources of His choosing, we must also trust Him to work on our behalf in His timing.

In order for the believer to see God’s divine provision at work, the first step always involves obedience to God’s Word. The widow had been commanded to feed Elijah, but he had to obey God and make his way to the widow (1 Kings 17:10). Without obedience, it is impossible to be in the right position for God’s miraculous provision. Next, provision usually involves ministry from one to another. Before the widow experienced divine provision, she had to exercise faith and be willing to minister to someone else even when she herself was in need (Luke 6:38). She had to trust that in her ministry to others, she herself would not be left empty handed (1 Kings 17:14). Lastly, divine provision involves the supernatural reversal of circumstances. God reversed the widow’s situation (1 Kings 17:16). She ended up with more than she originally had given up. God has the power to reverse things we cannot see, but only when we are willing to exercise our faith.

Getting Started

1. For many of us the beginning of a new year is exciting! We are motivated to begin well, but often it’s precisely at this time of year that some find it difficult to “get going.” How would you characterize your new year “start”? Tell your group about your experience thus far in 2018.
2. While the widow of Zarephath is a nameless woman, she is also a woman of great character who exercised great faith. Take a closer look at her. Review 1 Kings 17:8-16 and observe her actions and responses. What words would you use to describe her?

Let’s Get Personal

1. Have you ever experienced a drought in your life? How did God provide for you?
2. Are you currently experiencing a drought? In what area(s) do you need to trust God for His divine provision?
3. It’s easy to hope that God will use someone else as a resource to meet your need, but are you willing to be used as a resource? What are you in the position to give others so that you can be used by God and so that God can give to you?

Take the Next Step

1. What do you admire about the faith of Elijah and/or the widow? What can you do this week to grow and mature in your faith?
2. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Deut. 8:1-3; 11:13-17; Psalm 104:10-12, 27-29; Prov. 11:25; Luke 4:24-27; 6:38; and Phil 4:18-19.

Renew Your Mind

“Give and it will be given to you...” Luke 6:38