

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



"Faith in the Darkest Moments"

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): 1 Kings 17:17-24; Ps. 22:2, 25; Hab. 3:17-18; Dan. 3:17-18; Heb. 11:35-40; Jn. 11:33-35

Some of the darkest moments of life come when we least expect them. One moment, everything seems normal. We are thinking about tomorrow, next week, next month, and all the ordinary things that make up our lives. Then a phone call comes. A diagnosis is given. A relationship falls apart. Someone we love is suddenly gone. In a moment, everything changes. There is no emotional preparation for that kind of darkness. We may know intellectually that painful things happen in this world, but knowing that does not prepare us for the moment when the pain becomes ours.

That is where we find the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17. She had already watched God do something miraculous. She and her son had been starving, preparing to eat their final meal and die, when ADONAI sent Elijah to them. Day after day, the flour did not run out and the oil did not fail. God had sustained them. And then we read the stunning words, *"After these things..."* After the miracle. After the provision. After God had rescued them from death, her son became sick and died. The story reminds us that experiencing the faithfulness of God does not mean we will never enter dark moments. The question is: What does faith look like when we do?

1. DARKNESS CAN COME WITHOUT WARNING

The text says, *"After these things, it came to pass that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house fell sick, and his sickness was getting much worse until he had no breath left in him"* (1 Ki. 17:17). This is what makes the moment so difficult to understand. Elijah is living in their home. God has miraculously provided for them every day. They should have died during the famine, but instead they are alive because the Lord intervened. Then suddenly the boy becomes sick and dies. The darkest moments often come at the most unexpected times. One moment life seems secure, and the next we are standing in circumstances we never imagined we would have to face.

The widow responds exactly as a grieving human being might respond: *"What do I have to do with you, man of God? Have you come to me to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"* (1 Ki. 17:18). She is confused. She is angry. She wonders whether she is somehow being punished. Why would God rescue her and her son from starvation only to allow this? We sometimes ask the same kinds of questions. "Why, Lord? Why now? Why did You allow this? Did I do something wrong?" Faith does not mean that tragedy will never shock us or that we will immediately understand what God is doing. Sometimes darkness comes without warning, and we simply do not have an explanation for it.

2. THERE IS GRACE FOR GRIEF AND HONEST QUESTIONS

Elijah's response to the grieving widow is instructive. He does not begin preaching at her. He does not correct her theology or defend himself against her accusations. He simply says, *"Give me your son."* Then he takes the boy from her arms and carries him upstairs (1 Ki. 17:19). In effect, Elijah is saying, "Let me carry the pain you are carrying." There are moments when hurting people do not need our explanations nearly as much as they need our compassion. We do not always have to have the right words. Sometimes faithfulness means listening, weeping with those who weep, and helping another person carry a burden that has become too heavy for them to carry alone.

Elijah is quiet before the widow, but he is not quiet before God. He cries out, *"Adonai my God, have You brought such evil even on the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?"* (1 Ki. 17:20). That is an honest prayer. Elijah brings his complaint directly to the Lord. He does not distance himself from God; he says, "Adonai, **my** God." There is room in a genuine relationship with God for questions, pain, confusion, and lament. Yeshua Himself cried, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* The Psalms are filled with similar prayers. Faith does not require us to pretend that we are not hurting. Bring the pain to Him. Bring the questions to Him. He can handle our honest cries.

3. ASK THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE TO INTERVENE

Elijah does more than complain—he asks. And what he asks is remarkable. As far as the biblical record has revealed to this point, no one has ever been raised from the dead. There is no precedent Elijah can point to. There is no previous resurrection story for him to imitate. Yet he stretches himself over the boy and cries, *"Adonai my God, please let this child's soul come back into his body!"* (1 Ki. 17:21). Elijah asks the King of the Universe to do something unprecedented. He knows that the God who commands the rain, directs ravens, and multiplies flour and oil is also the Author of life. So he brings God an impossible request.

And ADONAI listens. *"ADONAI listened to the cry of Elijah, so the soul of the child came back into his body and he was revived"* (1 Ki. 17:22). We serve the same God. Nothing is too difficult for Him, and we should never allow the size of our problem to determine the size of our prayers. We can ask God to intervene in the situations that appear completely hopeless. We can ask Him to breathe life into what seems dead, restore what appears beyond repair, heal what seems impossible to heal, and do what we have never seen Him do before. Faith does not tell God what He must do, but faith knows who He is and therefore refuses to limit what He is able to do.

CONCLUSION

Our God is the God of the impossible. But there is an important truth we must hold alongside that declaration: the child does not always rise from the deathbed. Sometimes healing does not come in the way we hoped. Sometimes the marriage is not restored. Sometimes the door does not open. Sometimes the answer we desperately prayed for is not the answer we receive. That does not necessarily mean we lacked faith. Biblical faith

says with Daniel's friends, *"Our God whom we serve is able to save us..."* and then adds, *"Yet even if He does not..."* (Dan. 3:17–18). Habakkuk could look at barren trees, empty fields, and vacant stalls and still declare, *"Yet will I triumph in ADONAI, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!"* (Hab. 3:18). Faith is ultimately centered on Him, not on getting our way.

So where is the darkness in your life today? Maybe you are carrying grief that still feels unbearable. Maybe something you prayed for seems to have died. Maybe your marriage feels like the breath has gone out of it, your child seems far from God, your finances are in shambles, or dreams you once carried are lying shattered on the floor. Bring it to Him. Bring Him the grief. Bring Him the questions. Bring Him the complaint. But do not stop there—bring Him your request. Ask the King of the Universe to intervene. And then determine in your heart: "Lord, I know You are able. I will ask You for the impossible. But whether You answer the way I hope or lead me through a road I do not understand, I will keep holding to You, calling on You, waiting on You, and trusting You." Yeshua knows the hope on the other side of our darkness, and yet He still enters into our grief and weeps with us. He is present even here.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is the death of the widow's son especially surprising in light of everything God had already done for her family in 1 Kings 17?
2. What do you learn from Elijah's response to the widow's grief in 1 Ki. 17:19?
3. Why do you think Scripture gives us examples of faithful people bringing difficult questions and complaints directly to God?
4. When you are hurting or confused, are you more likely to talk about your pain with others or actually bring it honestly to the Lord? Why?
5. Is there an "impossible" situation in your life that you have stopped asking God to intervene in? What would it look like to bring that request to Him again while still trusting Him with the outcome?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, You are our God even in the darkest moments. When life changes without warning and we do not understand what You are allowing, help us to keep turning toward You rather than away from You. Give us grace to bring You our grief, our questions, our confusion, and even our complaints. Teach us also to carry the pain of those around us with compassion rather than rushing to give answers when what they need most is someone willing to weep with them.

King of the Universe, we know that nothing is too difficult for You. Give us faith to ask You for the impossible and courage to trust You with the answer. Intervene where only You can intervene. Bring life, healing, restoration, and hope according to Your will. And when Your answer is different from the one we hoped for, help us still to say, "Yet will I rejoice in ADONAI." Keep us holding to You, calling on You, waiting on You, and trusting You until the darkness gives way to the fullness of Your promises.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.