



First Baptist Church Fair Oaks Ranch

1 Kings 17:8-16 “the Lord said to Elijah, “Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you.” So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, “Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?” As she was going to get it, he called to her, “Bring me a bite of bread, too.” But she said, “I swear by the Lord your God that I don’t have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die.” But Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid! Go ahead and do just what you’ve said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what’s left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive oil left in your containers until the time when the Lord sends rain and the crops grow again!” So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her family continued to eat for many days. There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the Lord had promised through Elijah.”

In 1 Kings 17 we encounter the widow of Zarephath, a woman living in the midst of a severe famine. When Elijah arrives and asks for food and water, she reveals that she has only a handful of flour and a little oil, just enough for one last meal for herself and her son. Can you imagine his audacity. I can hear the incredulous response under her breath, “are you kidding me, I don’t have enough food for me and my son, and you want me to serve you first.” “Who do you think you are...” But scripture says in verse 8 that the Lord had instructed her to feed the prophet. Perhaps in a dream or a vision, God came to her and said, “Trust me.” I suspect this Gentile women had been praying to ‘any god who cared to hear her.’ “Please rescue me and my son from this famine before we die.” Perhaps you are someone you know has prayed a similar prayer; “God if you are real, I need you so show up right now.” And so the widow women prayer and the Lord responds, with “trust me and feed my prophet.” So, despite her dire circumstances, she obeys Elijah’s request, demonstrating remarkable faith and trust in God’s provision.

Not only was this an issue of trust by this Gentile women, but also of Elijah this Jewish prophet. At odds with the Jewish King in the Land of Israel, God tells Elijah go to Sidon, outside the land of Israel, to the land of foreigners and receive protection and provision from them. This prophet of the Living God must have questioned God’s wisdom in this command as well. “I am supposed to go to a foreign land and foreign people, who do not know You, nor to the obey You and I am supposed to get my provision from them?” To make matters worse, you want me to stay with a widow and impose upon her generosity to provide.” Elijah probably double checked these instructions a couple of times before he set out. Here in the midst of this famine, God puts this unlikely couple together to put His glory and miraculous provision on display with a simple command of “Trust me”.

Verse 13-14 “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. 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.”’” The miracle of the unending supply of flour and oil is a central element of this story. It signifies God’s ability to provide abundantly for those who trust in Him, even in the most desperate situations. This miracle is often interpreted in Jewish thought as a demonstration of God’s faithfulness and the rewards of obedience. This story encourages Christians and especially mothers to trust in God’s provision, even when resources seem scarce. Matthew 6:31-33: “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.”

It seems like the world is facing a famine these days. A famine of spiritual rain, and the fruit of common sense that results from a life with God. You may be feeling as desperate and protective of your flock as this widow women were of her son. PRAY and trust that God will provide. He will give you an unconventional solution to your problem that forces you to put your hand into an empty jar and each day pull out a fresh scoop of wisdom, grace, patience



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and provision for your family. Oil is often a picture of the Holy Spirit, and it was mixed with flour to make 'bread'; which is certainly a futuristic picture of the bread of life. The takeaway from this miraculous story, the very same unending supply offered to this widow women is available to everyone who would trust in the word of God today as well. Put your hand into the jar and by faith receive.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you call us to great leaps of faith as we trust the oil and flour will still be there. You call us to exhaust your resource today because we know, by faith, you will provide what is needed for tomorrow. Grow our faith by putting us through famine so we may see your miraculous provision. In Jesus name.