

Encounter Church
Sunday June 22, 2025

The Power of First
When You're Down to Nothing

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever been down to nothing? Finances? Emotions? Energy? Patience?

You ever heard this phrase? "I'm give out!" Or, "I have nothing left to give!"

I'm just down to nothing!

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT OF THE BIBLE THERE WAS A GUY BY THE NAME OF ELIJAH WHO FOUYND HIMSELF IN A PLACE OF BEING DOWN TO NOTHING!

In 1 Kings 17 God told Elijah to go and hide by the brook called ***Cherith!***

After obeying God Elijah was fed by ravens. They brought him bread and meat in both the morning and evening and he drank from the brook. THEN THE FOLLOWING HAPPENS:

1 Kings 17:7 (nlt)- "But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land."

WHY WAS THERE NO RAINFALL IN THE LAND?

1 Kings 17:1(nlt)- "Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, "As surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the word!"

The brook dried up because Elijah prophesied there would be no dew or rain!

WHY DID ELIJAH PROPHECY THERE WOULD BE NO RAIN IN THE PRESENCE OF KING AHAB?

Ahab was now the King of Israel and he had just married a woman named Jezebel!

Jezebel was a very zealous participant in the worship of the false god Baal! And Jezebel was a very manipulating, intimidating and dominating person!

JEZEBEL DIDN'T WANT TO BE KING, SHE JUST WANTED TO CONTROL THE KING!

Ahab's marriage to Jezebel led to the official endorsement of the immoral and idolatrous worship of Baal in in the land of Israel!

***SL- WHO YOU MARRY MATTERS!**

1 Kings 16:33(nkiv)- “And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.”

WHY DID ELIJAH PROPHECY THERE WOULD BE NO RAIN IN THE PRESENCE OF KING AHAB?

Because those who worshipped Baal believed that Baal controlled the rain!

In effect, Elijah cut to the heart of Baalism and challenged their so-called god, proclaiming that the LORD GOD OF ISRAEL controlled the weather in this situation!

So Elijah prophesied the drought that led to the brook he was drinking from to dry up!

So Elijah was down to nothing!

***SL - But, when you obey God, he always provides!**

So God tells Elijah to go to Zarephath where there will be a widow woman to sustain him.

OH YES, ELIJAH IS GOING TO FIND HIM A RICH WIDOW WOMAN!

1 Kings 17:10-12 (nlt) - 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.”

SL-*Elijah, who was down to nothing, found a widow woman who was down to nothing!

1 Kings 17:13,14 (nlt)- “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!”

THE POWER OF FIRST!

When Elijah instructed the poor widow woman to give him the last of the food, he appeared to be selfishly and arrogantly saying, “Put me first!”

However, he was demonstrating a concept that is foundational in God’s economy-PUT GOD FIRST!

God’s economy is not the worlds economy! God’s ways are not our ways!

Elijah was putting God first because he obeyed what the Lord told him to do!

The widow woman was putting God first because she obeyed God through what the man of God had told her to do!

Matthew 6:31-33 (nkjv)- ““Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”.

Proverbs 3:9-10 (nkjv)- “Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.”

(Msg)- “Honor God with everything you own; give him the first and the best. Your barns will burst, your wine vats will brim over.”

THE POWER OF FIRST!

SO HOW CAN I EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF FIRST WHEN I’M DOWN TO NOTHING?

1. Overcome Your Fear

1 Kings 17:13 (nkjv)- “And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear...”.

Isaiah 41:13 (nlt)- “For I hold you by your right hand— I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, ‘Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you.”

2. Respond in Faith

1 Kings 17:15 (nlt)- “So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her family continued to eat for many days.”

James 1:18 (esv)- “But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

***SL- Faith without works is useless. So, respond in faith!**

HOW CAN I EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF FIRST? Overcome fear and respond in faith!

3. Trust in God’s Promises

1 Kings 17:15 (nlt)- “There was always enough flour and olive oil left in the containers, just as the Lord had promised through Elijah.”

Numbers 23:19 (nlt)- “God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?”

Hebrews 6:18 (nlt)- “So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us.”

CONCLUSION: Are you down to nothing? It’s time to experience the POWER OF FIRST!
Overcome your fear! Respond in Faith! Trust in God’s Promises!