

77 God Cares for Elijah and a widow

Scripture: 1 Kings 16:29 – 17:24

Memory verse: "I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him." Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:12-26

Aim: To teach that prophets represented God's Love and Hope

It would seem there is no hope for the chosen people of God. From the time Israel was rescued from slavery and brought out of Egypt, the people seemed hopelessly inclined toward rebellion and faithlessness, despite God's steadfast love. That pattern continued during the times of the Judges. Next, the appointment of human kings proved to provide no better hope for God's people. But, God, in His steadfast love, did not abandon His people. Instead He gave them mercy they didn't deserve, and sent a message of hope through his prophets. Elijah was one of those men that God used to bring about a message of hope.

Ahab did what was evil in the Lord's sight, even more than any of the kings before him. And as though it were not enough to follow the sinful example of Jeroboam, he married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to bow down in worship of Baal – a false god. This greatly provoked God's anger.

At the same time, there was a man named Elijah. God sent him to give King Ahab a warning. "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!"

Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go to the east and hide by Kerith Brook, near where it enters the Jordan River. Drink from the brook and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to bring you food." So Elijah did as the Lord told him and camped beside Kerith Brook, east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in the land.

Then 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 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. It is not even enough to make the last meal for my son and I."

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. God told me that you would not run out of flour or oil. 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.

Some time later the woman's son became sick. He grew worse and worse, and finally he died. The woman was very sad. But Elijah replied, "Give me your son." And he took the child's body from her arms, carried him up the stairs to the room where he was staying, and laid the body on his bed. Then he prayed to God to restore the boy's life. The Lord heard Elijah's prayer, and the life of the child returned, and he revived! Then Elijah brought him down from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "Look!" he said. "Your son is alive!"

God brought hope and restoration to the woman's household through Elijah. In the same way, God had a plan to bring hope and restoration to Israel. Next week, we'll see how God empowered Elijah to bring a powerful message to king Ahab and his the nation of Israel.