

Devotional
“God’s Care for the Widow” -
1 Kings 17: 1-16

Monday: “Said to Ahab” - 1 Kings 17: 1-3

Imagine the most powerful person you can think of? Do you have someone in mind. Now imagine they were also the person who protected you, who paid you, who your life depended on. Still with me? Now it is your job to speak out against that person. How do you imagine that situation going?

Probably not well.

It is so easy to brush past what Elijah was called to do as a prophet. He was to tell the King that the grave situation facing the nation was because of him. There won’t be any dew or rain because of what he had done. And without rain, there aren’t many crops that will grow. So the people are probably heading for both a drought and a famine in the land.

While scripture doesn’t tell us exactly what Ahab’s reaction was, God told Elijah to go away from the area and head east.

Sometimes we are asked to do very difficult things - things where we may not know the potential consequences, or where we know them all too well. Even though Elijah was a prophet of God, it didn’t make his message any easier to deliver - yet he chose obedience.

What makes obedience difficult?

Prayer: God, we thank you for the example of the prophet Elijah who confronted King Ahab with a difficult message. We ask that you give us strength to live into our calls at difficult times as well. In your name and for your Kingdom, we pray. Amen.

Tuesday: “Ravens” - 1 Kings 17: 4-6

Once again, it is so easy to gloss over the profound acts of compassion that we find in the story of Elijah as told in the 1 Kings 17. When Elijah moved away from the King, even in the midst of a drought, he was provided for. He was able to drink from the wadi, and ravens can and brought him food.

Let that sink in for a moment. Ravens brought food to Elijah.

I don’t know about you, but I don’t recall ever having a bird bring me food. Yet, the ravens did this for an undisclosed period of time.

I wonder if Elijah recognized this as a mark of graciousness and compassion from God. If he understood at the time that it was a miracle. I also wonder if we see it as a miracle when we read the text today.

Miracles are all around us, as are the fingerprints of God’s compassion and mercy. What would we see if we looked with the eyes of God around us?

What miracles have you experienced in your life?

Prayer: Lord, we confess that sometimes we overlook the miracles all around us. Give us eyes to see and hearts to respond to your goodness and grace as the gift that it is. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Wednesday: “Zarephath” - 1 Kings 17: 7-9

After a period of time the wadi dried up and Elijah was on the move again, as God sent him to Zarephath to be provided for.

Geography has never been my best subject. Reading maps, even of places that I am familiar with can sometimes go sideways. However, understanding the layout of an area is even more confusing when we are not familiar with it - such as the Biblical landscape - which can lead to us overlooking profound points that the first hearers would have picked up on.

Like where Elijah was sent. Zarephath. Which belongs to where? Sidon. Who else was from Sidon? Jezabel. Ahab's wife who would see Elijah as an enemy and threaten his life. Yet, it is to this place that God sends Elijah to be cared for.

Sometimes the compassion of God comes in ways that we cannot recognize until we look back on our lives and see the many ways that God was bringing pieces together in a way that cannot be an accident. This is also a miracle in many ways.

How do you see God's hand in your life as you look back?

Prayer: God, we confess that we are sometimes blind to what you are doing right in front of us. Even as we look back on our lives, we sometimes miss how your glory is shining through. Break us open, O Lord, and let your teaching and leading take root in our lives. Amen.

Thursday: "Morsel" -1 Kings 17: 10-12

Elijah has been told by God that he will be fed by a widow. How lucky for him that when he gets to the gate he sees a widow gathering sticks. This must be who God was speaking of. So he asks for a little bit of water and only a morsel of bread - not a feast, but enough to sustain him after his journey.

Only the widow tells him that she doesn't even have enough for her son and herself. In fact, she was going to prepare what little she had for them to eat and then prepare to die.

This probably wasn't what Elijah was expecting to hear. God told him that widow would provide, yet here is a widow who cannot even provide for herself. Which stands a testament that the town in which she resides hasn't looked after her, even though she is a widow with a small son.

How would you have reacted if you heard the widow's words?

Prayer: Lord, we sometimes do not understand what you are doing around us. We sometimes do not follow through on your call or live into your words because it seems impossible. Yet, O Lord, you call for us to trust. Teach us anew, O Lord, what it means to put our hope and faith and trust in you. Amen.

Friday: "Jar and Jug" - 1 Kings 17: 13-16

Elijah responded by telling the woman that God would take care of her and her son. To not be afraid to show hospitality and give Elijah this morsel of bread, because she will have enough left over to make something for herself and her son. In fact, the jar of meal and jug of oil will not run dry.

Elijah was obedient to God and the woman followed the words of the prophet. As a result, people were fed. Not just fed by water and bread, as important as that it, but we fed with hope and renewal.

What would happen if we are obedient to God today? What good gifts could God be desiring to share through us, if only we respond?

Write down the ways that the woman and Elijah were blessed because of this interaction.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for inviting us to be a part of what you are doing in the world. Make our lives fertile ground for your Kingdom to take root and be made known. Amen.

Saturday: Preparing for the Word

You are invited to read and pray this week's text and topic: "Jonah and God's Mercy" - Jonah 1:1-17; 3:1-10