

Widow woman and her son (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

- [0 : 0 0] Now the Lord mercifully grant to us this great and divine favour as we are met together this morning.
- The word says, God had directed his servant Elijah to the brook Cherith.
- This was to be yet another school of teaching for him. I do feel encouraged yet again as I often have felt encouraged by the hymns that we have already sung this morning.
- Our first hymn speaking of our need to leave all for Christ.
- There have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. A servant though the Lord of all.
- [2 : 0 1] But I was just going to mention, I noticed over the top of our third hymn, these words which are found in Psalm 34.
- But it says, shall not want any good thing. And that is the word of God.
- Shall not want any good thing. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
- The Lord may not allow us to have all the things that we want. He knows that this would not be good for us.
- But he has promised this. My God shall supply all your need. Not everything that you want.
- [3 : 0 0] He has promised to supply all your need. Have we been thankful for this? The apostle in writing in one place could say this from his very heart.
- Now I have learned in whatsoever state I am in therewith to be content. And again the word of God says that godliness with contentment is great gain.
- And if we are blessed with real godliness in our hearts. Then we shall know what it is to be content. Be content with such things as ye have.
- For he has said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me.
- Now the prophet Elijah then had been directed to the brooch here. Have we any gracious understanding of this in our lives?
- [4 : 2 7] Could we say concerning our life and all that that means to us, your home, your daily calling, could you say this morning that you humbly believe the Lord has led you where you are?
- He led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation. Can you look upon all that you have in this life and say from your very heart this morning, the Lord has given me this?
- Jacob could speak like this to his brother Esau when he came to meet him and 400 men with him. And when Esau asked his brother, what are these?
- As he looked upon Jacob's children and his possessions. And what did Jacob say? He said, all these is that which the Lord hath graciously given to thy servant.

Oh, it is a good thing when we can view everything in our lives in this way. But it's all been given to us.

[5 : 45] And everything that we come into, rightly viewed, is for our good. The bitter is sweet, the medicine food.

Now, I do need help to come to the subject that is upon my heart. But first of all, the Lord had provided for his servant.

He had led him to the brook Cherith. And not only did he lead him there that he might drink of the brook, but he was fed by ravens.

And it is upon my heart just to speak about this for a moment. And I have the dear children and our younger friends, especially upon my heart in this thought.

We shall never believe that God fed his servant with the ravens. As we look upon such a thing with our natural mind.

[6 : 57] But what a mercy if, as we are favoured in believing, are given faith, God-given faith, and as the Holy Spirit works within our hearts, exercising the faith that God has given to us.

I wonder how many of us here this morning really believe that God fed his servant with these ravens. Well, I feel that one thing I must tell you this morning is this, that God fed his servant with these ravens.

The Lord brought a miracle for his servant. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.

We're not told where these ravens got this bread and flesh, but we know that God gave it to them. And we know that they brought it to Elijah.

What a sight it would have been to see these ravens coming every morning and every evening with this bread and flesh. And dear friends and dear young people, this really happened.

[8 : 16] This really happened. And it shows us, may it indeed show to us this morning that that which is impossible with men is possible with God.

And I firmly believe that God could do the same thing for any of us if it was his holy will and if there was the need for it. And when the Lord's people have need, are any of you in need this morning?

You will know if you are. Have you something that weighs upon your spirit? You may be wondering, there might even be someone here that is wondering how they are going to meet their commitments in the week or weeks to come.

Let me remind you then. And when the Lord's people have need, his goodness, we'll find out a way. Now there was a purpose in this.

Elijah must have this experience that he might, I'm sure, speak with greater feeling to the widow. Now. And then we read, and it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

[9 : 50] Now again, just a further thought. I wonder if there's anyone here that has come into such a position in your life, not of course the brook dried up.

Has the brook dried up? You will know if it has.

Are you in a special need this morning? Have you feeling me a tomorrow with you? And perhaps you've been saying in your heart, if you've not expressed it in words, alas, my master, how shall we do?

What are we going to do? Let me seek to tell you this morning that the God of Elijah still reigns. He still rules, both in heaven and in earth.

Now there was a purpose in this. The brook dried up. Elijah could stay there no longer. But did the Lord leave him?

[11 : 01] No, he directed him, and the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there.

Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. I would just notice how the Lord speaks to his servant. First of all, in verse 4, And I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

And then he says again here, And I have, behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

Have you noticed the Lord's choice? He didn't send Elijah to a home where there was plenty.

He didn't send him into some affluent home where there was everything that was needed. Again, the Lord was going to teach him.

[12 : 08] He must go to Zephath. He must go to the home of a widow woman. And the Lord said, Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

Now he arose and went to Zephath. I pause here for a further moment. Are there any here this morning to whom the Lord has spoken?

Has he directed you in some matter in your life? Have you come to chapel with the witness of this in your heart?

that the Lord has directed you in what you are to do? Now if he has directed you, you must obey his voice.

You cannot expect to receive his blessing. You cannot expect to receive what you need without first obeying the voice of God in your life.

[13 : 17] It might be that there is the need for such a word as this to be fulfilled in your life. Arise, get thee to Zephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there.

Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went. Now this is very important.

This we could rightly speak of as venturing faith. God had directed his servant to Zephath, which belongeth to Zidon.

And as I understand this, Zidon was very much a place that was connected with Jezebel, Ahab's wife.

But he had to go to this place. And I'm sure he wouldn't have chosen it. He might well have said if he had been left to himself, anywhere, Lord, but Zephath.

[14 : 27] Zephath. But he had to go there. And you may have to go somewhere in your life that you would not choose to go.

You may have to do something that you would not do. You may have been rebelling against this. You may have been saying in your heart, Lord, I will not go.

I will not do this. Well, may the Lord give you grace to go. Whatever it might be, and I believe you'll find, as Elijah did, that his word will be fulfilled.

A word spoken in connection with Abraham on Mount Moriah, and it's this, the Lord will provide. The Lord will provide.

And so he arrived at this widow woman's home. What did he find?

[15 : 31] And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks, and he called to her and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink.

And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth, she certainly knew who Elijah's God was.

I'm sure of this, that this dear widow woman feared the Lord. She was among his people. And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise.

And behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and for my son, that we may eat it and die.

Now what a place to come to. What a place to come to. What a situation. If the Lord should help us to give to us gracious meditation upon his word this morning, and that we might consider this, here was Elijah, he had obeyed the voice of God, when he arrived at the widow woman's home, she tells him, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise.

[17 : 10] And behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die. Now this is where the Lord sent him.

And sometimes the Lord directs his people in their lives into places which to the human mind seem so contradictory.

And if any of you are there this morning, you may be saying in your heart, how can this be right? Lord, how can this be right?

Why has thou brought me into such a place as this? Well, he has brought you there, that you may see what he will do for you.

And I think of a word here where it says, I will work, and who shall let it? Why, when the Lord is going to work, nothing can frustrate it.

[18 : 22] I will work, and who shall let it? And then we have this wondrous word, and Elijah said unto her, fear not, go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

Well, I do not know if any of you are in particular need, but if the Lord should speak this blessed promise into any of our hearts this morning, and if you should take it home with you, for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

And if it is needful and necessary in any of your lives, I feel this, I venture to say this, that you are going to see a miracle riled.

The day of miracles is not ended. Now how good it is to be reminded of this that is said concerning Jesus, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.

[20 : 14] Now the Lord fulfilled this, and she went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and she and he and her house did eat many days, and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

Now before we pass on, I would just put it to you like this, I wonder how many of us have need to acknowledge as we think back in our lives, that such a word as this has been fulfilled, and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

Perhaps the Lord will take one or another back in their life this morning, and you will be reminded of a promise given, or promises given.

The Lord helped you to consider this, and I believe you will have to say this, that God is faithful.

You may look back to your early days, you may look back to the time in your life when you were married, and some of our older friends, and it was so in one's own life, and some of you will remember very different days to what they are today.

[21 : 59] We can look back, some of us do look back in our earlier life, when things were very different to what they are today. life, and yet we would acknowledge this, that the barrel of meal wasted not, and the cruise of oil has never failed.

And we would acknowledge this to the honour and glory of our God. We've seen his hand, we've seen at times wondrous things wrought for us.

He's made a way where there has been no way. He has brought things to pass which we never thought could be brought to pass.

Now, what I desire to come to is this. In the word that I have read to you, and the woman said to Elijah, now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true.

What I have particularly felt is this. This widow woman knew that Elijah was God's servant to her in a providential way.

[23 : 23] She knew this. she knew that he was God's servant because he had spoken to her in a providential way and the Lord had fulfilled it.

Oh, if we are truly exercised concerning our souls, we shall not be satisfied with this. It's a great mercy when we do hear the voice of God in our lives providentially.

But if there's life in our hearts, we shall want more than this. It's a wonderful thing to have a God of providence. It's a wonderful thing to see the Lord's hand in providence.

It's a wonderful thing to be spoken to concerning our providential path. But the Lord knows how many of us here this morning want more than this.

Oh, you want more than this. You need food for your soul. You need the Lord to speak to you concerning your soul.

[24 : 38] And so the Lord help us then in looking a little further into this account here. And the woman said to Elijah, now by this I know that thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

Now the Lord brought a trial upon Elijah and upon this widow woman. Friends, the Lord brought it upon them.

There must be the trial of faith and the apostle Peter in writing says this that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire shall be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Now the Lord brought trouble into the life of this widow. What was her trouble?

What is your trouble? This came much closer to her than the things of this life. This was to do with her son.

[26 : 08] Oh if there should be any here this morning that are burdened about a son. Or burdened about a daughter. And you have come with this exercise upon your heart.

Now what happened then to this son? And it came to pass after these things. There had been a time of blessing. And now there was a time of trial.

A time of testing. the Lord was going to test Elijah. The Lord was going to test this woman. It came to pass after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house fell sick and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him.

The Lord helped me to come a little closer then in this subject. Do we know what it is to be burdened about our souls?

Do we know what it is to be burdened with the souls of others? It might be that there are those here who feel and know something of what is said about Jacob concerning Benjamin and it was said by one of his sons, his soul is bound up in the lad's life and sometimes the Lord brings his people into such things as this that they feel that if the Lord does not fulfil what he has laid upon their heart, what they are carrying before the Lord, then they feel something like this at least, Lord, if there's nothing in this, then there's nothing in me.

[28 : 14] If this is wrong, Lord, then I am wrong. If this exercise is not of thee, Lord, then there's nothing in me. Well, is your life bound up with the life of another?

mother, have you a burdened heart this morning? And what did she say to Elijah? And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee?

O thou man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance remembrance and to slay my son?

Is this, Lord, why thou hast brought thy servant to my home? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son?

Now, you might feel like that this morning, because I know this, that parents and others, their life is indeed bound up with the lives of their children.

[29 : 27] They are very much affected by these things and how they feel concerning sons or daughters or others, this burden upon their heart.

Well, I wonder again if anyone here this morning has cause to look back in your life. You may be in trouble in your family life. You may be in trouble in your business life.

And perhaps the Lord will see to it that your sin or a sin or sins are going to be called to remembrance. The Lord may take you back this morning.

He might take you back many years. You may have cause to remember a sin or sins. And all this is bound up concerning your son.

All this is bound up concerning the exercise of your soul. And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?

[30 : 39] Art thou come home to me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son? Oh, do you feel like this this morning? Have you been saying in your heart with Daniel, O my Lord, what shall the end of these things be?

What is going to be the end of all this, Lord? But there was an end. And the Lord helped me to bring it before you.

And here we have Elijah speaking. And he said unto her, give me thy son. And she took him and he took him out of her bosom and carried him up into a loft where he abode and laid him upon his own bed.

And he cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her son?

You see, sometimes there are those things that come into our life, painful things, distressing things, and things that come very close to us in our life.

[32 : 02] But you might say to me at this very point this morning, well, what is the answer to all this? Are you going to leave us without an explanation? Are you going to leave us without an answer?

What is the answer to this? What is the answer to your trouble? What is the answer to your distress? what is the answer to that that lays upon you this morning?

The answer is this. It is prayer. It is prayer. prayer. That is the answer.

I hope that there might be those that will feel this this morning in your very heart, that you might take this home with you. The answer to the burden of your soul, to your trouble, whatever it is in your life, the answer to it is prayer.

It is prayer. Prayer. Prayer. And I believe that will be an answer to some burdened hearts that are here.

[33 : 20] And this is what we find. And he said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourned by slaying her son?

You see, he was so affected by this. And friends, there are times, when God's servants, there are times when pastors know what it is for their very soul to be bound up with the souls of others.

I'm not a stranger to this. The exercise of my soul for you and in your life, you might be amazed if you knew how one feels for you, it's burdened for you, carries you to the Lord, and your case is mine.

The burdens of your heart are my burdens. But you see here, we have the way to relief, we have the way to deliverance.

Jesus, and he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again, and he revived.

[34 : 49] God, he will have him. Now it might be that there are those here that feel that this is a word for them concerning your son or your daughter or someone in your life.

The Lord knows how you feel. You wonder perhaps where the seam will end, but you see, the Lord heard and answered Elijah's cries.

He heard and answered prayer. I do hope that the day will come when there might be those who will be able to say this.

I may not be favoured, but if the Lord should favour me with this, that the day may come when one or another might come to me and say this.

The Lord did speak through you when he told me that the need, my need was prayer.

[36 : 08] Take it to the Lord in prayer. You may say, but I've laid it before him many times. And what do we sing in our second hymn?

I'll patient wait for who can tell. That was the prayer of David in his life when his son was dying.

This child that was born to David was going to die. And David was prostrated upon the earth. And when they asked him why he did this, he said, while the child lived, he said, oh, this is the substance of what he said.

This was the exercise of his soul. Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious unto me? Who can tell? if you go home with a who can tell this morning, I believe you'll go home with hope.

And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down out of the chamber into the house and delivered him unto his mother.

[37 : 36] And Elijah said, say, thy son liveth, thy son liveth. Who can tell what the Lord will yet do?

And then we have the answer. This verse, verse 24, is the answer that this dear woman could give to Elijah. And the woman said to Elijah, now by this I know that thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

Well, may the Lord make it, son. Oh, that you might know today that the word of the Lord in my poor mouth is truth.

And I leave you with this, this truth we rejoice in. The Lord will appear.

Amen. Elijah's example declares, whatever distress may be tied, the saints may commit all their cares to him who will surely provide.

[39 : 16] When rain long withheld from the earth occasioned a famine of bread, the profit secured from the dearth by ravens was constantly fed.

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS And which lay upon prey But when the Lord's people have lived His goodness will find a true way This instant still goes may be strange

But how faith can prevail But soon our own nature shall change From the power of God's promise is fair How safe and how happy are they The one that could share, could be found He gives them strength for their day

And who will surely serve us He will surely serve us He reigns and lions can tame For gracious us, praise His God Let us rejoice in His name And leave all our cares in His name Amen

[44 : 21] O Lord, thou knowest how everyone came To the service this morning And thou knowest all that is going on in each of our lives But oh, we do pray that Elijah's God May indeed be our God This God is our God For ever and ever He will be our guide Even unto death Having therefore Having therefore obtained Help of God I continue We continue Until this day Lord, thou knowest Lord, thou knowest the heartache That may be upon one or another here this morning But oh, we pray that thou wilt appear

And oh, that that word might be fulfilled even today Now by this I know that thou art a man of God And that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true Lord, do grant this Do fulfill this May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God With the communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Amen Amen