

Learning to Live the Life

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 17.8-16. Psalm 34.1-10.

There are three questions that often exercise the minds of God's people. First, 'Does God understand the trouble that I am in?' Second, 'Considering my present circumstances, does God still lead His people today as He did in the Bible times?' Third, 'Can God provide for me even in times like this?' This study answers these questions.

God's Children in Crisis. We are not immune from trouble because we are Christians. Things can and do go wrong. We Christians suffer illness, adversity, wrong doing from others as well as from our own stupidity, sinfulness and errors. This widow was caught in the drought which was doubtless not her fault, but she and her son were suffering, even as others. What is your trouble today?

The widow had come to the end of her resources. Verse 12 tells us that there was enough for a last meal for two. It would not stretch to three. Are you in a position like that? Has your health, money, opportunities, employment, hearing, eyesight, energy, patience shrunk to almost nothing? Take a good look at Psalm 84.11-12, and then meditate on Psalm 91.14-16. Here are two promises just for you.

She believed and trusted the Lord, yet He allowed her trouble The Lord had already told her that she was to supply Elijah. v9. Doubtless she found this hard to believe. Romans 8.14 was true of her. Like this widow, God does allow trouble in your life. You are not immune, but

remember God in the midst of your trouble. Remember God's promise '*He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*' Romans 8.28 hadn't then been written, but Psalm 138.6-8 had.

Despite this, she was in despair. Verse 12 tells us she expected to die. Why, because her eyes were on a handful of meal in an empty barrel, not on the God of promises. It is the eye of faith that sees the invisible God. Hebrews 11.27 tells us the secret of enduring in a time of trouble.

God's Guidance is Guaranteed. Elijah was in difficulties as the drought progressed. See v7. Each day he stooped a little lower to drink. Soon there would be nothing left, and the Bible says that it was due to the lack of rain.

Elijah was listening to God, not looking at the shrinking stream. V7 Guidance is the fruit of a relationship, not the product of a system. He was living in fellowship with the Lord. If we are to be led of the Spirit we must be filled with

the Spirit. See Luke 4.1, John 16.13, Ephesians 5.18, 2 Chronicles 30.9b. Christian, how is your prayer life; a ritual, a formality or a time of fellowship with your Lord?

The Lord also spoke to the widow. See v9. God seldom guides people in isolation. Romans 8.28, Amos 3.3. Husbands and wives, Pastor and people, business partners who are one in Christ should be able to confirm the guidance of each other, or be patient until they can. This woman was not Jewish. Again the Holy Spirit was working cross-culturally, a point not lost on Jesus in Luke 4.24.

God waited until the brook was 'dry' v7. How many of us work on the 'God helps those who help themselves principle.' Elijah was at Cherith because of v2-3, and there he stayed until God directed otherwise. Christians need to re-learn the 'Where God guides, God provides' principle. It is found in almost every page of the Bible and every missionary biography, right up to the present day. Talk about up to date!

This story shows how God knew and met the needs of the widow and Elijah. It shows the elementary principles of living by faith at work. Remembering Hebrews 13.8, we need to apply these principles to our own lives, and allow God to bring His answer to our needs as day by day we live in fellowship with Him in accord with the promises in His word.

God's Supply is Sufficient. At Cherith Elijah had been living well on bread, water and meat, twice a day. Now he moves up (or down!) to a cake. The word indicates a 'hot cake baked on hot stones.' This is not luxury, but sufficient to survive the drought. See Philippians 4.19, Matthew 6.32.

God through Elijah put the widows faith to the test. v13 When there was only one meal left, she was asked to place it on the altar. God then turned on His supply. This is one way God works in our lives to make our faith grow stronger. See Matthew 6.25-34, Malachi 3.10. Don't be surprised if God so tests you too.

Elijah demonstrated faith in God by declaring God's promise to the widow. Faith is not a blind leap, it is believing that God will do what He says He will do, and acting on that belief. Elijah passed on to the widow what God had said to him. Elijah was not acting on his own initiative, but God's word. See also the prayer David made and his reliance upon God's word in 2 Samuel 7.18-29.

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

These notes may be reproduced in part or in full when distributed without cost, with the words 'Used by Permission, Glen Park Gospel Church.' included.
Visit us at glenparkgospel.org.au