

Elijah – Prophet of Confrontation #5

Elijah and the Weeping

1Ki 17:17-24

Introduction:

1. The famine and drought were raging all around Elijah and the widow and her son – they did well as God continued to supply their need.
 - a. She had expected to eat and then die
 - b. God supplied food and they were surviving
2. At this time her son died
 - a. She had already lost her husband and now her son dies too
 - b. Her hope had been raised as God supplied food, but her hope is dashed
3. We all face trials and the Bible is the best place to go when life caves in
4. Heb 11 has a wonderful roll call of men and women of faith.
 - a. But in vs 35 it says that "women received back their dead"
 - b. This is probably the instance that the writer has in mind
 - c. It is interesting that Elijah is not mentioned in Heb 11
5. "After these things"
 - a. Elijah was sent by God to confront Ahab face to face
 - b. Then God directed Elijah to hide near the brook Cherith
 - c. God sent Elijah to Zarephath where he faced an impossible situation
 - d. After these things came Elijah's next test - the next impossible thing

I. The Place of Trials – vs 17

17 And 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.

A. The Place of Obedience

1. Elijah and the widow were living obedient lives
2. They had been tested and passed the test with flying colors
 - a) *Elijah obeyed and went to Zarephath*
 - b) *The widow obeyed and gave food to Elijah first*
3. In this time of obedience, she went through trials
 - a) *We often think that when we obey, there will be no trial*
 - b) *True, obedience eliminates many unnecessary trials since many troubles come as a result of disobedience*
4. Obeying the Lord faithfully will not exempt us from trials
 - a) *No one was more obedient than Christ and He went through trials*
5. When the righteous suffer trials, the devil is there to tell us that it doesn't pay to serve the Lord
6. Trials don't always indicate sin in our lives – Ps 34:19

B. The Place of Service

1. Elijah and the widow were in the place of service
 - a) *Elijah was the servant of God- in Zarephath at God's command*
 - b) *The widow was serving God as she risked her life daily providing room and board for Elijah*
 - c) *Being in the place of service does not guarantee that we will be free from trials*
2. The son still died though Elijah + widow were servants of God

C. The Place of Blessing

1. Elijah and the widow were in the place of blessing
2. Each day they experienced the multiplying of the oil and meal
3. As the famine took its toll on the land, they survived
4. Sometimes the days of blessing will fool us into thinking that the days of trials are over and past – Ps 30:6
5. Often those who have received the greatest blessings go through the deepest trials

II. The Perplexity of Trials

A. What Caused the Death?

1. The widow blamed Elijah - vs 18

18 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, and to slay my son?

 - a) *If Elijah could stop the rain, did he know some hidden sin of the woman and bring judgment on her for it?*
 - b) *Elijah's holy life might have convicted her*
 - c) *Live for the Lord and it may convict those around you*
2. Often in trials we lash out at the closest person to us
 - a) *No matter how they have helped us in the past*
 - b) *The widow was probably under a great deal of strain as she watched her son die*
 - (1) She might have been up all night caring for him
 - (2) Her nerves might have been frazzled
 - c) *Often, husband, wife, children, parents, friends, neighbors bear the brunt of our abuse*
3. Elijah blamed the Lord – vs 20

20 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?

 - a) *This trial caused a testing of the faith of Elijah*
 - b) *We are often quick to blame God and we don't think of the devil*
 - c) *God has good reasons for allowing trials – 1Pet 4:12-13*
4. It didn't make sense to keep them alive and then let the boy die

B. The Conduct in the Trial – vs 19-22

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. 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. 20 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? 21 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. 22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

1. “What do we do now?” is a common question during trials
 - a) *How this is answered determines if the trial makes or breaks us*
 - b) *The widow lashed out at Elijah in the trial*
 - c) *Some turn to the liquor bottle to drink away their trial*
2. Elijah could not get his Bible out and see what to do in a case like this
 - a) *There is no record of anyone raised from the dead before Elijah*
 - b) *How does Elijah dare ask God to do such an unprecedented thing*
 - c) *There were no instructions to follow - no principles to cling to*
3. Elijah knew what to do in the trial – he prayed – Ps 46:1
4. Elijah prayed earnestly
 - a) *Twice we are told that he “cried” to the Lord*
 - b) *Not reciting a memorized prayer- not reading a prayer*
 - c) *In situations that are beyond our control, we learn to pray*
5. Elijah prayed specifically - “Let this child’s soul come to him again”
 - a) *If there is a specific problem, be specific when you pray*
 - b) *Specific requests receive specific answers*
6. Elijah prayed boldly
 - a) *What a great request*
 - b) *He did not base this request on examples from the past since this had never been done before*
 - c) *Great boldness in prayer is a combination of great faith and great esteem in God’s power*
 - d) *Great requests honor God*
7. Elijah prayed privately
 - a) *He carried the boy up to his loft and prayed*
 - b) *Public prayer is important, but in private is our best praying*
 - c) *Less self-consciousness and less worrying about what others are thinking*
8. God raised the child to life again
9. Note that Elijah did not exploit this healing and begin a healing ministry

III. The Product in the Trial

A. The Trial Produced Purity

1. The trial reminded the widow of her sin
2. Such reminding causes purifying
3. One of our great problems today is that sin is often legalized, justified, excused and even promoted
4. When trials clean you up, rejoice for this is a great blessing
5. **Ps 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.**

B. The Trial Produced Life

1. The soul of the child returned to him and he revived
2. Trials are often great revivers
3. We get lazy and cold, God sends a trial and we get back into church, into the Bible and into prayer and God revives us
4. This trial brought physical life to the boy and our trials can bring new spiritual life to us

C. The Trial Produced Joy

1. Imagine the joy of the woman who received her son alive
2. It takes faith to find joy in trials
3. **1Pe 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.**

D. The Trial Produced Opportunity for Service

1. We may pray for the Lord to use us more, but often the doors for service are opened in trials
2. Death of the widow's son gave Elijah opportunity to greater service
3. Elijah could never have served in this way had not the son died
4. Paul had learned that trials often provide open doors to get the gospel to the lost
5. **Php 1:12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; 13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;**
6. **2Co 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.**
7. When opportunities for service arise like this, we need to be good stewards of these opportunities.

E. The Trial Produced Proof of Profession

24 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.

1. Elijah's identity as a man of God was validated by this trial
2. The daily miracle of provisions showed who Elijah was, but raising her son from death really proved who Elijah was
3. The world sees you as a Christian every day, but that is just so many words.
4. They want to see you when the trials of life come, when stress pours into your life. This will verify your Christianity
5. If you have been praying for a better testimony, perhaps God will send trials into your life
6. Our trials give us an opportunity to have a clear and unmistakable testimony for the Lord

F. The Trial Produced Spiritual Knowledge

1. The widow could say, "I know you are a man of God and that the Word of God is true"
2. She gain some valuable spiritual knowledge from this trial
3. We often learn the facts of knowledge, but the classroom of experience is the best teacher
4. Ps 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.
5. Trials are not a wasted, they are not a loss, they are not a mistake
6. "Zarephath" deals with smelting or refining metals. Elijah and the widow had their faith refined and made more pure through this trial.