

Sermon Discussion

7 March 2021

Read 1 Kings 17:1-24 together.

Dig Deeper

Elijah's name means "Yahweh is my God." He could promise severe drought because God had said this is what He would bring on the land if His people forsook Him (Leviticus 26:18-19; Deuteronomy 11:16-17; 28:23-24; 33:28).

Why choose a drought? Why emphasize that Yahweh lives?

Elijah determines to attack Baalism **at its theological center**. Baal worshipers believed that their storm god made rain unless it was the dry season, and he needed to be brought back from the dead. To refute this belief Elijah states that Yahweh is the one who determines when rain falls, that Yahweh lives at all times, and that Yahweh is not afraid to challenge Baal on what his worshipers consider his home ground.

The sickness of the widow's son corresponded to **Israel's spiritual condition** at this time, and Elijah realized that only God could bring the boy back to life. This is the first restoration to life of a dead person that Scripture records.

Elijah learned the power of God and the power of prayer. He applied both of these lessons in his contest with the Baal prophets (18:16-46). His confidence in his own ability as a channel of God's blessing and word received added strength from the widow's confession (v. 24).

If God could raise a dead Gentile boy back to life in response to believing prayer, He could also **revive the chosen people of Israel** who had become spiritually dead.

1. How do you know if a risk is worth taking? Why do people differ in the risks they are willing to take in life?
2. Elijah receives an instruction from God to go to Zarephath which was a long way away (v8). The widow receives an instruction from God to give Elijah water and bread before she feeds herself and her son (v13). How difficult do these instructions sound to us? Why is that?
3. If we ourselves were in Elijah's position, or the widow's position, do we see ourselves behaving as they did? Why is that?
4. Are you in a spiritual condition where you can hear God's instructions? What factors into being in such a position?

5. Look at v. 10-12. Put yourself in the place of this widow. Would you put the needs of an alien and stranger before those of your son or yourself? Does the widow have a moral obligation to give her son food before she gives it to an adult who is a stranger?
6. After God saved the widow and her son from starvation because of their faith, why after all that would God now let the boy die? How does v. 24 provide a possible explanation?

Application & Prayer

- This story reminds us of our human condition. Sometimes we are capable of great acts of faith. Then after God has shown His power to us so clearly, at the next crisis we doubt Him and accuse Him of the worst things. Will you take a moment right now, and think about the times when God clearly led and blessed you? Pray, with the Spirit's help, to never forget what God has done and never doubt Him in the future.
- Does your present condition look impossible? Does it look like there is no way God can meet your needs through what He has brought about into your life? Confess your doubt and ask the LORD to meet you in the middle of it.
- Meditate of this verse: *"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."* -Romans 6:5