

A Present Help — Something from Nothing

In the Old Testament, God spoke to His people through the prophets. When the prophets spoke, things happened because they spoke with God's authority and power. Elijah was one of these mighty prophets in the 9th century BC. He was called by God to minister and prophesy during the reign of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Ahab became one of the most wicked kings in Israel. Due to Jezebel and Ahab's influence, God's people became unfaithful and wicked and began worshipping the Baals and other Canaanite deities.

1 Kings 17 shows one of the events of Elijah's life.

1 Kings 17:16 KJV And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Elijah.

Before we consider this verse, we must go back to the beginning of this chapter and follow what brought Elijah to this place. Since the nation had fallen so far from God and had gone after the Baals, God told Elijah to go to king Ahab and declare a famine over the land of Israel.

1 Kings 17:1 NKJV And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."

After he delivered that word to Ahab, God told Elijah: *"Get away from here and turn eastward, go down and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan River, (vs. 3).* There was an urgency in God's message to Elijah.

"Run and hide" seems to be a strange word from the Lord, but during that time Jezebel had many of the prophets of God killed with the sword. God had a time schedule for what was going to take place and He had already commanded certain things to happen that would sustain the man of God.

When God gives us a command, He always has everything worked out.

1 Kings 1:4 God said, "You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

So he went and did what God said.

Every morning and evening ravens delivered bread and meat, and he drank from the brook. Sometimes in life it appears that we have nothing, but God can bring something from nothing. God was providing fresh food one meal at a time. He is the great God Jehovah. When the Brook Cherith dried up, God opened up the second part of His plan to provide for Elijah.

1 Kings 17:8-9 NKJV Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

In the first phase of God's provision, ravens were commanded to provide one meal at a time for the prophet. Now God said, *"I have commanded a widow to provide for you..."* Watch this unfold.

You can almost feel excitement in the old prophet...

Has God ever told you, *“I will take care of you?”* Has He ever said, *“Don’t worry, everything is going to work out?”* God knows the plans that He has for you and He knows the way you should take. Elijah did not know what to expect, but he trusted God. He was walking in faith and obedience to God and the promise, *“I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”*

When God commanded, it appears that the widow did not get the memo.

This woman and her son were suffering in the drought. They were down to their last cup of flour and she was out scavenging for sticks to make their last meal.

God’s sources of deliverance do not always fit within our definition of “provision and blessing.”

God said, *“I have commanded certain things to happen.”* That does not always mean what we think. I can imagine that Elijah thought she was a rich widow in Israel and had plenty of food and supply. You have probably thought the same thing.

God said, *“I will supply all your need according to my riches in glory.”*

You did not know that you were going to eat up all of your resources before the next blessing would come. You did not know that you were going to be fed manna from heaven. You did not know that the supply would come one day at a time.

We often think one thing and God does something different.

We think the well is deep and the water is cold. We think of a self-adjusting rest-o-pedic mattress. We think the pantry will be full. We think of maid service and three meals a day.

Elijah arrived at the widow’s house with great anticipation and faith!

The Lord said, *“I have commanded this widow to provide for the duration of the famine.”* Elijah was prepared to go and stay with no other promise than “God said, I have commanded.” When he arrived at Zarephath, the story continues.

1 Kings 17:10 NKJV So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, *“Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.”*

The woman was where God said she would be.

1 Kings 17:11 NKJV And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, *“Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”*

1 Kings 17:12 NKJV So she said, *“As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.”*

Have you been faced with information that did not match your faith-filled expectation? God said: *“I have commanded a widow who will sustain and*

provide.”

God’s command and provision does not always look the way we think it should look.

Just exactly what does that mean? What does it mean when God promises that He has commanded and everything will be all right? Elijah did not find a fully stocked pantry, a jolly cook and many loaves of fresh bread. He saw a thin...weak... widow woman and her frail weak son who were down to their last days. She was preparing for a small bite of food and death.

God said: “I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”

Little is much when God is in it. This woman only had ONE CUP of meal and a little oil in a jar. She said it was just enough for one biscuit. She had no plans past that last meager meal.

The only thing the prophet of God could rely on was his faith in what God had said.

God said He had prepared this widow for this task. Have you ever thought this is not enough? What had the Lord done to prepare her for this task? She was physically reduced and had little to offer. Their only hope was in what the prophet said.

Listen to the word of the Lord that came from the man of God.

1 Kings 17:13 And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son.”

1 Kings 17:14 For thus says the Lord God of Israel: “The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day the Lord sends rain upon the earth...”

It was a great challenge of faith to go and prepare that last biscuit, but Elijah and the widow had something no one else had.

They had God's word and promise that “*the barrel of meal shall not waste and neither shall the cruse of oil fail.*” Have you ever considered how this worked? Every time she went back to get some meal, there was some in the barrel. It never ran out. God had a miracle provision for them, but they had to rely on God's word for every meal. God said “I have commanded a widow to provide for you.” The Lord Almighty said He would multiply the oil and the meal.

Philippians 4:19 NKJV And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

God knows what is going to happen in your life and He is in control. When there was no way, God made a way. When nothing made sense, God had all of the answers. He specializes in things thought impossible and He is not limited by human resources or supply.

The drought was terrible in the land.

Everyone was suffering and every storehouse was empty. No shipments were coming to the grocery store.

God knows how to work things out for you.

This is the marvel of serving the awesome omnipotent God Who knows how to work it out. God can supply when there appears to be no supply. God has answers that you can count on! You don't have to try to make this work, you can count on God.

He is El Shaddai, the LORD God Almighty.

When God revealed Himself to Abraham as El Shaddai, He said: *"I am the LORD Almighty, I will multiply you and give you this land."* (Genesis 17) God kept millions of His people as they wandered in the wilderness. He took all sickness away from them and they were afflicted with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt. Their clothes did not wear out. God gave them bread from heaven and water from a rock in the wilderness and sustained them for forty years.

Remember what Jesus did when He walked on this earth.

He was born to be our Savior. He lived to heal the broken hearted, give liberty to captives, and open prisons to those who are bound. He suffered and was bruised to carry our sickness and griefs. He died to pay the penalty for our sins and offenses. He was raised to justify us and present us to God. He lives forevermore to make intercession for us to the Father.

The Good News is God cares about you.

Look at what Jesus said about God's care for you.

Matthew 6:25 NIV Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?

Matthew 6:26 NIV Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Matthew 6:31, 33 NIV So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

God knows how to provide for your need.

He knows what is going to happen before He sends you on your way. God may supply one day at a time and a little here and a little there. He works in ways we do not see. You may have a barrel that is almost empty but God has a limitless supply and His storehouse is full. You can trust the Lord God Almighty.

1 Kings 17:16 NKJV The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

I like the way the New Living Translation says this.

1 Kings 17:16 NLT For no matter how much they used, there was always

enough left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

The barrel of meal could not be used up and the cruse of oil never failed.

There is no way to reason this out. God works where things seem impossible.

He knows how to multiply oil and meal. He can do what no one else can do.

You can trust God!

Psalms 37:25 KJV I have been young, and [now] am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread.

Watch what happened.

1 Kings 17:15 NET She went and did as Elijah told her; there was always enough food for Elijah and for her and her family.

Your heavenly Father knows what you have need of and you can trust Him.

He will carry you through and supply your need. He will fix it for you. He is

your Healer and Deliverer. He is the Savior and Holy Ghost Baptizer. He is the Wonder Worker.

A Present Help — Something from Nothing