

ELIJAH HELPS A POOR WIDOW

1 KINGS 17:8-24

MEMORY VERSE

1 KINGS 17:15

“So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two bowls, two small spoons, two small jars that are the same size, two tables, flour, masking tape and small prizes (optional).

Play dough mixture: 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 1 cup water and 2 tablespoons of cooking oil, 2 bowls and zip lock bags.

One piece of paper for each child and a bowl.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Fill the Flour Bin!

In today’s lesson we will learn about how the Lord provides for a widow and her son. To introduce today’s lesson let’s see how fast you can fill up a jar with flour. You will need two bowls, two small spoons, two small jars that are the same size and flour. Split your class into two equal teams. Set up a table for each team. On each table set up a bowl filled with enough flour to fill one of the jars. Place one jar and one spoon on each table. Have the two teams line up behind each table. Make a starting line with masking tape.

Set the spoon next to the bowl. When you say, “go” the first child in line will go to the table, get the spoon and take one spoonful of flour and place it in the jar. Then they will set down the spoon and return to the line tagging the next child to proceed to do the same. The next child may not go until their hand is tagged. This will continue until one team has their jar completely filled (teacher will be the judge of “completely filled”). You may want to declare a winner and award small prizes.

LESSON TIME!

Have you or your family ever had a time when money was pretty tight? Maybe you weren't even sure where your next meal was going to come from. That is the situation that a certain widow found herself in, but little did she know that she would also be the one to be a blessing to the prophet Elijah.

Sometimes we can look at different situations in our lives and wonder how it is that God is going to take care of us. We can even look at our circumstances and become afraid. But God loves us and He owns the cattle on a thousand hills the Bible says. So He can certainly take care of us no matter what. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

1 KINGS 17:8-15

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."

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."

And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

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."

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."

"For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.'"

So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.

Last week we looked at the way the Lord God took care of the prophet Elijah in the wilderness. We saw how Elijah obeyed the word of the Lord and God took care of his every need. This week we will learn how the obedience of Elijah was used by God again. This story is about a widow and her family who learned to trust in God. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

God called Elijah to go to a widow who lived in Zarephath. This was in the area of Sidon. Sidon was an area outside of Israel and was not ruled by king Ahab of Israel (see 1 Kings 16:31). In verse 12 the widow says to Elijah "your God." This probably means she was not an Israelite or a Jew and did not serve the "one true God" (you can look up Daniel 6:16, & Ruth 1:16 to compare how some other people used the phrase "your God").

We aren't told why God sent Elijah to a nation outside of Israel and to a woman who didn't believe in the same way, but perhaps it was because really saw into her heart. God loves His people and has special plans for them, but He also loves the whole world who has yet to come to know Him. He wants to reach those who have never believed in Him. And He likes to use His people to do that. So by God sending Elijah to this widow just shows us God's heart in having people come to know Him.

God took care of Elijah and provided for him in some pretty amazing ways. But why in the world would God send Elijah to a woman who was poor and a widow for the purpose of taking care of him? She really didn't have any way to support herself, let alone a prophet from Israel. So many times God sends us into impossible situations to help us learn more about what it means to trust in Him. God didn't send Elijah to the richest person in Sidon, or even to the owner of the supermarket; but rather He sent Elijah to a poor widow who didn't even have enough for another meal. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

This widow thought for sure that she and her son were going to die soon. In our last lesson we learned about how that there was a severe drought in the land. There wasn't any rain in the land for about three years. This meant that food was very scarce and this woman's food had completely run out. She had reached a place that she no longer had any hope. But really God is bringing together two people with different needs who will both have to trust in Him.

Elijah came to the widow and asked for some water and bread. Elijah would be asking her to give up the last of her food for him to eat. But God is going to teach her about trusting in Him. The widow explained that she didn't have any food and was preparing the last of what she did have and was going to die. She told Elijah that she had just a small amount of flour and a little oil and that was it.

The first thing that Elijah tells her is “Do not fear.” What grace the Lord has for those in need. The Lord was about to take care of this woman’s needs as well as taking care of Elijah. But Elijah then made a strange request. He told her to make a cake and give it to him first, and then make some for her son and herself.

Now the widow had an interesting choice to make. Would she obey the prophet and the Lord and trust that everything would work out? Or would she look at what she has and say, “I don’t have enough and I need this for me and my son”? Sometimes faith works that way. We have to be obedient and then we will understand that God has it all in control and He will bless us. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

She did what Elijah requested and sure enough God honored His word as He always does. The flour and oil lasted for MANY days. It didn’t run out. What a testimony to God’s grace and provision. But she had to learn to trust in the Lord. Then something else happens to the widow...

Oil and Flour Play Dough

Not only is flour and oil good for food, but can also be made into something fun to play with. We are going to make some homemade play dough. You will need 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, 1 cup of water and 2 tablespoons of cooking oil, a couple of bowls and small zip lock bags. You can adjust this recipe up or down based on how many children you think you might have.

Mix all of the ingredients together. Add the water and the cooking oil. Next, knead the dough for at least 10 minutes. The kneading will make the dough smooth and shiny. Flour your hand to prevent the dough from sticking. As an option you can bring food coloring to make the dough a certain color. Give a little bit of dough to each child with a small zip lock bag to take home. Tell

the children that when they play with play dough that they should remember God's provision for them like He provided for the widow and her son.

1 KINGS 17:16-24

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.

Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him.

So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.

Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?"

And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him."

Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth."

Sometime later, the widow's circumstances took a turn for the worse. Her son died. Can you think of anything worse?! Has anything ever happened to you that was so bad that maybe you thought that God had forgotten about you? Maybe this widow thought the same thing.

Put yourself in that widow's place. Her husband had died, which had to be very painful in her life. Now she has lost her only child. We don't see any indication that she spent time blaming God, instead she confessed her sin. In the middle of all that pain, she was still willing to learn to trust Elijah's God. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

We see that Elijah cries out to the Lord on her behalf. No doubt he was saddened with her over the loss of her son and wanted to help her. He prays to the Lord on her behalf. He cries out the Lord three times that her son would come back to life.

In verse 22 we read that God heard Elijah's cry and He answered by giving the boy's life back. What a picture of Jesus' work in verses 18-23. There is death, then confessed sin, then mercy, then the raising from the dead to a new life. What a joy and a witness to God's faithfulness for that widow who was a Gentile, and Elijah too.

In verse 24 we see that the widow acknowledges she has learned another lesson; that the words from are from the Lord and that they are the truth. What a lesson she learned about trusting God. God's word is truth and we can always trust in Him no matter how bad a situation may seem. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

We can be thankful to the Lord for recording this story for us. He wants us to learn to trust Him, just like the widow in our story. Over and over again, no matter the circumstances and especially in hard times God is there for us teaching us to look towards Him.

Sometimes we can look at our circumstances and think that everything is hopeless. Just like the widow who had no food and then watched her son die. How sad that must have been. But she trusted in the Lord and He helped her through both situations. We don't always know how God is going to answer a prayer, but we do know that when we put our trust in Him that He will always do what is best for us.

Let's look at our own lives and see if there is anything happening that we need to give to the Lord. Do we trust Him all the time? Let's learn to trust Him for everything. **God wants us to learn how to trust in Him.**

Pick a Word Review

Before class choose 20 – 25 key words from today's lesson (i.e.: flour, Elijah, widow, etc.). Write them on a small piece of paper and place them in a bowl. Pass the bowl around class and have each child pick one word each. After everyone has chosen a word allow the children to take turns sharing what their word is and how it is important for today's lesson.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord with all of their hearts and to give any problems or difficult situations to the Lord. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.