



Sermon Text: 1 Kings 17:8-16

Sermon Date: February 17, 2019

The life and ministry of the prophet Elijah is audacious in its honesty. In Scripture we see real life, real obedience, and real sacrifice—all the mess that is often cropped out of our Instagram feeds. In our text, we examined three pictures that are accurate in their portrayal of God and what it means to follow Him.

A PICTURE OF THE GOD WHO DEMANDS OUR EVERYTHING

Unlike how God is popularly presented, as a God who is happy with whatever you can spare, our text presents a picture of God who demands our everything. He commands Elijah to travel to Zarephath in Sidon so that a widow can provide for Him. He didn't ask for Elijah's preferences or opinions, but demands Elijah's full allegiance. Once Elijah arrives in Zarephath, he discovers that God's appointed provider is utterly destitute herself. And yet, Elijah still asks for the first portion of her final meal! And the fact that God sends Elijah outside of Israel reveals that He isn't a tribal God, but Lord of all the earth, a God who demands the entire world's fervent worship.

A PICTURE OF THE GOD WHO PROVIDES IN OUR NOTHING

The God who demands our everything is also the God who provides in our nothing. Elijah promises the widow that God will not allow her meager rations to run out if she will obey Yahweh in faith. We learned that **what God gives back is always more than what we give up**. While God demanded the widow's everything, what she received in return is more than she was called to give up. She trusted him with her final meal; He provided her with an unending, daily supply of meals. Yet, once again the way God provides is instructive. We saw that **God's providence overflows even though the jug is never full**. She didn't wake up one morning to a 50-pound bag of Bisquick. Instead, every day there was just enough oil and flour for a meal that day. Every day was a daily drama of God's sustaining grace.

A PICTURE OF THE FAITH THAT WILL SAVE ANYBODY

The last picture we saw in our text was a picture of the faith that will save anybody. While Baal worship had invaded Israel, God sent His servant to infiltrate Baal's home turf so that He could pour out His favor on one of Baal's most helpless pawns. The widow sits under the curse of divine judgment, absolutely powerless, destined to die. And what happens? She puts all of her trust in the truthfulness of God's promise—she stakes her survival on God's sheer Word—and she is saved from certain death. This is a beautiful picture of the faith that will save anybody. The widow didn't merely understand God's Word or just agree with it, she obeyed it, leaning all of her weight on God's promise to provide. That is the essence of saving faith.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
2. Do you believe that everything you have rightly belongs to God, even if you have very little (like your final meal)? How does it encourage you to know that what God gives back is always more than what we give up? How do you clarify that previous question to avoid a false, prosperity gospel?
3. When have you leaned all your weight upon God's promise—even when it didn't make sense—and in the end discovered that He was perfectly faithful?