



An Extreme Test of Faith

By Matthew K. Boyle on June 6, 2024

TODAY'S READING: 1 Kings 17

Jesus was not a man to mince words. On one occasion, as recorded in Luke 4, Jesus reminds the religious leaders of the day that Israel had a history of faithlessness. He recounts to them that Elijah was not sent to any of the widows living in Israel. To be a widow in those days was to be poor and unprotected. Any given day could be their last. Their needs were great and their desperation, greater.

So what Jesus was communicating to these religious leaders was that just as they would not accept him by faith as a prophet, neither did faithless Israel accept Elijah as a prophet. But there were others that heard about God and his works. The widow of Zarephath that Jesus spoke of was the one that you find in 1 Kings 17. She heard of Israel's God and had something that was missing in the land of Israel: faith.

And it was about to be tested.

God sent Elijah to a widow during a time of drought and famine in the land. Already this widow and her son were preparing for their last meal. Death was on the horizon, and they were consigned to it.

Despite their imminent demise, God, through the prophet Elijah, issued an extreme test of faith for this woman. With her last bit of flour, she was to first make Elijah a *"little cake"* and freely give it to him to eat (vs. 13). Imagine that! All she had to live on for her and her son. It reminds me of the faith of another widow Jesus observed:

"Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, 2 and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on" (Luke 21:1-4, ESV).

The widow of Zarephath, likewise, gave all she had to live on. But she also had hope. Elijah told her that her flour would not run out. And she actively believed Elijah. As with Abraham, her faith was credited as righteousness (Rom. 4:5).

God may not test you with such a severe test of faith, but he does expect unwavering belief in the greatest prophet and his only Son, Jesus.

When the dust settles, that is the only faith that will matter.

PRAYER: Lord, grant me by your grace unwavering faith in your Son, Jesus. May he be magnified in my life that others would see my faith in him and long to know him.

TOMORROW'S READING: 1 Kings 21

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