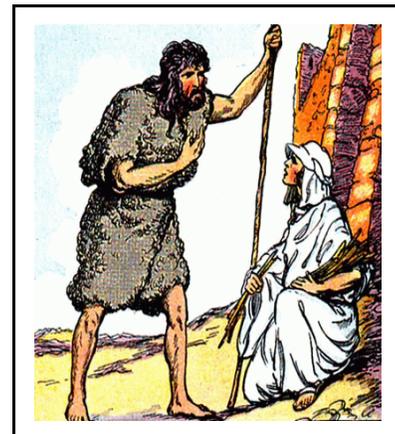


The Prophet Elijah

1 Kings 16:29 - 17:24

Have you ever thought, "I can't share what I have with you because then I won't have enough for myself"? Try to think of a situation where someone might feel this way. As you read this story, notice what Elijah shared with King Ahab and the widow and her family; what the widow shared with Elijah; and what the gracious hand of God shared with all of them.



Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, You have given us so freely of Your Son to take away our sins. Help us to give freely and generously to those in need and in our offerings at church. Help them to be gifts of love. Please give us the faith to trust that You will provide for all of our needs. Amen.

The Story

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. {30} Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. {31} And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. {32} Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. {33} And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

{34} In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.

(1 Kings 17) 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."

{2} Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, {3} "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. {4} "And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

{5} So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. {6} The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

{7} And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. {8} Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, {9} "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." {10} 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." {11} And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

{12} 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."

{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."

{14} "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.'"

{15} So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. {16} 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.

{17} 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.

{18} 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?"

{19} 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. {20} 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?" {21} 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."

{22} Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. {23} 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!"

{24} 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."

Outer Aim – God provides for all of Elijah, the widow and her family's bodily and spiritual needs.

What the Story Tells Us - Give a short answer to the questions below.

1. Who needed to hear there would be a punishment from God for worshiping idols?
2. Who do you think sent Elijah to talk to King Ahab?
3. How did God provide for Elijah at the brook Cherith?
4. Whom did God send Elijah to live with after the stream dried up?
5. How did God provide the widow, her family, and Elijah with food?
6. God also wanted the widow and her family to be saved and go to heaven. Whom did they need to learn about in order to be saved?
7. What did Elijah share with the woman and her family? (v. 24)

What God's Word Tells Us - Discuss the questions below.

1. Elijah did not have earthly possessions to share. What treasure did he have that he shared with King Ahab, the widow, and her family?
2. Did King Ahab want to hear Elijah's message? Since he was king, what could Ahab have done to Elijah?
3. Did Elijah let fear stop him from preaching God's Word? Whom did He trust in to take care of him?
4. Why was the widow hesitant to share her food with Elijah?
5. Elijah promised her that the oil and flour would never be gone until God sent the rain. The widow must have believed him because she brought food for Elijah before she fed her son and herself. How did she know that Elijah was speaking the truth?
6. Who gave her faith to believe God's promise?
7. Matt. 25:40 says, "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" So when we help people in need, to whom are we also giving a gift?
8. There is a similar story in Mark 12:41-44. Look it up. The widow gave all she had at the temple. Who would provide for all of her needs?
9. Who gave her the faith to believe that God would provide?
10. God has asked us to give to Him first. Look up 2 Cor. 9:7 and discuss. Why would we want to give offerings to the Lord?
11. But if we give to the Lord first, doesn't that mean we'll have less money to spend on ourselves? Look up Mal. 3:10-11 and discuss.
12. How do we know God will provide for all of our needs?
13. How has God provided for our spiritual needs?
14. What does this show us about God? Who gives us the faith to trust God to take care of us?

Inner Aim – We bring our first fruits to God out of love, trusting that He will provide for all of our future needs.

Your Turn - Put an X in front of each person who is giving God his or her first fruits and is trusting God to provide.

_____ Joey spent his time and money on Saturday with his friends seeing a movie and going out to eat. He only had a little change left to put in the collection plate on Sunday.

_____ Carl is saving his money for a new bike. Each week he sets some of his allowance aside for church and saves the rest for his bike.

_____ Mr. and Mrs. Jones aren't sure how they'll pay all their bills this month, but they write out a check to the church first for their offering.

_____ Katie has a classmate named Sue. Sue's family lost their home in a fire. Katie decides to give some of her clothes to Sue.

_____ Dr. Johnson is a Christian. He knows the Smith family can't afford health care so he charges them nothing for office visits.

_____ When Lisa finishes with nursing school, she wants to be a medical missionary in India and share her knowledge of God's Word and medicine with the orphans.

Hymn/Prayer - TLH 442 v. 1, 2

Lord of Glory, who hast bo't us
With Thy lifeblood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones
That tremendous sacrifice;
And with that has freely given
Blessings countless as the sand
To th' unthankful and the evil
With Thine own unsparing hand.

Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to yield Thee
Gladly, freely, of Thine own;
With the sunshine of Thy goodness
Melt our thankless hearts of stone
Till our cold and selfish natures,
Warmed by Thee, at length believe
That more happy and more blessed
'Tis to give than to receive. Amen

Passages

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

Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Proverbs 19:17 - He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.

