

Elijah Mini Series – from 1 Kings 17

This is a mini series from 1 Kings 17. What we'll do is take several points we find in 1 Kings 17 and we'll have a few headings to help us learn lessons from Elijah. In a way this will be a bit like lots of quiet-times from Elijah!

So the best place to start is by reading 1 Kings 17. Can't go wrong...

Some of the headings may be song or movie titles or lines. Or they may not be. Maybe find out for yourself.

The lesson from the story of Elijah – 'So he did what the Lord had told him.' Simple truth and our example.

That's What We Pray

The whole of 1 Kings 17 shows us the incredible power of prayer. Prayer is you communicating with God to see things happen on earth that are within God's will. In the Lord's Prayer (in Matthew 6) we find this phrase that Jesus teaches us to pray – 'your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. Prayer is partnering with God to see God things happen on earth as they do in heaven. Prayer is also listening to hear God speak to you.

When we look at Elijah we may think, 'wow, he was an amazing pray-er.' Yes he was – when he spoke there was no rain, then the rain came just as he'd prayed. Elijah also saw miracles and a boy raised from the dead! But you can be an amazing pray-er too. In James 5.16-17 we read that the prayers of someone who is right with God are powerful and effective. We also learn that Elijah was just a person – same as we are. So pray and watch God work.

The evangelist called J John often says, "When we pray, 'coincidences' happen. When we don't, they don't."

You Get What You Give

God is always able to provide for you and your needs. He even does special things and answers prayers about things you'd like – just remember to seek him and put him first. (Matthew 6.33). You may have to wait at times but it's always worth it. God knows what's best and if you're like me, you want God's best!

Elijah was told by God to go to places and found God's provision was in that place. His provision wasn't in the place where he was but in the place he had to go to – his place called 'there'. Sometimes when things don't seem to be working it can be because God has asked you to do something or go somewhere. Your provision will be in the place where God calls you. If God asks you to do something, go somewhere – he will go ahead of you and make a way.

So ask God where your place called 'there' is...

And remember, God's provision was supernatural. Don't limit God.

Lights Will Guide You Home

You probably have some kind of SatNav – in your car on just maps on your phone. Elijah didn't have the use of GPS or mobile phones. But he did have the Creator of the Universe and he's a pretty good guide! I like to call this 'GodNav'.

God gave Elijah some very specific guidance. God is well able to be very specific when you ask him. If God isn't saying anything specific, he trusts you to keep taking steps (he'll guide you, see Proverbs 4.12). So keep moving forward. Joyce Meyer says that if you get off track or if God needs you for something specific, he knows where to find you!

If we look at what God said to Elijah it was specific. There was always a 'reason for the season' that Elijah was in. God said: "Stay there." Then Elijah's provision went (the brook dried up!) Then God spoke. Then said, "Go at once." Then "Stay." Try not to get ahead or behind God's timing. And remember that God speaks and leads in different ways at various times.

Hidden

Have you ever felt a bit 'Invisible' like people don't seem to see you? Sometimes I've been in situations where no-one seems to even see that I'm there! Or maybe you want to be used by God but nothing seems to be happening. Don't worry. God's got you in a 'hidden' place and in training. Just keep going forward and putting God first. We have all been there!

Elijah was hidden for a season when God told him to go and hide in a ravine (a big valley with a river in it). If Elijah had to be hidden away for a time, then you may be too. So remember, there are times when God hides us away and nothing much seems to be happening. But we know God is always working and often up to something special we won't understand fully. So don't give up!

New Beginnings

Life is like a journey on a train. There are new stops, new trains, new passengers, new seats and all kinds of things that happen in between!

Eventually the brook where Elijah was staying dried up. Why? Because Elijah had prophesied the rain would stop and it did. No rain, no brook! Aagh! Elijah was a victim of his own prophecy – but when we've heard from God and are obeying God, we have nothing to fear. God will always show his faithfulness. I read a book about a lady who went from England to Burundi to look after children. The miracles of God's provision and protection (and supernatural healing!) are unbelievable. But with God, all things are possible and so what happened to this lady and to Elijah aren't just believable, they should be the normal Christian life.

But the brook has dried up. Had God forgotten Elijah? No of course not. And he hasn't forgotten you. But because the brook had dried up, it was time to move on. It was time for a new season, a new adventure, a new location. Often this is how God leads us. I've known times in my life where what I once did no longer works or feels quite 'right'. You will have the same. It's one way God leads us into the next step. Joyce Meyer speaks about when God had told her to quit her well-paid job at a church to do nothing. She tried to get a part-time

job and was fired! So just go with God's leading. He's always wanting to move you forward, deeper and show you more of his goodness so you can help others.

Timing Is Everything

You get watches that promise the perfect time. You have phones that lock onto the GPS and data signals to get the perfect time. But the only really perfect timing is God's perfect timing. And he does this for hundreds of millions of his people around the world all the time!

God brought Elijah to the widow just as she was out collecting sticks – to the exact place she was searching for wood. And Elijah had to walk around 100km to the widow's house. What a coincidence... I'm mean, what a God-incidence... And this all happened just outside the city walls. Remember that God is often active on the fringes of the church and society.

But it's not just God's timing that is perfect. God's way is perfect. Elijah needed food and water and got it from the widow – but also God's provision came for the widow and son through Elijah.

The Bible talks about God ordering our steps and God having a good plan for his people. God will work in his way and his timing. He rarely does things in the way and in the timescale that we want. God is never early and God is never late. Remember that he cares deeply about you but is also working out his purposes in the world.

Never Run Dry

There are powerful weapons we have as Christians. And we're not talking bombs, guns or anything like that. We mean spiritual weapons – because behind every act of evil is the evil one and he can only be defeated spiritually.

We've seen that one weapon is the power of prayer. We also have the weapon of the blood of Jesus and what Jesus did on the cross. But we also have the Word of God (the Bible) and the Holy Spirit inside of us. But we can also take practical action. James tells us that if we see someone hungry we don't just talk to them, we help them!!

In 1 Kings 17, Elijah asked the widow for bread. Jesus said in Matthew 4.4 that we can't live on physical bread alone but we also live on every word from God. But notice that Jesus didn't say we didn't need to eat bread – he just said that we need physical and 'spiritual' bread! We need both.

And remember the promise from Elijah (via God) to the widow that her bread and oil would never run dry. This is like a picture for us spiritually. God's word (the bread) and God's Spirit (often referred to as oil in the Bible) will never run dry. We need both together and we can never get enough.

And we get oil and bread from God so we can give it away. It was great that the widow had a supply of oil that would never run out – but unless this was poured out and used it would never be effective. The widow gave away some of her oil and then the oil was used to bring life for her, her son and Elijah. The application for us is that we get to give away what God gives us, knowing that he always fills us up with more!!

Miracles From Heaven

(‘Miracles from Heaven’ – a movie worth watching by the way...)

Every act of your kindness, goodness and love can work to bring God’s kingdom. Every sacrifice you make to do the right thing or to put others first or to serve God, is never ever wasted. And God is a rewarder of those who go after him (Hebrews 11.6).

The widow served Elijah giving him food and drink, putting Elijah (and therefore God) before herself. You will never ever lose out by doing the same, even in those times that may feel that way. I’ve missed out on loads of things because I have wanted to put God first and kept my word. We won’t ultimately miss out if we do the same.

You see, the widow’s provision for Elijah would become the route to her own miracle later on. Because she obeyed what God had said and honoured Elijah, she would be able to call on Elijah later and see God answer his prayer to see the widow’s son raised from the dead. Widow acted in faith, although God said he’d already spoken to her. A word isn’t a true word until it’s acted on.

The lesson for us: don’t be a passer by – be a Good Samaritan and act on what God says.

And here’s another thing to think about... Elijah asked for bread and the widow said she didn’t have any. Often God points to the problem because he wants to reveal the answer or bring a miracle along or an answer to prayer. The answer to the lack of bread came from Elijah. God always has a solution to any problem!

‘O Lord Your God’... I mean, “Oh Lord My God”

Early in 1 Kings 17, the widow speaks to Elijah and refers to the “Lord your God”... this would later change. Because of what happened through Elijah, watching her son be raised from the dead and seeing the promises of God fulfilled in her life, the widow went on a spiritual journey closer to God.

In the final verse of 1 Kings 17 we read that widow said, ‘Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.’

The widow had moved from knowing about God and who Elijah was to a place where she was able to understand that God’s word (from Elijah’s mouth) was true. This must also have meant that Elijah did what he said and was obedient to what God said to him so that each promise of God given to him happened exactly as Elijah had said.

This brings glory to God and we should have the same said of us. The way ahead is to know God, know what he says and line up our words and actions with God and his Word. We should also never harshly judge where people are at with God. Many people are on a journey with God and we need to support them and add to their journey!

The widow’s son was healed, giving a testimony of God’s power. She then had a greater revelation of God and his nature (so did Elijah!) Elijah acted in faith when faced with a life and death situation and brought honour to God – we should do the same thing in all we do.

Lord Give Me A Sign

The actions of Elijah in praying for the widow's son – and God's answered prayer to raise the son from the dead also shows God's will to heal. We know this is true today. The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 2.24 that Jesus has already healed us. We know from Matthew 8 that Jesus has carried our sicknesses and illnesses. We also see across the world incredible testimonies of God's healing power, earning the tag line 'the normal Christian life.'

The son's healing was also an incredible witness, testimony and a sign. In Mark 16, Jesus tells his disciples and us that we will see signs and wonders because we have the same Holy Spirit in us if we're believers in Jesus. As people often say signs are what make people wonder about God. Healings, signs and wonders bring glory to God and show his power is above everything. So let's never limit God to work in us and through us to heal, deliver, set free, see words of prophecy and more.

And think about this... This wouldn't be the last time that a son would be raised from the dead to reveal God. The widow's son was touched by Elijah three times. It was three days in the grave for Jesus. Elijah's comment of 'Look, your son is alive' is also significant. A similar thing would happen with Jesus!

The Word

The Bible says that God's word is higher, above and beyond anything else. It says in Psalm 138.2 that God's word is above everything – in some translations it says God's Word is even above his name!

It's interesting that Elijah was staying in the upper room with the widow. The carrier of God's word was above the family. Later on in 2 Kings we see Elisha has a room built for him on a roof by the Shunamite woman. On both occasions, the prophets raise a son from the dead. But we see that both women honoured the man of God and in a way put God's word 'above' everything else.

We need to honour the Word of God above everything else.