

FULLNESS

I KINGS 17:24, *She told Elijah, “Now I know for sure that you are a man of God, and that the Lord truly speaks through you.”*

After receiving the Word of the Lord through the prophet Elijah, the widow and her son in Zarephath never have to experience hunger again! When she emptied her containers of all that she was trying for herself and used it for the purpose of God, the Lord supernaturally provided for her! What a powerful story! Her house became a center of celebration. But the story takes a turn in verse 17 where it says, *Sometime later the woman’s son became sick. He grew worse and worse, and finally he died.* The house of abundance and gladness became a house of sadness. At that point, the widow experienced a crisis of faith called cognitive dissonance; it’s when your experience contradicts what you believe. As a result, she blames God, the prophet and eventually, herself for what happened (verse 18). Her circumstance shook her so much that her perspective about God changed. She struggled how the God who saved her from hunger could let her son die. This is a classic test of faith!

Knowing that the woman was experiencing cognitive dissonance, instead of getting all defensive and judgmental, Elijah replied, “Give me your son.” The last thing she needed was judgment, so Elijah offered to carry the load. Galatians 6:2 says, *Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.* While our culture says the opposite (i.e. “To each their own” or “God won’t give you a burden you cannot carry”) the Bible commands us to carry each other’s burdens and we fulfill the law of Christ which is found in John 15:12 says, *This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.* How did Jesus show his love for us? 1 Peter 2:24 says, *He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.* Elijah offered to carry the woman’s burden with the intent of praying.

After stretching over the child three times, Elijah prayed a simple prayer of faith and desperation and God reverses his decision by giving life back to the boy (verses 21-24)! This whole story is challenging us to trust God, pray and stretch our faith at a whole new level. While some people won’t believe until they see; but Jesus said, more blessed are those who believe even before they see. But in this story, we see both sides: God performed a miracle and the widow believed; Elijah believed that God can do a miracle.

Elijah appealed to the God of grace from a posture of desperation; and the God who never changes reverses a decision He previously made. The challenge pastor gave is: What are you carrying in your arms? A dead dream? A barren womb? What do you see in your situation? A broken heart? Failed plans? What do you see?

I see _____, but God sees _____.

What do you see now? What do you see ahead? Based on His promises, what do you think God sees in your life? In your private time or in your DGroup, fill those blanks, and start speaking and stretching over what you see, and ask God to help you stretch over what you see so you can received what He sees for you, and use it for His purpose.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEXT STEPS:

- New York Mission Trip (November 8-16)
- September 29-30 (Equip Seminar Edmonton), Pastor Jon is the main speaker in this gathering of leaders from 60 churches.

PRAY TOGETHER FOR

- Pray for Janet and Chris who were baptized last Sunday.
- Pray for Pastor Jon’s preaching at Equip and for Pastor Ta’s preaching on Sunday at Mosaic.

GOAL FOR THIS STUDY:

Learn how to: Speak (pray) and stretch (act) in faith at a whole new level.

Learn how to: Prepare for the storms we are not yet in; while preparing for the blessings that we do not yet have.

Connection and Action

Questions to promote conversation and connection

Question:

Have you ever experienced *cognitive dissonance*? Share an instance.

Question:

What part or lesson from Pastor's sermon last Sunday resonated so strongly for you?

Question:

In Pastor's challenge to us, what did you the blanks with (I see _____, but God sees _____)?

Bible and Belief

Questions to help believers develop a biblical point of view.

I KINGS 17:17-24

Question:

What was the cause of the widow's *cognitive dissonance*, and how did she react to her situation? (Verses 17-18)

Question:

How did Elijah respond to the woman's accusation? Why do you think he responded the way he did? (Verse 19)

Question:

What tradition/rule of Israel did Elijah violate just to minister to the widow? (Verse 19, Numbers 19:11) Why do you think did Elijah choose to violate a "rule" in this instance?

Question:

In verse 20, we find that even a man of God doesn't have all the answers. What does this imply regarding faith and obedience? (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Question:

Instead of simply praying for the child, why did Elijah have to stretch his body over the boy's body three times? What do you remember from pastor's message about this?

Question:

In this story (verse 23), God reversed a decision He had previously made. What does this teach us?

Growing in Leadership

Questions to help people grow as leaders.

Question:

In our story, Elijah chose to reach out to a woman accusing her of a misdeed. What can we learn from Elijah's response and attitude when someone accuses us of wrongdoing?

Question:

When Elijah asked the widow "give me your son," what leadership value or godly quality did he exhibit? Read Galatians 6:2.

Question:

In the first sermon in this series, Pastor said we need to increase our flow in our relationships. In this week's sermon, we see Elijah reaching out to a woman struggling in her belief. In both cases we see that God's power works more strongly through those who are willing to use it by reaching out to those who are not yet in Christ so they can experience fullness in Him. How can you grow in this area?

Questions:

Speak and stretch:

How are you preparing for the storms you are not yet in?

How are you preparing for the blessings that you do not yet have?

Question:

Speak and stretch.

What new levels do you think God is leading you onto in the following areas?

1. Prayer and Worship.
2. Making disciples and investing in new people.
3. Finances and Giving.
4. Family.
5. Rootedness and fruitfulness.