



ILLUSTRATION

Boy Ministers with No Arms or Legs

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Topics: Christian life; Consecration; Dedication; Devotion; Disabilities; Dying to self; Faith; Focus; Glorifying God; God; Life; Lifestyle; Meaning; Mission; Motivation; Motivational; Overcoming; Passion; Pleasing God; Prayer; Purpose; Responsibility; Self-denial; Self-worth; Servanthood; Service; Spiritual Gifts; Talents; Worship

Filters: Everyday Disciples; Stories

References: Romans 12:1-2 , 1 Corinthians 10:31 , 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 , Ephesians 4:24 , Philippians 4:13 , Colossians 3:10

Tone: Commend

Thousands are coming to hear him preach. His ministry has gone global. He has a new book coming out. That's quite a résumé for a boy without any arms or legs!

Nick Vujicic, a 25-year-old Australian, was born without limbs. Vujicic's parents, devout Christians who planted a church in Australia 11 months before Nick was born, found it hard to understand how God could use their son's loss for good. But he has.

Reading in Sunday school about being made in the image of God seemed like a cruel joke to Nick. He seesawed between despair and begging God to grow arms and legs for him. He contemplated suicide the year he turned 8. When he was 15, though, one story in the Bible answered one of his toughest questions.

"When I read the story of the blind man ... Jesus said he was born so that the work of God could be revealed through him," Vujicic said. "That gave me peace. I said, 'Lord, here I am. Use me. Mold me. Make me the man you want me to be.'"

Vujicic learned to write using the two toes on a partial foot that protrudes from his body. He also learned how to throw tennis balls, answer the phone, walk, and swim. He invented new ways to shave and brush his own teeth. He even earned double degrees in accounting and financial planning by age 21. He has since become a motivational speaker to Christian congregations in over 12 countries, and he has ministered to over two million people face to face. He also oversees Life Without Limbs, an organization for the physically disabled. No Arms, No Legs, No Worries, his first book, is scheduled for release in 2009.

Van Morris, Mount Washington, Kentucky; source: Ruth Schenk, "No Arms, No Legs, No Worries: Man Uses Disabilities to Reach the Masses," The Southeast Outlook (11-29-07)

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STUDY NUMBER TWO
I Kings 17:8-24

TEXT:

- v. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,
- v. 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."
- v.10 So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink."
- v.11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."
- v.12 But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die."
- v.13 Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first, and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son."
- v.14 "For thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.'"
- v.15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days.
- v.16 The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through Elijah.
- v.17 Now it came about after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe, that there was no breath left in him.
- v.18 So she said to Elijah, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance, and to put my son to death!"
- v.19 And he said to her, "Give me your son." Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed.
- v.20 And he called to the Lord and said, "O Lord my God, hast Thou also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?"
- v.21 Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the Lord, and said, "O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child's life return to him."
- v.22 And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived.
- v.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 is alive."
- v.24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

62 years + 22 Ahab Worst of All! 7th Ahab
 Jeroboam - Northern King -
 Gold Calves - Bethel & Dan

INTRODUCTION:

We noted together in our first study of the life of Elijah that he was a man of God who came on the scene from Gilead and challenged Ahab with the message of judgment that because of his idolatry and the idolatry of his wife, Jezebel, there would be no dew or rain upon the earth except by his word. After this public appearance on the part of Elijah, he is commanded by the Lord to go hide himself by the brook Cherith, and there by means of the ravens and the water from the brook Elijah will have his physical needs cared for. We left Elijah in our previous study with a test that arose as verse 7 records, "And it happened after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land."

I'm sure it must have been a real test to Elijah to watch the brook dry up, to see it turn from a trickling stream into just puddles, and then finally to completely dry up. It is awfully tough in a situation like this not to get worried and anxious and to want to do something, especially when there is the conflict between faith and sight.

Faith is often tried the most by the slow process of time and the achievement of the Father's will.

Ecc. 3:11 He makes all things...

But could not the God who had provided for him with the brook and the ravens as easily provide for him without the brook? So what if it failed? Was not God still God?

Commentator:

It is one of the highest forms of obedience to stay at our post even though we are unable to see why we are kept there and may have to endure considerable hardship to remain. God had spoken to Elijah the prophet. Until He spoke again, he would abide where he was.

How terrible has been the plight of those who have rushed ahead of the Lord and not been patient to wait for a new word of instruction from Him. It is recorded of Saul in the book of Samuel that when Samuel delayed, Saul forced himself to make a sacrifice in direct disobedience to the word of the Lord. It was F.B. Meyer who said, "When we are most eager to act is the time when we'll make the most pitiful mistake."

Although the brook was dried up and there was no new word from the Lord, the prophet patiently waits to hear what the Lord would have him do. In verses 8 and 9 we find this faith and trust rewarded by a new word from the Lord.

Verse 8: "Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,..."

Circum. most suited to develop.

The little word "then" helps us realize that the Lord is always on time. True, many times it seems in our eyes that all hope is gone and He's too late, but then the Lord speaks and all is changed. To the disciples the water was filling the boat in Mark chapter 4, and then the Master speaks, "Peace be still," and the wind and the waves obeyed His voice. John 11: Lord You Are Late...

Verse 9: "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

Place of Refining

What a strange command this is: "Arise, go to Zarephath." Zarephath is a coastal

- ① Lord, that's the heart of Baal worship and land of King Ethbaal - Jezebel's daddy.
- ② Jonah to Nineveh
- ③ Ananias to street called Straight.

Smelting Furnace
 I Pe. 4:12

Moses
 Saul
 Abraham
 Jacob

18 Months
 Gal. 4:4,5
 Ecc 3:11
 Mark 4:
 John 11:
 Lam 3:22,25

out of the Skillet into the Fire

-3-

From a dying brook to a dangerous battle

on the Mediterranean Sea between Tyre and Sidon. It is also the homeland of Ethbaal, the king of that region and father of Jezebel. This is truly a new trial of faith presented to Elijah to cross all the way from Cherith to the coast because now he's going into the very heart of Baal worship, and it certainly seems like a very dangerous assignment to go into the place where, from a human point of view, it would be very easy for him to be discovered.

It is not a very inviting prospect to say the least.

The message goes on to say that he is to stay there and the Lord also tells him how he's going to be taken care of. "Behold, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

Evidently the stay of Elijah by the brook Cherith was probably somewhere between a year to 18 months in duration. The time of his stay with the widow at Zarephath was approximately two years. Bible Counter part of our Modern day
Corrie Ten Boon

The Lord Jesus himself speaks of this widow in Luke chapter 4:24-26, "And he said, 'Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his home town. But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was shut up for three years and six months when a great famine came over all the land. And yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon to a woman who was a widow.'"

I Cor. 1:26-28, "For consider your call, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised. God has chosen the things that are not that He might unllify the things that are."

"I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." Here the word of the Lord comes to say that instead of the ravens and the brook, there now will be a widow who will carry out this function of making provision for his needs in this hour of famine and crisis.

Verse 10: "So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink."

"So he arose and went to Zarephath." Here we have the immediate obedience of the prophet just like we had back in verse 5, "So he went and did according to the word of the Lord." The prophet has learned not to question the Lord's directions and dealings with His servant although sometimes it's difficult to understand what He's trying to do.

It was necessary for the prophet to travel about a hundred miles and was necessary probably for him to do much of this at night lest he be noticed by the population as the man most wanted by the king and the queen. F.B.I. Most wanted

The tenth verse goes on to say, "When he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks." The problem of the famine and the crisis had not only touched Israel, but had now reached the surrounding area as well.

Private
to Public
Lord!
Are you
Sure you
Know what
You're
doing?
T.S.A.S.S.

This poor woman was at her extremity, as we will notice in the next verses. She is gathering sticks for a final fire and the baking of her last meal for a cake to sustain life as long as possible, and a final drink of water, and then she was preparing herself to die.

John 4:

The prophet Elijah calls to her and says, "Please give me a little water in a jar, that I may drink." Exhausted from the journey and in need of water, he uses this in his opening statement of test to determine whether or not she is the widow that the Lord meant when He spoke to him by the brook Cherith.

Verse 11: "As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, 'Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.'"

You'll notice here that he adds to the request for water some bread because of his physical needs.

Verse 12: "But she said, 'As the Lord your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.'"

Not hers yet!

The second request now triggers the true circumstance of this widow to whom the Lord has led the prophet.

"As the Lord your God lives." She recognizes what Elijah told Ahab in verse 1: "As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand." She must recognize him as a prophet and an Israelite who has a relationship with this living God.

She goes on to say, "I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl, and a little oil in the jar." She then explains her reason for gathering a few sticks, so that she can go in and prepare for her and her son that they might eat and then die.

Someone has said that man's extremity is God's opportunity. God's dealings with us are often delayed to the very last so that when relief does come, we recognize that it's from Him. We have noted this at the dried brook; now we see it with the last meal. This is true in the case of Abraham as he walked the mountain with his son to be sacrificed on the altar of the Lord, and the Lord in the last moment provided a ram. And so it is described for us by the apostle Paul: "And when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Here in our passage we have a prophet who has travelled a hundred miles and is exhausted and in need of water and food, and we have a widow and her son who are preparing their last before they die. What is the Lord going to do to meet the needs in this situation?

Verse 13: "Then Elijah said to her, 'Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first, and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.'"

The first command from Elijah is "Do not fear." It is the same message that the

angel gave to Mary in Luke chapter one and verse 30: "And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.'" It was Isaiah the prophet who said, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

He follows this with the command to, "Go and do as you have said." In other words, take your sticks. Prepare the cake, but in the process, make a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.

The prophet is asking her to do for God what needs to be done before she cares for her own needs.

Here she is asked to give up the certain for the uncertain because she is asked to trust the word of the Lord. She is asked for all that she had, and she gave it. She is similar to another widow in the New Testament whom the Lord highly commends when she comes to the treasury to cast in her two mites because she had given all that she had.

It is a thrill to see this woman who with very limited resources, can still do something for God. *what are you doing with what you have?*

Verse 14: "For thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.'"

Here accompanying this command, the prophet fortifies his request with a promise from the Lord.

When we give to God, we're taking the surest means of getting more from Him because God is no man's debtor.

Now it is up to the widow to trust the promise of the Lord that this is His means of provision for their every need through the remaining years of the famine that is before them.

Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

With the psalmist David we can cry, "I am poor and needy, and yet the Lord thinketh upon me." How precious to realize that no sparrow falls to the ground unknownst to Him, and the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. The woman who came to the well, the Lord provided salvation, and to the widow He meets her needs with the promise that the bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the face of the earth.

Is thy cruise of comfort failing? Rise and share it with another, and through all the years of famine it shall serve thee and thy brother. Love divine will fill thy storehouse, or thy handful still renew, scanty fare for one will often make a royal feast for two. For the heart grows rich in giving, all its wealth is living grain, seeds which mildew in the garner, scattered, fill with gold the plain. Is thy burden hard and heavy? Do thy steps drag wearily? Help to bear thy

Jm6: Little
Lads Lunch
Ministry

brother's burden. God will bear both it and thee. Numb and weary on the mountain, wouldst thou sleep amidst the snow? Chase that frozen form beside thee, and together both shall glow. Art thou stricken in life's battle, many wounded round thee moan? Lavish on their wounds thy balsam, and that balm shall heal thy own. Is a heart, a well left empty? None but God it's void can fill. Nothing but a ceaseless fountain can a ceaseless longing still. Is a heart a living power, self-intwined its strength sinks low. It can only live in loving, and by serving love will grow.

Verse 15: "So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days."

She follows the example of Elijah in his response to the message of the Lord, and as a result of her obedience, the Lord blessed in the fulfillment of His promise, and the bowl of flour and the jar of oil did not become empty.

This reminds us of an account in the life of the Lord Jesus that He takes the five loaves and a couple of fish and feeds the multitudes by His miraculous intervention in taking that which was made available to Him and feeding a large multitude. And so it is that the Lord takes what we have and He multiplies it, and He meets our needs miraculously.

When the need is greatest is God nearest, and here He provides for this household and for the prophet in this time of national crisis as they are obedient to His word.

Verse 16: "The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through Elijah."

It is interesting to note that the Lord did not provide all of the flour and all of the oil necessary to sustain them for the full time because it would not have been long before reports would have gotten out that there was a widow in Zarephath who had a large store of meal and oil, and they would have ravaged her home in order to sustain themselves; but it is the Lord's good pleasure to make daily provision so that their faith will not turn to presumption, and that they will trust the Lord for daily supply, and that they will pray as the Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

This is the Lord's response to the obedience of His children and the fulfillment of His promise.

Verse 17: "Now it came about after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe, that there was no breath left in him."

Just as there was a test at Cherith in the drying of the brook, so now there is a trial at Zarephath in the death of the son of the widow.

How can it be that in the midst of this enjoyment another trial which is unexpected falls upon them? At the very moment that He was working a miracle to save them all, He should allow the son to die. How impossible it is for the widow to understand God's dealings with her. First it was the death of her husband and the pain of the separation was tempered by the fact that she had a son.

could she hand it over & watch him eat it!

Tears stood in her eyes & in his as she brought the cakes.

long walk back to the barrel!

yes its there!!

Everything Great!!

drying brook dying boy

And now her son is gone, and she is alone. "Lord, how can you say that all things work together for good to them that love God, and to those who are the called according to His purpose?"

"Lord, I don't understand it. It all seems so inconsistent with your character and with the plan that you began working in our lives."

Verse 18: "So she said to Elijah, 'What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance, and to put my son to death!'"

→ Birth of Boy - Hide or Excuse

In the hour of her grief she revealed her thoughts toward God. She expresses her bitterness by separating herself from Him. "What do I have to do with you, O man of God?" And then she realizes the possibility of a God getting even for the sins and iniquities which she had committed in the past. She is trying to discover within herself the reason why this trial should have come and why her son has died. Commendable so many resort to self-justification.

We need to realize that no circumstances in life exempt us from disturbing problems and trials, and we need to learn, too, that trials often times reveal us to ourselves. It showed her that she was a sinner.

Theology of Suffering

The strain of the storm and the tension of the trial often reveals the defects in our character.

Verse 19: "And he said to her, 'Give me your son.' Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed."

The prophet does not speak any words of self-defense for God. He just makes a simple request, "Give me your son," and then in the hour of his perplexity he goes straight to God.

Response instead of Reaction.

Tell me where a man goes first in his sorrow and stress, and I will tell you of his character. To Elijah, he goes to the chamber, in the upper room where he stays, the place where he has prayed and seen God powerfully at work. He takes the boy to this special place to intercede in his behalf. He, like Daniel at a later time, went to the special place and three times a day he prayed with his windows being open toward Jerusalem.

Was there anything too hard for God? Had not the same God who had sealed the heavens to bring about the crisis and famine, could He not also save the boy?

Verse 20: "And he called to the Lord and said, 'O Lord my God, hast Thou also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?'"

Question! Not Accusation!

Here Elijah lays hold of the Lord to try to discover what His purpose and plan is back of this experience which they are now facing.

It is James who tells us in James chapter one and verse 5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and unbraideth not, and it shall be given him." In the hour of trial and circumstance we desperately

it doesn't make sense!

Job in Daily walk

Jer. 32:27
Jer. 33:3

① Stopped the rain
② Provided food for the table
③ Gave life to a little boy if He wanted to.

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need to know what the Lord is trying to do so we can fully cooperate with His plan and receive the greatest benefit from the circumstance that is before us. And here the prophet pours his question into the ears of the Lord God.

Verse 21: "Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the Lord, and said, 'O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child's life return to him.'"

The prophet feels motivated to pray that the Lord might restore the life of this child, and that from this experience He would get the greatest glory; from this experience the woman would learn of her sin and be convinced of the living God who is making daily provisions for her needs, and for the prophet it prepares him for the experiences that are ahead on Mount Carmel.

Verse 22: "And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived."

The Lord heard the prayer of the prophet and gave life to the boy and he was revived. We can now look on this experience as being similar to that of Mary and Martha when Lazarus died, and the Lord said, "This experience happened to them that God might be glorified."

Lazarus Come Forth!

How graciously we see the Lord ordering the circumstances and events in the life of His servant. In the thorough preparation of his heart and life for the confrontation on Carmel, and the things which must be done to return a sinful nation to the worship of Jehovah God, the same God who provided ravens and water at the brook Cherith is the same God who provided meal and oil for provision in the home of a widow and life to a boy who had died; so the same God in answer to Elijah's prayer, is going to send fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice and rain to refresh a land.

Verse 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 is alive.'"

What a precious moment of joyful reunion this must have been when the woman sees that in answer to the prayer of the man of God, the Lord returns the son alive.

The death of the child had provided a new opportunity for Elijah to lay hold of God and to see Him at work.

II Chron. 10:15: "So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of events from God, that the Lord might establish His word."

In the time of Sampson, it was out of the carcass of a dead lion comes a honeycomb, so out of the trial comes something sweet in the lives of both Elijah and the widow.

It was Paul the apostle who said, "Be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" because he had the promise from the Lord that they would all be delivered safely from the ship to the shore during the midst of a great storm. This did not exempt them from the trial of shipwreck and a swim to shore in many being sustained by planks, but the Lord was faithful

Shad-me-Ab! Dan. in Lion's den!

*Lot's of
this in
Heaven!!*

and in accordance to His word, they all were brought safely to land. So it is in our lives. We need to realize that the Lord has a way of doing things, and what He does will always be in faithfulness to His promise, and the circumstances will be to the full accomplishment of His maximum purpose in making us more like Jesus Christ.

Verse 24: "Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.'"

For the woman, the trial increased her confidence in Elijah and in God. Before, she had doubts and questions, but now she can say, "Now I know that you are a man of God," and not only that but "that the word of the Lord in your mouth is true."

How many times do we confess with our lips that we know something and really it is only an intellectual knowledge, and then through some trial or circumstance where we are pressed down, shaken together and sore distressed, do we really know by personal experience the truth that the Lord has been trying to teach us.

Here the Lord vindicates Himself through the circumstances that have come about in the home of the widow at Zarephath. He has accomplished His purpose in bringing this woman to an experiential knowledge that Elijah is a man of God, and that the words which he speaks are words of truth from the Lord. Who are we to question how God sets about to accomplish His purpose?

CONCLUSION:

There are several lessons that we can learn from today's study. First, the Lord is always on time with His direction and His provision as we have seen in the life of Elijah and the widow.

- ② Our trust in God and our obedience to what He commands places us in a position of blessing and provision from His hand.
- ③ We have learned that being in the center of His will does not exempt us from trying circumstances to the ultimate accomplishment of His purpose in our lives.
- ④ Through these circumstances and experiences, we see the Lord preparing His prophet for the ultimate confrontation that will take place on Mount Carmel.
- ⑤ Perhaps your circum. are to bring to Christ.

- ① Where are you?
- ② Why are you here?