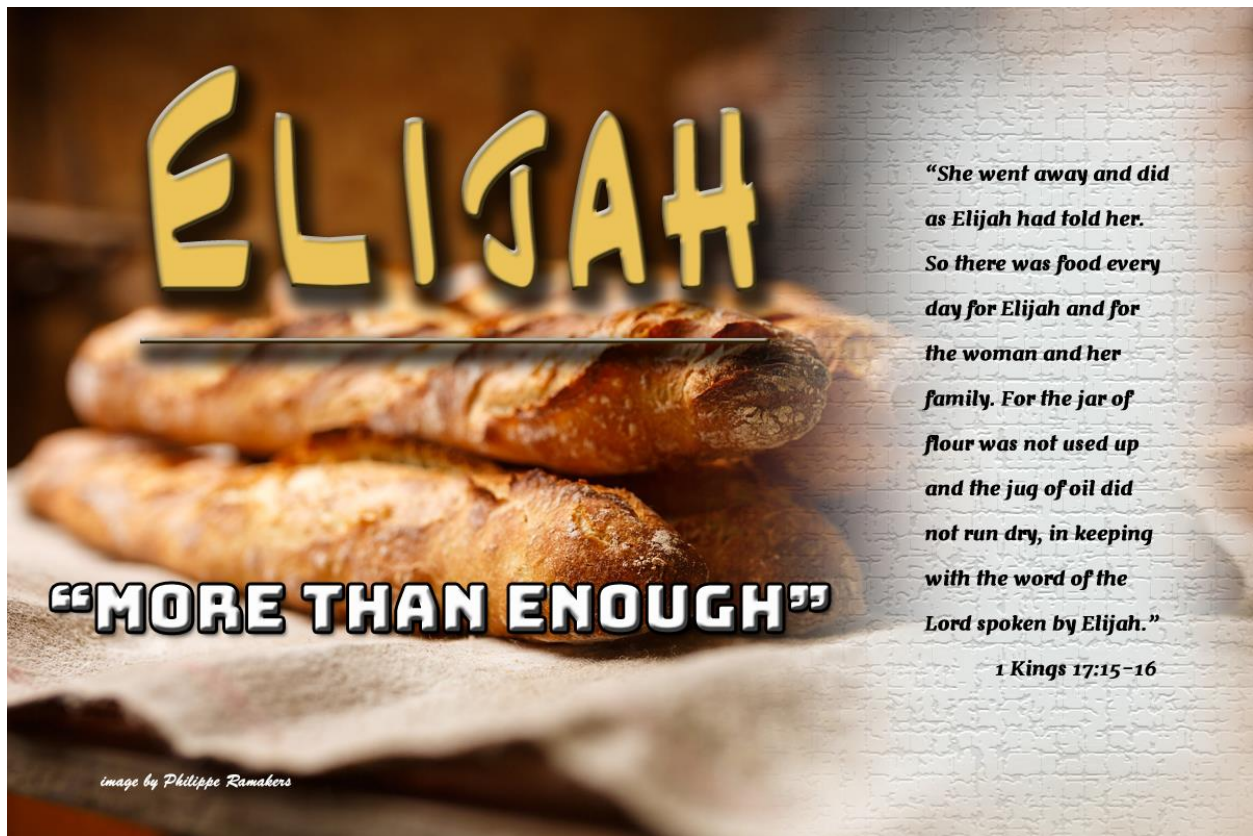


January 9, 2022

More Than Enough

1 Kings 17: 10-16



Special Music: “More Than Enough” Alina Baraz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-rCP7Dq4Hk>

**She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So, there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah. 1 Kings 17:15-16**

## **MORE THAN ENOUGH**

More thirst than water

More vinegar than honey

More hunger than food

More month than there's money

More anger than love

More people displaced

More mockery than mercy

More judgement than grace

More needs than resources

More pain than good health

More damage than healing

More poverty than wealth

More questions than answers

More trouble than peace

More promises than actions

More traps than release

It always seems

There is never enough

To meet all the needs

Or to call all the bluffs

But that's where we're wrong  
There's plenty to share  
The promise from God  
Will always be there

Our cup overflows  
With more than we need  
It's worry that stops us  
We have to accede

To the promises of God.  
Our cup runneth over  
When we focus on Jesus  
There will be plenty leftover.

**I want to read you this entire story from 1 Kings of Elijah's interaction between  
Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:7-16)**

**Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the LORD came to him: "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food." So, he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."**

**"As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."**

**Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.'"**

**She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So, there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.**

There is a lot to break down in this story, but it is important that we take the time to do so. There are so many lessons to glean and learn from here, but the final takeaway is so very important. Last week we talked about Elijah and his prophecy of draught; how he took his message to Ahab and Ahab didn't pay much attention. We brought that into perspective with how bad news gets delivered into our lives and how important it is that we understand bad news for what it is rather than believing that it is a punishment.

Now we find Elijah going to Zarephath to engage with a woman that he has never met. God says go. Elijah goes. Let's start there. Look at this order of events:

**First**, the brook dries up so that there is no reason to stick around. God knows that the brook will dry up. He made it clear that there was a draught coming. This brook drying up is no surprise. God is using the event of the brook drying up to help Elijah make the right move. Going to meet the woman in Zarephath is important for Elijah's ministry, and it positions him for events that will transpire once he gets there, both personally and for his message to the people.

**Second**, God tells Elijah to go to Zarephath immediately. Not tomorrow. Not next week. Not next month. Immediately. Don't wait around. This is not where the work is. The work is in Zarephath. If you want to accomplish the purpose that I have set before you, then pick up your feet and get moving. We all

have to pay attention to when and where God leads if we want to find the blessings that God has waiting for us. If we go too early or arrive too late, we may miss the blessing that God intends for us. If you go to the wrong place or don't go at all, we may miss the blessing that God intends for us. Location and timing are important and we need to keep our eyes and ears open to the opportunities and instructions God gives us.

**Third**, God tells Elijah that there is someone in Zarephath that will meet his needs; that will give him food. The brook has dried up where he is. The draught is a calamity for everyone. People are scrambling left and right trying to come up with resources. People can get very unfriendly and somewhat selfish when resources run low. And God tells Elijah, "You don't need to worry about any of that. I already put a plan in place to take care of you. There is a lady in Zarephath that will meet your needs." What God does not tell Elijah is that the widow doesn't know about any of this. She's on her last morsal already. The last thing that she needs is another mouth to feed. She and her son are about to take their last bite, and then die. There is no more flour. There is no more oil. And water is scarce. This woman has already given up before Elijah arrives, but Elijah is listening to God tell him that she is going to meet his needs.

God specifically tells Elijah, **"I have directed a widow there to supply you with food."** When Elijah finds this woman at the at the city gates, she is picking up sticks. Elijah asks her to draw him some water and give him some bread. I believe God told her that Elijah was coming. She probably ignored it thinking how ridiculous it was to expect her to try and take care of someone else when she can't even take care of herself and her own son. Her response to Elijah says it all. **"As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a**

**few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”**

She might as well be saying, “You don’t know what you are asking. I have nothing. There is no bread. Can’t you see the draught that is going on around you? Why would you ask me something like this when you can see that I have nothing to give you? You must be a fool. **“I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”** If you want what little I have then, by all means, come to my house, I will feed you what little I have and then you can die right along with us.”

I’m not Elijah, but I know that if I was in his position I would have been at the point of tears. I would have been crying out to God, “Why would you send me here and put this woman through all this pain? Why do I have to be the source of that pain?” I guess it is a good thing I am not Elijah, because Elijah seems to be able to take this all in stride. Basically he says, “Don’t worry. Be happy.” **“Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said.”** And then he adds this, **“But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son.”** In other words, “I know you are broke and starving, but I want you to make some bread for me first, before you make any for you and your son.”

Doesn’t this seem beyond rude to you? Of course, it does. We probably would not have thought a thing about it if this woman had given Elijah a piece of her mind and beat on him a little. Don’t you know that she must have felt like he was kicking her when she was already down?

But here’s the thing. Elijah knows something that she doesn’t know. He goes on to give her some hope. **“the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.’”** As wonderful as that is, that is not the secret that Elijah knows. It’s

not about the flour or the jug of oil. It's not even about the miracle. And please take a moment to notice that Elijah is not claiming any work on his part. He clearly says God is doing this. No, the secret that Elijah knows, is this, God will provide. He will never send his children on a journey and not provide for them. Not only will God provide, but God will provide in abundance.

Here's the caveat to this blessing though, of knowing that God will provide. We have to follow God's lead. Before this miracle, before this blessing occurs, several things have to take place; several actions have to be performed. Faith is a prelude to the miracle. It is only by doing what God asks us to do that we are able to embrace the blessing. We don't set the terms. There is no "if you will make the oil plentiful and the flour abundant, I will do what you ask." That's putting the blessing before the faith. That's trying to bargain with God, who already loves us and provides for us. No, we have to step into the faith act first, knowing that he will provide. Elijah had to hit the road to Zarephath as God had commanded. The woman had to bake the bread for Elijah even though it would use up all the resources she had. Only when Elijah and the woman had both committed to the act of service instructed by God could the blessing of abundance be realized.

So many of the lessons that Christ teaches us seem contrary to logic. Love your neighbor. Love your enemy. Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who persecute you. Be humble. Serve one another. Do not love the world. What goes into your mouth isn't important, its what comes out of your mouth that is important t. Don't store up your treasures on earth. Keep your eyes focused on the Kingdom. Example Jesus in all that you do. Don't worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will take care of itself.

This lesson, from the old testament, is no different. Too often we expect the blessing without making the commitment. We want God to bless us, but we



don't want to provide him with our time and our resources. We are all guilty of this to some extent. Being a Christian is not a part-time job. It's not a job at all. It isn't something we do out of convenience or with the expectation of reward. It is the full-fledged revelation in our lives that the Creator of the universe loves us and wants to take care of us. But God does expect us to acknowledge that we understand that He is the Creator of the Universe, that Jesus Christ is His son, and that we know that our magnificent Creator loves us more than we can possibly understand. We have to realize that creation was made for us and that we are not an afterthought.

**'She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So, there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.'**

Let's talk about something that happens here. The widow made the bread, just like she was asked to do. And we see the miracle happen. Suddenly there is plenty of flour and plenty of oil throughout the draught. Everything is as it should be, right? But Elijah doesn't eat his bread and then leave. This becomes like a home away from home for him.

Sometimes, our immediate needs are all we see. We find ourselves in survival mode. But that is part of being human. We look at the danger and deal with the threat before we do anything else. That's normal. But it also blinds us to the end game. While we are focused on the immediate needs in front of us, God has a much bigger plan going on. It is a blessed thing to be able to look back at

where we have been in our lives and see how God has guided us; how he has brought certain people into our lives as certain times of need, and how we have been injected into other people's lives just when they needed us the most.

When we start to believe that God sent Elijah to the widow just to get some bread and water, we fail to see the big picture. God was creating an ongoing relationship between Elijah and the widow so that both of their needs could be met, not just for a day, but for the entire time of the draught. God never intended this to be a quick fix for either one of them. We can compare this relationship to today's extended families, people who may not share our blood and bone, but whom we also see as an important part of our family, siblings of the spirit.

God does that for us as well. Our Creator often brings people together to meet each other's needs. Sometimes it is for a singular event. But, more often it is so that we can feed each other, help each other, nourish each other. God sent me to First Christian Church of Fort Stockton to serve, feed, and nourish you. And you, in turn, have served, fed, and nourished me. You are my family and I hope that you consider me as one of yours. We are species that encourages congregation, unity, togetherness. In most cases, we don't do well by ourselves. We need each other. We are blessed that the Holy Spirit can serve as the glue that binds us in unity, that Christ is our common savior, that the God of Creation made each of us, and His greatest desire is to commune with us. We are his children. We are born to communion.

My prayer this week is that we see our relationships as divine interactions serving a greater cause than finding a little bread and drinking a little wine. I pray

that we allow the Spirit to move through us and bind us. I pray that we find unity, not only with each other, but with everyone in this community.

I want you to consider how Elijah going to Zarephath was part of a much larger plan; that God had a purpose in sending him there for more than his immediate needs. Look at those around you and see if you are meeting their needs, just as the widow met the needs of Elijah. Are we giving all that we can to ensure our relationship with God and with each other? Are we ready to trust God and bake that last loaf of bread knowing that He will never fail us and that there are blessings on the other side of our devastation? Are we willing to accept that God has made plans for us on the other side of the draught? We need to be praying that God will provide us with a path that will further his Kingdom through the relationships that he leads us to.

God bless you all!

AMEN

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