

**Monday, February 6 – Read 1st Kings 17:1-9.** In this passage we see the continuing of God’s testing of the Prophet Elijah at a place called Zarephath--which actually means “a smelting place.” But here, another important element is added to the scenario of Elijah’s life as it is recorded for us in Scripture. It’s the element of personal ministry or outreach to others. The testing and needs of the Prophet became a means of ministry to a poor widow and her son. The events of our lives, even our everyday and seemingly mundane affairs, are not without importance. They are certainly not without God’s providential care as the One who works all things after the counsel of His own will. But important to this truth of Scripture is the need of God’s people to consider this fact against the varied events of their lives. We must think, trust, and act accordingly. The events of life are tools and agents of the Almighty. He uses these to get our attention, to change our values, character, priorities, pursuits, and above all, to change our sources of trust for security and happiness. In what ways can you look at your everyday tasks and busyness as a way to remind you of God’s hand in your life or point others to Christ?

**Tuesday, February 7 – Read 1st Kings 17:10-16.** But let’s never lose sight of the fact that the same events that test us often become the means by which God is able to use us in ministry to others. In other words, our trials often become vehicles for ministry, opportunities to manifest the life of Jesus Christ and the reality and power of God (**Read 2 Cor. 4:8-15**). This is precisely what we see in this next episode in the life of Elijah. His need became a means of meeting needs in the lives of the widow and her son. Does this not serve to remind us again that we are not here for ourselves, even in our pain and need? God cares for us, but we are not alone. He cares for others too, and often seeks to minister to the people around us through the character changes He is seeking to bring about through our own suffering or need. Christlikeness means that even in our pain we are to think of others and how God may want to use us. This goes totally against the grain of human nature and especially against our self-centered society. Ours is a society that is focused on what is best for me regardless of what it could mean to others. What’s best for my career, my happiness, my security, my significance, my . . . (you fill in the blank).

**Wednesday, February 8 – Read 1 Kings 17:8-9.** Elijah received a word from the Lord with instruction. But the sequence here is resultant; it points to a consequence. In the context, this revelation to the prophet is undoubtedly the result of two spiritual facts. First, there is the faithfulness of God. The brook had dried up but God had promised to supply Elijah’s need. So the Lord comes to Elijah’s rescue. Second, Elijah had met the tests of the brook in faith. He waited on the Lord. He had not run ahead, nor run away to do his own thing, nor complained in discontent. So now, God comes to his rescue and gives new instruction. We see in this the principle of **Luke 16:10**, “**He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.**” Elijah had been faithful in the matter of dwelling by the brook. Now God was moving him out of this place of solitude and testing into a small, but important ministry because all ministries are important. From his faithfulness at Zarephath greater things would come. God was building Elijah’s faith, capacity for ministry, and using him to comfort the widow and her son at the same time.

What a person does with a small task is an indication of how he will handle a large one. We may think that the small things are not so important--that they do not really matter. However, faithfulness in the small things prepares us to handle the larger things when they come. Even the small things of life are tests of one’s faith and of who is really in control of one’s life. In what ways are you being faithful in the ‘small things’?

**Thursday, February 9 – Read 1st Kings 17:10.** Elijah was operating by the principle of **Proverbs 4:18**, “**But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.**” While this verse refers primarily to the moral rectitude of those who walk with the Lord, it may also illustrate how the Lord directs our paths making His will plain as we walk in His righteousness by faith. The righteous live by faith. Day-by-day, step-by-step as we walk in fellowship with the Lord, He leads and directs the path of the righteous (**Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17**). Again, being consistent in faith, Elijah did not argue with the Lord, whine, complain, nor run away. Instead, we read, “So he arose and went.” No questions, no arguments, no complaints, just obedience and undoubtedly, in the joy and expectation of what the Lord would do not only in him and for him, but through him. Why? Because, like the Lord Jesus, he would be there not simply to be ministered to, but to minister. We expect also he understood why he was not being sent to the widows of Israel. Also, it was God’s way of removing Elijah from Jezebel’s reach.

**Friday, February 10 – Read 1 Kings 17:10-16.** What was Elijah to do now? Was he mistaken? What gave Elijah the courage to act like he did instead of throwing in the towel? Remember, as a man thins, so he is! Elijah's response in verses 13 and 14 were words of faith, compassion, and vision. As a man of God, he undoubtedly felt compassion for this poor woman but he knew his solutions or strategies for meeting his or her needs were not sufficient. He knew she was poor, yet God's source of supply was no accident or mistake. Elijah knew God was faithful, powerful, and purposeful and that his needs were God's concern and that they were met in the Lord. He also knew God was aware of his longings to preach in Israel and this would need to be tabled for now and turned over to the Lord and His timing. This meant he must be available to serve others and trust the Lord for his needs.

What lessons can we learn from this passage?

- (1) Look beyond the circumstances to the Lord as the one who supplies.
- (2) Never judge or measure God's supply by what you can see. He is the One who does exceeding abundantly beyond all we can ask or think.
- (3) Ask God for the vision needed to see the opportunity for ministry lying, perhaps, right under your nose.
- (4) Ask God for the compassion and love needed to reach out to others with His power and love.
- (5) Know that the Lord is aware of your longings and turn them over to Him.
- (6) Know also that your basic needs have been met in Christ. Knowing that, commit yourself to fulfilling God's purposes in your life.