

Bible Studies for Life: August 1

Serve with Trust • 1 Kings 17:7-16

By Clay Anthony



Anthony

Trust is a strange thing, is it not? How many times have you ever interviewed the pilot of the plane you're boarding? Your doctor says, "Take this pill," and you reach for a glass of water. You cannot name a time when you've checked the air pressure in your tires prior to running an errand.

We just trust without any thought at all, perhaps because in all these instances we are dealing with the seen and not the unseen. We have flown before, so why worry? We have used the same doctor for years; surely he can be trusted. Cars are fitted with gauges that light up when tires lose pressure. We can see these issues, so why not be trusting?

What of those opportunities to trust the unseen? We read that a brook has dried up in the middle of a drought (v. 7). The plight of a widow is revealed in that very little nourishment is available for her and her child. Widows would have been in dire straits during a drought.

She has reached the point in her story where she is resigned to her fate. It seems that she is preparing what she views as her last meal (v. 12). What a sad scene to read.

Why would God's word introduce us to such a pitiful life? A starving widow and child are situated deep in the heart of Phoenician territory, which was known for Baal worship. As we saw in last week's text, God has a way of reaching into a dark story and injecting a hero. Again, Elijah fills that role well. The prophet has much to teach this area concerning the God he follows.

Provision (17:7-12). Scripture is full of examples of God providing for His people. Elijah's life is a walking testimony. We read that ravens brought bread and meat to him twice a day (17:6). Later we read that God again fed this man by miracle (19:6). This man is living Psalm 23 in real time.

Yes, droughts produce starving people and smaller bundles of wood to produce small fires for small meals. However, we know that God does His best work when small trust is placed in Him. Moses needs water and he finds it in a rock. Goliath needs defeating and is beaten by an untrained boy.

Our sins needed forgiving and God gave us a story that involves a stable. Elijah knew as much about God as you do today: God provides and that makes Him trustworthy.

Encouragement (17:13-14). Here is a widow that is known only for her meager means and the fact that she is a mother. How heart breaking to wake up each morning and not know where food would come from for your child. We can be sure that questions were asked, tears were shed, and hunger pains abounded.

No doubt she said the words, "I don't know," many times throughout the day. This widow was facing starvation while surrounded by false gods who could do nothing for her. I can only imagine her face as time after time she reached into her flour pot only to find little flour there. Oil was harder to come by and she had a reserve that would not run dry.

If nothing else, present day readers can rejoice for her never having to run to the grocery store. The One true God, whom she

knew very little about, was providing for her needs without her even having to ask. How is this encouraging? The fence post was created for moments like this. Can you imagine how quickly news of God's presence spread through the area of Baal worshippers?

Guidance (17:15-16). Here is a true statement: the more desperate you are, the more trusting you become. Just read Matthew chapter nine for examples. People who have reached the end of their rope will trust anyone willing to pull them up.

The widow did precisely what the prophet had requested, and her plight turned into a buffet (v. 15). It would seem odd to do the bidding of a complete stranger, if she were not so desperate for help. She would try anything at this point. As always, God knew right when to step in and give guidance. Her false gods were useless. Now her area would know that Israel's God was real and mighty.

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My experience has been that desperate people who have sought our God make the best sales people for His mercy. Does this describe your faith? If not, why?

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