

Welcome! May the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be praised. Let's explore a powerful lesson from Scripture together.

In the Old Testament, we encounter a story about a widow in the town of Zarephath. This small town was located outside of Israel, in the region of Sidon (modern-day Lebanon). Despite her obscurity and poverty, this woman became a key figure in one of the most dramatic stories of divine provision.

A Time of Crisis

During the days of the prophet Elijah, Israel was experiencing a severe drought. Elijah had declared that there would be no rain for three and a half years—by the word of the Lord—because of Israel's rebellion and idolatry (cf. 1 Kings 17:1, James 5:17). As the famine spread, God first provided for Elijah through ravens at a brook (1 Kings 17:4-6). But when the brook dried up, God sent him to Zarephath:

1 Kings 17:8-9 (ESV):

"Then the word of the Lord came to him, 'Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I

have commanded a widow there to feed you.’”

God could have sent Elijah to a wealthy household. Instead, He sent him to a poor, desperate widow who had nothing but a handful of flour and a little oil. Why?

Because God often chooses the weak, the lowly, and the overlooked to display His glory (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). This woman would be tested—and her faith would become an example for generations.

Radical Obedience in Desperation

When Elijah arrived, he found the woman gathering sticks. He asked her for water—and then for bread. She responded with brutal honesty:

1 Kings 17:12 (ESV):

“As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it

for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.”

This was her last meal. Yet Elijah asked her to give the first portion to him.

1 Kings 17:13-14 (ESV):

“And Elijah said to her, ‘Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, “The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.”’”

This was not manipulation—it was a test of faith. And she passed.

1 Kings 17:15-16 (ESV):

“And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.”

Theological Insight: Faith in Action

This story reveals a core principle of the kingdom of God: God often performs miracles through our obedience, not in spite of our lack.

- The widow gave *before* her needs were met.
- She prioritized God's servant and God's word above her own survival.
- She placed her faith not in her resources, but in God's promise.

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV):

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

Jesus Affirms Her Example

Even Jesus Himself highlighted this woman's story. When His own people rejected Him in Nazareth, He reminded them:

Luke 4:25-26 (ESV):

"But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow."

Why was Elijah sent to her and not to the others?

Because God saw something in her heart—a willingness to believe and obey. Others may have focused on their own suffering, but she was ready to put God first.

The Principle: Prioritize God, Not Just Your Problems

This story challenges us. Many Christians today are overwhelmed by their own needs—whether it's finances, food, family, or the future. They bring their problems to God, which is good—but they often forget to seek God's purpose.

God is not just a provider; He's a King. And when we put His kingdom first, everything else falls into place.

Matthew 6:33 (ESV):

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Too often, people say:

- "I can't give now, I haven't paid rent."
- "I'll support the church later, when I get more."

- “I can’t serve, I’m too busy.”

But that’s not how God’s kingdom works. God blesses faith that gives even when it hurts.

Another Example: The Poor Widow’s Offering

Jesus pointed out a similar situation in the New Testament:

Mark 12:43-44 (ESV):

“Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

God is deeply moved when we give or serve Him sacrificially—not just when it’s convenient, but when it’s costly.

Final Encouragement: Your Sacrifice Matters

Maybe you're going through a hard season right now—financially, emotionally, or spiritually. Maybe your “jar of flour” is almost empty. Maybe you're down to your last bit of strength.

Here's the truth: God sees. God knows. And God honors faith.

Don't wait for everything to be perfect before you serve Him or give to Him. Trust Him now. Give Him your “little.” It may be the key to unlocking miraculous provision and divine favor over your life.

Galatians 6:9 (ESV):

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

Conclusion

If you want to succeed in life—and in your walk with God—learn from the widow of Zarephath:

- Put God first.
- Trust His Word.
- Obey even when it's difficult.
- Believe that He can multiply what little you have.

God doesn't bless fear. He blesses faith.

Hebrews 13:8 (ESV):

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you and give you strength to walk by faith, not by sight.

Do You Want to Succeed? Learn from the Widow of Zarephath

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