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**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**October 19, 2014**

**The Young Boy's resurrection...and Ours**

**1 Kings 17:3-14**

**Prayer:** *Father God, I do thank you for your grace, I thank you for the fact that you are our God, you are our peace, you are what makes life worth living. Father, I thank you for the gift of your son, the gift of the cross, and the gift of the resurrection. And Lord, this morning as we are opening up your book, that's an important part of what we're going to be looking at and so I pray that you would grant by your Holy Spirit's power the ability to look into your word, to understand what's there for us and to grab it and to make it a permanent part of our lives. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, we have been following the life of Elijah. And we have been looking through the scriptures and what we're really doing is looking at Elijah at the ten thousand foot level. And that means we've been able to see God's plan for Elijah unclouded by the day in, day out struggle that Elijah had when he was trying to live out his own life. We have watched so far Elijah struggle with the bewilderment of being grown into a great man of faith by God and

we've seen played out in his life a pattern designed to produce a prophet who was fully convinced that God could do whatever he said he could do. And so far we followed Elijah going from Ahab and Jezebel's throne room to this complete isolation that he feels at the brook Cherith and there after months and months of being fed by ravens and drinking from the stream, he's now forced to leave Cherith because the stream, it's all dried up. And God speaks to Elijah yet another bewildering commandment. He tells him, Elijah, you have to journey a hundred miles to the city of Zarephath, a city that's ruled by Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. This is an entire city that's given over to idol worship. They worship Baal. And Elijah is sent to a widow of Zarephath and she's so impoverished, she's down to the very last bit of flour and oil that she possesses, and as Elijah arrives in town we see Elijah asking her to bake him some bread. And so we pick up on the scripture that describes what happened next. This is *1 Kings 17:12-16*. It says: *But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I don't have anything baked -- only a handful of flour in the jar and a bit of oil in the jug. Just now, I am gathering a couple of sticks in order to go prepare it for myself and my son so we can eat it and die." Then Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid; go and do as you have said. But first make me a small loaf from it and bring it out to me. Afterward, you may make some for yourself and your son, for this is what the LORD God of Israel says, "The flour jar will not*

*become empty and the oil jug will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the surface of the land." So she proceeded to do according to the word of Elijah. Then the woman, Elijah, and her household ate for many days. The flour jar did not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD He had spoken through Elijah.*

This widow and her young son, they've been in the grip of this very drought that Elijah had prayed to bring about, and it was Israel's wickedness that had caused God to send him to Ahab and Jezebel with a punishment that the heavens were going to be sealed up until his command. And clearly we see that the effects, they've been devastating on everybody but they've been devastating in particular on this widow. And one of the things that I pointed out last time is that when you study Elijah, you get the ability to see God at work, and what he is doing in Elijah is building faith into his life. And one of the things we saw though is that we understand Elijah as an iconic figure in scripture and we may have a hard time identifying with him because after all, he's a spiritual somebody, and we're just nobodys. I mean, we think God may have a plan for somebody who's a mighty prophet like Elijah, but does he really have a plan for my life? And what we saw last week was that that flies in the face of what God tells us. He tells us in *Romans 8:28* that *all things really do work together for good to those who love*

*God and who are called according to his purpose, and that the good that God has in mind there is not health, it's not wealth, it's not prosperity, it is conformity to the image of his son. God says every single event in our lives is designed to shape and mold us into the image of Jesus Christ. And that's God's master plan for every one of us. And so watching out -- watching God work out his master plan in Elijah's life is what gives us hope that he's doing the same thing in our lives.*

And this morning I want to focus in on the nobody in this story, and that nobody of course is the widow. You know, the widow in many ways represents us better than Elijah does because first of all she's a Gentile, she's an outsider. Secondly she's a widow, and if you're looking for a representative nobody, somebody who has no estate whatsoever, then this widow in this culture, well, it's a perfect choice because widows had no power at all, they had no standing, they had little if any ability to fend for themselves. And thirdly, this widow, well, she had to have been fairly recently widowed because it seems that her son was young. And so we look at this widow and we see she has no heritage, she has no help, she has no hope that anyone can see at all except for her young son. And we can sense this despair that is kind of working it's way through her. She's willing to make this loaf -- bake this loaf of bread but she says it with such despair, she says, "*Just now, I am*

*gathering a couple of sticks in order to go prepare it for myself and my son so we can eat it and die."* Those are the words of somebody who's just about given up all hope. I mean, she's lost her husband, she's lost her standing, she's anticipating her and her son losing their lives. Well, she actually had no idea how incredibly special she was to God. She had no idea of the conversation that Elijah had had that brought him to Zarephath in the first place. She had no idea that she was part of that conversation. I mean all she knew was that it was communicated to her in some way that this strange looking man would be coming into town was somebody that she needed to pay very close attention to, someone she was supposed to feed, and we know that because God says to Elijah in *1 Kings 17:9*: "*Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.*" Just remember though, she's -- she's a Sidonian. She's one of this idol worshiping people who have none of the traditions of the Jews and whose idol worship is in fact partly responsible for the drought that Elijah has called down on the whole nation of Israel. In spite of the wickedness of these people, we see that God is still determined to rescue his own. And she was one of his own.

You see, God had a plan, and that plan included the gospel reaching out to the Gentile world. You know, if you remember back to when we did the study, the series on the servant songs of Isaiah, we saw

that God even back in the Old Testament was speaking poetically and figuratively about the ministry of his son the Lord Jesus Christ and that ministry even back then, well, it was concerned also with reaching out to Gentiles. Listen to what God said of Jesus in *Isaiah 49:5*, he says, "I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach out to the end of the earth." And then in the New Testament in *Acts 15* we have this, it says: "God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.'" So God calls out his chosen and he calls them out of the darkness. He's seeking out Gentiles who are called by his name. The widow didn't realize it but the widow of Zarephath was one of those people. And God goes on to say in *1 Kings 17:15*: *So she proceeded to do according to the word of Elijah. Then the woman, Elijah, and her household ate for many days. The flour jar did not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD He had spoken through Elijah.* We see that God -- God's clearly set her apart. He's blessed her with faith and he's blessed her with a miraculous supply of flour and oil. And everything about her relationship with Elijah speaks to God's

provision for widows. Of how he had set her apart not only by faith but also by directly supplying her needs. *Psalm 68* says this, it says: *Sing to God, sing praise to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the Lord; exult before him! Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.* She's basking in that blessing.

But then the unthinkable happens. Verse 17 says: *After this, the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. His illness became very severe until no breath remained in him.* You talk about bewildering. You talk about crushing. You know, the loss of a widow's son would have been a cruel blow to anyone at any time but to a widow in this culture, this is the ultimate in crushing blows. Her son was her future. Like I said, a widow had no standing, she has no protection, she has no hope whatsoever. And you know, the widow may have lost her husband but at least she hadn't lost her son. She may have lost all of her possessions, she may have been down to her last jar of flour or last bit of oil but she still had her son. She's an outsider, she's powerless, she's utterly dependent on God. God appears to have done to her what we all fear that he might some day do to us. He takes away from her that which she most dearly possesses. I mean, isn't that just like God, we think? You know, to make her hopes soar by bringing Elijah into her life to save her life only to crush those hopes by taking away

the only thing that really matters to her. You know, the story begs for us to nod our heads and to say out loud what we might secretly be thinking. This is a God of love? Deep down inside we may well be thinking this is a cruel God. This is a God who delights in crushing the spirit of those he's tricked into thinking he cares about. But even the text appears to be simply matter of fact, I mean, after this the son gets sick and then he just stops breathing. You know, our culture looks, it looks at situations like this and it instantly blames God. But she's from another time, she's really from a totally different culture, and she looks at the same circumstances, and what's unique about her response is she instantly blames herself. She said to Elijah, this is verse 18: *"Man of God, what do we have in common? Have you come to remind me of my guilt and to kill my son?"* Now we consider her words. I mean, the only thing that Elijah and this widow really had in common at this point is God. And in her pain she cries out that that's only a ruse. I mean now God has found her out, now God has killed her son. So in her mind at that moment there's -- there's no longer this concept of our God. You know, the God who's provided for Elijah and the widow and her son, now she's back, she's back to the original statement she made when she first met Elijah, when she's referring to Elijah's God as "your God." And Elijah's God, and by extension Elijah, he's just taken from her the most precious possession she's ever had.

Tim Keller points out how radically different our cultures are from hers. *"Have you come to remind me of my guilt and kill my son?"* That's not anything a 21st century American would ever say. You know, we would be the first to say flat out this is God's fault. This is God's doing. And we would likely be profoundly confused because I mean, to our way of thinking, this widow did everything right. I mean, she met the prophet, she trusted in the prophet, she even gave him her very least meal. I mean, she's providing food, she's providing shelter even now. And because she's doing all of these right things, how could it possibly be that God would respond to all of these right things with this gigantic wrong thing. I mean, talk about no deed going unpunished. That's the way we think, isn't it? I mean, isn't that the way we process bad news? The widow couldn't have gotten any worse news than this, and so she unloads on Elijah, *"Have you come to remind me of my guilt and to kill my son?"* That's unloading. And Elijah's response to her is extraordinary. I mean, he is feeling her profound grief, he's feeling her anger, he's feeling her sorrow, but his response is not reactive, it's not defensive, it's gentle, and it's caring. This is what takes place, verse 19 says: *But Elijah said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him from her arms, brought him up to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.*

Now, as a prophet who knew all too well what God ceremonial law was all about, Elijah knew that if he were to touch a dead person he would become ceremonially unclean. But he doesn't just touch the child. He approaches the widow and he takes this young child, this dead child up in his arms, and he carries him up the stairs to an upper room. He stays silent in the face of her blistering accusations and then once he gets safely alone with God, he's got a few of his own. Verse 20 it says: *Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "My LORD God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow I am staying with by killing her son?"* You know, the drought has already brought tragedy to everyone. It's an indiscriminate force that affects everyone, believer and non-believer alike. Elijah's crying out on behalf of the widow and his own sense of bewilderment. And he understands that God seems to have singled her out not for blessing but for a curse, and there's no ambivalence at all in Elijah about how her son has died, I mean, he places the responsibility for that death right at God's feet. You killed her son. It's what he says. Verse 21 says: *Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times. He cried out to the LORD and said, "My LORD God, please let this boy's life return to him!"* So the LORD listened to Elijah's voice, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Then Elijah took the boy, brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him

to his mother. *Elijah said, "Look, your son is alive." Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know you are a man of God and the LORD's word from your mouth is true."* See, Elijah was right. I mean, the widow's son didn't die because of hard luck or circumstance or disease, he died because the sovereign Lord of the universe ordained that it would be so. As Job says in *Job 1:21*: "*The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*"

And so we ask, is it cruel, is it indifferent of God to allow this widow's son to die? We can ask the very same question of Jesus, because Jesus knew that Lazarus was sick and he delayed coming to visit him until he knew that he had died. So we can ask, was that -- was that cruel, was that indifferent as well, or did the certain knowledge that this death would not be final be reason enough for God to allow it? You see, God was making a statement, and he was making the statement to and through Elijah, not just to the widow, the outsider, the Gentile, but he was making a statement through her to us, and it's a message that we often overlook in our pain and our distress. You see, God has already demonstrated to Elijah and to the widow that he has the power over hunger, he has the power over thirst, he has power over poverty, I mean, after all the oil jar and the flour's never diminished since he said that it wouldn't. But something much greater than that is being

demonstrated here, and it's being demonstrated in the very same way that Jesus demonstrated it with Lazarus. What God is doing is through Elijah, he's showing the widow and he's showing us that he has the literal power of life over death. And what Elijah is demonstrating by raising that little boy, that's only a down payment. It's a taste of God's resurrection power. And that taste is what can break the grip that death has on us not just for a season, but for all eternity. You see, the resurrection is the greatest of all miracles, and God has granted it to every one of us. It's a miracle every one of us is going to receive. But it's perhaps the easiest miracle of all to overlook because every one of us is living today and that miracle is off in the future. It is a hope that is rooted in the future. I mean, we live in a hope of a resurrected savior who has conquered death itself. And by his death on the cross and resurrection, he's paid the price of my sin, he's qualified me for heaven and he's assured me that I'm going to live forever with him. I mean, this is the source of our hope.

Listen to how Paul explained it in *1 Corinthians 15*, he says: *Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting*

God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. You see, there is no greater gift to be given than the promise that death itself has no hold whatsoever on us. That's exactly what God has promised us in Christ. Now, you would think people would be flabbergasted at this prospect, but they're not. You know, people complain that Christianity is a religion based on pie in the sky by and by and that all of its benefits are only way off in the future after you die. You know, that viewpoint misses something very fundamental. The important part of that is this: It is the Christian's hope for the future that fills, that directs, that propels his or her present. Now sometimes I'm hesitant to use the word "hope" because in English it means something very different than it means in the original language. The original language -- in the original language, "hope" doesn't mean "I hope, I hope, I hope," it doesn't mean some kind of wishful thinking. "Hope" in the original language means "confident expectation." And so as Christians we have this confident expectation that there's

far more to this life than simple biological life itself. Elijah proved to the widow that biological life, like all life, it's under the command of God. And that's the hope that drives us.

Listen to what C.S. Lewis said in *Mere Christianity* about hope, he said: "Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman Empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in:' Aim at earth, and you will get neither."

You see, what took place in that upper room between Elijah, between that little boy and God was just a taste, it was just a down payment of what God has promised to do for every one of his

children, and it is the hope of heaven that drives our lives here on earth.

Allow me to explain the importance of what really took place in that upper room by applying it to two contemporary figures who have been in the news quite a bit in the last few weeks. Now one of them is to me one of the best examples I've ever seen of what it means to live life so occupied with heaven, so completely sold out for Christ that any sacrifice here on earth including the sacrifice of your own life is considered worth of price. That's our first example. I'm referring to Dr. Kent Brantley. I don't know if the name is familiar, but he's the medical doctor who was trained in the United States, gave up all that that career promises to go serve Christ by serving the poorest of the poor in this diseased-stricken country of Liberia. He's the American doctor who first contracted Ebola. He's an absolute hero of mine. I want you to just listen to his words. I have a video of him. These are the words that he gave as he came out of the hospital after he was miraculously healed of Ebola. Run that.

"Today is a miraculous day. I'm thrilled to be alive, to be well, and to be reunited with my family. As a medical missionary, I never imagined myself in this position. When my family and I moved to Liberia last October to begin a two-year term working with

Samaritan's Purse, Ebola was not on the radar. We moved to Liberia because God called us to serve the people of Liberia. In March, when we got word that Ebola was in Guinea and had spread to Liberia, we began preparing for the worst. We did not receive our first Ebola patient until June, but when she arrived, we were ready. During the course of June and July, the number of Ebola patients increased steadily, and our amazing crew at ELWA Hospital took care of each patient with great care and compassion. We also took every precaution to protect ourselves from this dreaded disease by following MSF and WHO guidelines for safety. After taking Amber and our children to the airport to return to the States on Sunday morning, July 20th, I poured myself into my work even more than before -- transferring patients to our new bigger isolation unit; training and orienting new staff; and working with our Human Resources Officer to fill our staffing needs. Three days later, on Wednesday, July 23rd, I woke up feeling under the weather, and then my life took an unexpected turn as I was diagnosed with Ebola Virus Disease. As I lay in my bed in Liberia for the following nine days, getting sicker and weaker each day, I prayed that God would help me be faithful even in my illness, and I prayed that in my life, or in my death, that He would be glorified. I did not know then but have learned since, that there were thousands, maybe even millions of people around the world praying for me throughout that week, and even still today. And I've heard

story after story of how this situation has impacted the lives of individuals around the globe -- both among my friends and family, and also among complete strangers. I cannot thank you enough for your prayers and your support. But what I can tell you is that I serve a faithful God who answers prayers. Through the care of the Samaritan's Purse and SIM missionary team in Liberia, the use of an experimental drug, and the expertise and resources of the health care team at Emory University Hospital, God saved my life -- a direct answer to thousands and thousands of prayers."

There's a sentence that Kent said in that that just jumped out when I heard it, and I just want to repeat it, he said, "I prayed that God would help me to be faithful even in my illness, and I prayed that in my life or in my death, He would be glorified." You know, if any of you moms and dads are looking for heroes that you want to hold up to your children, that's the guy. He's the genuine item, a more Christ like example of eyes fixed on heaven, giving all sacrificially here on earth I can't imagine. You know what Dr. Brantley didn't say was that when he was offered the only experimental vaccine available, he insisted that it all go to his friend and fellow believer, Nancy Writebol. It was the doctors who decided to split it up. But understand, Dr. Brantley was quite willing to have all of it go to Nancy. He experienced a miraculous turnaround and a complete cure. Now it's his blood that's being

administered to those who are here with Ebola who have the same blood type, and the hope is that somehow some antibodies that he's developed will help them attack the disease.

I want to contrast the story of Dr. Brantley with another story that is hitting the news. It's the story of Brittany Maynard. *PEOPLE* magazine said this of her: "Born with a soul of an adventurer and the heart of a warrior, Brittany Maynard has been ice climbing in Ecuador and kayaking in Patagonia and has cared for orphans in Nepal. But there's one place she'd still like to see -- the Grand Canyon. 'We're going to try,' Debbie Ziegler, 56, Maynard's mother, tells *PEOPLE*. 'It's her last hurrah.' Maynard, 29, has terminal brain cancer and has made plans to end her own life with the sedative Secobarbital on November 1st if her suffering becomes too much to handle." I think there's a picture of her. She's -- it's that big a deal, she's on the cover of *PEOPLE* magazine. They summed up the tragic story this way, says: "Married for a year, Brittany Maynard found she had aggressive brain cancer. She had six months to live, and she didn't want her family to watch her dying in pain. She moved to Oregon to take advantage of the Death with Dignity law, and she says nobody has the right to take away from her the option of someone who is terminally ill."

Now, the reason why Brittany's story is so compelling is because she is young, she is beautiful, she is intelligent, and she is determined to take charge of her life in spite of the horrendous circumstances she finds herself in, and I understand completely when Brittany says before you comment on my decision, walk a mile in my shoes. So I have no idea what my state of mind would be if I was the one facing the horrible circumstances that she is. This is what she said. She said, "After months of research, my family and I have reached the heartbreaking conclusion: There is no treatment that would save my life, and the recommended treatments would have destroyed the time I had left. I considered passing away in hospice care at my San Francisco Bay area home. But even with palliative medication, I could develop potentially morphine-resistant pain and suffer personality changes and verbal, cognitive and motor loss of virtually any kind. Because the rest of my body is young and healthy, I am likely to physically hang on for a long time even though the cancer is eating my mind. I probably would have suffered in hospice care for weeks or even months. And my family would have had to watch that."

That's horrifying, I mean that is a horrifying prognosis. Kent Brantley and Brittany Maynard are two very different stories about life itself. But here's why what Elijah demonstrated with that widow in that upper room, here's why it makes all the difference in

these two stories. Every one of us who is a child of God is a recipient of a far greater miracle than the miracle Elijah did for the widow. And by raising that little boy, he showed the widow and he showed us that God has absolute power over death itself. But you know, that little boy, that little boy's just like Lazarus. They both had to eventually still face death. Well, Jesus came to fight the final battle against death, and on the cross he won that battle. Listen to what *Colossians 2:13* says, it says: *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.* You see, the resurrection that God has promised to us, it's an eternal one. It's not like the little boy's, it's not like Lazarus's -- it lasts forever. This is what Paul says in *1 Corinthians 15*, he says: *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

This is how Brittany Maynard sees the end of her life. She says this: "When my suffering becomes too great, I can say to all those I love, 'I love you; come be by my side, and come say goodbye as I

pass into whatever's next.' I will die upstairs in my bedroom with my husband, mother, stepfather and best friend by my side and pass peacefully. I can't imagine trying to rob anyone else of that choice." Dr. Kent Brantley sees his death this way: "I prayed that God would help me be faithful even in my illness and that in my life, even in my death, he would be glorified."

Now, I hesitated in putting these two lives beside each other lest you think I'm trying to make a comparison of good and bad, of right and wrong. That's not my intention at all. I pray for Brittany Maynard and for the awfulness of their situation. I want you to understand, my comparison is not good or bad, it's not right or wrong, it's one of hopefulness and hopelessness. Kent Brantley knows at the end of life on this planet is not at all the end of life. It's the beginning of eternal life. *John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* *Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* *John 17:3: "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

You know, what I was saying before is it is the Christian's hope for the future that fills, that directs, and propels his present.

Kent Brantley is the perfect example of that. I mean, his hope, that's to say his confident expectation of the eternal life that he already has in Christ Jesus has made him more than willing to give his life away. It's his confidence in Jesus that led him to do precisely what Jesus has asked us to do, and that's to love one another even unto death. *John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."* It is the confidence in the resurrection that could give Kent Brantley the freedom to give his life away. And it is absolutely tragic that it appears that Brittany does not yet know this love, and because she doesn't yet know it, instead of giving her life away, she is throwing it away. Obviously I don't know Brittany's spiritual state but I think it's clear that her confidence is not yet in Jesus Christ. In fact, her confidence appears to be in -- quote -- "whatever's next." That's a cry of hopelessness.

Joni Eareckson Tada knows what it feels like to be the victim of physical hopelessness. She's been paralyzed from the neck down for over 40 years, she's a breast cancer survivor, and she's frequently lived in almost constant pain. She found Christ at the age of 16. She had this to say about Brittany's situation. She said: "Romans 14:7 says, 'For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.'" Brittany's well-publicized decision is already influencing untold numbers of despairing people that

physician-assisted suicide could be the answer to their problems. This is no way to strengthen care and nurturing in society; rather, such a decision further unravels the cords of compassion that have characterized our nation for so many decades. A right to privacy is radicalized by physician-assisted suicide -- it does not strengthen the common good, but only alienates, separates and dismantles us as a people who truly care for one another. If I could spend a few moments with Brittany before she swallows that prescription she has already filled, I would tell her how I have felt the love of Jesus strengthen and comfort me through my own cancer, chronic pain and quadriplegia. I would tell her that the saddest thing of all would be for her to wake up on the other side of her tombstone only to face a grim, joyless existence not only without life, but without God. Only Jesus was able to transform the landscape of life after death by conquering the grave and opening the path to eternal life. Three grams of phenobarbital will provide only a temporary reprieve and will only more quickly usher in an eternity separated from God, which would be ultimate and pointless suffering. Life is the most irreplaceable and fundamental condition of the human experience, and I implore Brittany and others considering her example to take a long, hard look at the consequences of a decision that is so fatal, and worst of all, so final."

What a contrast. Hope in Christ and utter hopelessness outside of him. This brings us right back to Elijah. We're back at verse 22, it says: *So the Lord listened to Elijah's voice, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Then Elijah took the boy, brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, "Look, your son is alive." Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know you are a man of God and the LORD's word from your mouth is true."* Like I said, the widow and her boy received an incredible miracle from God and Elijah that day. I mean, our God has the power of life over death itself, but it was still only a down payment. It was still just a partial payment on the real miracle, and that miracle every one of us who knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is going to receive.

And so the most important question is have you trusted in him who alone who has the power to grant you eternal life? I mean, do you want a hope that transcends even the horror of this disease that has captured Brittany today? I mean, you can have that hope. You can have it by giving your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. When Martha approached Jesus at the tomb of her dead brother Lazarus, he said this to her, he said: *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* Well, that's the question. Isn't that the

question? Do you believe this? He alone is the source of our hope. He alone is the secret to eternal life. November 1st is the day that Brittany has elected to end her life. I just want to conclude in prayer that God's Holy Spirit changes her mind and introduces her to the source of all hope, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

*Father God, again, I -- I fear somebody's thinking that I am casting aspersions on Brittany. I'm not, Lord, I just -- I cannot imagine the horror at finding at age 29 that you are dying of brain cancer. I cannot imagine the horror of the hopelessness that does not have Christ at the end of the journey, that does not have the hope of the resurrection, that does not allow anyone to hope beyond simple physical biological life. Father, I pray that Brittany's eyes would be opened, I pray that those believers who are desperately trying to get to her to share with her the very hope that they have, even a woman who herself is dying of cancer who is a believer is trying to get in touch with Brittany. I pray for her, I pray before it is too late, Lord, that she would understand that there is hope maybe not in this life, but there's absolute hope, there's absolute confident expectation that there is eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ. And give her that hope, I pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.*