

**1st Kings 17: 17-24; “See, Your Son Lives!”, Message # 4 in the series –
“Lessons from the Life of Elijah”, A Bible Study conducted by Pastor
Paul Rendall on May 31st, 2017, for those gathered at his home.**

As believing parents, it is often when we are most grieved or most concerned for our children, that God would teach us more of His goodness; that He would desire to minister to us, and show us more of His good ways. God is always good to His people. God is the One who has given our children to us. And having given them to us, we should understand that He will, at times, test our faith in relation to our continuing to have them with us, and keeping them with us. The reason that He does so is to solidify and build our faith in Him, through the truth of the word of God which comes to us from the Lord’s minister. Instead of mistrusting the Lord’s minister, He would have us to see that the word of the Lord in his mouth is the truth, and we should indeed receive it. Tonight I would like to draw a number of precious lessons of truth from 3 phrases which the widow and Elijah uttered, concerning the death and resurrection of this young man. 1st of all – The phrase, “What have I to do with you, O man of God?” 2nd – The phrase, “Give me your son”. And 3rd – The phrase, “See, your son lives!” I hope to show you that Elijah, in this situation is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ; that there is much that we can learn about Christ from Elijah’s words and actions here. And I believe that each of us will be helped by these truths when, or if, we come into a situation where we lose someone who is very close to us.

1st of all – The phrase, “What have I to do with you, O man of God?”

This particular statement came out of the bitterness of this widow’s heart, because she had just lost her son to sickness, and a quick and untimely death. Wasn’t it bad enough, she thought, that she and all the people around her were going through this long period of drought, where little was to be had to eat, and where there was no end in sight, to this drought? But how could God take her son from her now? How could He take him away from her; the one who was trusting in Him? This did not seem right to her. This only son of hers was the very one whom she had hoped would grow up to take care of her in her older years and help provide for her needs? At some point in her life she had probably heard God’s word. Perhaps a word such as this which is found in Deuteronomy chapter 10 and verses 17 and 18. “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.” “He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.” She was a widow but she would trust in God. Her son was fatherless, but she would trust in God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

She had been very thankful that God had sent Elijah to her. He had been a means of great spiritual and material blessing to her, and she knew by the peace which the Lord had given to her in her heart, that it was what the Lord had wanted her to do; to take him in, and help provide for his needs as well as her own. But, she also realized that, as the Lord’s prophet, He was the one who had instrumentally brought the judgment of God upon the land, when he said, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years except at my word.” God’s word which was given to her personally through Elijah had been a source of great comfort to her, that – “The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain upon the earth.” For this she was extremely grateful.

But still, it had been a very difficult providence when suddenly, her son had taken sick, and he had died. As a Gentile believer, she had come to trust in the true and living God, she had believed that God had mercifully brought her into a saving relationship with Himself, by her believing in the God of the Jews. She had believed that one true and living God existed, and that He was a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. She had sought Him for herself, and she found that He was the God of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He had answered her and heard

her cries to him in prayer. She thought often upon the promises of God's word; as much as she knew them. Here is one which she may have heard – Psalm 146: 8 and 9. "The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous." "The Lord watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked He turns upside down." What we need to see for our study this evening is that even though she had been shown so much goodness and mercy from the Lord, when this young man died, this dear woman immediately concluded wrongly that God was "turning her way upside down"; that somehow she was a wicked person, and that Elijah was God's instrument in causing his death. She said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God?" "Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" She was not thinking correctly about God or Elijah.

This is something that can happen to Christians today as well. She did not understand the doctrine of justification by faith; that God had declared her righteous in her initial exercise of faith, and that He would never leave off seeing her as righteous, or doing her good, for Jesus' sake. It is perfectly understandable that since she lived in Old Covenant times and did not know much, if anything, about what Jesus would come to do for her, that she would fall into this wrong thinking. And so, we find the faith of this dear woman was faltering. I want you to see that in this, she was drawing entirely the wrong conclusion; to think that Elijah was responsible for killing her son. Elijah would be the human means of God's saving her son; raising him to life. She however, thought in this way; that since God was a God of justice, and since it was by Elijah's word that it did not rain, then it somehow also must be true that by Elijah's word, her son would not live; and this would be a righteous judgment brought upon her because of her past sins, and because she now was living in such close proximity to the prophet. She now thought that perhaps he had come there to her house, to bring her personal sins to remembrance.

Let us understand that even true believers can draw wrong conclusions concerning God's providence in their lives. They can sometimes even draw wrong conclusions about God's servants, who are sent to preach and teach God's word to them, for their good. It was not for her former sins that this young man of hers had died. This young man died because the Lord wanted to build and increase her faith and Elijah's, in regard to His power and His purposes of good toward His people. He wanted to teach her something very great and good; about death, and resurrection from the dead, through using Elijah to portray to her the grace and favor of the future Messiah who had been promised to Israel. He was planning on using Elijah as a type of Christ to her; to preach to her the gospel, and to teach her about the glory of the resurrection of the dead.

Let us therefore draw this important lesson – Let us not give in to the temptation to believe that God is against us, once we have first trusted in Him for salvation. If we believe that He lives, as this dear woman did, then we should also believe that God has been faithful to take away all of our sins, no matter what our present dark experiences might tempt us to believe. Romans 8: 31, 32 – "What then shall we say to these things?" "If God is for us, who can be against us?" "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us things?" What this dear woman should have said to herself was this: If God brought this great prophet to my house to live, how will He not also with him, living here in my house, bring to me everything which is for my good. It is the Lord's ordering things for my good, for his sake thus far, that is the reason that I have been so blessed. This dark providence, therefore, must be for my good, and so I will trust that whatever God will do for me through him, will also be for my good.

2nd – Let's think about the phrase, "Give me your son".

Verse 19 – “And he said to her, Give me your son.” “So he took him out of the her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.” “Then he cried out to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord my God, have you also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?’ “And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.” “Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child revived.” This is such a beautifully expressive phrase which the prophet spoke to her – “Give me your son”. He could have begun by reproving her for her unbelief and mistrust of him, but he began with this statement. What can we learn from it? I believe that Elijah, in his words and actions, was portraying Christ to this Old Testament believer, and to us here tonight. The first thing that we must learn from these words is that Christ would have us bring to Him all of our greatest concerns, and give them to Him. “Give me your son” was a statement which said to her – Give to me this situation, and this loved one who has died. He was saying: I know that it is impossible to think that they might live again; impossible to think that anything good can come to you from their death. I know that this is your greatest loss, your greatest grief, your greatest pain, the Lord says. But trust Me; I will consider what to do, which will be best for them and for you. In other words, in this statement – “Give me your son”, is the implied truth that you should seek God to see what He might do for you through His servant, the minister of the word of God.

This is what Christ does for every believer in Him. Think of what a minister of Christ Elijah was to this woman and to her son. Elijah took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying and laid him on his own bed. This is a picture of our Christ, who is at the right hand of the Father, seeing us in all of our grief and pain. He takes our greatest cares for our children, when all of our hopes for them have been dashed, and when we see that they are not recoverable, either from natural physical sickness, or they have died; or, which is just as great a grief almost, they appear to be dead to the things which God would have them to learn in relation to the truth of the word of God. We bring them to Jesus, and we as it were, “give them to Him”. Turn with me over to John chapter 11, verses 21-26. Lazarus, Mary and Martha’s brother had died, and they both thought that if Jesus would have been there before he died, he could have healed him. “Then Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.’ “But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” “Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ “Martha said to Him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’ “He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.” “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” “Do you believe this?” “She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.’”

You see, this is what we as believers in Christ must learn to do as well; to believe in the resurrection of the dead, in both of its forms, spiritual and physical, because of our Lord Jesus Christ’s words and actions. Before we are given spiritual life by Christ, our hearts are dead in trespasses and sins, and when we die physically, it is only the Lord Jesus Christ who can raise us from the dead to forever rejoice and be glad in the glorious body which He will give us. But let us understand that Christ has overcome sin at the cross, and He has overcome death in His resurrection, and He has the power to raise people from the dead physically and spiritually at all times. From the beginning of the world until the times of Elijah, no one had ever been raised from the dead, until this young man was raised by the power of God through Elijah. He was the first. What Elijah did was very personally to portray for this woman, and for us, what Christ would need to do in saving a soul from sin. He took him out of his mother’s arms, and he brought him up to his own upper room where He was staying, and he laid him on his own bed, stretched himself out over the child three times in succession, and he prayed for him. He pleaded with God; he reasoned with God over this tragedy which God had brought on the widow

with whom he was lodging. He stretched himself out on the child three times, and he cried out to God to let the child's soul come back to his body, and he revived!

What are all of these things supposed to mean? It means that Elijah would show by his actions what Christ would have to do in order to save a person who was dead in their trespasses in sins. He would have to take the initiative to fully identify Himself with the sinner's dead condition. He would stretch Himself out on the dead body of the child. In others words, He would spiritually unite Himself to the child, with His work of suffering for them, and interceding for them. He would pray in the Garden of Gethsemane to do the will of the Father and go to the cross to bear the sinner's sins, and griefs, and sorrows. He would die, and He would rise again on their behalf, on the 3rd day. This is what the symbolic meaning was, of Elijah's stretching himself out 3 times on that child's body. He would have to be in the grave, dead, for that long, in His identification with sinners in their death, so that they would spiritually rise from their death in transgressions and sins, in the New Birth; and that they might arise from the dead physically on the day in which Christ returns. Look with me over at Isaiah 26: 19. "Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise." "Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Let us understand that even though the person whom we have loved very much has died, that Christ could raise them from the dead at any time. And so, we should rejoice to know and believe that they will rise in the resurrection at the last day.

And then 3rd – Let's think about the phrase, "See, your son lives!"

Verse 22 says – "Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived." "And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother." "Then the woman said to Elijah, 'Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.'" We can see from this that only God can bring a soul back into the body, after it has once left it, in death. But the glorious thing about the resurrection of this young man was that it confirmed for his mother that all the words which the prophet had spoken to her were true, and that she should fully trust in the Lord at all times; even in all the difficult and even impossible situations in her life. Someday the Lord will come down from His upper chamber in the heavens; and with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, He shall raise all of the dead, and the first group of these will be the righteous dead; all those people who have believed the word of God. What a delightful day it shall be, when we will rise to forever be with Christ. "See, your son lives", is a preview of the great power of God, which He displays when He pleases, in accordance with His great purposes to save souls and to build our faith.