



## No.28 The Widow of Zarephath - God's abundant multiplication!

**1 Kings 17:7-24**

This wonderful testimony of this foreigner, from Jezebel's homeland, mentioned by Jesus when He was walking the earth, although nameless, is important. God chose many years ago to put her in the Word for us to read about daily, to draw us closer to Him and encourage us and give us direction. She has many similarities to previous women we have looked at. There is the [Shunammite woman \(2 Kings 4:8-36\)](#) who was married but her son died and she ran to the man of God for a miracle, keeping her mouth shut and she received her miracle of a raised son. Maybe Elisha

was copying what he had heard that Elijah had done. Don't ever forget who is watching you, especially in your home. What they see will always bear fruit for good or bad! Then there is the [widow with the copper coin \(Mark 12:41-44\)](#) who gave her all which is one of the challenges of this lady.

### **Faith like a mustard seed.**

Elijah had been living beside the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan being fed supernaturally by the Lord by unclean ravens and water from the brook. He would know that at sometime this would dry up as he had boldly gone into the presence of the evil King Ahab and warned him that there would be no rain or dew for 'years' 'except at my word!' Ahab had not believed him as he worshipped Baal who was the god of rain and abundance, so he was not concerned. When the brook dries up God instructs Elijah to go immediately to a widow on the coast near Sidon whom He had already instructed to feed him. What an amazing thought that God had it all planned for Elijah and the widow ahead of time. What God commands He also enables. She was a heathen but will have heard about what God had done for the Israelites, but her obedience demanded great faith. Imagine being told by God to help someone when we know we are down to our last pound! 'Do you not know how little I have; what red bills I have got; how will I feed the kids for the rest of the month.....?'

She would see the man of God approaching, probably identified by his clothing, but she had to put her faith into action otherwise it would not be fruitful, **James 2:17**. Notice the timing of Elijah's arrival, at the eleventh hour, by tomorrow she would probably be dead. Just as well he obeyed the Word from God immediately! **1 Kings 17:9**. Even though this poor widow had her instructions from God, giving Elijah water which was in such short supply, was one thing but responding to his request for a piece of bread was another completely. She makes sure he knows the facts about her and her son's situation. How often when God calls us to obey Him, knowledge and reasoning get in the way? We are just like Eve from the beginning, instead of focussing completely on God's Word and His wonderful love, we focus on lies and stinking thinking which completely undermines our faith in God.

The widow did not just have to consider her own death but that of her only son also. Faith can become very powerful when rooted in love, **1 John 3:21-24**. So she responds to Elijah's request, what did she have to lose. It was interesting to see what was going to happen to the flour and oil. She put her faith in the testimony of the God of Israel, the man of God and the Word spoken through Elijah. What an assurance for any of us going through a trial 'Don't be afraid' she took her action on the strength of the encouragement this gave her, **Romans 10:17**. Are our words encouraging people to walk into faith projects or are we a prophet of doom? We are required to walk by faith daily in order to please God (**Hebrews 11:6**) so we need to plant the seed of the Word in our hearts and this is helped by walking with faith-filled believers, **1 Timothy 4:6**. Keep focused on the answer more than the problem and remember Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith, **Hebrews 12:2**.

Surely as she saw the oil and flour daily supplying her needs along with her son and Elijah's, and remembered the story she had heard about God's supply of manna on a daily basis for His children for forty years, her faith must have increased. What did she talk to Elijah about when cooking his meal? As she heard more about God her faith would rise. How do we feel when we have been with friends who talk about all they have learnt about Jesus? This really builds us up and challenges us. It is so important in our everyday talk we share Jesus and not the talk of the world which will not draw us closer to Him and may even appeal to our flesh. Talk like clothes, houses, relationships can so easily lead us to an unhealthy desire for more 'stuff' and ungratefulness for all that we do have.

The faith in the one true God that grew in her heart on a daily basis was so important for what was going to come upon her son, that is when she knew exactly where to go, **1 Kings 17:17**. She recognised as Elijah's word had been fulfilled in the provision of food, he did speak the Word of God. She was so shocked when the spirit of death attacked her son and she was in shock not realising, like the last time she had faced death, God indeed had a great plan and was going to do something amazing for her. Often our faith becomes deeper as it is stretched in a time of difficulty and shows to God our genuine love for Him, **1 Peter 1:6-7**. Faith that remains after a test is purified, **1 Peter 4:12-13**. She would certainly be a different woman as she moves on from both the daily provision and the resurrection of her son. She states her new relationship with Jehovah who she knows has just raised her son through Elijah by declaring, 'Now I know that you are a man of God and that the Word of the Lord from your mouth is the Truth' **1 Kings 17:24**. What a treble victory for this woman, provision, resurrection and salvation, even Jesus mentioning her as an example of all being accepted and used by God, **Luke 4:26**.

**There is a great challenge here to give hospitality at the depth of our poverty. If God asks us to entertain someone, we cannot refuse, even if we have only our last to share. We cannot afford to be concerned about impressions or reputation with men just our availability to Him. Imagine all the blessings that she would have missed!**

### **Sowing and reaping**

This generous widow did not realise when she was giving Elijah the last of her food that she was in fact planting seeds of provision into the good soil of Elijah and his work for God. She continued to share on a daily basis with him. The day must have come when Elijah left her and went to see Ahab to put an end to the drought, but her faith would be so strong after all they had been through together.

Giving is like planting seed. Seed can be money, time, talents, food, and clothing, hospitality, just about anything that we give and do not expect to see again. When the seed is sown it grows up. Always. God's economy always works perfectly every time. If you sow into good soil, good seed with good water, you're going to have good growth and a good return. So give cheerfully, in faith and surround it with praise and worship and say "**Lord I bring my gift to you and I give myself to you Body, Soul and Spirit as a Living Sacrifice**", **Romans 12:1**. Then pray over your specific seed reminding God of the Word regarding your situation. Fill it with faith then plant it - guaranteed it will grow up and warm the heart of the Father, be a blessing to the receiver, and give you an abundant harvest.

Jesus went to a lot of trouble to help us understand the power in sowing ultimately sowing His own life so **we** could reap eternal life. He teaches the parable of the sower (**Mark 4:3-25**) pointing out that it is the key to understanding all the parables. The principle of reaping and sowing is a key to laying the foundation for a very successful life in the future, **Mark 4:13**. For Jesus' teaching, the seed is likened to the **Word of God**. **All** the different kinds of ground got the same seed but they **used it in different ways**.

Round the edge of the field is **the path** where there is no soil (**Mark 4:3**). This represents people who are **totally unresponsive to the Word**, be it preached, shared, seen in creation, or through the many different circumstances in which God tries to speak.

Then there are the **rocky places** (**Mark 4:5-6**) where there is a tiny amount of soil in which the seed can make a very small root. This is a picture of the heart of the people who **receive** the Word and **get excited on the surface** - "go with the flow", but their situation doesn't improve or they get gossiped against and dramatically their faith withers up.

Then the seeds that are sown **among thorns** (**Mark 4:7**) describes the life of people who **receive** the Word but it is suffocated and **choked by the cares and anxieties of the world**, and the **distractions** that surround them all the time, and they **don't choose the Word**.

But the best part of the field is sown with good seed into **good soil** and produces thirty, sixty, and a hundred times as much as was planted. (**Mark 4:8**). This is the heart of the people who **receives** the Word, **acts** on it, **feeds** it, **nurtures** it and **believes** it so it can **bring forth fruit in abundance**, **2 Timothy 2:4....**

Seed always **produces after its own kind**: tomato seeds produce tomatoes, apple seeds produce apples. No one can get apples from sowing a tomato seed. So the widow gave food and was supplied with her meals. Seeds **need the right kind of soil** and the **right depth** of soil for the seeds to become established. They need the **right surroundings** in order to grow in the form of **light and heat and food**. Light allows them to breathe and so grow. Heat encourages growth; if there was no heat, there would only be slow stunted growth. Food makes them fruitful and strong.

The all-powerful Living Word of God is priceless treasure. We have to do everything in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to plant more and more in our hearts **and** into the lives of others. We need to decide we are going to hold onto the Word so that no matter how the devil tries to steal it, he will not make us "stony ground" Christians.

The best way to be good soil is to get truly excited about the Word. We get excited about what we focus on the most! Just like there is amazing power within a tiny seed to become a very fruitful tree, so it is the same with the Word of God, which when planted by faith in our heart will bear fruit in abundance of blessings and more faith. Spend all our spare time in the Bible, listen to CDs whenever we can, cancel the papers for a week and turn the television off. We will have our own revival. Watch while the tiny seed inside our hearts bears amazing fruit. God will cause desires and actions to rise up inside us and give us the strength to **obey** His Word. He will show us good works that He has designed for us to do, and His way of doing them. They might not be spectacular but they will bear abundant fruit for the Kingdom of God.

All the time we are reading the Word with our spirits we are planting seeds of health, wholeness and victory in our lives. The Bible is not an ordinary book, it has spiritual seeds of supernatural power, but we must be good soil, planting it, watering and feeding it, and not letting the thorns grow up. Go around every day with the most effective weed killer, **Praise and worship!**

**There is no greater need today than to make the Word the Priority in our lives: (Luke 13:18-19)**

If you sow love you will reap love  
If you sow faith you will reap faith  
If you sow joy you will reap joy  
If you sow harmony you will reap harmony  
If you sow faithfulness you will reap faithfulness

If you sow love you will **not** reap hatred  
If you sow faith you will **not** reap fear  
If you sow joy you will **not** reap sorrow  
If you sow harmony you will **not** reap strife  
If you sow faithfulness you will **not** reap unfaithfulness

**Every seed produces after its own kind Genesis 1: 11-12. Don't forget seed takes time to bear fruit but eventually, given the right conditions, IT WILL.**

'Give, and [gifts] will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will they pour into [the pouch formed by] the bosom [of your robe and used as a bag]. For with the measure you deal out [with the measure you use when you confer benefits on others], it will be measured back to you', **Luke 6:38 Amp.**

This sums up the widow of Zarephath's life and is a daily challenge to us to walk with Jesus moment by moment being led by His Spirit, feeding the Word planted in our hearts and giving our all that others might live eternally.

## No.28 The Widow of Zarephath - God's abundant multiplication! Challenge Question

### **Read all the notes about the Widow of Zarephath – God's abundant multiplication!**

1. What spoke to you in the notes? What area in your life are you walking in faith for at this time?
2. What about your casual conversation, are you always aware of the leading of the Holy Spirit to talk '**Jesus talk**'? Are our words encouraging ourselves and other people to walk by faith?
3. Can you think of a recent time when your faith was stretched but the outcome was so exciting?
4. From the list near the end of the notes 'If you sow.....' which do you find most encouraging and which do you find most challenging? What do you think the Father wants you to do?

### **Read Matthew 9:18-22; Mark 5:21-34; Luke 8:43-48**

5. In verse 20, what condition was this woman in?
6. What had she done to help herself?
7. What did she say was her plan?
8. Why was her plan dangerous for her?
9. What was Jesus' reaction and why? Also what was the disciples' reaction?
10. Share the woman's reaction when she was found out? Suggest how you think she must have felt.

