

# The Jar did Not Rub Dry

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[ 0 : 00 ] To begin things off for this week, I need a volunteer. Richard, my job for you this week is very, very simple. I just need you to do something for me.

But before I tell you what it is, do you think, are you happy to do this or do you think you need to get some help? I have no idea. I'll tell you what. I told you it's easy.

I just want you to hold this rugby ball for me. I've got another thing I need you to do for me, though.

Do you think you can do this for me or do you want to call on someone for some help?

I still don't know. I also want you to hold these books for me. I've got another thing I need you to do.

Are you happy to do this or do you think you need to call on someone for help?

At the moment, because I still don't know, I might manage a lecture. Very soon I'll see if I might have told you that. Okay. I want you to hold some more books for me. I've got another thing I need you to do for me today.

[ 1 : 03 ] Are you happy to do this or do you think you need to call on someone for some help?

Okay. Some more books for you. Do you want to keep going?

You don't have to read them. I just need you to hold them. Are you happy to keep going or do you want to call for some help? I should go for the moment. Okay. I've got some more books for you.

I'll tell you what. Let's speed this up. I'm going to give you some more books to go with those ones.

Okay. Do you want to keep going or...?

Okay. Okay. We're calling out for some... Can anyone help? I mean, it's probably fairly obvious what it is you're going to be doing.

At this point though, I am just going to speed things up and I need you to hold the rest of the books for me, please. Thank you. So we're on the story of Elijah.

[ 2 : 08 ] This might feel a little bit random, but it does link. So we are very early in Elijah's ministry. So far, the only thing he has done that the Bible tells us about in 1 Kings is giving a warning to the king.

And God then told him to go out to the wilderness because the king was not happy with the warning he was given. See, the warning that he was given was that because of what was going on, there was going to be a drought, which would mean no water, no rain, but also most likely no food.

So then God told Elijah to go out to the wilderness where there'd be even less water and even less food. And I think at this point, early on in Elijah's ministry, God was testing him.

Because he wanted to know from Elijah, same way that actually I was asking Richard, do you want to keep doing this yourself or are you going to call for some help? And Elijah chose to depend on God.

So I believe last week Richard was preaching and was talking about this first part where Elijah was out in the wilderness, is that correct? And God was providing food brought to him by crows and he drunk water from the brook.

[ 3 : 34 ] And that's how the very first part of the reading from Kings starts today. You can put down all of the books now, thank you. And the bull, yes.

I'm going to read the passage from 1 Kings 17 verses 8 to 16.

Verses 7 to 16, I apologize. Some time later, the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. Then the word of the Lord came to him. Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there.

I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food. So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks.

He called to her and asked, would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink? As she was going to get it, he called, and bring me, please, a piece of bread.

[ 4 : 40 ] As surely as the Lord your God lives, she replied, I don't have any bread. Only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I'm gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son that we may eat it and die.

Elijah said to her, don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me.

And then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says. The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.

She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry.

In keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah. So we're starting with Elijah. This morning we're going to look at Elijah and then the widow and then her son.

[ 5 : 55 ] We started with Elijah. Where God has already put him in a position where he has to depend on God. And the Bible tells us that God provides.

He provided for Elijah who depended on him. But also, I think there's a point for us to take from this. God provides for his work. We're at the very beginning of Elijah's ministry.

And God provides Elijah with what he needs to do it. What about the widow? The widow said that we only have enough food left.

I only have enough ingredients left to make one more meal for me and my son. And then after that, we expect to die. How do we think the widow felt giving that?

As I was looking through this and praying about it, my mind went to point in the Gospels. When Jesus is with his disciples, sat outside the temple. And Jesus points out two people who go into the temple.

[ 7 : 03 ] A rich man who goes in and just puts a tiny little bit of what he has into the offering box. But then a poor widow, a poor woman who only has one coin.

And she goes and she gives that to God. Last term, we were talking about giving with the youth. As we were building up to Christmas, we're talking about gifts that we get from God and we give to others.

But also giving back to God as well. And we asked the question, what would it be? What would it look like to give everything you have to God?

And one of the points that we showed from the Bible is actually maybe it comes down to the way that we look at what we have. The widow gave this to Elijah.

Maybe she did that because she saw it as a gift from God in the first place. So if we see everything that we have from God and we then give everything because we trust God, God will continue to provide for us as well.

[ 8 : 16 ] And then we had the son. I've got a short film clip that I want to play for you. I will point out now this is from a Christmas film. But I feel like actually the point that we want from it is there perfectly.

Towards the end of the clip, have a look out specifically for the daughter's reaction. How did the daughter react when her father put money or gave money into the charity box?

That is an open question. She wasn't particularly pleased. They didn't have much. Her younger brother was sick and needed medicine.

And her father gave away a part of what little they had. How do we think the widow's son felt when his mother gave away that last bit of bread that he thought they could make?

Did he react the same way as Cratchit's daughter? Or did he trust his mother? Did he trust God?

[ 9 : 28 ] Was this a chance for him to see what happens when we give everything we have to God? We know that in the next part of this story, as Elijah promised, the wheat never runs, the flour, sorry, never runs out.

The jar of oil never runs dry. God continues to provide for that family what they need until the rains come again.

So three people in the story. Elijah, who is led by God into his ministry and God provides for him.

The widow who doesn't have much, but because she gives everything she has to God, she has the opportunity to provide for God's work and for someone else who has need.

And the son. We don't actually know how old the son was. Maybe he was young. Maybe he was an adult as well. It does say that the widow was the one out collecting wood, which might suggest that

perhaps the son was a bit younger.

[ 10 : 40 ] But he had an opportunity to see God's provision and to see what it's like to trust God firsthand. I've got one more video for you, if you can hold it just for a second.

It's a worship song called God Provides by Tamela Mann. And while we're watching this video, while we're listening to this song.

What do you need at the moment? Do you need God to provide for you at this moment? Do you have something actually you could offer to others as part of God's provision?

Or maybe you're both. Maybe you don't have much and you need God to provide what the things that you need, but yet you still have something small that you can offer as well.

To have a think about that as we listen to this video. And whichever of those people you would say you are, make that your prayer this morning.

[ 11 : 48 ] It's okay to ask God to provide for us and to give us the things that we need. God will always provide.

So I want to turn that question into a challenge. It doesn't matter how young or how old we are. It doesn't matter whether we're at school, working or retired or unable to work.

God will provide. I think perhaps we are all like the widow. Some of us have more than others, but I think we all need something from God.

But I think no matter how young or old, how rich or poor you are, we all have something to offer as well. So that's the challenge that I want to give.

What do you need to ask God for this morning? But what can you offer back to God and to God's work as well?

[ 12 : 51 ] I mentioned that we spoke about giving with the youth last term. One of the points that we made was giving generously, giving sacrificially is about giving without counting the cost.

So the question, what do you need from God? The challenge, what will you give to God and to his work? And an encouragement.

All of the songs we've been singing this morning are about how good God is. God cares about the things that we need.

He will provide because he is good. Matthew 6 verses 31 to 33. And I want to leave with this.

So do not worry saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly father knows that you need him.

[ 13 : 54 ] But seek first his kingdom and righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

The encouragement that God will provide the things that you need. But he asks what we're prepared to give as well. Father God, thank you that you know all of our needs.

That you don't call us out to places to have nothing and then not provide. We also thank you that we all have things that we can give back to you.

And that we can give to others as well. Amen. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.