

# Elijah at Zarephath

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Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

[ 0 : 01 ] A warm welcome to our service this evening, and as we come together around the Word of God, let us seek his blessing upon his Word. Let us pray.

Eternal and ever-blessed Lord, we give thanks unto thee that we have access into the very throne room of God, that we can come with boldness and with confidence into thy presence to seek thy grace and to seek thy help in our time of need.

And as we come around thy Word, we pray, O Lord, for the help of thine own Spirit to enable us to be led into thy truth, that as we come to meditate upon thy Word, that thy Spirit would enlighten our understanding, and that thy Spirit would open our hearts, that thy Word may be lodged in our heart and bring forth evidence in our lives.

We give thee thanks for all the blessings that thou dost so abundantly outpour upon us every day.

For as we come before thee, we acknowledge our sins. We come, O Lord, to confess our sins, leaning upon thine own promise, that if we confess our sins, that thou art faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[ 1 : 50 ] We give thee thanks for all the things that thou art faithfulness. We give thee thanks for the efficacy of the finished work of thy Son, for the efficacy of the blood that was shed, which is able to reconcile us to our God, which is able to grant to us that we may have peace with God.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, for the continual ministry of thy Son at thine own right hand, and the intercession that he makes for those who were given to him by thee in the covenant of redemption, those for whom he shed his blood in this world, those whom he has redeemed to himself.

And we pray, O Lord, that as those who are among the redeemed, that we may indeed be faithful witnesses for thee in this world.

We remember those who are careless and indifferent to the claims of the word. And we pray, O Lord, that thy Spirit would draw them to see their need and to the sufficiency of Christ to meet with their need.

Remember those who may be seeking thee this day, who are seeking a token of good, who are seeking assurance that they have truly put their trust in thee.

[ 3 : 21 ] We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst meet with them at their point of need. We pray, O Lord, that thou would bless those who are ill.

May thy healing hand be upon them, and those who mourn the passing of loved ones, that thou would draw near to them and meet with them at their point of need.

O Lord, we pray, O Lord, we pray that thou would bless thy gospel throughout our communities, and throughout our land, throughout our nation, and in all nations of the earth.

Lord, we pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst meet with us, and in all nations of the earth.

Our souls shall not reap. But let us remember, as we know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, that even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.

[ 4 : 50 ] And we pray, O Lord, that today, that we may have rested upon the sovereignty of God, all knowing that thou art the one who is in full control, and that thou knowest, O Lord, what thou art doing, that there is no confusion with thee, that thou art working out thine own purpose.

And so grant to us, O Lord, that we may be dutiful, that we may, O Lord, be found in the path of duty.

Therefore, in the morning that we would sow the seed, and in the evening withhold not our hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

And so let us come, O Lord, and proclaim thy word, dependent upon thyself, to take thy word, and to bless it.

Remember all thy servants who have gone forth with thy word, that they may know the action of thine own Spirit upon them. We pray, O Lord, for our young people and our children, and pray that thou would raise up a generation that would fear thine own name.

[ 6 : 12 ] Remember our Queen and the Royal Household. Remember those set up in government. We pray, O Lord, that they would be given wisdom, that wisdom that cometh from thyself.

O Lord, we acknowledge that as a nation we have gone astray, that we are moved away from thine own paths. But we pray, O Lord, that in thy compassion and in thy pity, that thou would bring us back, that thou would bring us to days of repentance, days when we would sorrow over our sin and seek the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

Bless thy people. O grant that they may be faithful unto thee. And we pray, O Lord, that thou would bless us as an island, now that we see how the virus is impacting upon so many lives.

O Lord, we pray that thou would bring healing, that thou, O Lord, are teaching us how our lives can be so changed in a moment.

But we give thanks that we can have our hope and trust in a God who doesn't change. A God who delighteth in mercy at all times.

[ 7 : 34 ] A God who is ready to receive us at all times. We give thanks that our hope is in the unchanging God. Our lives will change.

Our communities will change. Our homes and families will change. But there is no change with God. And to that we give thanks today.

O Lord, we pray that thou would continue with us as we come to read thy word and as we come to meditate upon it. Apply it to our hearts. Give us, O Lord, that we may say wondrous things out of thine own word.

That our lives may be richer after our meditation upon it. And all that we ask with the forgiveness of our sins in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. We shall now read the word of God as we find it in the Old Testament in the first book of Kings and chapter 17.

[ 8 : 37 ] And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand.

There shall not be June or rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and tend thee usward, and hide thyself by the brook Kerith that is before Jordan.

And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord, for he went and dwelt by the brook Kerith that is before Jordan.

And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Saraphath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

[ 9 : 43 ] So he arose and went to Saraphath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow woman was there gathering of sticks, and he called to her and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink.

And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a mussel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise.

And behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not, Go and do as thou hast said, but make me therefore a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee a nice son.

For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and she and he and her house did eat many days.

And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Elijah. And it came to pass after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick, and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him.

[ 11 : 10 ] And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin, to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son.

And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into her loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon this widow with whom I sojourned, by slaying your son?

And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come unto him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came unto him again, and he revived.

And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber, into the house, and delivered him unto his mother. And Elijah said, See thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

May the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his word. And seeking the Lord's blessing and help, let us again read verse 24.

[ 12 : 27 ] 1 Kings 17 verse 24. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

This morning we reflected upon the widow of Saraphath. But tonight I would like to reflect upon Elijah at Saraphath.

Last week we paused with Elijah at Carith, the place of God's appointment for him, after he delivered a message of judgment to King Ahab.

A judgment that the Lord had already brought upon Israel for six months, and which was going to continue, and all because of their idolatry and wickedness.

Elijah presented King Ahab with a message from the living God. As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand, in contrast to the idols that the king and Israel had come to worship.

[ 13 : 31 ] Throughout the story of Elijah, we come to notice how often this truth is brought before us, that the God of Israel is the true and living God. But just as it was important in the days of Elijah that people would know that truth, it is just as important and relevant in our own day that people be taught that the God of the Bible is the true and living God.

that the God we worship is the living God. In a day when religious pluralism is promoted, in a day when we are encouraged to accept a multiplicity and variety of ways to worship God, a mixing of this and that, there is a call that is so important for us, and that is to bring out people to believe that there is only one God, one true and living God.

That was part of the burden that was placed upon the ministry of God's servant Elijah, and it is part of our ministry and our witness in our own day that there is only one God, the one and living true God.

Another matter that is brought before us is that the living God judges sin. The prophet Habakkuk wrote regarding the Lord, Thou art of pure eyes, and to behold evil, thou canst not look on iniquity.

At this time Israel was being judged by God because of their sin. Our living God is a holy God, and he is a God that judges sin, the sins of a nation, and the sins of individual.

[ 15 : 24 ] He is the living God. He is that living God that judges sin. But our living God is also the creator. He is the one who rules and sustains his works of creation.

He is the one who controls the seasons. He can send rain or cause drought and famine. He is in complete control.

He is also the God of providence and the God that cares. At Kereith, the Lord had promised that Elijah would be fed by ravens with bread and flesh every morning and evening, and that he could drink from a brook.

However, after a while, the brook dried up because there was no rain in the land. But Elijah waited upon the Lord, and the word of the Lord came to him and said, Arise, get thee to Seraphat, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there.

Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. If the first word that came to Elijah to hide by the brook Kereith sounded bizarre, this second word sounded even more bizarre.

[ 16 : 43 ] But again, as we noted regarding Kereith, that it was a place of Elijah, that it was not a place of Elijah's choosing, but it was a place of the Lord's choosing. Well, the same is true regarding Seraphat.

It was not a place of Elijah's choosing, but it was a place of the Lord's choosing. Kereith was a place of seclusion, a place of isolation, but Seraphat belonged to Sidon, the central place of Baal worship.

Sidon was the birthplace of Jezebel, who married King Ahab and introduced Baal worship into Israel. For which the Lord had judged Israel, a judgment which Elijah had just declared to King Ahab.

Jezebel probably instigated her campaign to wipe out the prophets of the Lord very shortly after Elijah had delivered his message to King Ahab.

However, regarding Elijah, we are told, so he arose and went to Seraphat. Elijah trusted the word of God.

[ 17 : 56 ] Although it may have sounded to him bizarre, yet his trust was not in man's wisdom, but in the wisdom of God. He had to travel about a hundred miles from Kereith to reach Seraphat, and he had to do so in a most dangerous time, when his life was being sought for by Jezebel.

But he had full confidence in the Lord's protection for him. He was moving in accordance with the word of the Lord.

You see, so many failures in our life, our backsliding, our spiritual leanness is often because we walk contrary to the word of God.

Elijah may have been tempted to look for other sources to sustain him as the brook-drieder, but Kereith, but each day that the brook was given less and less water, he waited upon the Lord.

If Seraphat seemed strange, the means of his sustenance was even stranger. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

[ 19 : 15 ] Widows in those days were extremely poor. We see how in Israel a law was made to provide special provision for widows.

However, Elijah is directed to Seraphat where a certain widow is going to sustain him. Whatever may have been his thoughts as he journeyed toward Seraphat, when he arrived at the city we are told that when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks.

Here again we meet two themes on which we have made some remarks already, so it will suffice us just to mention them. They are the sovereignty and the providence of God.

There was no luck, no coincidence. this was God's timing. How did Elijah know that this was the widow woman whom the Lord promised that was going to sustain him?

We are not told, but there have been many stories and perhaps some of our listeners have experienced this for themselves when the Lord reveals certain things to you about a person.

[ 20 : 33 ] Elijah was convinced that this woman at the gate was the woman chosen by God to sustain him. Now this morning we reflected upon this woman and how she came to faith in the living God.

What we will focus on at the moment is the conversation that took place between herself and Elijah. He called to her and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water and a vessel that I may drink.

Elijah had travelled about a hundred miles. The brook at Kerith had dried up before he began his journey and I would think that his body was very much dehydrated and we know that the loss of body water can lead to excessive thirst.

He was probably very thirsty. He was probably tired and weary from his journey. Water in a time of drought was a valuable commodity. However, she was willing to fetch him water but on the way Elijah called to her and said, bring me, I pray thee, a marshal of bread in thine hand.

He would almost conclude that Elijah's request was very selfish and that he had extraordinarily little or no regard to the situation and circumstances of the widow.

[ 21 : 52 ] But as the story unfolds, we come to realise that it was not Elijah that was in control. The one who was in control was God.

The Lord, through his word, delivered by his servant Elijah, was challenging this woman as we saw this morning. Elijah was just the mouthpiece of the living God.

Has the word of God ever challenged you through the preaching of the gospel? Well, preachers are simply God's mouthpiece through which he presents you with a challenge.

Paul, writing his second letter to the Corinthians in chapter five, writes, now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's dead, be ye reconciled to God.

God. This is a challenge to you tonight. Be ye reconciled to God. Elijah was presenting this widow with a challenge to see who had priority in her life.

[ 23 : 05 ] Would she put God first or herself? Well, who has the priority in your life? Jesus says in Matthew chapter six, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought for tomorrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, sufficient into the days, the evil thereof. The widow explained to Elijah her predicament.

As the Lord thy God loveth, I am not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise, and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.

Now, Elijah would not have been hard hearted against the predicament of this widow, but Elijah had faith in the word of the living God.

So he said to the widow, Fear not, go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after it make for thee and for thy son.

[ 24 : 19 ] For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord send rain upon the earth.

Elijah had already experienced the promise of God at Carith, how the ravens came and fed him, and how the brook provided water for many days, and although he could not explain, he believed the word of the living God.

He had faith and trust in the source of the promise. promise. He had faith and trust in the source of the promise. There are many things that we cannot explain.

For instance, who can explain the resurrection? But we believe that there will be a day of resurrection, because we have faith and trust in the source of the promise.

Like Elijah, the children of faith have many instances in their Christian life that strengthens and reinforces their faith and trust with the word of God.

[ 25 : 27 ] There is no doubt that Elijah's experience at Kerith strengthened and reinforced his faith and trust with the word of God, and such he was now exercising in regards to the widow of Seraphath.

For the Lord had promised, that the barrel of meal would not waste and the cruise of oil would not fail until the day that the Lord sent a rain upon the earth.

But Elijah's ministry here at Seraphath was not merely for his own sustenance and for the widow and her son to survive, but it was also to pluck a brand from the burning, or to bring a woman, and I believe her son, to faith in the living God.

She believed, as we saw this morning, she believed that God lives in contrast to the dead idols, but she at that time had no relationship whatsoever with God.

Her reference to the living God was that God was the God of Elijah, but through Elijah presenting her with the word of God and the promise of God, she came to faith.

[ 26 : 58 ] Elijah was sent so that the widow of Seraphath and her son might receive saving grace. Elijah again saw the wisdom and power of God at work in the widow's home, which would be an encouragement for himself and for his future ministry.

He was no longer in isolation and I am sure that he shared much with the widow and her son. They shared God's blessings together.

The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail according to the word of the Lord which is spake by Elijah. Every day that she dipped her hand into the barrel there was sufficient meal for that day.

And every day that she poured the oil from the cruise, there was sufficient oil for that day. Whatever doubts might have arisen in her mind as she dipped her hand into the barrel or as she poured the cruise, whatever doubt she may have had, despite perhaps her own failures, the Lord was faithful to his word and to his promise.

A period of time has passed since the coming of Elijah to the city and into the widow's home, and the home and life seems to have been going on well for the widow and her son and for Elijah.

[ 28 : 30 ] The home seems to be all happiness. However, an unwelcome intruder is near at hand. This home is soon to echo weeping and mourning.

the widow's son has become sick and eventually he dies and the home is plunged into a mourning household. As we reflect upon what is happening in the widow's home, we are reminded that God has a purpose with every detail of our lives.

He had a purpose in sending Elijah to Seraphat and meeting up with the widow and her son. God has a purpose in sending sickness and death into the home.

It reminds us of our immortality and that is not necessarily a bad thing. In the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 7, it says there, it is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men and the living will be laid to his heart.

There is often the assumption by the young that they think that when they think about death that they think it's only something that is for older people.

[ 29 : 50 ] There is the assumption by the young that they will think about death when they are older. But death is no respecter of persons. God sends us sickness for he wants us to reckon about death and so he sends warnings to us.

sickness is a warning from God letting us know that one day that death is coming. It is a gospel call to be ready and prepared for death.

Here we are called upon to pause and read the uncertainty of earth's best joys and purest happiness. After a season of rich blessings, amid our happy homes and sunshine hours and seasons of holy and joyous communion between friend and friend, we must bear in mind that it is not to last.

In one brief and unsuspected moment we may be taken away in death. In recent months we have been hearing much of death and while vaccines may eliminate sufferings and sickness, it will never eliminate death.

death. No vaccine will eliminate death. It may eliminate sufferings and sickness, but not death.

[ 31 : 13 ] We will always live under the shadow of death. It is always there waiting for us at the finishing line. death entered this home at Seraphath.

The widow in a moment of haste blames Elijah. What have I to do with you, O thou man of God? Are thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son?

Her complaint against Elijah was that the death of her son had something to do with her being judged because of a particular sin that was in her life.

Although her mind seems to be muddled up in her bereavement and grief, there is a worthy note to take from her statement. Truly, the Bible makes it quite clear to us that death is the wages of sin.

Sin has entered the world and with sin, death. Paul, writing his letter to the Roman, writes in chapter 5, Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

[ 32 : 30 ] Although the cause of her son's death was not a particular sin that she had committed, nevertheless, death is as a result of sin. But notice here that Elijah did not abrade the wood wand.

Instead, we are told that he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom and carried him up into aloft where he abode and laid him upon his own bed.

He took the child to his own private quarters, and then he brought the matter before God. He cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourned by slaying her son.

And he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come unto him again. O, what value do I and you put upon private prayer?

This was a private prayer. What was Elijah's secret? What was secret? It was his faith and trust in the living God.

[ 33 : 47 ] Remember what we read some time ago in James chapter 5 about Elijah. We read there that he was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

You see, Elijah felt the death of the widow's son very kindly. He was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he felt the death of the widow's son.

But he knew that the best place to come with his grief was to the Lord, and not to go about throwing accusations and looking to blame someone. Elijah already had experienced the power of prayer, for he had prayed for God to withhold rain from Israel.

Israel, whose prayer was based upon the word of God. And in the privacy of his chamber, Elijah brought his dilemma before the Lord.

And that's the best place for me and you to bring our burdens, to bring our dilemma, always to bring them before the Lord.

[ 35 : 02 ] Lord. The words of his cry to the Lord shows us that Elijah himself did not understand the Lord's purpose any more than the boy's mother. O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon this widow with whom I sojourned by slaying her son?

His petition to the Lord is in the form of a question. O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon this widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her son?

This teaches us that whatever problems, whatever doubts, whatever questions we may have, the best place to take them is to the Lord. Elijah, though a man of God, a prophet of God, yet he could not explain everything.

And this is also true of present-day ministries. There is much that no minister of the gospel or any Christian person can explain. There is much that we cannot explain.

But Elijah prayed in faith. Again, the testimony of James, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

[ 36 : 19 ] A.W. Pink draws seven lessons to us from Elijah's prayer. He writes, Elijah retiring to his own private chamber that he might be alone with God.

Then he says his fervency. He cried unto the Lord. No mere lip service was this. Third, his reliance upon his own personal interest in the Lord, availing his covenant relationship.

O Lord, my God. Fourth, his encouraging himself and God's attributes. Here, the divine sovereignty and supremacy, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow.

Fifthly, his earnestness and importunity evidenced by his stretching himself upon the child no less than three times. Sixth, his appeal to God's tender mercy, the widow with whom I sojourned.



And finally, the definitiveness of his petition. Let this child's soul come back unto him again. Now, each of these lessons that A.W.

- [ 37 : 25 ] Pink draws are worthy of further assessment, appraisal and consideration, but we have to leave them tonight, just as quotes. But they are worthy for you to take them with you and to consider them.

Another interesting feature that we have about Elijah's prayer is that his petition was for something new. He was praying for something that he had never heard that had happened before, for as far as we know, this is the first recorded return from death in the Bible.

We know that Abraham believed in the power of God to bring back the dead, for we are told in the book of Hebrews that by faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promise, offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, according that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.

I don't think it would be wrong for us at all to believe that Elijah believed like Abraham that God had the power to raise the widow's son from death.

Elijah prayed in faith, trusting the power of God, and like Abraham, he also believed that God had the power to raise the widow's son from death.

- [ 39 : 02 ] It is interesting that he stretched himself upon the child three times. A.W. Pinker, as we saw there, says that this was evidence of his earnestness and importunity.

Well, I do not know, but I do know this, that according to the Levitical law, it was unlawful and impure for a holy man to touch a dead body.

Yet he touched this body, we are told, three times. Now, I don't know why three times. Of course, we must remember that it was not Elijah's touch that raised the child, but God, for God only has the power to give life.

Remember how one day a leper came to Jesus and Jesus had compassion upon him and stretched forth his hand and healed him. The same Levitical law pertained to lepers.

No one was to touch them, for by doing so they became ceremonially unclean. And I think what we have here in Elijah stretching himself upon the child, it is indeed a mark of his earnestness and importunity.

- [ 40 : 24 ] We're not saying that it isn't, but I think that it is a lesson in time for us of identification. temptation. By doing so, Elijah himself was becoming ceremonially unclean.

And Paul writing a second letter to the Corinthians chapter 5 writes about Jesus, for he, that is God, made him, that is Jesus, to be sin for us. He became identified with us.

The one who you know sin became identified with us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Jesus was not a sinner, but he came identified with our sin.

Our sins were imputed to him, or our sins were reckoned to him. He remained purist and sinless, but our sins was reckoned to him.

The touch of Elijah was a touch of faith. It was an act of faith, because faith that believed that God could make the unclean clean, a faith that believed that God could bring the dead to life again.

- [ 41 : 40 ] See, there is a sense in which the focus of the story is not so much upon death, but the power of God to bring back the dead to life again.

In the New Testament we have Jairus' daughter, the son of the Duatnain and Lazarus. All three were brought back from the dead to live again.

Now, I am of the opinion that such experience was only received by believers. We read in Matthew chapter 27, Matthew 3, and behold, the veil of the temple was opened to, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

It was the bodies of the saints that were raised. many ask where their spirits or souls in the intervening period were it also raises many opinions but we acknowledge that here we have something that is far beyond our comprehension our knowledge and nevertheless without being dogmatic or rigid it is my opinion that the God who created all things and knew all things from the beginning to end held their spirits in a special place knowing what he was going to do with them those who rose and appeared to many in Jerusalem we are not told that they returned into the grave and I believe that at the death of Christ that after the Christ's resurrection that they went into heaven with him that they went into heaven with Christ

Christ is the firstfruits from the dead no resurrected body went into heaven before Jesus Christ it is interesting that this very prophet himself Elijah was going to go to heaven without entering death along with Enoch they were translated or changed without dying and the Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came unto him again and he revived Elijah witnessed the power of God over death even here in the Old Testament the power of God over death is already seen which in the New Testament is plainly demonstrated for us in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ the raising of the widow's son at Seraphat was one of the Old Testament events that pointed the people of God forward to Jesus Christ it anticipated the resurrection power of God that was fully revealed in Jesus

[ 44 : 51 ] God interrupted and overturned death by giving life to the widow's son you see the resurrection is an important concept within the realm of salvation for Paul tells us in his letter to the Corinthians now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead but if there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen and if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain and we are found false witnesses of God because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ whom he raised not up if so be that the dead rise not for if the dead rise not then is not Christ raised and if Christ be not raised your faith is vain and ye are yet in your sins then they which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished if in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable what Paul is saying there is that if there is no resurrection there is no faith there is no salvation when Jesus says

I am the resurrection he is claiming a power that the world does not know or understand he is saying I can't stop death I can't reverse death I can't stand over the grave and challenge death throughout this narrative there is one thing that is made truly clear to us and that is the utter helplessness of man in the presence of death not only was this widow this boy's mother utterly helpless but so also was Elijah and here is where the glory of God shines forth man may be helpless before death but not so God we are told and Elijah took the child and brought him down out of the chamber into the house and delivered him up into his mother and Elijah said see thy son liveth and the woman said to Elijah now by this I know that thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth

God demonstrates that he has power over death and God's demonstration over death gave the widow the assurance that she needed I know that thou art a man of God and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth here is something that is particularly important for us to grasp the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the given pledge and guarantee of his people's everlasting salvation the resurrection of Jesus is a proclamation that he has purchased all that he has paid the ransom price that he has procured everything for his people and as we look into his empty tomb we see sin being cancelled guilt blotted out the law magnified just dishonoured and the sinner saved and like the widow we can say that the word of the Lord is truth believers in Christ will die a physical death but they will not die a permanent death for Jesus he is the one who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification

Paul writing to the Philippians writes for our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself oh the glorious future that awaits the child of God the Christian is going to be delivered from everything that is humiliating it is all going to be taken away and the Christian will be transformed into a glorification that will be fitting and enable the Christian to stand for eternity in the presence of God that is our living hope that is what we have as our sure hope that still awaits us today you may be weak tired harassed by your imperfections but Paul says press on press on you are not on your own for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure do you share in this living and sure hope well whatever doubts whatever imperfections that belonged to the widow of Seraphath

God's demonstration over death gave her the assurance that she needed and dear friend whatever weakness whatever failures whatever imperfections is in my life and your life God's demonstration over death and the resurrection of his son the Lord Jesus Christ should give me and you the assurance that we need that the word of the Lord is truth that the word of the Lord is truth and so let us follow this widow of Seraphath may she be a good example for me and you tonight for the Lord is risen he is risen as we noted this morning the words of the angels to the woman who came come see the place where the Lord lay it is empty he has demonstrated his power over death and the grave and we shall share in that in that experience we shall share it with Christ yes we may die a physical death but we will not die a permanent death for we shall appear with him who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like into his glorious body well do you share in this living and sure hope will we stand with the widow of Seraphath and rejoice in the salvation of our

[ 51 : 45 ] God may the Lord bless our thoughts let us pray eternal and ever blessed Lord we give thanks unto thee that thou hast given to us that true and living hope through the resurrection of thy son the Lord Jesus Christ we give thee thanks that it was he who died that it was he who was buried and that it was he that rose again and ascended to thine own right hand where he ministers in the intercession that he makes on behalf of those for whom he died and for those for whom he rose again and we give thee thanks for the great promise that he is coming back not as a sacrifice for sin but to gather his people on that day when our vile bodies shall be fashioned like into his glorious body oh Lord we give thee thanks that we can have tonight that living and true hope through

Jesus Christ we ask oh Lord that thou would watch over us in coming days and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more Amen Amen