

Put God first and watch Him meet your Needs

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

How many of y'all enjoyed the young girls singing tonight? Say amen. That's the young girls at Vision. Amen. Take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Kings chapter 17.

And don't laugh, guys. They don't like it when you laugh when you call them young girls. 1 Kings 17 verse 5. I really want to ask you to listen tonight.

Not to me, but to this passage of Scripture. And I want you to realize what's going on. Did you know that you have a problem and it's always the Word of God that has the solution?

It's always the Word of God that has the solution. And you must forget your own opinion and your own way of responding and just say, well, if God said that, that settles it.

[1 : 05] And you just drop it. So you don't want to continue on with your own opinion arguing with God. And in this story tonight, we find out that as they obeyed God, he met their need.

As they obeyed God, both of them. In fact, the man of God's need won't be met if he doesn't obey God. And the widow's needs won't be met if she doesn't obey God.

So I wonder if in my own life some of the problems I deal with might be better solved if I would just obey God. So read with me, if you would, 1 Kings 17 and verse 5.

The Bible said, Would you want to learn that? He went and did according unto the word of the Lord.

For he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan. He went and did according to the word of the Lord. Now go down to 1 Kings 17, 15. The Bible says that she went and did.

[2 : 11] Look at that. She went and did according to the saying of Elijah. You should not align that. He went and did. 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 cruiser all fail. Listen to this. According to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

If you go back up to verse 5, it was according unto the word of the Lord. If you come back down to verse 16, it was according to the word of the Lord. We have in our hands the word of the Lord.

And we ought to believe that it works today. This is not a dead, dry book. The fact is, it claims to be alive quick.

It claims to be powerful. It claims to be able to read your mind to discern your thoughts and intents of your heart. And you know what I think about that?

[3 : 13] I think it does. Because he said it does. And so I also have experienced it. He has a way of looking into my heart. So tonight, if you want to sum everything up, those verses right there will do it.

They went and did according to the word of the Lord. What are you dealing with? What issues are you dealing with? Go and do what the word of God says. Father, would you help me now as I walk through the story with your people to help them to be excited and encouraged to obey you, to not argue with you, to accept what you say, whether it makes sense to them or not.

Would you help us to trust your word? And I will give you praise and honor and glory for all that you do. In Jesus' name, amen. Go with me, if you would, to 1 Kings 17 and verse 1.

The first thing you might notice is that God will be taking care of his man. The first thing he does is he sends Elijah to the wicked king, Ahab, to tell the king it's not going to rain until he says so, until Elijah says so.

Read 1 Kings 17 and 1 with me. And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

[4 : 28] So he goes and finds the king and says, Hey king, I just want to tell you, God said it's not going to rain. God said it's not going to rain until I say it's going to rain, and I'll serve him, I'll stand before him, I'm his servant, and I'm just telling you, it's not going to rain.

Look at 17.2. So God sends his man to a place where he can take care of him. It says in 1 Kings 17.2, The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, verse 3, Get out of here, get thee hence, go there, turn eastward, hide yourself by the brook Cherith that's before Jordan.

And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, that I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. God sent his man to a place where he would take care of him.

If you have your Bible open, you might even circle the word there in verse 4. He said, you go to this place, you do what I say, you go where I say, and you do what I say do, and I will take care of you.

He said, I got a creek you can drink out of, a brook you can drink out of, and I got birds that are going to take you food and you can eat. Verse 5. And he obeyed God.

[5 : 35] Look at it. And so he went and did according unto the word of the Lord. He obeyed God. He obeyed God. And God kept his word.

Verse 6. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook. That's a pretty wild story. So the man of God goes in and delivers a scary message and tells the people, tells the king, it's not going to rain.

He had to go face a wicked king, Ahab, tells him it's not going to rain. And then God says, but I got to take care of you. If it's not going to rain, things are going to get tight around here. Let me send you to a place where I will take care of you.

God sends his man on a mission, but not without meeting his needs as he goes. I'd like to pause right here and talk to you as parents. They give up your kids to go to the mission field.

Because at our church, there's a good chance your kids may go to the mission field. And you might be worried about them. And you might be thinking to yourself, I really don't want to be in missions because I'm not sure that things will work out.

[6 : 43] I'm not sure they'll be taken care of. But in this story, as the man of God obeyed God and went where God told him to go, God met his needs. As they obey, he provides.

You would never be able to do for them what God can and will do for them. So some things to consider before we get into the real meat of the message, maybe find and do God's will for your life.

Can I just stop and say this? And I hope you'll pay just a tad of attention here. Too many times a biblical truth is stated to us. And it's in the Bible. And we know it.

And here's what we do. But, I don't know if that works in my life. But, I'm not sure about that. Let me respond to that. Let me tell you what I think of that. You know, here's the beautiful thing in this story tonight.

There's no buts in the story. There's no arguing with God. There's just simple obedience. What if Elijah had said, I don't really want food's been in a bird's mouth.

[7 : 44] Let's clarify something here, God. I'm against ravens. And I'm definitely against ravens if they've got my food in their mouth. And I really don't want to drink out of a brook. I'd rather have a well and get the water the way I want to get the water.

But that's not what happened in the story. And so many times I think when God's dealing in my life, I know what the Bible says. You know, it's rarely an issue with us that we don't know what God says. We usually know what He says.

We just don't like what He says. We usually know what He says. We just have another opinion that God doesn't have. So we want to listen to the Word of God. We want to obey the Word of God.

And we will know that God's going to meet our needs. Don't be too picky about how He goes about meeting your needs. Don't be too picky about how He goes about meeting your needs.

Isn't that an amazing story? I mean, honestly, I mean, I don't know if you picture things, but when I read the Bible, I mean, I can see it. It's just like a movie playing in my head. I can just see Elijah down by the brook and he's up in the morning.

[8 : 43] He doesn't run by McDonald's. The bird comes flying in. He's just hoping the bird's starting to bring a bigger meal. Say amen. He's just hoping that the bird comes in with something he wants. He's just hoping the bird didn't slobber on what he brought.

But he went where he was supposed to, and he obeyed God. Second thing I want you to see. You go where God wants, and you obey. Second thing I want you to see is it's always step by step with us.

God's people always get direction step by step. You don't know what God's going to do with you next year or five years from now or ten years from now. And the fact is, if you thought you did, you'd be foolish to say it because he said in James chapter 4, don't you dare say I plan to go to that town, stay there a year, make me some money, and I'll come back.

He said if you're smart, you'll say if the Lord wills because you don't know if you'll live or not. You can make all the plans you want, but it's not you who will decide. Go with me, if you would, to 1 Kings 17.

See, the story is that Elijah will not know every step of the journey, and Elijah won't know how things are going to be taken care of. And so it says in 1 Kings 17.7 that it came to pass that the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land, and the word of the Lord came in him saying.

[9 : 59] So, you know, here's what happens. He's at the brook, and he's waiting on the bird, and he starts noticing there's a little bit less water today, a little bit less water the next day, a little bit less water the next day. He had to be wondering, what am I supposed to do?

I thought God was going to take care of me, but he only had the step to take him to one place. He doesn't know what the next step is. All he knows is I'm obeying God to this point, and whenever it's time, I'll take the next step.

That's a big lesson for us. Too many of us, you know, by nature, we are all control freaks. By nature, every one of us want to know everything that's going to happen. Everybody wants to be able to lay it all out.

Well, he went there, and the brook dried up, but the word of the Lord came saying something in verse 8, didn't it? Look at verse 9. God told him where to go again. In verse 9, he said, Can I get you to put a circle around the word there two more times?

You know, he said, If you go there to the brook, I'll take care of you. Now he says, If you go dwell there, where the widow woman's there, I'll sustain you. God gave Elijah a specific place both times.

[11 : 13] That's three times the word there has been used in nine verses. There. Go there. Three times. Referring to the place where Elijah was to be.

Elijah knows before he ever sees this woman that his needs are going to be met. You've got to remember, Elijah went to the brook, and God said, Maybe the first time you get that message, the first time God's dealing with your heart, maybe you're a little leery, a little skeptical when you hear God say, Why don't you step out and go down to the brook Cherith, and there you're going to drink out of the brook, and I'll send a bird to bring your food in.

And maybe on the way down there, he's like, I'm not too sure about this. I'm going to do it because God said do it, but I don't know that I quite understand it. Kind of like the guys did when he said, he came to them and he said, Hey, boys, you caught any fish?

And they said, No, sir, we've worked all night and hadn't caught a fish. He said, Well, throw the net out on the other side. And they said, Lord, we're working all night here. We ain't caught a thing. But nevertheless, it's your word. And what you say, I'll respond and I'll do it.

And they threw it out in their boat, almost sunk trying to pull the fish in with them. So he goes down, 1 Kings 17, 10. The lady's blessings and needs being met all start with obedience.

[12 : 26] The lady's in trouble. The lady's in trouble. The lady is in trouble. But it's all going to be met by obedience. The way God works is little bits of obedience.

The big word is obedience. The big word is take the next step God tells you to take. Don't argue. Just go there. Don't argue. Just do what I say.

And look at what it says in 1 Kings 17. That's the story here. In 1 Kings 17, 10, it says, So he arose and he went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the woman, the widow woman, was there gathering sticks.

And he called to her and said, Hey, lady, get me some water. A little bit of water. I just need something to drink. Been down at the brook. The brook's dried up. I'd like something to drink. Bring me some water. She doesn't know who Elijah is.

She doesn't know that God's going to provide for them both. And the first thing he does is only ask for a little bit of water. And the lady was going to go get him some water.

[13 : 26] 1 Kings 17, 11. Look at it. It says, And as she was going to fetch it, she's on her way to get the water. And he said to her, Well, bring me a morsel. I just need one good bite of bread when you come back.

So I want you to picture this. The lady now, now the man of God's been going step by step obeying God. He wasn't told, First, you will go down to the brook. And after you've been at the brook for three months, go ahead and check off on your checklist.

I'll be sending you down to another place. Because I'm going to meet your needs. Let me lay it all out for you. That's not how the story goes at all. The story goes, You go to the brook. He goes to the brook, and all of a sudden the brook's drying up.

And, you know, he might have been getting nervous. If he was like us, he'd have been getting nervous. When you start seeing your bank account shrivel, when you start seeing your water fountain dry up, when you start seeing that things aren't working the way you want, the first thing you do is get nervous.

That's what I do. How many of you get nervous if you do say amen? I get nervous. I mean, I get nervous. Betty says, You know, That's a lot of bills there. And I'm like, Sorry, man.

[14 : 25] I tell her, I'll find a place to preach. Don't worry. I'll go preach somewhere and get us some more money. That really is true. But look here.

She's on her way to get the water. And he says, I need you to bring me a bite of bread. Rarely could anyone know much of what's in the future. Now, Elijah did know just a little bit.

He knew if I go to the brook, the Lord will feed me there. And if I go to the widow lady, the Lord will feed me there. He knew that much. He was given a little more light than she was given. But here's what we do.

We simply step out on faith. I'm going to read you some verses in a minute. How are you trying to get raised money out of you tonight? This is just the chapter. But I do think money is probably one of the biggest testing areas.

We simply obey the light he gives us. We wait on him to give more light, and we keep trusting. So, you know, God says, Go there. We take that step. We get there, and we're like, Well, Lord, what are we going to do now?

[15 : 24] And the Lord said, We'll take another step. I got this all worked out. But I can only obey the light I've been given. Notice that both Elijah and the widow are asked to take steps. One, go down to the brook.

Now go to the widow. Go get me some water. Now bring me a bite of bread. It was step by step. The whole plan's not laid out. They just obey and keep obeying.

I wish we could graduate from obedience training. I wish there'd be a day they'd give us a diploma and say, We finished obedience school. Even a puppy gets to do that.

But we never get to do that. You're never getting out of this school. I've been doing this a long time. And I can tell you this. He's still telling me, Just take the next step, son. I'll take care of things.

Don't get much light about what's happening or what's going to happen. Go with me to verse 12. The Lord knows where you live. And the Lord knows what you're facing.

[16 : 25] That's what I wish you'd write down. The Lord knows where you live. And he knows what you're facing. So you're in this room tonight. And you're saying, Look, Austin, if you understood my financial situation, if you knew of my emotional state, if you knew where I'm living, if you knew about my marriage, if you understood, you'd understand this doesn't work for me.

And I used to tell the Peruvians all the time, I do not understand your reality. Because that was their favorite saying to me, You don't understand our reality. I said, I don't understand your reality, but God understands your reality.

Could I get an amen right there? God knows where you live. God knows what you need. God knows how to provide for you whatever it is you need. So look at 1 Kings 17, 12.

And she said, He told her to go get him a bite of bread. Remember? And she says, As the Lord thy God lives, I have not a cake to get you a morsel from.

All I got is a handful of meal and a little bit of oil. And I was gathering two sticks. Do you understand how much fire I'm going to make? I'm not stoking a big oven here. I got two little sticks.

[17 : 30] That's all I need to cook what I'm going to cook. And I got a little oil. I got a little meal. And I got two sticks. I'm going to go fix that. And then me and my son are going to eat it. And we're going to die.

This is it. We're out. It's over. You don't understand where I live, Elijah. That's a pretty tough statement.

She lets Elijah know she doesn't have a cake. She doesn't have a loaf of bread. And she certainly can't give him a bite of it. She's actually out of everything and planning her last meal.

She's going to eat and die. But God knew her need. He knew where she was. And he sent the man of God, Elijah, to her. God is going to work a miracle.

And he's going to take care of his man. And she's going to get to be a part of that miracle. And she's going to enjoy the blessings of being a part of that miracle. I want you to understand tonight, God knows where you live.

[18 : 29] That's the beautiful thing of this chapter. He knows the financial situation you're in. He knows the emotional state you're in. He knows the problems you're facing. He knows what you're living with. He knows your health condition.

He knows all about that. And he is bigger than every place we are. He is the creator God. He is the almighty, eternal, powerful, almighty God.

And so he knows what to do with me. The answer to her need was for her to give. The answer to her need was for her to give.

That goes against everything. The answer for her need was to give. He said, bring me some water. She said, don't have any water. I said, I do have water.

I'll give you some water. He said, bring me a bite. She says, I ain't got a bite to give you. But he's going to tell her, bring me. Now, here's a biblical principle for you.

[19 : 33] You see, obedience means you learn to trust God, not what you can see. You learn to trust God, not what you can figure out.

So the Bible says in Luke chapter 6 and verse 38, if you would, New Testament verse that goes right along with this. Give and it shall be given unto you.

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that you meet with all, it shall be measured to you again.

Here's what God said to him. He said, learn to give. Now, see, giving is the opposite of what a selfish person does. Because when I hadn't got enough to eat, I'm not about to give it away.

And when I think that it's going to be dependent upon how much I handle my money and what I do with myself, I'm not about to give it away. But Jesus said, give and it shall be given. Betty and I were young a long time ago, and I heard a message on this verse.

[20 : 36] And the preacher said, God can meet your needs. You should step out sometime in your life and just give like a crazy person and see what God could do. And I was trying to remember exactly what the salary was.

I told some of the guys the other day, but I think I was making \$240 a month at the church I worked in. And so I'd given my tithe, my \$24 or \$25, and I came home and I told Betty.

I said, I don't want to tell anybody, but I'd like to see if God will really do that stuff. I don't know if he will or not, but I'd like to at least try it. And so we took \$100 out of what was left.

Our rent was about \$195, I think it was. And I took another \$100, and I said, let's just see what God will do. I'd like to see what God will do. And I sent it to a missionary down in Atlanta who worked with people that lived on the streets.

And I told the Lord, I'm testing you. You said give, and it shall be given. So I'm expecting to see something happen. We didn't have any money. We didn't know what to do.

[21 : 40] It was just me and her. We didn't tell a soul about it. And we were at the little church we worked in, probably our size, a little bit smaller than this church. And on the way home, one night we got to our house, and we walked up to the door, and there was a note stuck on the door.

And somebody put a \$50 bill there in a little envelope that had that little window where you could see the \$50 bill face. And around the note it said, you've been a blessing to us, we want to be a blessing to you. No name. We still don't know who gave it.

I said, hey, we gave away \$100. He's already given \$50 back. This is going pretty good. I know what you're thinking. It was a coincidence. Well, it might have been, but I'll take that coincidence.

And we didn't tell a soul, and they didn't know. And then a church called me and asked me to preach. And I mean, I'm a little kid.

I'm in my late, I guess my early 20s, maybe 20, 21. And I go to this church, and I'm just so excited. I said, that's it. I'm going to preach, and they're going to give me a lot of money.

[22 : 39] This is going to be good. And I got there, and there's like four old ladies, probably about Betty's age. But you've got to remember, I was 20 back then. So she did look a little older back then.

And I thought, I said, well, I hope they pay my gas bill. And they gave me \$100 after I preached here. And I came home, I said, I gave away \$100. I'm up to \$150 now. And before it was over, we made much more.

We had more income that month than we ever had. And here's a Bible principle. Lady, you don't have anything to eat. Stop being selfish and start trusting me.

Start putting God to the chest. Go with me, if you would, to 2 Corinthians 8, verse 1. 2 Corinthians 8, verse 1. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 8, verse 1.

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded under the riches of their liberality.

[23 : 40] They were in trouble, but they were liberal. That means they were big givers. They had a lot of joy and a lot of poverty and a big trial, but they gave a lot.

And to their power they gave, and beyond their power they were willing. They begged us to take the offering and to let them be a part of it. You see the same story in the story of Hannah.

In 1 Samuel 1, verse 11, Hannah can't have children. Her wife, her partner wife, is having lots of children and picking on her about it. She goes to the temple and starts praying, and she says, God, if you'll just give me a kid, I'll give him back to you.

I just want one. Just give me one, and I'll give him back so that I'd like her to shut her mouth and quit picking on me. And so she gave God Samuel. In 1 Samuel 1, verse 27, she said, I prayed and you've answered.

In 1 Samuel 2, verse 21, God gave her three sons and two daughters. God is in the taking care of you business. God is in the taking care of you business.

[24 : 48] Let me just say bluntly and unashamedly, I don't feel the least bit bad about you being a giver. When I arrived in Atikipa, to a very poor people, we paid our maid \$25 a month, and that was more than she could make as a nurse.

It was \$25 a week. I had to get paid to tell me that. \$25 a week? A month? You don't know. I don't know. Anyway, it's a long time ago. But you know what happened? I told those people to tithe, and you know what?

When those people started giving, God started blessing them because God blesses givers. And in this story, a widow woman who's in trouble becomes a giver.

And here's what you do. You get in trouble, and you become stingier. And the stingier you become, the more you cut off what God would do in your life. You never have to question if God understands where you live and what you're going through.

Tonight, you're in this room, and you are going through some junk, and I don't know what you're going through, but God does. You got financial problems. You got emotional problems. You got any kind of junk going on in your life, and you think, I don't know what's going on, and I don't understand why God's doing this.

[25 : 58] But God sees the future. God already knows. And God is ready to help you and to take care of you. 1 Kings 17, verse 13. Believing God means putting Him first, even when you're afraid to do so.

Believing God means putting Him first, even when you're afraid to do so. You know, when you got plenty of money, it's not that big a deal to give. Actually, sometimes it becomes a bigger deal to give because it seems like the more people, the more money people get, the more they need to keep it.

But in 1 Kings 17, verse 13, the lady said, he said, bring me some water. And she said, okay, goes to get him the water.

And on the way, he says, give me a little bite of bread while you're at it. And she says, look, buddy, we don't have any bread to give you. I'm fixing to get me two sticks.

I got a little bit of meal. I got a little bit of oil. I'm going to mix it up. We're going to eat. We're going to die. That's our future. And you want me to be some bread. And so in 1 Kings 17, 13, look what the Bible says.

[27 : 06] And Elijah said unto her, well, don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Just go and do what I told you to do. Fear not. Go and do as you have said, but make me therefore a little cake first.

This is a crazy story. He said, so you said you're going to get your oil and you're going to get your flour. You're going to get your two sticks. You're going to make you a cake. You're going to eat that and y'all are going to die. Okay, go do it.

Tell me if I'm not eating the story right. Well, go do it. He said, but before you eat, bring me a cake. Bring me a cake. But it's a little cake. It's a cupcake. It's not a big cake. Just a little cake.

He said, go make me a cake and bring me my cake first. Would you put a circle around the word first? I mean, he didn't say, make sure your child gets something to eat. He didn't say, make sure you get something because you're hungry and you're doing all the work.

He said, bring me the cake first. And then after that, make something for you and your son. Look at this. First for you and after, first for me and after for you and your kid.

[28 : 13] Elijah was telling her to fear not. He was saying, in other words, believe God. I really wish you'd listen. If I was in another church and I was preaching a mission conference, I'd be yelling and moving and screaming at you to get you to understand this.

But you should understand it. Did you know what Hebrews 11, 6 says? It's impossible to please God without faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

For they that come to him must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Look that up, Hebrews 11, 6.

I'm a servant of God. You're a servant of God. We all serve God. He's the one that's really in charge here. And so Elijah knows God's going to take care of her. So Elijah's like, you don't have to worry about it.

Go make me a cake. Go ahead, fix the cake you're going to die with. But make me one first. And then after that, you can eat. Even in the statement, he said, after that, you can eat. He didn't say after that, you can watch me eat and then you can die.

[29 : 14] That's what he said. He said, you just make sure I get one first and you'll be all right. You make me one first. You'll be all right. That's a pretty good story. You make me one first. You'll be all right.

Then he told her to make his little cake and he wants it first. That's kind of like Matthew 6, 33, isn't it? Sometimes it seems like God is big on himself.

Let me explain it to you. Because he is. He's real big on himself. He likes being first. We like putting him second. We like being first.

But whoever you put first is the God in your life. The Bible says in Matthew 6, 33, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.

Seek God first. She was told that she could make her and her son a cake after the man of God ate. After.

[30 : 16] I don't think I'd have had the heart to do that. I don't think I could have looked at her and said, but you know what he's doing? He's teaching her a big lesson. He's teaching me a big lesson.

He's teaching you a big lesson. He was so convinced that he knew that if she obeyed God and did what he told her to do, she'd be taken care of. If she'd obey God and do what he said to do, which God said to do, she'd be taken care of.

You put God first and your needs will get met. You give to God. That's faith. Not being afraid to honor God brings the promise of food for her family.

I'm going to read some more verses out of the chapter, but I really wish you'd get a hold of something. I need God to work in my life. Just to be honest with you, I'm not sure Trump's going to solve all my problems. I wasn't sure Obama was going to solve them all.

In fact, I've been waiting on these presidents to solve all my problems all my life, and they haven't done it yet. I'm not sure y'all are going to solve my problems. Just to be honest with you, I don't think Vision Baptist is going to take care of my problems. I know somebody who can.

[31 : 19] I know somebody who can take care of me, and you know somebody who can take care of you. And you're in a bind right now, and you need God to move, but you've got to get you off the throne and get Him on the throne. You've got to put Him first and put you second.

That's the real truth. God always keeps His word, though. Look at it. 1 Kings 17, 14. We're just reading through the story. All we're doing is reading through the story. For thus said the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the Lord sends the rain.

I don't know if you get this story. If I was preaching this in children's church or at a missions conference, I'd just have fun with you. You do realize what happened, don't you? She went into that barrel, got out enough corn, got out enough meal to make that cake for the man of God.

She got enough oil to make it. She's like, I'll just do what the man of God asks. All right, here's your cake. He says, well, go make yourself a cake. And she goes, I done shook the barrel dry, buddy.

He said, go make yourself a cake. She goes back over and says, Oh, got the same amount of oil. All right, so she made her another cake. You know what's going to happen till the rain comes. Every time she goes back, it's still there.

[32 : 32] It's kind of like the same story when he took the little loaves and fishes. And you ever think about him taking those two loaves and five fishes and giving them to those guys that said feed 5,000 people with them? I don't know if you ever thought about it, but when one of them apostles stepped up, the first guy he stepped up to, he probably had to think in his mind, I got to make this little loaf of bread go a long ways.

And so he probably broke off a small piece and handed it to him, but when he looked back down, the piece was still there. And before the story was over, he just breaking off huge pieces and every time he does, it's still there. I mean, that's the Bible story. By the way, there were 12 baskets left over.

There was more left over afterwards than there was to start with because God's in it. You can say those are foolish children's stories, or you can realize God's telling you a story for your life, for God to work in you, for you to believe that it's God.

I wish I'd have written it down. But Watchman Nee said something like this, God has to keep changing buckets on us because we forget where the real fountain is.

We think that the food we're getting comes from our workplace. We think it comes from our business. We think it's us. And God's saying, no, it's not you.

[33 : 50] Verse 15, if you would. As she obeyed, her needs were met. She went and did according to the saying of Elijah. She and he and her house did eat many days.

There was only enough there to eat one last meal and cook it over two sticks, but they kept eating for many days. And it explains how that happens in verse 16.

And what scares me is, I think a lot of you think this is a children's church story. And you don't really believe that it's exactly like it is. But I'll be honest with you. This is how foolish I am.

I believe this as much as I believe in a six-day creation. I believe this as much as I believe in a salvation by grace. Because it's in the book and I'm just going to accept it. But look what happens in verse 16.

And the barrel of meal wasted not. It did not run out. He never did fill the barrel up and make her have... It wasn't like she went in there and gave that cake to him and came back in there.

[34 : 48] It was 50 barrels. That's not what happened. She didn't make the little cake and walk in there and then turn around and all of a sudden it was a prosperity gospel and she walked back in there and there were barrels everywhere.

That's not what happened. She had the same barrel. She had the same barrel, but it was a bottomless barrel. No matter how much she dug out, it just kept filling back up. That's what it says in the book.

And the cruise of all didn't fail. You should underline this. According to the word of the Lord. God takes care of us.

I could tell you stories on top of stories, but I think it might make it sound like I'm the hero. I'm not the hero. I was just a needy guy that he took care of. You're not the hero.

He is. He will meet your needs. In this story, the hero's not the widow. And the hero's not Elijah. The hero's God who does all of that.

[35 : 48] I want you to remember. I wish you'd look this verse up with me. 1 Chronicles 29, 12. I really wish you'd look this up. You need to mark this in your Bible.

It's God that makes you able to have all you have. Please listen to this. You may be the smartest businessman, the smartest engineer, the smartest preacher.

You may be the best looking actor. You can be anything you want to be. But you need to remember something. It's all God. 1 Chronicles 29, 12 says, Both riches and honor come from graduating from the right college.

Both riches and honor come from having a great salary. No, both riches and honor come of thee. It says, what it means is, God, all riches and all honor, they come from you because you reign over all.

Because I know you're almighty God. You're all powerful God. Look at this. And in your hand is the power and the might. In your hand is to make great and to give strength.

[37 : 04] Now therefore, our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name. But who am I? And what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort?

Phrase you got to underline. For all things come of thee and of thine own have we given thee. If we were in children's church, I would call you up and I could hand you ten cupcakes and then say, how about being real generous of giving me a cupcake?

And you'd say, well, that's easy. You just gave me ten cupcakes. So it's not that big of a deal to give you two cupcakes. I'll give you two cupcakes. I mean, they came from you. I'll just give you two back. And you'd say, yeah, well, every kid can understand that, but you can't seem to understand it.

You need to go back to children's church because the ten cupcakes you got came from him. The job you got came from him. And David said, God, we've given all this money to build your temple, but everything we gave you, we got it from you anyway.

So what's the big deal about giving God something? How can you give God something? It's kind of like when my kids were little. And Betty would say, you need to give the kids some money so they can buy you a Christmas present.

[38 : 22] I said, I think I know what I want a lot better. I'll just spend the money I was going to give them and I'll buy what I want. No, they got to be able to give you something. So give them the money. That's what God's doing. God said, I'll give you all the money, but I'd like you all to think about me and give me some of it.

And here's what we say. Ha! My money. Don't be pushy. Don't be asking me to give. Don't be pushing me. It's my money. I went to college, you know.

I got a good job, you know. Hey, you're asking for my money. And God's like, whoa, whoa, whoa. You must not read my book. I wrote a book about this. And I told you everybody's got any money, I gave it to them.

And everybody's got any life, I gave it to them. Is that in the Bible or not? Verse 16, same chapter, 1 Chronicles 29, 16. Oh, Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thy holy name comes of thy hand and is all thine own.

I'm going to go back to the story in just a second, but just let me say this. You gave sacrificially probably to build a building here and to do the ministry and to give to missions.

[39 : 32] And I would try to say thank you to you, but you should actually say to him, oh, I know I didn't really give anything. I only gave you back what was yours to begin with. So we put money in the offering plate.

We support missionaries. We say, God, I think I'll give some money to support a missionary. God's like, you know, you're just giving me back my stuff. I gave you 10 cupcakes. Reckon you could give me a couple?

The key to spiritual blessing is believing that he is. Do you believe God is? Or God was? Do you believe there really is a God?

Do you believe he really does reward them that diligently seek him? Do you believe that? Do you believe he deserves it all? Do you believe he deserves it first? Do you believe we're supposed to live in obedience?

The test comes when you have to decide to obey God even though it hurts and it's scary. giving up your security and your comfort. Giving more than is reasonable of your time and your treasure.

[40 : 39] Living for others instead of yourself. That's the story here. I want you to put yourself in a position of the little lady now. I mean, it wasn't that hard to get water out of a brook. It wasn't that hard to get a bird to bring you food.

What's really hard is when you're the little lady, I just want you to picture her. Here's the little lady and her son is going to die and she knows I only have enough food to give my boy something to eat and me something to eat and we're going to die.

That's pretty bad circumstances. And then the man of God says, don't worry about it. Just fix me something first and after that you'll be able to eat. Now that's scary.

If he'd have come and I'd have just had like old Nabal a great harvest and I could give him a few things, that's one thing. This lady has nothing. But God met her need.

I'm not trying to take up a special offering. I'm not trying to raise missions funds. I just happen to be in 1 Kings chapter 17. But everything you have came from God.

[41 : 50] I'm standing here healthy tonight and my friend who's five years older than me used to serve in Peru with me. He had a feeding tube and a tube to breathe with and he's out of the hospital now but he still can't think and he still can't talk.

He's up in the Dalton area. I'm not healthy because I'm healthy. I'm healthy because he kept me healthy. I had kidney cancer and I lived and another guy had the same cancer I did and I preached his funeral.

My life is his. My stuff is his. My wallet belongs to him. My time belongs to him. In the story, God meets her needs later in the chapter.

In 1 Kings chapter 17, she had a son and the son died. And this is the first story of a resurrected dead person in the Bible. And so she's again in big bad problems.

And she thinks she must have done something wrong. She's feeling guilty. She's an independent Baptist for sure because she thinks that God killed her son because she went to the Falcons game instead of coming to church tonight.

[43 : 00] So amen. She thinks God killed her kid. She says in 1 Kings 17, 18, what'd you do? Come to remind me of my sin? She thought God was punishing her by killing her son.

People who think like this don't know God's ways. He's a good God. I know you were raised to think he just wants to break your legs. You think you were trained that God's a mafia boss?

He's not. He's a father. God loves you and just doesn't go around killing people. Can I remind you of that? So Elijah prayed.

Her boy comes back to life. God gives her life back. And in verse King 17, 14, she said, By this I now know you are the man of God. Let me finish with this. Are you trusting God with your finances?

Are you trusting God with your finances? I know it's a scary thing. I know that it's hard to know when you're in bad shape that I ought to honor God. But you quit giving because you got a little bit of a tight.

[44 : 08] You quit giving. You know what you did? You put yourself in a worse shape because now you put yourself in your own taking care of you. I'm going to try and take up an offer tonight.

But when you stop giving because you're in trouble, you're saying, God, it's my money and I'll take care of me and I don't need your help. When you stop coming to church and praying and reading your Bible, you're saying, I don't need God.

I'll take care of this. I mean, that's really the story here. Are you trusting him with your family and your children? Are you trusting him with your future? If you'll just learn to give to God, you'll find out he can out give you.

He's a good God. You hear a preacher talk about this and you think, he must be wanting something. I just want to read 1 Kings 17.

I think you know I was in 1 Kings 16 last round and I'll be in 1 Kings 18 Thursday night or yeah, I think Thursday night. I just want you to know this is the truth.

[45 : 18] Are you honoring God with your money? Are you honoring God with your time? Are you honoring God with your children? Are you honoring God? Do you ever consider that it is God that's doing all this?

Do you ever consider that the reason your kids are healthy is not because you give them vitamins? I'm not saying don't give them vitamins but I am telling you this. A lot of people give vitamins, they still die. It's not you.

That doesn't mean we're not responsible. It just means this. All I have and all I am comes from him. So honoring him with it. It's not a big deal. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks.