

Trust in the Lord Alone for All Your Needs

Zac Poonen:

Elijah was a man who was instantly obedient to every little thing that God said. God told him one day to go and hide himself by the brook Cherith - and he went at once (1 Kings 17:3). There the ravens brought him bread and meat and he drank from the brook (v.6). At 8 o'clock every morning, a raven would bring him some food. Again at 5 o'clock in the evening, another raven would bring him some food. These crows would bring him meat. If the crows had brought him vegetables, that itself would have been a miracle. But for a crow to bring meat (which it loves) is a greater miracle. That's how God provided for Elijah. But gradually, after a few days, Elijah began depending on the ravens and not the Lord!

Many servants of the Lord start out trusting the Lord for their financial needs. But after a few years, they are no longer depending on the Lord, but on some ravens - human beings who send them regular support! That is exactly what happened to Elijah. So what did the Lord do? He stopped the ravens. God wanted to shake off Elijah's dependence on ravens and to teach him once again to depend on the Lord. So thank God when the ravens stop coming - when the promised support doesn't come. Then you will learn once again to trust the Lord alone for your needs. I have been through experiences like that. I thank God for the times when He has turned away my eyes from ravens to Him Who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and Who has said that He will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.

The Lord then changed His method and told Elijah now to go to Zarephath. Zarephath was outside Israel. Elijah may have imagined that some rich businessman there would take care of him. But when he reached Zarephath, what he found was not a rich businessman, but a poor widow who was just about to have her last meal! And the Lord told Elijah, "She will support you!" God's ways are truly amazing. God does things like that because He is a jealous God. He wants us to trust in Him and not in ravens or rich businessmen. He will use a weak person whom you least expect to be able to help you, and use him, so that no flesh may glory in His presence.

The widow said, "We were just about to have our last meal and die." Elijah told her, "Don't be afraid. Make me a little bread cake from it first. The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth" (1 Kings 17:13,14). And the bowl of flour was not exhausted and the jar of oil did not become empty.

There are many preachers today who use this incident to teach poor people to give them money. But that is a total misinterpretation of this incident. First of all, most of today's preachers are not prophets like Elijah. Secondly, most of today's preachers are lovers of money, unlike Elijah. These two facts alone put Elijah in a different class altogether from most of today's preachers who exploit the poor. Further, Elijah asked the widow for just a bare meal to survive in a time of famine; and he ate the same food that the widow and her son ate. Today's preachers are not asking for money to survive but to support their grand lifestyles. There are multitudes of false prophets around today. Unfortunately, since most of God's people do not know how to distinguish between a true prophet and a false one, they are deceived.