

A. Introduction

- **Title:** *Worship from an Empty Place*
- **Scripture Foundation Passage:** 1 Kings 17:7-16 NIV
- **Theme:** Finding faith and worshiping God in times of emptiness and hardship
1 Kings 17:7-18 New International Version

Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath

⁷ Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him: ⁹ “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” ¹⁰ 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?” ¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

¹² “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 olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

¹³ Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ 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 sends rain on the land.’”

¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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.

B. Context and Background

The Declaration of No Rain

- **1 Kings 17:7** Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.
- The brook dried up because of the drought Elijah declared.
- **Kerith Ravine:** Reliance on the river and ravens for sustenance.

Elijah's Journey to Zarephath

- **1 Kings 17:8-9** Then the word of the LORD came to him: ⁹“Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.
- **Verses 8-9:** God directs Elijah to Zarephath, promising provision through a widow.
- **Challenge:** Obeying God can lead to difficult, seemingly wrong places.

C. The Encounter with the Widow

The Initial Request

- **1 Kings 17: 10-11** 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?” ¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.
- **Verses 10-11:** Elijah asks for water and bread; the widow’s sacrifice.
- **Context:** Water was scarce, making it a significant sacrifice.

The Widow's Response

- **1 Kings 17: 12** “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 olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”
- **Verse 12:** Widow expresses her dire situation and limited resources.
- **Significance:** The widow, a Gentile, acknowledges Elijah's God but doesn’t know Him personally.
- **Jesus’ Reference:** Luke 4:25-26, highlighting the widow’s faith.

D. Worship from an Empty Place

Definition and Examples of an Empty Place

- An empty place is a state of feeling overwhelmed by crises and circumstances, leading to a **sense** of distance from God and difficulty reconciling pain or lack with faith
- **Psalm 22**, “My God My God, why hast Thou Forsaken me?” David’s screaming, “Where are you in my time of trouble?”, “I’m supposed to be a man after your own heart, but I’m fighting for my life and you are nowhere to be found!

- **1 Samuel 1:10-17** ERV Hannah was so sad that she cried the whole time she was praying to the LORD. She made a special promise to God and said, “LORD All-Powerful, you can see how sad I am. Remember me
- **Mark 5**, Woman with the issue of Blood

Definition and Examples of Worship

- **QUOTE:** Worship is a sacrifice; an expression of what the most important thing in the world means to us.
- When we worship God we’re telling him “This is what you’re worth to me”
- **Genesis 22** when Abraham was telling his servant that he was about to offer Isaac on the altar in order to demonstrate his faith, hope, and trust in God.
- **Romans 12:1** Paul encourages us to live our entire lives as the true way to worship God.
- **Psalms 51**, David says that the posture of his heart is the offering God desires more than any half-hearted ritual.

The Widow’s Act of Worship

- **1 Kings 17: 13- 15** Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ 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 sends rain on the land.’”
- ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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.
- **Verse 13:** Elijah’s directive **not to fear** and to **first serve** him.
- **Verse 14:** God’s promise of provision.
- **Verse 15:** Widow’s obedience and resulting provision

Principles of Worshiping from an Empty Place

Push Beyond Fear

- **Verse 13:** Elijah’s instruction to not be afraid.
- Trusting God’s plans and timing.

Recognize the Season

- **Seasonal Nature:** Understanding that emptiness is temporary.
- **Daily Faith:** Continuous decision to trust God each day.

Choose to Trust God

- **Sustained Provision:** Flour and oil didn't overflow but were sufficient.
- **Faith Over Circumstances:** Trusting God's timeline over our own.

The Result of Trust and Worship

God's Faithfulness

- **I Kings 17: 16** ¹⁶For 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.
- **Verse 16:** Continuous provision in accordance with God's word.
- **Isaiah 55:11:** God's word accomplishing His purposes.

Worship into a New Season

- Worship from adversity leads to a deeper relationship with God.
- **Examples:** Biblical figures who worshiped God despite hardships.

Encouragement and Examples

Biblical Examples of Faith and Endurance

- **Provision:** The widow's unending flour and oil, Isaac sowing during a famine,
- **Betrayal:** David's journey with Saul, Jesus and Judas.
- **Failure:** Moses' and Jacob's stories of redemption.
- **Personal Failures:** Peter's denial and restoration.

Scriptures for Encouragement

- **Psalms 27:14:** Waiting for the Lord with faith.
- **Matthew 7:7-8:** The promise of seeking and finding God.
- **Psalms 139:8-10:** God's omnipresence and guidance.
- **1 Thessalonians 3:3:** God's faithfulness in establishing us.

Invitation and Conclusion

God's Faithfulness

- **Psalm 36:6:** God's unfailing faithfulness.
- **Numbers 23:19:** God's unchanging nature and faithfulness.
- **1 John 3:1:** The great love of God for His children

Knowing God Personally

- The importance of a personal relationship with God.
- **Examples:** The widow of Sidon, Naaman, the Samaritan leper, the Greek woman.

Closing Prayer and Call to Worship

- Encourage the congregation to trust God and worship from their empty places.
- Lead in a prayer for Salvation: faith, trust, and a deeper relationship with God.