

Sunday 17th March 2013

Elijah Part 5 Elijah at Zarephath.

God's instruction to Elijah was to " Arise and go to Zarephath". Arise and go to the place of refining, the melting Pot.

Isaiah 48:10 Behold, I have refined you, but not with silver, I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.

Sounds like a daunting prospect, but we go with the assurance of God that he is with us.

Isaiah 41:10 Read

I can imagine Elijah's first thoughts were that he was glad to be getting out of Cherith (the dried up brook)

God knew where he was sending Elijah, he knew he was sending him to Zarephath, the place he would be chosen from. Just as well that Elijah did not know what was in front of him.

If we knew what was going to happen in the next 12 months we would be worried, anxious, sick and fearful!!

This journey and our journey is all about preparation, Elijah was being prepared. God is in the process of preparing us one step at a time.

Just like preparing downstairs: Decoration, the preparation is the hardest bit. We cannot just go straight to the gloss.

Logistics: Zarephath was 100 miles west of Cherith, across open unprotected wilderness where he would be a wanted man.

The promise: "I have commanded a widow there to provide for you"

Choice; Stay in this God forsaken place or go through this dangerous terrain to get to the promise.

Sometimes we need to go a way we would not normally choose to get to where God wants us.

The way of obedience can be a difficult journey, but we should not try to go around, to take a diversion.

John 4:1-4 **Read**

Just like Jesus, Elijah had an appointment with a woman in need. This woman would provide for him. That's humbling enough. You would think that this great man in training would be the one to provide for her.

From Ravens to Widows.

1 Kings 17:10-11 **Read**

So he arose and went and arrived safely.

What was his first impression of this next bit of his training.

Pastor Tucker tells of a story of a young man in training for the Ministry. His first job was to sweep the yard of the church for three months every day. Every day he would see people from the church as he did his job.

It was a test to see if he was faithful in the little things. He could so easily have reacted with bitterness or resentment as he experienced his first impression of the ministry. But he reacted with humility. He passed the test.

What was Elijah's first impression of the situation.

He gets to the gate, sees the widow gathering sticks. He is thirsty, hungry, he asks her for a drink and some food.

Verse 12 and she said as the Lord thy God lives, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse, and behold I am gathering two sticks that I may go and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.

The promise was for provision, first impressions would suggest different.

Don't rely on first impressions, don't be put off if things don't go the way you think they should. It could be part of the test, The furnace from where God is going to choose you.

How do you react?

Verse 13/14 Read

Elijah gets over and passed the first impression. The widow had her eyes on the impossible. The emerging man of God focused on the possibilities.

Luke 18:27 Read

He had experienced Cherith, the provision, God's hand.

You cannot talk the talk if you have not walked the walk!!

2 Corin 1:3/4 Read

The man or woman of God will speak out of his or her experience.

You cannot encourage someone to believe the improbable, if you have not believed for the impossible. You cannot light a candle of hope in some ones heart if you're own torch is not burning.

Verse 14 Read again.

It's the promise in the midst of the situation. It's God in the furnace with you.

Verse 13 Elijah speaks out of his experience and because he does, God then speaks the promise, the miracle in verse 14.

Romans 10:17 So then faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of God.

The widow hears from God, " Thus saith the Lord "

When the word of God comes to a situation, things change. Miracles happen.

However difficult it was for this poor widow to believe and take all this in, something in her was changing.

Remember **V12**, She was preparing to die, no hope, no plan, no future, ...

Now she was preparing for a miracle. She had a lifeline, Hope was flooding back into her life. She responded in Faith, She was ready to " Go and Do "

Are you ready to go and do what it is that God has been asking you to do. Stop preparing for the worst and start preparing for the miracle.

John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, whatsoever he says to you, do it!!

When we respond in faith and obey God's word, the miracle is not far away.

However improbable, However impossible, However unlikely, if we respond and react in faith rather than unbelief, God is there.

Matthew 9:24-25 Read

People responded by mocking and laughing, Sarah responded to God by laughing.

The widow shows us how to respond:

VerSES 15-16 Read

She went and did and so did God.

You could leave here tonight and carry on as you have and be like the widow was preparing to give up, or you could leave here tonight ready to respond in faith and obedience and allow God to begin to change things.

Whether you are Elijah or the widow, you are part of God's plan for salvation.

Elijah was fast emerging as the man of God for the task. He had passes the test of first impressions and in doing so ministered out of his experience to a lost and needful widow.

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