

## *Frowning Providence* *1 Kings 17:17-24*

INTRO:

Since ***“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching,”*** The first question is: Why did the Lord put this in His Bible? We have just read how God is the miraculous source of the supply and life for Elijah, the widow and her son. Now something happened which can throw us for a loop. The widow’s son suddenly died. What do we do when we struggle to obey and something unthinkable happens?

***I. The Widow’s Son Died (v. 17-18)***

***II. God Raised the Widow’s Son (v. 19-24)***

***I. The Widow’s Son Died (v. 17-18)***

***v.17-18 “Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?”***

A. Do you remember what we have learned so far in our study? Elijah the prophet traveled to the heart of Baal country to find this widow (by definition, a woman who was destitute) who would provide for him. God did a miracle and every day, the woman got the meal from the bag and the oil from the flask to make a meal for her, for her son, and for Elijah.

B. Although the meal never stopped, and the oil did not run out, her son got sick and died. What in the wide world was God doing? The widow responded like we often respond when we cannot understand what God is doing. She is sure that Elijah came to her to judge her sin. Do you remember the scene in **John 9**?

***“Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’”***

We do not always know why God allows things we cannot understand happen to us. God had a purpose in the man’s blindness in **John 9** and He had a purpose in the death of this widow’s son.

## ***II. God Raised the Widow's Son (v. 19-24)***

**vs.19-22** *“And he said to her, ‘Give me your son.’ So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. Then he cried out to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?’ And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.’”*

B. We do not read of any answer from Elijah other than a request to take the child. Now we need to step into Elijah’s sandals. When I was a boy in Sunday school I remember being taught that Elijah raised this boy from the dead. This was entirely untrue.

1. What did Elijah do? Was he a prophet who had the LORD God wrapped around his little finger? Did he whisper a rhyming incantation over the boy and suddenly he arose? No. Elijah had no bag of tricks. He did what he could do.

2. He tried to keep the body warm and he prayed. Up to this point in the record the only miracles Elijah did were to announce that God said it wouldn’t rain and that the LORD would miraculously provide for him, his hostess, and her son. To remind Elijah and us that the power is not from Elijah, but Yahweh, God presents this object lesson to Elijah and to us, the on-lookers, that God is the miracle worker not Elijah.

3. Elijah prayed twice. His first prayer was one of confusion and frustration.

**v.20** *“Then he cried out to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?’”*

As one commentator pointed out, the LORD brought His servant to the helplessness of prayer before He brought him the miracle. Elijah’s second prayer was different.

**v.21** *“[Elijah] cried out to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.’”*

Elijah recognized only God could bring this boy back to life.

C. Look who brought the resurrection of this boy?

**v.22** *“Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.”*

God answered prayer. What do you think Elijah did when the boy breathed and was revived? We are not told.

D. Why did the LORD do all of this and why did He put it in His Bible? I don’t know we know all the answers but the widow’s response give us a big part of the answer.

vs.23-24 ***“And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, ‘See, your son lives!’ Then the woman said to Elijah ‘Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth.’”***

The ultimate purpose of this miracle was to authenticate God’s prophet and His message. Do we doubt the widow’s conclusion?

What do we take away from this paragraph of God’s Word?

1. To quote from William Cowper’s hymn.

<i>“God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea And rides upon the storm.</i>	<i>Deep in unfathomable mines Of never failing skill He treasures up His bright designs And works His sov’reign will.”</i>
--	--

Many times we cannot see what God is doing, we are reduced to praying and waiting.

2. Second, sometimes God waits for us to pray so that we may learn.

**2 Corinthians 3:5** ***“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.”***

**2 Corinthians 4:7** ***“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels [in order] that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”***

3. God many times has to shut us up to the frustration of prayer in order to bring us to the end of ourselves and our resources before He works. We must not forget the truth of the end of Cowper’s Hymn,

<i>“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; The clouds ye so much dread Are big with mercy and shall break In blessings on your head.</i>	<i>Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust Him for His grace; Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.</i>
--	---