

ELIJAH

A Man of Like Passions

4 - The Widow



SERIES OUTLINE



1 - Ahab's Israel



2 - Elijah's Drought

3 - The Ravens

4 - The Widow



5 - Carmel and Judgment

6 - The Voice



Goal: to see how God was working with Elijah.

Core Message:

God:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 - Ahab's Israel | is in control. |
| 2 - Elijah's Drought | hears prayers. |
| 3 - The Ravens | gives lessons that push us beyond our comfort zones. |
| 4 - The Widow | gives lessons with fantastic blessings. |
| 5 - Carmel and Judgment | decides when it is time for judgment. |
| 6 - The Voice | doesn't relent. |

4 - The Widow

- The Grain and the Oil
- The Widow's Son
- Elijah's Change

Core: God gives lessons with fantastic blessings.

Why: did Elijah raise the widow's son?

Elijah's time with the widow reflected the Lord's ministry.



A REFLECTION

But this was one of the most inglorious moments of Elijah's life.

He wasn't in Israel.

He was in total poverty.

He could only work with *two people*.

Let's think a little bit about this widow.



THE GRAIN AND OIL

1 Kings 17:9 commanded?

Did the widow expect Elijah?

1 Kings 17:10-12 - “So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, ‘Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.’ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, ‘Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.’ And she said, ‘As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.’”

She also is receptive to this phrase:

1 Kings 17:13-14 - “And Elijah said to her, ‘Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’””

1. Israel didn't worship Yahweh.

2. This phrase had layers of meaning for gentiles.

Other times it is used with gentiles:

<u>Exodus 5:1-2</u>	spurned God
<u>Judges 5:3, 5</u>	recognizing God's power
Ruth 2:12	accepting God
<u>1 Samuel 5:7-11</u>	recognizing God's power

Elijah probably sought to contrast God with Baal. But nothing had happened yet.

Didn't the drought start in Israel?

1 Kings 20:23 - "And the servants of the king of Syria said to him, 'Their gods are gods of the hills, and so they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.'"

If God hadn't appeared to this woman, she wouldn't have listened to Elijah!

But, she was prepared to accept the message that God could work in her land.

This message would have been a big deal for Elijah.

But also still had ties back to his earliest proclamation. 1 Kings 17:1

Elijah was beginning to soften.

But he still had to learn *to care about people*.

He couldn't treat her with the indifference with which he had treated Israel.

God had prepared this woman—she would help Elijah, and he would help her.

1. She had hit rock bottom
2. God promised her provision if she took care of a prophet
3. She went to the city gate to wait
4. The prophet came

Do you see why she was willing to get the water and food?

She believed enough to wait, and everything was taking place.

Consider the situation:

This was all the work of God. cp. Acts 16:14

God was transforming *both people*.

The woman believed—going to do as God and Elijah had asked.



THE MIRACLE

I Kings 17:15-16

But why did the miracle happen like this?

Couldn't God have done this another way? 2 Kings 4

Could God have provided an animal for them? Genesis 22

1 Kings 17:13-14 - “And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son.

“cake” = עֵגֶה H5692 only occurs three times before this

Genesis 18:6 - “And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, ‘Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes.’”

Exodus 12:39 - “And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.”

Numbers 11:9 - “The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil.”

Genesis and Exodus connect these cakes with haste. Probably relevant here.

But think about the last reference.

Numbers 18:11 - “The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil.”

1. God's miraculous provision

2. When people were starving Exodus 16:3

3. Oil

4. That was eaten until the end of this period Exodus 16:35

Was Elijah making the connection between himself and Israel?

And what about this woman? Exodus 12:48

She wasn't fully converted. 1 Kings 17:24

But Elijah realized that God was working with her.

He was learning. And he would continue to learn throughout this time.

As Elijah lived with these people, he began to care for them.

THE WIDOW'S SON

He saw that they, too, were people.

1 Kings 17:17-18 - “After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elijah, ‘What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son.’”

Can you see the woman trying to make sense of all of this?

Hadn't God saved them? And then why did He kill her son?

“mistress” only used three other times in Scripture בַּעֲלָה H1172

I Samuel 28:7 - “Then Saul said to his servants, ‘Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.’ And his servants said to him, ‘Behold, there is a medium at En-dor.’”

Nahum 3:4 NIV - “All because of the wanton lust of a prostitute, alluring, the mistress of sorceries, who enslaved nations by her prostitution and peoples by her witchcraft.”

This woman was involved in witchcraft.

She still held strongly on to her idolatry!

But, there's perhaps a progression in her words.

I. This was Elijah's fault. On one hand, this clearly isn't true. Elijah saved them.
But also, think about what this boy had eaten for days.
Elijah caused the drought.

2. Her sin (idolatry?) was being brought to remembrance.

3. But, Elijah could *do something*.

Hebrews 11:35 - "Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life."

This has to be about this widow!

There were *only two women* who had family members raised.

By faith!

No one had ever *been raised from the dead*.

1 Kings 17:19 - “And he said to her, ‘Give me your son.’ And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed.”

There's more to this than Elijah simply raising the child.

ELIJAH'S CHANGE



This story becomes emblematic of Elijah's life.

This is the only instance in which Elisha repeatedly follows Elijah's example.

	Elijah	Elisha
Miraculously multiplied a widow's oil	1 Kings 17:14	2 Kings 4:2
Stayed at a woman's home	1 Kings 17:9	2 Kings 4:10
The woman's only son died	1 Kings 17:12, 18	2 Kings 4:20
Blamed for the death	1 Kings 17:18	2 Kings 4:28
Stretched himself on the child	1 Kings 17:21	2 Kings 4:34
Tried to revive the child three times	1 Kings 17:21	2 Kings 4:31, 34-35
Only two resurrections in the OT		

This also connected Elijah to the Lord Jesus:

Luke 7:11-16 - “Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, ‘Young man, I say to you, arise.’ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and “God has visited his people!’”

	Elijah	Christ
Begins with “and it happened” (καὶ ἐγένετο)	1 Kings 17:17	Luke 7:11
Only raising of a widow’s son in their testament		
First resurrection in their testament		
Son is an only child	1 Kings 17:12,18	Luke 7:12
Moved with compassion and pity	1 Kings 17:20	Luke 7:13
Connected with the dead	1 Kings 17:21	Luke 7:14
“and delivered him to his mother”	1 Kings 17:23	Luke 7:15
καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ		
Recognized as a prophet	1 Kings 17:24	Luke 7:16

But, Christ follows this pattern twice:

Matthew 15:21-28 - “And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, ‘Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.’ But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, ‘Send her away, for she is crying out after us.’ He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ But she came and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, help me.’ And he answered, ‘It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.’ She said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.’ Then Jesus answered her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed instantly.”

	Elijah	Christ
In Sidon	1 Kings 17:9	Matthew 15:21
The woman was an idolator	<i>baalah</i> v. 17	Canaanite v. 22
Asked on behalf of their (only?) child		
Asked to provide Israel with food first	1 Kings 17:13	Matthew 15:26
Example of faith	Hebrews 11:35	Matthew 15:28

Jesus lived out this story twice in his life!

Why?

Perhaps because this was the first time in his life—at least according to Scripture...
...that Elijah felt *compassion*.

God was teaching Elijah about the power of relationship...
...versus the power of miracles.



THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIP

Think about Elijah's first encounter with the widow:

1. She knew about Yahweh (1 Kings 17:12)
2. Yahweh had spoken to her (1 Kings 17:9, 12)
3. Yahweh miraculously saved her life (1 Kings 17:15)
4. This miracle was *still occurring!!!*

Shouldn't that have brought about her conversion?

What about the raising of her son was different?

This time, this wasn't some random stranger providing bread.

Now she knew Elijah.

She knew that he cared.

She knew what he stood for.

She knew that even though this was *impossible*, he would do something.

Because Elijah had changed.

1 Kings 17:19-21 - “And he said to her, ‘Give me your son.’ And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. And he cried to the LORD, ‘O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?’ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, ‘O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again.’”

Elijah was willing to do this, and say these things, for the *baalah*.

Even though no one had ever even thought about something like this before.

Can you hear the strain in his voice?

Can you picture him as he takes this child?

And puts him in *his own bed*?

Then he took this a step further and stretched himself out on this boy.

Why?

Keep in mind: this was beyond Elijah just touching a gentile.

This was Elijah touching *a dead body*. Numbers 19:11

Consider God's words to the priests:

Leviticus 21:10-11 - "The priest who is chief among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil is poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose nor tear his clothes. He shall not go in to any dead bodies nor make himself unclean, even for his father or for his mother."

Elijah wasn't a priest, but he was anointed too!

Do you see what Elijah did?

He broke the law.

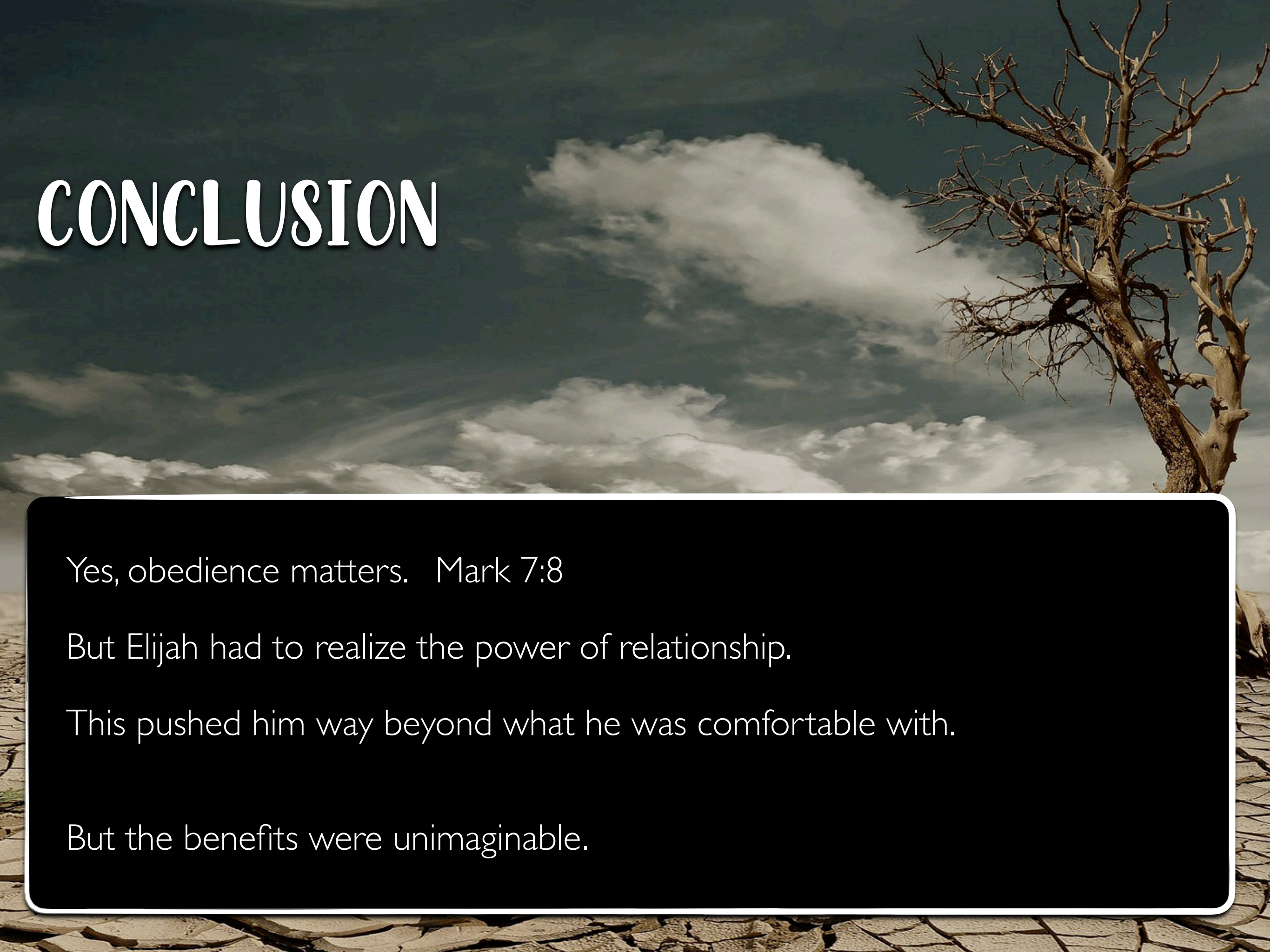
Because he was identifying with the boy. Because he cared about him and his mom.

Maybe this was the point at which Elijah felt touched by death and suffering.
And when he began to realize that law and miracles don't change hearts.

Matthew 15:16-20 - “And he said, ‘Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.’”

And so Christ follows Elijah's footsteps to prove his point.

CONCLUSION



Yes, obedience matters. Mark 7:8

But Elijah had to realize the power of relationship.

This pushed him way beyond what he was comfortable with.

But the benefits were unimaginable.