

A Thought for the coming week

Reading: 1 Kings 17 (NIV)

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 instructed 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.

In this lovely story, Elijah is living in a time of drought and is told by God to go to Zarephath where provision had been made for him.

The words of the Prophet to the Widow are important:

1. 'Don't be afraid'

Often quoted in the Bible:

Matthew 1 v20

'Do not be afraid'

When the angel came to Joseph and hold him to take Mary as his wife'.

Psalm 16 v8

I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

Psalm 56 v3

When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

Joshua 1 v9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.'

Do not fear or be afraid – it is so easy become afraid during the current situation in which our country finds its self, do you fear, are you having a panic attack? We must put our trust in God and have faith in our Lord Jesus Christ to watch over us and see us through at this time.

2. 'But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me'

The widow is clearly instructed to put someone else first.

Jesus in the new testament reminds us to put others first, this is not always easy but we should strive to do it.

The parable of the Good Samaritan - (Luke 10 v25 to v37) - Jesus told this parable as an answer the question 'And who is my neighbour?')

During these days we must consider and help others in every way we can, not only in our Church fellowship but others with whom we come in contact.

It required a step of faith by the widow.

Hebrews 11 v6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

3. 'then make something for yourself and your son'

Don't be afraid, put others first, then yourself and God will provide.

She believed the words of the prophet.

'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.'

God sustained the three of them with a such little.

What a wonderful promise!

We must remind ourselves that God's resources are unlimited.

God will provide for our needs both physical and spiritual.

'She went away and did as Elijah had told her'.

She followed the instructions given to her by God through Elijah

'I have instructed a widow there to supply you with food'

God in a wonderful way was at work in the Widows life.

Jeremiah 17 v7-8

But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.'

It this time of national uncertainty we must look and pray to God.

May I remind you of the bible quotation on our pens!

'My times are in your hands' Psalm 31 v15