

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Kings 17:8-24.

INTRODUCTION:

1. **Elijah.** Elijah first appears in scripture in 1 Kings 17:1. See also 1 Kings 17:2-4, 5-6, 7.
2. **Zarephath.** A Phoenician city on the coast between Tyre and Sidon. Refer to map on the right. Matthew 11:20-24.
3. **The widow.** "I have commanded a widow there to provide for you" (1 Kings 17:9); "As the LORD your God lives" (1 Kings 17:12); "So she went and did according to the word of Elijah" (1 Kings 17:15); "My iniquity" (1 Kings 17:18).
4. **The son of the woman.**

APPLICATIONS:

1. **The danger of familiarity.** Luke 4:16-23, 24, 25-26, 27, 28-30.
 - A. Let's face it. We don't like to be corrected. As a result, we tend to look for excuses to ignore correction.
 - B. One excuse we often find to ignore correction is familiarity. We dismiss correction from those we know well. Ironically, we often listen far more carefully to people who hardly know us than to people who know us well.
 - C. How do we respond to correction from people we know well? Spouses, parents, preachers, etc.
 - D. This ought not be so. Who knows us better? Who loves us more? What penetrating insights are we ignoring? What blessings are we missing?
 - E. Brethren, for these and other reasons we need to carefully consider all corrections, but especially the corrections of those we know well and know us well.
 - F. The widow of Zarephath was blessed because she listened to anyone who told her the truth? Do we?
2. **God provides.** 1 Kings 17:5-6, 9, 15-16.
 - A. God doesn't provide for us in the same way, but He just as certainly provides. Matthew 6:25-33.
 - B. God doesn't promise us *when* He'll provide, just that He *will* provide. The widow was down to her last meal, but she didn't let God down and God did not let her down.
 - C. Do we doubt God's provision? 1 Kings 17:18. "What could this fond and anxious mother think? Was the prophet who had given them bread unable to defend them from sickness? Or was this God's recompense for her hospitality? She might have had hard thoughts of God, or unworthy thoughts of the prophet. It is a wonder she held fast her integrity. But she only thought hardly of herself. It must be, she argued, a judgment for her sin. The man of God had read her life; had brought her sin to the remembrance of His Master (ver. 18). It never occurs to her, strong as was the temptation, to arraign God's providence" (Pulpit Commentary).
 - D. Are we putting God first?
 - 1) For many, God is a provider of last resort. Phone calls illustration. Not so with the widow of Zarephath or the widow with the two mites. Luke 21:1-4.
 - 2) Yes, it's counterintuitive. Yes, we must step out in faith. But putting God first really is the only true social security. 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Substitute "poor" for "rich" and "worried" for "conceited." Luke 6:38.
 - E. Has God ever let us down? When are we finally going to be like the widow of Zarephath? 1 Kings 17:23-24; Psalm 37:23-26.
3. **Prayer is powerful.** 1 Kings 17:20-22.
 - A. If we'll be like Elijah, God will just as surely answer our prayers. James 5:16B-18.
 - B. If we'll be like the widow of Zarephath, God will just as surely answer our prayers. 1 Kings 17:9; Matthew 15:21-28.
 - C. Are we like Elijah and the widow of Zarephath? James 4:2B-3. Are we praying as we ought? Are we living like we ought?

