



Trust God or Ourselves?

In the Old Testament, in the book of Kings, the prophet Elijah was serving God by fighting against the priests of Baal (Canaanite god). Elijah at some point withdrew to the wilderness and God made sure he was fed by ravens who brought him food and there was even a small brook that provided him with water. Eventually however the brook dried up and God sent Elijah to a widow in Zarephath. The widow lived with her only son. When Elijah arrived there he asked the widow for help. At this time there was a famine and the widow responded that she could not for fear that she would not have enough food for her and her son. Elijah told her that God would not allow her supply of flour or oil to run out, saying, “Don’t be afraid, 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 gives rain on the land.’” The widow trusted Elijah and God, she offered what she had and sure enough her jar of oil and flour miraculously never ran out. She had more than enough for her, her son, and Elijah.

The message here is clear. There are times in our life when we are asked to give to God, to give a portion of what we have. However we struggle as the widow did. We worry if I give of what I have, will there be enough for me and my family? We find ourselves confronted with a trust issue. If I do what is right, will God do what is right? If I obey, will God come through and provide for me? We often are afraid to help or to give for fear we won’t have enough. We hoard our resources and treasure because we don’t trust God will provide for us if we offer some back to God.

We clearly see in the encounter between Elijah and the widow that God provides and responds when we give. God was acting through Elijah in fighting the people’s belief in a false God. Even today God acts through the church to counter the darkness of the world and to bring the light of Christ to others. Today we have the same opportunity as the widow of Zarephath. We are asked to support the church that it may continue the Lord’s ministry in the world, just as the widow was asked to help Elijah in doing God’s work. We are confronted by the same fears the widow experienced. She gave unconditionally and without her own conditions and expectations, she trusted God. May we learn from the example of the widow, to not be afraid to give, and to allow God to work miracles through us and our generosity.