

**SERIES: ELIJAH – A MAN FOR THE TIMES**

**TITLE: God’s multi-purpose, multi-person plan**

**SONGS: I Need You**

**My House is Full/I’ll Go**

**Welcome to Grace Notes.**

**Barbara Sandbek has been taking us on a faith building journey with the prophet, Elijah. We’ve seen how God stationed Elijah in the royal palace, where he delivered a prophetic message of impending drought to King Ahab. Then God sent him to the wilderness, where his only company was that of a raven. Last week we found Elijah settling in, but God soon dried up the brook -- his source of life. Now it was time for him to go to a territory ruled by Queen Jezebel’s father, and be cared for by the human hands of a poor, gentile widow, facing starvation.**

**Sounds like ‘Mission Impossible’ doesn’t it? Well, the Lord had said to Sarah, Abraham’s barren wife, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”, and He challenges US to believe that EVERYTHING is possible when we act in obedience. Elijah chose to accept this mission and found that NOTHING would ‘self-destruct’ without God’s say so.**

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**Elijah has to be wondering what God’s purpose is in all of this. In the middle of a crisis, it’s hard to see the benefits, but as outsiders looking in, it’s obvious. God has miraculously sustained Elijah in the WILDERNESS, while Israel is going hungry in the PROMISED LAND. Elijah is doing well in his faith apprenticeship.**

**The next chapter of study says...So he went to Zarephath. No questions asked here. When he came to the town gate, he saw a widow gathering sticks and called to her...**

**ELIJAH: “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink? And while you’re at it, bring me, please, a piece of bread.”**

**WIDOW: “As surely as the Lord your God lives, I don’t have any bread – only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I’m gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat – and die.”**

**ELIJAH: “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first, make a small cake of bread for ME from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 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 gives rain on the land.’”**

**Why was Elijah sent to a widow? And why a widow from a pagan land?**

**Jesus talked about this in Luke 4:25-26. He said...**

**“There were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for 3 ½ years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath.”**

**Jesus had said that no prophet was accepted in his own home town. Israel had rejected God, so God removed His word and His blessing from their land by sending Elijah away. God seeks to bless someone – this time He chose a needy Gentile widow.**

**We’re most aware and most appreciative of God’s blessing when we’re most in need. We may not bow down to Asherath poles or sacrifice our children on an altar, but when we choose to have our needs met in a way that excludes God, we’re just as rebellious as the Israelites.**

**I think, too, that we can even miss out on God’s best, by seeking advice from someone, before asking direction from our Father.**

**We all have needs. No one knows them better, and no one know how to meet them better, than the One who made us.**

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**\*\* I NEED YOU \*\***  
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**God had told Elijah that the widow would supply him with food – but she was starving. This posed no difficulty for Elijah, though. He’d already learned in his wilderness venture that God would supply his needs. He was prepared to respond to her with conviction and assurance.**

**Experiences that take us into times of depravation, birth hope in us. They enable us to be more convincing to others in their plight.**

**In Romans 5:3 Paul writes..**

**We rejoice in our sufferings because we know that suffering produces perseverance - perseverance – character and character - hope.**

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says...Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.**

**Job 36:15 says...Those who suffer, He delivers IN their suffering:  
He speaks to them IN their affliction.**

**Notice, it says...He delivers 'IN' suffering...not 'FROM' suffering. Delivers what? - a message - God SPEAKS to us in our affliction. He gives us a message of comfort for ourselves and for others.**

**God never wastes anything. His ways usually involve more than one person and result in more than one outcome. In this case, it's time to increase faith in Elijah and instill faith in the widow.**

**She had said to Elijah, "the Lord YOUR God." She knew of the Lord but she was not a believer. I see a 'Red Sea faith' test here. God gave her a command and a promise just like he did for Elijah in his first faith test. She passed, too. She did indeed make that cake for Elijah first, and saw God keep his promise.**

**God will never ask anything of us without providing the faith to believe. We can count on it. But, we need to step out and meet the test. We also need to give off the top, and not the leftovers. Remember, the widow was to make the cake for Elijah, first, and then make one for herself and her son.**

**There's a lesson in tithing here. I remember a time when we'd been saving to make a recording and had already set the date. We projected that we'd have enough money by then. A month or so before, we heard a plea for money to buy flannel-graphs to use in teaching Bible stories in Russia. It so touched our hearts, we decided to take the money we'd designated for the recording to meet the need. We did. God met the need for the Russian children through us, and....you guessed it...He met our need, too. We recorded on schedule. Don't ask me how. I can't explain it. He just did! Two blessings for the price of one - that's just how He works when we heed His call!**

**What are you withholding from the Lord?  
Has God asked you to do or to give something you're not willing to?**

**You'll never receive the blessing God wants to give you unless you take that step of faith.**

**God met the needs a widow who was lost and all alone, because she stopped trying to meet her own needs and believed in Him for a miracle.**

**I'd like to conclude with a song written by a woman who was a singer as well as a writer. When she wrote this song, she was preparing for an operation to remove vocal nodes. She was told that she may never sing again. In her desert experience, she chose to give God herself - voice or no voice. He in turn placed a new song in her heart and returned her voice to her as well.**

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\*\*\* I'll Go/My House is full \*\*\*  
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**Thanks for joining the program.**

**For more information about Sandbek Concert ministries write to...**

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**Join us again next time and we'll find out how Elijah handles his new living arrangements.**