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**GRACE NOTES RADIO PROGRAM
SERIES: ELIJAH – A MAN FOR THE TIMES
TITLE: God’s Glory increases our Faith
SONGS: ALL THE GLORY
LAZARUS COME FORTH**

Welcome to Grace Notes!

Barbara Sandbek has been following the prophet Elijah on his ‘BOARDWALK’ of life. Elijah seems to have a MONOPOLY on receiving God’s prophetic word and seeing His promises fulfilled. He LANDED first at a palace. To avoid being sent ‘DIRECTLY TO JAIL’ by King Ahab when he told him of God’s impending punishment, he fled into a wilderness.

There he was fed from the COMMUNITY CHEST by a raven. When his WATER WORKS dried up, he moved to a pagan city, where he took the CHANCE to trust God to provide his needs through a starving widow. This certainly wasn’t the HIGH RENT DISTRICT, but he didn’t have to pay rent at any of these places - God gave him FREE PARKING. The widow ‘ROLLED DOUBLES’ when she obeyed Elijah’s command to make a cake for him, first, and then for herself and her son. God kept his promise. There was enough food for ALL of them until the rain came.

Elijah may feel like HE’S been winning the monopoly game so far, but this next faith test will show him that God is in control, especially when he comes to the end of his resources.

Today we’ll hear about another miracle God performed for the widow. This one will finally cause her to believe.

If all you had to eat was a little flour and a little oil, and miraculously, God made enough to last for about three years, wouldn’t you believe in Him? You’d think so. But this didn’t appear to be the case for the widow. It was going to take more than just meeting her physical needs to make a believer out of her.

Faith is rarely increased when God meets a physical need.

Take the feedings of the 4000 and 5000. Nowhere does it say that the people believed and became followers. They were satisfied and went home.

The Israelites, too, failed to appreciate the manna and quail they’d received from the hand of God. All they did was complain.

When we’re satisfied physically, it’s easy to forget from whom our blessings flowed.

Miracles do provide, though, a spiritual starting point for those whose hearts are open to the things of God. Thank God, He doesn’t give up on us. He didn’t give up on the widow, either. Let’s see what He did.

Some time later the son of the woman became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. She said to Elijah...

WIDOW: "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

Elijah replied:

ELIJAH: "Give me your son."

He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. Then he cried out to the Lord...

ELIJAH: "O Lord my God, have you brought tragedy ALSO upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?"

Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord..

ELIJAH: "O Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said...

ELIJAH: "Look, your son is alive!"

Then the woman said to Elijah...

WIDOW: "Now I KNOW that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

What made her believe THIS TIME? There are many reasons.

First, God touched something near and dear to her heart. Her son probably meant more to her than anything. He was her source of comfort. When she was starving, she needed what God GAVE, but now she needed God, HIMSELF.

Another reason, was that the reality of death was staring her in the face. Death reveals our sinfulness and hopelessness. We're born into this world with a natural fear of it, because innately, we know we've sinned against God. Our conscious tells us. In fact, it's been said that children's nightmares are a result of the fear of death.

Though this widow didn't have the Bible, which states in Romans 3:23 that 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.', and in Romans 6:23 that 'The wages of sin is death.', she felt convicted. True belief in God provides the remedy for spiritual death – without it, there's no hope. She felt that her sin had caused her son's death. Here we see the GUILT of sin permeating her being. She needs more than her physical needs met and NOW she knows it.

There was nothing the widow, or Elijah, could take credit for in the raising of the dead boy. The Glory and Power of the Lord was clearly made evident. When God brought her son back to life, this gave assurance that there was hope for her, if she but believed. She responded to the light she was given and confirmed her faith with a statement of trust.

***** ALL THE GLORY *****

God sent his Son, Jesus, to die for our sin so we would not have to fear death. Romans 6:23 states in its entirety...

The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

John 3:16 explains the gift...

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

When we accept this gift, the fear of death is removed, and hope is born in us.

Let's take a look, now, at how Elijah handled this situation. When I read this, it struck me that Elijah may be weakening in his faith. Can you tell from his question? He asked God if He is bringing tragedy also on the widow he's staying with.

Things had been going pretty smoothly. He'd played the role of the hero when he announced that God would supply her needs – and God came through. He didn't expect this turn of events!

He's probably sensing by now that wherever he goes, he's the bearer of bad tidings – famine in Ahab's land, and now death in the widow's house. Couldn't he have a better job, where everybody likes him and he offends no one? He doesn't seem to understand how the Glory of God works. It's not about him – it's about GOD!

Sounds a little like the story of the raising of Lazarus from the grave. Here's how it goes. Lazarus was sick. Mary and Martha, his sisters, had sent word to Jesus. Though Jesus loved them, he delayed, but returned a message to them, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's

glory, so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Lazarus did indeed die. Jesus arrived on the scene four days later to face a mourning crowd – with the sisters as participants.

John 11:33 says that Jesus 'groaned in his spirit'. According to the Vines dictionary, this means 'to express indignation or to rebuke sternly'. Why was Jesus indignant in this emotional situation? Probably because he'd already told the sisters to expect a miracle, and that His Glory would be revealed.

They were short-sighted - more concerned with the temporal, than in looking for the promised revelation from the Lord. He reminded them of this when He said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

Jesus raised Lazarus, despite their wrong response, and God raised the widow's son, despite Elijah's questioning approach. Why, because He wanted to increase their faith. He waited until their hope was almost gone before He performed the miracle. God responded in mercy to their meager prayer of faith, and their willingness to believe.

The God who worked in the dilemmas that both Elijah and Lazarus faced, is the same yesterday, today and forever. In the middle of our desperate situations, He wants us to use whatever faith we currently have to pray and believe. In turn, He'll give us hope to live, and hope for eternity.

*** LAZARUS COME FORTH ***

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Join us again next time and we'll continue following Elijah as he faces his next faith test – it's a biggie!