

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ZAREPHATH WIDOW LESSON NINETEEN

by Sandy Harber

"And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom." I Kings 17:19a

The distraught mother clutched her son in her arms, holding him close to her chest, as she berated the prophet for bringing this disaster to her house. The Hebrew word translated "bosom" literally means "to enclose." The widow enclosed the child within her arms, hugging him close against her chest. Certainly she was sobbing, tears sliding down her cheeks and dripping onto the still form in her embrace. Perhaps she rocked back and forth grasping tightly the cold, limp body of her beloved son.

Elijah did not argue with the widow. He didn't defend himself against her accusations. He didn't even attempt to correct her theology, assuming he knew better than to believe that the child died because of the mother's sins. He recognized that the widow was in no state to be reasoned with. He simply said, "Give me your son."

Elijah realized that the situation was beyond the control of mere human beings. The child had already passed out of this world. Only God Himself had the power to restore the son to his mother. And the prophet had every intension of confronting God and entreating His aid for the little family that had been sheltering him through the drought.

Quite often the calamities we face in life are beyond our control. The cause of our troubles may or may not lie at our door. But, whether we brought the situation on ourselves or not, the solution may be beyond our capabilities. There is only one place to turn. God is just a prayer away (Jer. 33:3).

God in His sovereignty has allowed us to experience hard times in our lives. Regardless of how the situation came about God is interested in how we react to our circumstances. It may be that the whole purpose of permitting our crisis is to teach us how to respond properly. For example, are we trusting that God is in control? Are we taking our burdens to Him in prayer? Are we waiting patiently for His leading?

The widow responded to the crisis by looking for someone to blame. It was her fault because of past sins, she decided. It was the prophet's fault because his presence reminded God that she was a sinner, she speculated. It was God's fault because He was punishing her for her sins, she concluded. It isn't unusual for us to look for someone to blame when things go wrong. At times it could indeed be someone's fault that we are in a pickle. How about the coworker who lied about us and got us in trouble with the boss? How about the sick friend who didn't realize that he was contagious when he spent some time with us? How about that persistent sin we just can't let go of that brings the chastening of the Lord? On the other hand, it may not be anyone's fault that we are dealing with a crisis. The car breaks down and we have no transportation for a week. A water pipe breaks when we're away from home and we come back to a mess. Tragedies come in all sizes and shapes.

Our first line of defense is the prayer line. Contact heaven's help line. Elijah knew that this was the way to go. He took the problem out of the widow's arms. And, as we shall see, he took her burden to the Lord (verse 20). We need to keep God's number on speed dial. It's Jeremiah 33:3.

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3