

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ZAREPHATH WIDOW LESSON TEN

by Sandy Harber

"And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand." I Kings 17:11

No sooner had the widow begun to fetch a vessel of water for the prophet than he made a second request. He wanted a little bread to eat with his cup of water. That request definitely required the woman to go home to get some bread if she had some already made or to bake a new loaf.

And these seemingly small requests were anything but during a drought. Water was scarce. And, because crops needed water to grow, the main ingredient for the requested bread was not easy to come by. The stranger was asking a lot of this poor widow woman.

Why did Elijah make these requests? God told him that He had commanded a widow to sustain him during the drought. So Elijah already knew that God had a plan for both him and the widow. Was Elijah not sure that this woman was the one God had chosen? Was he perhaps testing her? Maybe this was his way of initiating contact with the widow. He was pointing out his need- water and food - as an ice breaker, a way to begin discussing their mutual need to be sustained during the drought. The ensuing conversation gave him the opportunity to explain to the woman that God had a plan that would satisfy the needs of them both.

We do not have to face life's hardships alone. Of course, God is always with us. But He made humans to be social creatures, not solitary beings. When Adam was alone in the garden God said, "it is not good that man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). And He remedied the situation by creating a companion for Adam.

Our lives are enriched by the companionship of other people. That first couple was soon joined by the births of their children. And, so, God created families. As the population of earth expanded so did the relationship possibilities: siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents, nieces and nephews, etc. The family units grew into tribes. As humanity spread around the globe nations were born. The opportunities to interact with other humans is endless.

We all have friends that we enjoy spending time with. These are people we know we can call on when times are tough. We have family members that we can turn to in time of need. I have a church family that I know is there for me. God has surrounded us with helping hands and shoulders to cry on.

God's Plan for each of us includes the services of other people to meet our needs whether they be physical, emotional, or spiritual. Whatever crisis you are facing you can be sure God has prepared a support group to get you through. Words of wisdom, a comforting touch, or a hot meal are all methods of providing support.

And, don't forget you also provide assistance to others in their time of need. You may have taken a meal to a shut-in, given someone a glass of water, provided shelter to a stranger for one night, donated clothes to a charity, visited someone in the hospital or in prison, etc. (Mt. 25:35-36). You probably perform acts of kindness all the time without realizing how much impact that has on the life of another. In this we bring glory to God and show others the love of Christ.

" And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40