

Living and Receiving the Gospel

Scripture Reading — 1 Kings 17:7-24

The woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth.” — 1 Kings 17:24

I find it amazing that of all the places God could send Elijah, he sent the prophet to a widow in Zarephath. It was probably surprising to Elijah too. God had sent him out of Israel, the land of his people. This caused Elijah to depend on the hospitality of an outsider.

God directed this widow to supply Elijah with food, and yet she herself was very poor. In several ways—being a widow, poor, and from a land outside Israel—she was one of the last people we might expect to be chosen as a host for a prophet of the Lord. From the story, it sounds like she wasn't a follower of God either.

In our focus on religion, we often gauge success on the basis of performance: How often do you pray to God? Do you follow the teachings of God's Word? Do you worship God faithfully? In this story, however, the God of grace uses someone who is foreign to all of those ideas. That's what makes grace so amazing—we can do nothing to earn it.

God goes to the outsider. He goes to people who are on the margins. The widow and Elijah are both blessed by each other's presence and help. There's no place for superiority or inferiority. It is through embracing the other that grace can be mutually experienced. When we follow God's direction, we not only share his grace with others but also receive it.

Prayer

God of grace, we want to know who you truly are. Guide our living so that we not only share the grace you give but also receive it. Amen.

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