



# The Widow of Zarephath

**TEXT:** 1 Kings 17:8-16

**KEY VERSE:** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. — Hebrews 11:6

At the center of the Christian's experience is that seed of faith whereby he first entered, and now continues in the Christian walk. Should a time of testing rob him of that faith, he is a pauper, and will remain so until it is regained. But the one who guards his faith as a treasure beyond value will persevere and triumph in every trial of life.

## RESPONSES

1. As the scenario is developed, discussion should lead the students to sympathize with the widow and understand that this was, no doubt, the lowest point in her whole life.

2. Either obey through faith in God and in the prophet and live, or return to the same hopelessness that prevailed before the prophet stepped on the scene. Ask your students what indication the prophet gave to the widow that if she obeyed his request, her needs would be met until the rains came. Discussion should bring out that God rarely requires us to step out in faith without giving us any support or assurance that He will sustain.

3. The sinner must choose to believe that Jesus really is the answer and turn his whole life over to Him or return to his own way and suffer the consequences. Even though the benefits promised to the sinner make his response to God's call seem obvious, still mankind will often harden his heart to his own destruction.

4. Allow your students time to discuss their responses to this question. They should reach the conclusion that faith must be followed with works or it is of no value. Is this still true in our Christian experience? Ask your students to support their answers with specific illustrations.

1. Describe the situation that the widow of Zarephath was in when the prophet came to her.
  
2. While the widow went to fetch water for Elijah, he called to her with another request which elicited a pitiful response from the widow. What options did his request leave her?
  
3. What parallel can you draw between this woman's decision in how to respond to Elijah's demand and the decision facing every sinner who hears God's call?
  
4. Verse 15 brings out what very important truth concerning faith?

## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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5. What might the consequences have been had the characters in the following verses not exercised faith?

Genesis 6:13-18

Jonah 3:4,5

Matthew 15:22-28

6. Give an example from your own life that illustrates how faith sustains a person.

7. Luke 18:8 poses a very piercing question. How does it apply to the world in which we live?

8. How can we guard against the onslaught of the forces which would destroy or diminish our faith?

5. Noah: Loss of his own and his family's life and possibly the whole human race.

Ninevites: Certain destruction.

Syrophoenician woman: No healing for her daughter.

Summarize the responses to these Scriptures by discussing what some of the consequences would be in our day if faith is not exercised: no salvation, healings, etc.

6. Allow time for your students to share some examples. It would be good to point out the effect their lives and their faith have on those around them. One's personal experience of faith rewarded can be a powerful encouragement to another who is going through a similar test or trial. This is the basis for testimonies given in Gospel services.

7. Discuss the falling away from the true faith in much of Christendom and the growth of humanism which is the very antithesis of faith. The gradual erosion of such doctrines as divine healing among Christians is startling evidence of a watered-down and declining faith.

8. Your students' responses to this question should bring out that seeking to always retain a love for the truth and attending to the many means of grace such as prayer, Bible reading, and fellowship with other believers will serve to keep the hedge of God's protection high around us and our faith strong. Also, we should never shrink from situations that might demand us to walk by faith alone, since faith grows with use.

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What would have been the destiny of the widow and her son if normal events had happened? Why was it different?

Why did God send Elijah to a widow for sustenance when she had so very little herself?

Might this not also have been a test of Elijah's faith? why or why not?

Can you tell how God provided for Elijah before he came to the widow? Do people today have to trust God for their daily food? Explain. How do such experiences strengthen one's faith?

Do you know the story in the New Testament of another poor woman who had very little but was willing to give it to Jesus? Is there ever any need to think that what we have is of no consequence or too little to count?

Explain the importance of faith and obedience as revealed in this lesson.

Why do you suppose God didn't just send the widow all of the oil and the meal at once?

What do you think this lesson teaches us about sharing and hospitality?

How important is faith in your life? What has it done for you?

## THINGS TO DO

Take a small barrel with a little cornmeal and a vinegar cruet with oil in it. Show how it runs out when you pour. But still, day after day, there was meal and there was oil. God promises to provide for those who have faith to believe.

Have a little play. Give one child a candy bar and have him take the whole thing and say, "Well, there's only one so I'll eat it all." Then do it again to another child. That child breaks it into pieces and gives to the others and then takes what is left for himself. Reward him with another candy bar for himself and explain that God's blessing comes from giving to others first, and not from thinking of ourselves first.

To illustrate the need for faith in our everyday lives, bring to class small items which show we all have a degree of faith in the things we use every day: a letter ready to be mailed, a box of cake mix or a recipe, the key to our house or car, a camera. Or bring pictures of things too large to bring—electric lights, appliances. The choice is

almost unending. Then explain that if we can have faith in man-made things, how much more should we have faith in the God who created all things. He never fails those who put their trust in Him.

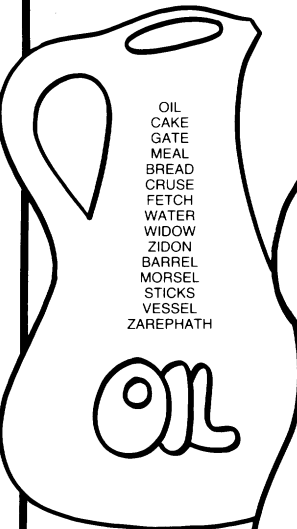
Do a little play or skit, letting the students act the parts to illustrate family happenings: (a) some member of the family is sick and an anointed handkerchief or tract is brought to him. Or family gathers around to pray for him. (b) Several days yet till payday, the grocery money gone, and almost no gasoline in the car, but it is meeting night. Should we go, or stay home so Dad will have the gas to go to work? He said, "Let's put first things first," and they go to church. That night someone gave the mother an envelope with money, which likely would not have been received had they not gone to church. Emphasize that faith coupled with obedience—doing what we can—is always honored by God. (This was an actual happening.)

Make three posters, one for each word—Others, Yourself, and Jesus. Let the students decide in which order they should be. (Have the J, O, and Y a different color from the rest of the letters so they will stand out.)

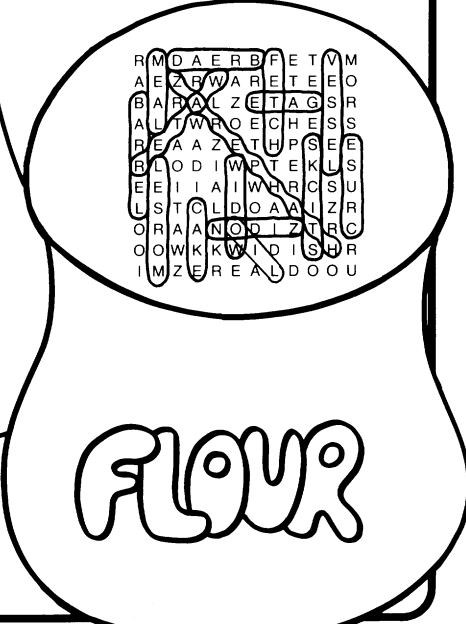
## Answers for ANSWER

### Faith in Action

The widow of Zarephath is an example to us of faith in action. In this Word-Find are some words used in this lesson. Find and circle each one.



OIL  
CAKE  
GATE  
MEAL  
BREAD  
CRUISE  
FETCH  
WATER  
WIDOW  
ZIDON  
BARREL  
MORSEL  
STICKS  
VESSEL  
ZAREPHATH



R	M	D	A	E	R	B	F	E	T	V	M
A	E	A	B	W	A	R	E	T	E	O	
B	A	R	A	L	Z	E	T	A	G	S	R
A	L	T	W	R	O	E	C	H	E	S	S
R	E	A	A	Z	E	T	H	P	S	E	E
R	L	O	D	I	W	P	T	E	K	L	S
E	E	H	I	A	I	W	E	R	C	S	U
L	S	T	O	L	D	O	A	A	I	Z	R
O	R	A	A	N	O	I	Z	T	R	C	
O	O	W	K	K	W	I	D	I	S	H	R
I	M	Z	E	R	E	A	L	D	O	O	U