Study of Elijah - Part 3

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[0:00] Seeking God's blessing, we'll turn to the first portion of scripture we read.

In the first book of Kings, chapter 17, and verse 8, 1 Kings chapter 17, verse 8, And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there.
Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. Get thee to Zarephath, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.
Now we saw that the Lord had two purposes in view in sending Elijah beside the brook Cherith. First of all, the very removal of the prophet there was a rebuke to Israel itself, because by removing the prophet, God was effectively removing his word from the land, and that we saw was the greatest judgment that can come upon a people, or upon a soul, when the Lord removes his word from a person or from a people.
And in the second place we saw that Elijah beside the brook was taught again the great power and the great mercy of God.
[1:57] And he was taught that through the instrumentality of the ravens, who brought him his food morning and evening. God's power was shown there in changing the nature, as it were, of the raven altogether.

That voracious bird, who will rather feed herself and let her young starve, God caused that bird to bring Elijah food morning and evening.
And in doing that, Elijah learned in a powerful way the power of God and the care of God for him. Now these lessons he learned for a whole year beside the brook Cherith, but he was going to learn them for another two years.
But not this time beside the brook Cherith, but in the house of a poor widow woman, who lived in a place called Zarephath. So Elijah was learning humility, and he was learning how to trust the Lord continually.
And that meant that the Lord would use him again, and he would again be useful in the service of God. Because God empties people when they are to be used of himself.
[3:05] We must be emptied of pride and of vanity for the Lord to use us in blessing anyone else in any way at all. And that is why it's always good to go willingly to our Cheriths and to our places of seclusion, that the Lord may empty and humble us.

Now after a while, mysteriously, the brook dries. And this is a mystery to Elijah. We're told in verse 7, It came to pass after a while that the brook dried up.
A strange providence, because he had been asked by God to go there, and he had been told that he would be sustained there, and now the brook dries. And when a brook dries up in your own life, or when a providence remarkable comes into your experience, it's time again to seek the Lord's face, and to diligently ask, What is he requiring of you now?
And I am quite sure that Elijah began to ask that specific question, when he saw the brook drying up. And he waited for an answer from the Lord, and he received it.
Notice that he didn't just run away when the brook dried up. He waited until God confirmed that providence, and God does that in his guidance. He speaks in the mouth of two or three witnesses.
[4:21] Watch for two or three providences, or watch for two or three particular words applied to your soul. He waits. And sure enough, like Israel, who rested when the pillar rested, and moved when the pillar moved, Elijah waits, and he hears the word.

And that word comes to him, Arise, and get thee to Zarephath, verse 9, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

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Now, if the command to go to Cherith was strange, this command was stranger still. To begin with, the journey from Cherith to Zarephath is approximately 100 miles.
And that is a journey that Elijah would have had to make on foot, as a man who is in flight, who is in a dangerous position all the time.
He has to remove himself from the east of Jordan, where the small tributary of Cherith flows, and he has to cross the promised land, and to go westward, right to the Mediterranean Sea, to the country of the Phoenicians, and to a town there called Zarephath, which lay between the two major Phoenician cities, of Tyre and Zidon.
[5:40] So that was a long and arduous journey that the Lord required of Elijah to make. And it was in time of famine, and it was in a time of danger, so there was dryness and desolation.

And I say danger particularly, because Zarephath, being a Phoenician city, was a particularly dangerous territory for Elijah to enter.
And if you remember, a couple of weeks ago, I mentioned to you that that was Jezebel's home country, the wife of Ahab, the persecutor of the people of God.
She was the daughter of Ezbal, the king of the Phoenicians. And the two principal cities, you could perhaps say the Edinburgh and the Glasgow of Phoenicia, were Tyre and Sidon, and Zarephath was right between the two.
It seems in many respects that, in many respects that although it was, perhaps a smaller town than the two, it was undoubtedly that, it was a dangerous position, and a dangerous place, for this man of God to be found in at that time.
[6:46] All the more so when you consider that Ahab was, by now, in a fury. He was in a rage, and he had sent out messengers, north, east, south, and west, to find the man Elijah.

Look, for example, at chapter 18 here, and verse, verse 9, and Obadiah speaking to Elijah here, and listen to what Obadiah says, verse 9, and he said, Look at the rage, and the devilish, vehement fury of Ahab, prompted and spurned on by his wife Jezebel.
Into every surrounding country, Ahab sends a message, Have you seen the man Elijah? Is there a man who claims to be a prophet of God? Does he wear a leathern girdle?
Find him, and bring him to me. And Elijah is walking right into the heart, of enemy territory, as it were. And, it's worthwhile stating that, the famine of God was obviously in Phoenicia, at the same time.
Because God was cursing the worship of Baal. God was cursing idolatry. And so he doesn't just send the famine to Israel, he sends it to its root, he sends it to Phoenicia, and into the great kingdom of the king, Ethbaal.
[8:24] So it's dangerous for Elijah, another strange aspect of the commandment is this, that the Lord says to him, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

And it turns out when Elijah meets her, that the widow woman has a son. And I'll tell you, my friend, the poorest person you could meet, in the near east, in these times, was a widow woman, with a son, too young to work.
That was the poorest person, you could possibly come, into contact with. And the Lord says, that I have commanded, a widow woman there, to sustain thee.
It's as though Elijah is told, you are to be a dependent, upon a dependent. You are to make your, or to be sustained in a famine, by one who herself, requires to be sustained, in a famine.
And that is the full strangeness, of the command, that presents itself to Elijah. Arise, go to Sarephath. I have commanded a widow woman there, to sustain you.
[9:33] And make no mistake, my friend, it's not just a strange command, it's a difficult one. I said already, he was going into the heart, of enemy territory.

And he's going to see a widow. And for all Elijah knows, this widow would give anything, or would take anything, to betray the prophet of God. What if Ethbal had come along, and said, I will give such and such, to anyone who can show me, where the prophet of Israel is.
And he's trusting himself, to someone, he thinks is a heathen woman, in the midst of a heathen land. And he has to trust, the care of God, in that situation.
I know the ravens are fed up, but my friend, it's much more difficult, to trust with respect to people, than it is to animals. What I mean by that is this, you remember when David said, let me not fall, into the hands of men, let me fall, into the hands of God.

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What does that mean? Well it means, that when we are trusting, as it were, upon God alone, or when God is even, moving the animal world, to look after us, there is something, more certain, and more stable in that, than there is, in looking to man.
[10:48] Fickle man, frail man, who can change, in a moment. And so I would say, that he was moving, from the lesser, to the greater, in moving away, from the ravens, to a heathen widow woman, in the midst of Sarephath.

He was leaving, the relative certainty, of the ravens, to the uncertainty, of a woman, he had never seen, nor heard of before, who possessed, a wicked heart, a deceitful heart, like all other men, and women.
So there was undoubtedly, a difficult test, involved in that as well. And let me say to you, my friend, in the passing, that every single thing, that God requires of you, is difficult.
Now, I suppose you could come back, at me and say, well, surely that's an exaggeration. Well, I don't really know, if it is an exaggeration, at all. Faith, is the great requirement, in the word of God. And, as the Christian goes on, he discovers, that he needs faith, for absolutely everything. Even a command, that looks simple, or that looks sweet, and that may even look, pleasant to perform.
[11:52] You'll find, that it has its catch in it. You'll find, that it has its difficulty, in it. To the point, where you have to ask, God's help, and God's assistance, to go through with it.

And that is why, the word of God, is full of commands, and full of promises. Because, life, is full, of difficult, providential situations. And, in this command, inside it, there is, a trial, which he must rise up, by God's strength, and meet, and which he must meet, successfully.
And you'll notice, what he does. He rises up, verse 10, and he goes, to Zarephath. Now, I pointed this out, before. There's a pattern, in Elijah's life, and it appears, again and again.
And it appears, in the life of, the believer, who is walking, with the Lord. There is, first of all, a need, of some kind. That need, drives you, to earnest, fervent prayer.
That fervent prayer, is met with, a word by God. And you'll find, that that word, by God, always carries, a test, and a promise.
[13:07] You'll always find, that God's word, carries a test, and a promise. Arise, get thee, to Zarephath. That's a test. Get thee, to Zarephath. It's a test. I've commanded, a widow woman, to sustain thee.

There's the promise. Do as I say, go forward, put your face, to the task. Don't look, at the difficulties. And I have commanded, to sustain you. And when that is obeyed, the child of God, discovers, a reward, following upon that.
And the reward, is to see, the glory of God. Whenever you obey, the Lord, and whenever you follow him, and the path he has put out for you, God will reward that.
God will honor it. Did I not say unto thee, Martha, that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God? That is what the Lord does. If you but do what he asks, he will open the heavens, and he will reveal himself, and he will reward you with that.
Just as Abraham, when he, when he defeated, the coalition of kings against him. You remember, the king of Sodom, came to him, and offered him, a tithe.
[14:17] He said, take this. And Abraham would take, none of it. In case, people would think that, a heathen had made him wealthy.

No. God said to Abraham, I will make you great. And he would not let anyone else, make him great. He took none, of what the king of Sodom, offered to him. And in the next chapter, you find the chapter, beginning with the Lord, appearing to Abraham, and saying, fear not Abraham, I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward.
And the Lord gives him, a vision of himself. That is the way, the Lord works. And you, my friend, or me, if I have a stinted vision, at any time of the glory of God, and if I am not caught up, with the greatness, and the majesty of the Almighty, it's because I am disobedient, or it's because I am unprayerful, it's because I'm out of my place, and out of line.
And the Lord will honor it, when we turn our faces towards himself, and when we but do, what he asks us to do. And Elijah here, sees the glory of God.
Now, well, we'll see how in a moment, but, as he arrives in Sarephath, he sees a sad sight. There's a woman there, and she's gathering sticks.
[15:34] And if anyone's face, ever told a tale, this woman's face, tells a tale. It is emaciated. It is starved. This woman looks like a woman, who is at death's door.

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Sad, and sorrowful. And when Elijah speaks to her, she's gathering a couple of sticks, because she's going to make her last meal, for herself, and her equally sorrowful, emaciated, and starving son.
She has a little meal, and a little oil left. And she's going to make one last meal, and what a pathetic sight it makes for us, to think of this poor woman. And she is poor.
She has no servant to gather sticks for her. She is just a poor widow woman, with a very young son, who is not able to perform even this task for her. And she's going to sit with this child, and she's going to feed the child, and feed herself, and lay down to die, because there's nothing else, except to look death in the face.
We have the gall, to claim our own poverty. We have the affrontery, to claim sometimes, that we are poor, or that we have difficult providences. Let these things shame us, in reading of them.
[16:49] Let the lives of our own mothers, and fathers, and our forefathers, shame us, for we know not what poverty means. We don't know what these things mean. And that is the sight that Elijah saw, when he went near Zarephath, this poor widow woman, gathering sticks for one last meal.

But I'll tell you, my friend, forgotten she may be, by all, but not by the Lord. And interestingly enough, she already knows the name of the Lord.
Now listen, in verse 12, to how strange this is. Elijah asks her for some bread, and she says, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise. Now you notice that the name Lord, is in capital letters. That means it is Jehovah, the God of the covenant, the God of Israel. She knows the name.
And what's more, however she knows it, she knows that this man, is also God's man, and God's prophet. And she will receive him, in the name of a prophet.
[18:04] And she will receive a prophet's reward. She uses the name of Jehovah, she uses it reverently, and she uses it respectfully. And I would argue, that faith is at least, beginning in this woman.

Faith is at least, beginning in this woman. And the Lord knows her, and the Lord will find her. He will find his elect, wherever they are.
He will search for them, and he will seek them out, even if they are, in the middle of Sarephath, in the middle of heathendom, in the middle of a famine. God will seek them, and he'll work in his soul, and he'll send, consolation, and he'll send a prophet, to them.
And that is what he does, here. But interestingly, she doesn't say, my God. She says in verse 12, as the Lord thy God liveth. Now I don't think, we should understand that, to mean that she was growth, and the language of assurance, isn't there.
I know it comes easy, to some people today, but the language of assurance, isn't there. As the Lord thy God liveth. Almost as though, she was saying, would that he were my God.
[19:14] Or I pray, and hope that he is my God. But he is certainly thine, as the Lord thy God liveth. This is all, but I have. But my friend, God has sent Elijah, a hundred miles, for her sake.

He has sent Elijah, a hundred miles, for her sake. Because this is the day, of her visitation. And she will be glad, and she'll rejoice, in that day.
And I think, there's nothing more wonderful, to behold, than the way, in which God, brings his own people in. Isn't that right? Christian friend, is it not something, that makes your own heart, rejoice, and makes you glad, when you hear of a soul here, or a soul there.
And perhaps, you've watched the progress, day to day. And you've seen, how the Lord has done this. How he has moved here, and how he has worked, powerfully, and effectively. Well, Elijah saw it.
And I'm quite sure, it took his own breath away, and caused him to marvel, at the grace of God. And before I move on, to the woman, which is what I really, wish to look at with you.
[20:20] It's worth again, thinking of what Elijah, himself learned from this. What but this, that God reigneth? What does he learn, but that God is, Lord of all, of heaven and earth?

That even when, Jezebel is destroying Israel, God is right in the heartland, of Jezebel's homeland. And he's calling people, out of the heart, of enemy territory. As though God is saying to Elijah, fear not Elijah.
She can do nothing, but what I permit her to do, to you who have forsaken, my altars, and broken my covenants. But to show you Elijah, that I still rule, look at her home country, and look at the poor widow woman, that I am calling to myself.

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And it's almost a foretaste, for Elijah, of the day, when the gospel, will be taken from, the Jews, and when will be given, to the Gentiles. And when for hundreds of years, the Jews will die in ignorance, and the Gentiles, will grow, and the church of Christ, will grow amongst the Gentile people, until the Jews, are finally, brought back again, into the kingdom of God.
Elijah sees, God's grace, going out, to the Gentiles. And, I think Christ himself, is referring to that, when he's preaching, in the synagogue. He says, there were many widows, he says, in Israel, in the days of Elijah.
[21:38] But to not one of them, was Elijah sent, except to the widow, in Sarephath. What is Christ saying there? What is the Lord revealing? Well, he's revealing this, that the kingdom of God, is taken away, from a nation, which does not bring forth, the fruits thereof, and it's given to another.

Elijah was sent, outside the country, as a judgment, on the country, and he brought the word, to another country, he brought it to Sarephath. He brought it to Sarephath.
And that is the wonderful way, in which the Lord himself works. And by the way, I can't help, but trace, some kind of analogy there, between that, and the way in which, Christ himself, for once, in his, in his own ministry, goes outside the borders, of the land.
You can read of it, in Matthew 15. He goes into, and listen to where he goes to, he goes to, Syrophoenicia. And he meets a woman there.
And he tests that woman. And that woman, has great faith, he pronounces. And she herself, is a foretaste, of the harvest, of the Gentiles to come.
[22:52] That again, parallels, just exactly, what we have here. Now, I want to turn with you, to look at this woman, in a little more detail.

And what I want us, to notice regarding her, is this. That like every other believer, she is also tested. And she is also, rewarded.
We find it here, in this chapter, twice. She is tested, and she is rewarded. Now, look at it with me, and see her faith grow. And see what we can learn, from her experience, ourselves.
Now, let's look at the first test, in verse 10. And when he came, to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman, was there, gathering of sticks. And he called to her, and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water, in a vessel, that I may drink it.
Now, that's the first test, give me some water. She probably, doesn't have, too much water herself. But she goes, to get it. But that's not enough, for Elijah. The very quickness, of his response, seems to make him, come in again.
[24:05] And he says, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel, of bread, in your hand. As well as, for the water, he asks for the bread. And then, the woman's agony, comes out, and she says, in verse 12, as the Lord thy God, liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal, in a barrel, and a little oil, in a cruise.

And she says, I'm going to make, the last meal, before I die, myself and my son. Now, Elijah doesn't, bog at that. He doesn't retreat. In fact, he comes forward, and he seems, to lay a command, on her, as though this is going, to test her life, and her faith, one way or the other.
He says, now is the hour, of crisis. Fear not, go and do, as thou hast said, but make me, a cake first, and bring it to me, and after, make for thee, and for thy son.
For, thus saith, the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal, shall not waste, neither shall the cruise, of oil fail, until the day, that the Lord, sendeth rain, upon the earth.
Now, notice there, first of all, again, you have the same thing. This woman, has been needy, and I've no doubt, that she prayed, every day, to the Lord, for help.
[25:31] Elijah came, and the word of God, came with him, but it comes, in the form, of a test. A test, a command, and a promise, attached.

Do you notice, the same thing, here's the test, or the command, make me a cake first, and after, make for yourself, and your son, and here's the promise, for, if you do what I tell you, the barrel shall never waste, and the cruise of oil, shall not fail.
And she goes, and does it. Verse 15, she went, and did according, to the saying, of Elijah. Now notice, my friend, that is obedience. We're specifically told, she went, and did according, to the word of Elijah.
Now she didn't do this, she didn't sit down, and reason with unbelief, and say that a bird, in the hand, was worth two in the bush. She didn't say, well it's better, to have this meal, of which I'm sure, than to trust this man, that I've never seen before, that this will multiply.

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That was unbelief, and she didn't reason, that way. And neither, did she say, for that matter, I'll take a chance, and go and do it.
[26:44] We are told, that she did, according to the saying, of Elijah. That means, that she took his word, as the word of God. She took the prophet, as a prophet of God.

And she knew, that this was God's word, to her soul. Do or die. The hour of crisis, the day of salvation, has really drawn near, to this woman. And her incipient, growing faith, is now put to the test.
What will she do? Will she falter, and stumble, and perish with the rest? Or will she rise, and take hold of the prophet, and take hold of the God, of the prophet? She went, and did, according to, the word of Elijah.
And she made him, a cake first. And lo and behold, when she went, to make the food, for herself, and for her son, almost miraculously, not almost, but entirely, and altogether, miraculously, in her hand, it multiplied.
The oil, multiplied. And the meal, multiplied. She received, a prophet's reward. As Christ said, give a cup, of cold water. If you receive, a prophet, in the name of a prophet, you shall receive, a prophet's reward.
[27:48] She obeyed. She rose to the test, and she did, what the Lord asked, and here's the reward. That the cruise, never failed, and that the barrel, was never empty.

And like, any child of God, you, she would apply, these natural, phenomena, miraculous as the way, she would apply them, to her spiritual life.
That's what the child, of God always does. And she would know, that this is, but a parable, of what God does for her, and will do for her faith. Her faith, I believe, was flickering low.
Have you ever had, that experience, where your faith, is just flickering low? It seems that you've been, praying for long enough, but the answer, never really came, or it seems to be, long in coming. But it's right, at the last hour, or when you're on your, last legs, that God comes in.
He intervenes, when it's his time. And he came, to this woman. And God, is as it were, in a parable, telling here, I will never fail you.
[28:52] Just like the cruise of oil, and the barrel of meals, I will never fail you. He didn't give her, 20 barrels, and 20 cruises of oil. He just gave her, enough, every day.

Multiplying, as it were, through the night, or even under her hands, I don't know. But it multiplied, and it just grew. Whatever she took from, there was something there.
God, multiplied it. And I think, there are many lessons, for us to be learned there, with respect to the life of faith. God keeps you, day to day. And he wishes you, to learn that from this.
Give us this day, our daily bread. Pray for that, spiritually. God will give you, what you need. Sufficient unto the days, the evil thereof, and sufficient unto the evil, is the grace, that you receive for it.
Day to day, the Lord will give you, little by little, as he sees, that you have need. And there are many things, that the Lord gives us, in small portions, to remind us, that we should look at the giver, and not at the gift itself.
[29:58] This woman, would never sit back, and admire, the crews of oil, and the barrels, all around her. Because she was dependent, every single day, on the Lord, bringing something, out of nothing.

And that's how we should, live by grace, day by day, that the Lord, would give us something, when we have nothing, ourselves. And it's in using it, that it grows.
The manna, was like that itself. If you didn't use the manna, it bred worms, and it stank. And that's what happens, to some people, in their spiritual lives.
They begin to breed worms, and to stink, in their spiritual lives. Because you're not putting, to use the means of grace. Not putting them to use. God gives, you use.
And as you use, he gives more. Use your talents, God will give you more talents. And God gives, a reward, to those, who use well.
[30:58] But I'll tell you this as well, my friend. Not only, was her reward, in the food, but it was also, in the fellowship, of the prophet.

There was a house, next to her house. Or can we say, there was a note house, or a house that was, attached, to the roof of her house. This was common, in the near east. It was a common structure.

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It was accessible, from the outside. Just in case you think, that there was anything, indecent in it. There was not. The access to the house, was from outside. These structures, are still apparently, common amongst, the poorer people, in the near east.
And Elijah lived there, and dwelt with this woman, for over two years. This woman, and her son. And that, my friend, was the greatest reward, that this woman, received.
How many days, of fellowship, did they have together? In how many ways, did Elijah, help this woman, to understand, the Lord God, of Israel? bringing her on, in the faith, teaching, encouraging, exhorting, rebuking, admonishing.
[32:03] She had the privilege, of the prophet of God, with her, in the home. The last shall be first. Out goes the gospel, out of Israel, and into the house, of this poor woman, it goes.

She did, a lot with a little, when Israel, was doing a little, with a lot. And the Lord, honored her, and the Lord, blessed her, to them that hath, shall be given.
And from them that hath not, even that which they have, shall be taken from them. And the Lord, blessed the woman, and blessed her, richly, indeed. Now, the interesting thing, here is that, this cycle, is again, repeated, in this woman's experience.
she's tested, she passes, and she sees, the glory of God. But it happens, to her again, another test comes, and you'll notice, that it's harder, than the first one.
Now, some people preach, and practice, a sugary, spicy Christianity. One that's very, very easy. And they pretend to you, sometimes even, when they preach that, oh, you just come and believe, and that's it, it's all plain sailing, after that.
[33:16] The Christianity, of the Bible, is nothing like that. Nothing like that, at all. It is a trial, one after the other, and if I am not mistaken, the trials don't get any easier, they get harder.

Was Abraham's hardest trial, not at the twilight, of his own years? This woman's second trial, is certainly harder, than her first. Apparently, the name, Zarephath, means a crucible, or a melting place.
Now, actually, there's a little dispute, over what exactly, the name means. It could mean two things, but it seems, to be the case, there, it means a melting place, or a smelting place, a furnace. And there was, indeed, in that area, a place for the refining of metals.
How aptly named, the place was. Because, this woman, was really put into, the crucible, the second time. Because, the worst thing, that could happen to her, fell to her.
In verse 17, it came to pass, after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick. And his sickness, was so sore, that there was no breath, left in him.
[34:20] He died. Her young child, died. And only those, who have gone through that, know, the pain, and the loss, of losing a child, when he or she, is still young.

She holds him for a while, and then, it seems almost, to take herself by surprise. I'm sure, it was the last thing, she was expecting, when the child, expired, and grieved its last.
And this woman, so recently favored, surrounded, with the miracles of God, is suddenly left, holding, the dead body, of her own child.
My friend, God's, greatest test, sometimes come, in the midst, of his greatest blessings, and his greatest, providential kindnesses. You mark that. It's as though, one was just a cushion, or a cushion, for the other.
The child, dies. And she turns, to Elijah, in near despair, and she says to him, in verse 18, what have I, to do with thee, O thou man of God?
[35:28] Art thou come unto me, to call my sin, to remembrance, and to slay, my son. Now, the one thing, I want us to understand, from this, very clearly, is that, this woman, is not blaming Elijah, for what happened to her.

It sounds like it. But she's not blaming him, at all. There is fear, in her voice. And she certainly, feels, in some way, that she would be better, distant from the prophet.
But it's not because, there's something wrong, with a prophet. Notice, and read the words, carefully. It's because, she's conscious, that there's something, wrong with herself. Read it again, verse 18. And she said to Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me, to call my sin, to remembrance, and to slay, my son?
She doesn't blame the prophet, she blames herself. She blames herself. And as far as I'm concerned, that is a good mark, on this woman.

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[36:36] Because she's talking, about her sins. And she's talking, about her past. And she knows now, through two years, of fellowship, and through two years, of blessing, from the prophet, that she deserves, nothing but the wrath, and curse of God.

And that is a child, grown in grace. She is conscious, that she never deserved, the child. She knows that if God, were to mark her iniquity, she would have nothing, left in the world.
She knows that. She knows it now. And if ever she was shaky, on any of these things, grace has taught her. Grace has emptied her. Have you come, to bring my sins, to remembrance, and to slay, my son?
But let me say this, that if there is, any harshness, in this towards Elijah, notice how Elijah, takes it. And Christian man, and woman, you notice, how Elijah takes it.
He doesn't turn and say, who are you, to talk like that to me? He knows, that when grief, comes into a person, sometimes words, escape their lips, that might not escape, their lips, in other circumstances.
[37:46] But he had a tender heart, and he had a compassionate soul, like the Lord himself, had to the disciples, when they said, in the midst of the storm, carest thou not, that we perish?

what words, they were to use. Elijah deals, with her tenderly. And you remember that, if you hear someone, in their extremity, perhaps speak, a word of doubt, or even cast, an aspersion, upon the Lord, I don't excuse, such a thing, in myself, or in anyone else.
Save this, that we are, weak, and frail vessels. You remember it, and be kind, and tender, and patient, to such people. Who knows, what you would say, if such grief, came upon yourself?
Who knows, what words, would escape your lips? Elijah says nothing. I know his own soul, is in torment, and in turmoil. He just picks, the child, off her bosom, where she is holding him, so closely, he picks the child, off her bosom, he goes outside, and he ascends, his own loft.
He shuts the door, he's in a secret chamber, and he lays the child, on the bed. And a strange thing happens. He lays himself, on top of the child, and he does that, three times, and he prays, earnestly to God, to put life, back, into, this child.
[39:13] Now if you come across, a strange act, in the Bible, you know that there's, a significance, behind it. And this was, a strange act. Now there's a part of it, that's not strange, and that is his cry, to God.

It is, his prayer. He cried, to God. The effectual, fervent prayer, of the righteous man, availeth much, and he knows, that he must take, this whole thing, to God.
The only one, who can deal with it. Now, it doesn't tell us, too much detail, but, Elisha did the same thing, some years later. And we're told that, when he stretched himself, on the child, he would get up, and he would walk, back and forth, for a while, and then he would come back, and lay himself, on the child again.
Now I have no doubt, that Elisha learned, from his master. And if Elisha did that, he knew that Elijah, had done it. So here you have, the phenomenon, of this man crying, to God, pacing back and forth, and then lying again, down on the child, mouth to mouth, hands upon hands, eyes upon eyes.
And he asks, and pleads with God, to give life, back, to this child. And you saw his prayer, a couple of weeks ago, it's earnest, he cries.
[40:40] Like everything else, in the Christian life, for Elijah, it was business for him. He meant it. He was in earnest. He wasn't playing games. He wasn't, having his faith, like a badge people wear, on their lapels.

It was his whole life. He cried to God, about this matter. He desired God, to do something, and you'll notice, that he expected an answer. Here you have, the number three again.
Three times, he laid himself, on the child. Three times, went away to pray. Three times, our Lord prayed, in Gethsemane. Three times, Paul asked for the thorn, in the flesh.
What did it mean? It meant, expectant prayer, until an answer was given. That's what it means. He again, prayed expectantly, until God, sent, an answer.
And you'll notice, that he asked specifically. A specific request, in verse 21, he stretched himself, upon the child, three times, and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul, come into him again.
[41:42] What a prayer that was. Never before, had it been offered up, in the Old Testament, in the history of the world. Never before, was there a resurrection. As far as I can understand, this was

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the first, person, brought, back, to life.

And Elijah, puts up that prayer. He puts up that petition, for something, never seen before. Bring, this child, let the child's soul, come back, into him again.
Now, if I'm not mistaken, I believe that, that fact, that it's the first resurrection, explains, the mystery, of the stretching.
In other words, this first resurrection, from death to life, is done in such a way, as to teach us, how God always, brings life, from death.
How does he do it? Well, the key is in the hands, upon the hands, and the mouth, upon the mouth, and the eyes, upon the eyes. The fact of the matter is, that God brings, souls to life, first of all, by contracting, himself, I speak with reverence, by contracting, himself, to their situation, and to their need.
[43:07] Here is a small child, he can be, but a few years old, but Elijah comes, and meets him, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, and hands to hands, as Elisha, was to do afterwards.

He is bringing himself, as it were, to the dimensions, of the child. I cannot help, but see the incarnation, of the Lord in that. Did he not become, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, in order to save us?
Did he not have to, as it were, put the palms of his hands, upon yours? His eyes, upon yours, to impart his sight, to you? And above all, his mouth, upon yours, to kiss you, with the kiss of life, and to impart life, to your soul?
Is that not how, the Lord brings life, out of death? By, as it were, swallowing your death, and imparting his life, to you?
That is how, the Lord awakens, the dead, and breathes, life into a soul, I kill, and I make alive. And you, who are dead today, and there may be people, weeping over you, your mother, or father, or your children even, sad or still, may be weeping over you, that you are still dead.
[44:22] Well, I pray that the prophet of God, might lie upon you, hand to hand, mouth upon mouth, and that he may impart, to you the life, that you need.

And as it was true, of the living man, the first physical living creature, God breathed, the breath of life, into his nostrils, and he became a living soul. So may Christ, the prophet, breathe, into your soul, to become a spiritual, living soul.
Elijah, contracts himself, to the child, identifies with the child, and the child, is brought, as it were, to life. And he takes the child, finally, down to his mother.
Verse 23, And Elijah took the child, and brought him down, out of the chamber, into the house, and delivered him, unto his mother, and Elijah said, see, thy son liveth.
And the woman said, to Elijah, now by this I know, that thou art a man of God, and that the word, of the Lord, in thy mouth, is truth.
[45:30] Her faith, is brought, to full fruition. The work of God, is accomplished. You don't know, sometimes, why you have to do, a certain thing, but then you discover, why.

It was for this person, or for that person. Her faith, is ripened, her faith, is full. She sees, that God, is a God, of resurrection, and he is the God, of life.
And that God, will never leave her, and that God, will never forsake her. She learns, and Elijah learns. And how much more, blessed, their fellowship, afterwards.
The greater your trial, the greater your reward, the greater your blessing, the better your fellowship, you share, with one another. It is as simple as that. God's work, brings its own reward.
He obeyed, and they both, saw, the glory, of God. Well, that's very well, but then the time, comes for Elijah, again, to leave, because it's time, to face Ahab, again.
[46:33] In fact, it's time, to face the 450, court prophets of Baal, on the top, of Mount Carmel. But he has had Cherith, and he has had, Seraphath, so he's now ready, to stand, on Carmel.

And you will also, be close to the Lord, and you can defeat, his enemies. May the Lord, bless his word. Let us pray. Eternal God, we pray, that they would, strip from us, all self-confidence, and reliance, upon the flesh.
Help us, to look to the one, who is the resurrection, and the life, who can impart, to us life, that we may have it, indeed, and have it, abundantly.
We pray, for any, who may be dead, in their souls, among us tonight. Though knowest them, and though knowest them all, will thou not visit them, with thy salvation.

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Draw near to them. Take away anything, that may have been, inconsistent with thy truth. Let thine own word prevail, and may it be blessed, for Christ's sake.
[47:40] Amen.

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