

Title: The Assurance of Faith

Text: 1 Kings 17: 17-24

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Place: SGBC, NJ

1 Kings 17: 17: And 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. 18: And she said unto 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? 19: And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. 20: And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? 21: And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. 22: And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. 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. 24: 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.

Subject: The Assurance of Faith

We are told it was “by faith” that this woman received her dead child raised to life again.

Hebrews 11: 35: [by faith] Women received their dead raised to life again:

God had given this woman faith in the Lord. God said, “I have commanded her to sustain thee.” By God's grace she believed the word of the Lord delivered by his servant. By faith in the Lord, believing the word of the Lord which the Lord spake by Elijah, the Lord provided her meal and oil.

1 Kings 17: 16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

Christ is the Bread from heaven—he is the Bread that wastes not. The Spirit of the Lord the oil of gladness that never fails. He is our Life according to the word of the LORD. God gives us the gift of faith in the Lord.

Where God has given faith, God grows us in the assurance of faith. That is where she ends up in verse 24, “*And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know [I am assured, I have assurance] that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.*” Did she not know before? Yes. When the Spirit of God regenerates his child and brings us to faith in Christ, we know Christ is Salvation. We are assured. We can say, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim 1: 12). But we are so apt to seek for assurance in ourselves, in the gifts, in earthly blessings. So God grows us in the assurance of faith.

How does God grow us in assurance of faith? The same way he did this widow. God sent this woman trouble to grow her in the assurance of faith.

1 Kings 17: 17: And 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.

After God had worked grace for her, God worked more grace for her. It was God's grace that her son fell sick and died suddenly. It is God's grace to send trials to his people. Christ said the life of a believer must go through much tribulation. But it is for the purpose which Christ declared, “That IN ME ye might have peace” (Jn 16:33). It is by beholding that Christ truly is our Life that God makes Christ the assurance of our faith. He makes us know more assuredly be of good cheer that Christ has overcome the world, and in him alone, the believer has overcome the world.

Proposition: God our Father only chastens those he loves so that our assurance is kept being Christ alone.

NO ASSURANCE IN SELF

1 Kings 17: 18: And she said unto 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?

God chastens us to keep us from having assurance in ourselves or in the gifts God has given. This was her response to the trial. Her response is much harsher than the Shunamite woman. God had given her and her son life by his word delivered by his prophet. She believed God. But after being sustained for a full year, she blames Elijah for the death of her son—"*What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?*" It is the same word the Gadarene spoke to Christ,

Luke 8:28: When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

She had probably heard of Elijah declaring the sin of Israel and that he prayed for the rain to be withholden and now she thinks Elijah has come to do the same to her, "*art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?*" She accuses Elijah of mocking her. She accuses him of doing her good only to call her sin to remembrance and slay her son because of her sin.

Yet, in the midst of her unbelief, we see a flicker of faith. She calls Elijah "*O thou man of God.*" We know God had given her faith because Hebrews 11 says so. But her unbelief is strong and her faith so weak. She knows what God did for her through his word spoken by Elijah. The Lord saved her life and sustained her and her son's life and those in her house for a full year now. But she is so overcome in sorrow she thinks it was only to trick her and slay her son due to her sin.

Believer, has the trial ever made you have thoughts like this? That after all that God the Father has done for you in Christ, it has only to bring your sins up again and slay you for them? Christ put away the sin of his people. God says, "I remember your sins no more." They are gone before God by the death of our Substitute. But God will keep us from having assurance in anything of ourselves.

Now think of how she will look back on these words and these hard thoughts toward God, and toward his servant, after the Lord has revived her and given her assurance of faith in Christ. What does the Lord do by this? He keeps us remembering that "*in our flesh, dwells no good thing.*" By making us see our sin, God keeps us from finding assurance in self. He keeps us from finding assurance in his gifts or from having assurance in our faith or the meal or the cruse of oil or whatever blessings he has given us. He keeps our assurance being in Christ alone.

CHRIST IS OUR ASSURANCE

1 Kings 17: 19: And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

Behold Christ in Elijah. He said unto her, "*Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom and carried him up into a loft, where he abode.*" Elijah commanded her so that she gave him her son. Elijah seized the child. He took possession of the child.

When our Lord sends trouble, by irresistible grace, the Spirit comes and commands us to cast all our care on Christ again. Her son is an extension of herself. The son will be brought to life again but so will the woman. It is the woman the Lord is dealing with. She had become sick and her spiritual life, her inner man, appeared as dead as the child. God is growing her faith in the Lord. He is making her assurance to be in the Lord alone.

The Lord's chastening hand brings us to this state on purpose to remind us again that we are helpless sinners. Then the Lord comes to us and says "Give me yourself. Give me your heart. Cast your burden on me!" He irresistibly seizes us. Christ takes possession of our heart, our inner man. He takes us to himself as Elijah took the child from her bosom. Christ carries us up in Spirit where he abides at God's right hand. He makes us behold him on the cross as THE Son who died and we in him. Christ lifts our heart to him above. He carries us up by faith to where he abides at God's right hand as Elijah "*carried [the child] up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.*"

CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE

1 Kings 17: 20: And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

Elijah interceded for the widow and her son. Christ makes us behold him as our Intercessor and Advocate with the Father. The LORD God gave her good and he also brought the evil upon the widow for her good. Elijah only sojourned with the widow but Christ abides with every true believer. So Christ intercedes for those for whom he died.

James 5: 16...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availieth much

Every believer is righteous in Christ and we pray for one another. But our prayer is effectual fervent prayer only because Jesus Christ the Righteous everliveth to make intercession for us. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our sins. He Advocates by his own Righteousness. Christ intercedes on our behalf for God the Father's glory because Christ has made us righteous in him.

REVIVED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

1 Kings 17: 21: And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. 22: And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

Christ is the Son who died. He made himself one with his people and it is by his Life that we live. We see this typified in Elijah stretching himself upon the child. He measured or meted himself upon the child. The Son of God made himself one with God's elect. He became us and we were in him. Our sin became his sin, our curse became his curse and we are made the righteousness of God in Christ.

Elijah did this "*three times and cried unto the LORD.*" In the garden of Gethsemane our Lord went apart to pray *three times*. He willingly submitted to God's will and laid down his life on the cross and bore the wrath of God in place of his people with his people in him. God's elect were one with Christ on the cross.

Our Savior cried with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death and he was heard in that he feared!—"And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." Elijah cried three times. On the *third day*, our Savior arose from the grave and all his people arose righteous and holy and complete in him. We sat down in him at God's right hand. It is giving our inner man a renewed view of this through faith that Christ revives us by his Spirit.

SEEING THAT THE SON LIVETH

1 Kings 17: 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.

By Christ's intercession for us, he not only regenerates us when he first comes to us, he continues to revive and renews us by his Spirit. Hebrews 11: 35 says that by faith this woman received her dead raised to life again. Did we see much faith in her at the beginning of this? Do we see anything of her in this? We see faith in Elijah. But God strengthened his faith at this time to show us a type of Christ Jesus our Faithful Intercessor! It is by Christ's faith that this woman's faith did not fail. It was by Christ's faith that her faith was increased to be in Christ alone. This is an example of what Paul said, "The life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God."

Remember, how the disciples were cast down when Christ was crucified and buried. They spoke with much unbelief like this widow when she saw her son dead. Yet, Christ arose and came to them and showed Mary—"See, thy Son liveth!" He made good on his promise to his disciples and this is his promise to us.

John 14:19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

Through trial, Christ brings us to the end of ourselves then Christ lifts our inner man to him at God's right hand to behold we are risen with Christ. He makes us behold that Christ everlives to make intercession for us. He makes us behold Christ is our Advocate with the Father and the Propitiation for our sins. Like as the Lord brought her son to the widow through his prophet so Christ comes to us through his gospel and says, "*See, thy Son liveth!*"

Here is the point. It is beholding Jesus Christ our Righteousness Risen, Living, Interceding on our behalf that he revives us and makes himself—only himself—to be the assurance of our faith.

1 Kings 17: 24: And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know [I am assured] that thou *art* a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.

Hebrews 10: 19: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And *having* an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;)

Amen!