

Back to Life 4 - Determined to Live

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Hello! We are Redemption Church in Plano TX. My name is Chris Fluitt and I welcome everyone joining us online and everyone joining us in the church sanctuary, today. I am excited to share the Word of God with you today!

Please turn in scripture to 1 Kings 17.

Back to Life

We have been celebrating the news that Jesus came back to life. That is reason to celebrate. Because Jesus came back to life, you too can come back to life.

1 Kings 17 tells us about a noteworthy prophet named Elijah. The Lord had told Elijah to prophecy a time of drought of several years. The Lord had to hide Elijah because people wanted to kill him because of his true prophecy.

During this time of hiding the Lord fed Elijah with ravens and provided water from a secret brook.

1 Kings 17:7-12(NIV) 7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food." 10 So he

went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” 11 As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

12 “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

God told Elijah to come to this town.

God told Elijah to find a widow.

God told Elijah that this widow would provide Elijah with food.

Yet when Elijah asks for a piece of bread, the woman's response is so unexpected, that you wouldn't blame Elijah for wondering if he had somehow misunderstood God or talked to the wrong widow.

She says "I don't have any bread, and the little supply I have is just enough for me to bake a cake for myself and my son... "that we may eat it - and die."

Determined to die

This widow was determined to die. She had it all planned out. She had the

recipe out ready to bake a cake, eat it, and then die. She was gathering her final supply by picking up sticks to make the fire.

Her every effort in this story was to die on a full stomach.

She was not determined to live. She was determined to die.

Am I talking to anyone that is a little like this widow?

Are you in a drought?

Have you run out of hope?

Are you out of faith?

Can't see a future?

You might not realize that you are like this "determined to die" widow.

- If you have no plans for a successful

future you are more like this widow than you understand.

- If you are afraid to try and achieve your dreams and use your talent because it is just easier and safer to stay where you are... you are more like this widow than you know.
- If you are constantly just trying to make it through the day instead of breaking through and overcoming... you are just gathering sticks.
- If you are comfortable with the status quo...
- If you are no longer praying and asking God to deliver you... then you have resigned yourself to death, like the widow.

Little did this widow know, the Lord of Heaven had seen her situation. God had sent a prophet to deliver a word to her and bring her back to life.

1 Kings 17 13-16 (NIV) 13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

The first thing that Elijah tells the widow is... "Don't be afraid!

Living takes Courage

Living takes courage. Dying takes no courage. Remaining in the status quo takes no courage.

It takes courage to stand yourself up and start climbing out of the pit.

It takes courage and faith to say I am going to keep trying and see a difference made.

But do you know who really showed courage in this story? Elijah!

Do you realize how gutsy Elijah is? He looks this widow low on supply, low on hope, low on faith, and Elijah says... 'first make me a small loaf of bread and then take what you have left over and make something for you and your son.'

This story amazes me. This moment is a moment I have thought about a lot.

- I can see myself having the courage to

lift up a staff like Moses and see the Red Sea parted.

- I could see myself being a Gideon and leading a small army with no weapons to victory against a Midianite army that is beyond numbering.
- I could see myself do a Noah and building an ark...
- I could see myself be an apostle with the guts to preach the gospel to the Pharisees who would like to kill me.

But of all the stories in the Bible... this one is the most difficult for me to see myself fulfilling.

Can you imagine having the courage to look someone in the eye who has so

little and to boldly ask for them to first make you something?

If we didn't know the context, it would be so easy to criticize the prophet. Surely this prophet is just looking after himself.

Elijah courageously obeyed the command of the Lord, and because he did, they all lived.

She made that bread for Elijah and there was food every day for all of them. God worked a miracle and the flour and the oil never ran out.

If you think that it is courageous for Elijah to boldly declare the word of God, then I want to tell you about Jesus.

Jesus says these courageous words...

John 10:10 (NIV) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Jesus declares that has come to give life... a life that is full, super abundant, not lacking anything. Jesus courageously declares this! Do you have this life?

John 11:25-26 (NIV) "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

Jesus courageously declares that the life within him is resurrection life. Even if they die... they will live! Whoever lives by believing in me will never die!

John 6:48 (NIV) I am the bread of life.

Jesus with great courage says He is the bread from heaven that brings life to whoever consumes his teaching.

John 14:6 (NIV) "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Of all the gall... Jesus stands up and looks people in the eye and says He is

the way, the truth, and life. The only way to the Father is through Jesus.

I don't think you will find anyone as courageous as Jesus. Jesus declared Himself to be life. Jesus declared that He is the one who can cause you to cross over from death to life.

In the words of C.S. Lewis, for someone to say that they must either be "Lunatic, Liar, or Lord."

Jesus Christ is Lord and He lived courageously in order to save us and bring us a courageous life.

Are you courageously living?

Why not? Christians should live courageously. We claim to be followers of the courageous Christ!

- We claim to follow the Lord of Daniel who faced down lions.. Because he courageously prayed to God!
- We claim to follow the Lord of David who took down a giant.. Because he courageously believed in the name of the Lord!
- We claim to follow the Lord of Moses who parted the Red Sea.. and courageously led others to freedom!
- We claim to follow the Lord of Peter who walked on water.. and courageously preached the resurrection of Jesus!

- We claim to follow the Lord of Paul who was stoned to death and rose back to life and continued courageously planting churches in new cities!

Living takes courage! Are you living courageously?

We have been through it the last year with a covid19 pandemic. We have been told to social distance and not go do things that we once thought as normal... Now do not think that I am against getting a vaccine or taking safety precautions... But I need to tell you this..

Do not stop living! You can remain careful but still live courageously.

Get back to living! Say goodbye to fear and live! Say goodbye to depression and live!

Do not spend 1 moment NOT LIVING!

One of the major reasons we don't live courageously is the fear of failure. I have reached the point where I would rather be a failure than a coward.

I would rather fail in getting my education than to be cowardly to try...

I would rather fail in business than to sit on the sidelines to afraid to try...

I would rather fail in my career than to play it safe in a job I hate...

I would rather be a failure than a

coward!

Live courageously!

Dream courageously!

Parent your children courageously!

Love your spouse courageously!

Love, pray, and worship God
courageously!

Being courageous does NOT mean that you have faced your last trouble. Being courageous means that you are determined to live, no matter what trouble comes your way.

Be Determined to Live!

You have to be determined because you will face trouble.

John 16:33 In this world you will

have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Elijah, the widow, and the son, when we last looked at their story they were delivered miraculously and it appeared that they would all live happily ever after! The moral of the story seemed to be if you just believe God you will always have food... but watch what happens...

1 Kings 17:17-18(NIV) 17 Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. 18 She said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to

remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

The widow was determined to die when she met the Elijah... she was picking up the sticks to bake that final meal... She obeyed the command of the Lord and received a miracle every day in her kitchen pantry. She lived in the miraculous provision of the Lord every day... but then a trouble comes.

Her son becomes sick. He got worse and worse until he died. He stopped breathing.

How does the widow respond? She was once again determined to die.

Determined to die

She says to Elijah "What do you have against me... Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

Are you like this? Something goes wrong and you just admit defeat. Do we throw all the blame on God...? "Of course God, you are just going to do this to me."

Where was her faith? Where is our faith? When problems come why don't we respond in faith?

She was once again determined to die... even though she had heard the Word of God and seen miracles.

But Elijah was determined to live.

Be Determined to Live!

1 Kings 17:19-24 (NIV) 19 “Give me your son,” Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. 20 Then he cried out to the Lord, “Lord my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?” 21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the Lord, “Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

22 The Lord heard Elijah’s cry, and the boy’s life returned to him, and he lived. 23 Elijah picked up the

child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

24 Then 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."

Be an Elijah in the middle of problems. Elijah was determined to live. "Give me your son!" and Elijah cried out to the Lord. "Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

Elijah was determined for life to return!

Lord let life return to my marriage...

Lord let life return to my children's

lives...

Lord let life return to my dreams and
my calling...

Lord let life return to my church and my
city...

We serve a courageous Lord who
declared I am the resurrection and the
life! When was the last time you
courageously, with determination called
on God like Elijah called on him?

Musician

We are going to be opening this service
for a time of prayer. I want to hear
people calling on God with
determination today.

Before we come I want to challenge you
with the end of this story.

After Elijah had handed her a living son,
the widow said...

**1 Kings 17:24(NIV) 24 Then 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.”**

Now I know? Wait she didn't know this
when God worked a miracle in the past?
She didn't know it when a prophet
interrupted her last meal to speak life
into her family? She didn't know it every
time she went to her kitchen and had
flour and oil that never ran out?

Now she knows? You mean she didn't
know then?

We make this mistake. With all that God has done for us... it is not until the next miracle that we say "NOW I KNOW!"

You should know by now!

Some clap your hands if you know by now He is real... a healer...

I am afraid that the widow only feels this way because her trouble has just now been eliminated. I fear that the next time she faces trouble she will once again start gathering sticks.

Is that you today? Is your faith... your love for God... your worship... is it dependent on a trouble free existence?

You should know by now that God is going to come through!

Let's courageously call on the Lord today.