

# Christ Lutheran Church

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**"At your wits end? Make a last ditch effort" 1 Kings 17:8-16**

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Do you ever feel like things have just gone from bad to worse? I don't mean to get political, but one of the worst leaders in history just made king in Israel. His name was Ahab. Ahab and Jezebel were the worst leaders Israel ever had, "worse than any that had gone before him", (16:30)

Israel was at an all time spiritual low. He rebuilt the pagan city of Jericho. Baal worship was the new national religion. Elijah proclaimed God's judgment on the nation. God struck the land with drought and there would be no rain until he said so. Everyone suffered physically. Elijah was sent to isolation by God and fed by the scraps that ravens brought him.

Elijah must have thought, "Thanks God, thanks for this reward for serving you, that I would be sent out in the wilderness to suffer like this." Eventually the brook dried up, and he was forced to move on to where our story begins today.

Are you at your wits end? All dried up. No energy. No motivation. You have tried so hard and now you are at an all time low. Spiritually it just seems like you don't feel it.

Worse off than Elijah, we see the widow and her son. She has no food and is going to make her last meal for her family before they go to die. She was at her wits end. She couldn't come up with any way to provide for her family. She had

exhausted every person she knew, every avenue for help, every resource for survival.

You may be at this place in life. You may be medically at your wits end, finding no healing. You might be saying that is the last straw. You're at the end of your rope. You may even be facing the hard reality that you are dying.

It might seem that there is no hope short of a miracle that can solve your problems. Why has God brought you to this place? Why has he stripped you of every remaining resource for your well-being? What is the deal God?

Yet it is just at this point that God is asking you to trust in him. He may have brought you to your wits end so that only he can provide. He might give you this hardship so that you can only give him the credit for every ounce of spiritual juice you have. He is your last resort, for good reason. You have nowhere else to turn.

The Battle of New Orleans was a desperate last stand for the Americans led by Andrew Jackson in the war of 1812. The British army, led by the famous General Pakenham, had won two major victories before coming to New Orleans. Andrew Jackson's "Line" was the last ditch effort for the Americans to stop the powerful British military. Andrew Jackson had nowhere else to turn that to ask for civilian volunteers, Indians, and even pirates to help him defeat the British.

Outnumbered by 2300 well trained seasoned soldiers, The American rag tag army defeated the British. Once and for all, after three years, the British were put to a stop as the War wound down and was solved by a treaty.

Not out of desperation, but because of our desperate condition, Jesus died and rose once and for all to put an end to sin. He volunteered himself to die in our place and give us the victory. God has provided as Savior that died once and for all for your sins.

He will sustain you, he will lift you up in his hands. Your spirit can only be revived by him. You have probably tried time and time again to revive yourself. You have exhausted all your resources to get back on your feet, to take care of yourself. There is only one resource that will help now. God asks you to take a step forward in faith and give to others, even in your time of need.

For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth." 1 kings 17:14 Your spirit will not run dry. You will always have something left. God will provide. He does provide physically for the widow, her son, and Elijah. But even more than that, he provides that spiritual flour and oil that you need.

His word will not return empty, not even in your own life. You know there is so much going on in your own personal life, that you can hardly take the time to really be concerned with the whole nation, the whole church, or even the whole family. God will sustain you, he will lift you up and spiritually you always have more than you need.

God wants us to realize our physical and spiritual helplessness. He wants us to see we only have the things we have because he gave them to us. He wants us to fully and totally depend on him for everything.

As sinful human beings, we need to depend on him. Some of us might not be feeling like we are really at our wits end right now, but maybe we should be. Maybe we should give all of our money away so that we can be physically poor and that will make us spiritually rich.

Physically we could force ourselves to come down to have nothing, but that wouldn't help if we haven't done anything spiritually. God wants us to realize poorness of our spiritual situation so that we will become rich in his Spirit. He wants us to give up all those things that we think make us good. Our hard work, our enthusiasm, our popularity, our morals, our good deeds. On our own, we will soon be dead. Jesus is the only one who paid for our sins, and he is the only one who raises us to life.

So what happens in the story? "The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah." 1 Kings 17: 16 The widow and her son survive because God does a miracle. Their oil and flour don't run out. They even have enough for Elijah too.

We must look into the next passage in 1 kings 17 to really get the rest of the story. It is going to take Elijah raising her dead son to actually put her faith in God. She finally believes based on her son's resurrection.

This is the same for us. We see this miracle and realize God will raise us up as well. We are as good as dead in this life but God will bring us back to life. He wants us to see this miracle of his son's resurrection. He wants us to put our faith in him. And he wants us to rise up, fully dependent, brought back to life by him. Amen.

