



Stepping Out in Faith and Placing it in God's Hands

Can you think of a step of faith you need to take today? Sometimes, we must trust God even when we don't clearly see the plan. You may feel like you're walking a tightrope and afraid to look down. You hope it's there, but you can't see it. You feel around with arms outstretched in the dark, believing He will keep you from falling. He is looking for our obedience even when we don't understand. Against all odds, He will provide a miracle.

In I Kings 17:8-15 (NKJV), God gives direction to Elijah, the prophet:

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁹ "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." ¹¹ And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

¹² So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

Let's set the stage for this story: God had told Elijah to prophesy no rain or dew as a judgment because the people were worshipping Baal. At the time, Elijah knew it was the word of the Lord, but he also knew he would not escape the famine and hunger to come.

Reflecting on Your Faith: *Is there a specific step of faith that God is calling you to take right now, even though the outcome isn't clear? What is holding you back, and how might you start trusting God with this step?*

God sent Elijah to Zarephath, where a widow and her son suffered from famine. They barely got by each day on the little they could scrape together. It was a hopeless situation. They were living under a death sentence.

¹³ And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.’”

¹⁵ So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

When Elijah came by, the widow was out collecting two sticks to make a final cake out of the last flour and oil she had remaining, and then she and her son would have nothing else. She may have been nervously counting down the days until they both starved to death. All that was visible to the physical eye was scarcity and lack, but Elijah began to talk to her about God’s abundance. He builds her faith, saying, “Fear not, make me a cake first.” He asks her to participate in the miracle God will perform for her.



Learning from the Widow’s Faith: Like the widow who sacrificed her last bit of flour and oil, can you think of something valuable to you that God might be asking you to offer in faith? How could releasing this to God open the door for Him to work in your life?

Maybe you’ve experienced this too. God has provided for you; it could be a job or a business, and it has been your life-giving brook. But then it seems all at once that dries up. What was working before isn’t working now. Sometimes, a crisis happens to let us know it’s time to move on. God has more than one way of supplying what we need. Most of the time, it will look completely different than expected. Maybe you’ve been working the same job for ten to fifteen years, and you get the idea that the job is providing for you when all the time, it is God who is your provider. Changes will come. Maybe a job change, a change in your ministry, your family. But God is ordering your steps to where He needs you to

be. There is a blessing with your name on it where you might not expect it. He'll provide what you need when you need it.

After the brook dries up, God starts talking to Elijah again. He tells him to go to Zarephath. That is when he sees the widow out gathering sticks to prepare her last meal. He initially asks for a cup of water. Even with all she had going on in her life, she was willing to do that for him. But, as she was on her way, he asked, "Bring me some bread too." Her faith is being tried. Instead of feeding herself and her son, she is requested to give it to the man of God. What would you do in that situation? Would you sacrifice for someone else based on what you felt was the Word of the Lord? But she had already been talking to God before the prophet showed up. God had instructed her that Elijah was on the way and to provide for his needs.

Recognizing God's Provision in Change: *Elijah had to move from the brook to Zarephath to receive God's continued provision. Have you experienced a season where something that used to provide for you stopped working? How did you—or how might you—trust God to provide in a new way?*

She carefully emptied the meal barrel and jar of oil, baked the final cake, and carried it to Elijah. I imagine she walked slowly back toward her home, wondering what she had done. Can you imagine the fear or questions that must have been in her heart as she once again approached the barrel and bottle of oil? I am sure she wondered if there would be anything for her and her son because she had used all she had to feed the prophet. But, when she hesitantly reached into the barrel, there was meal there! When she cautiously tipped that little jar over, more oil poured out. Just a few hours before, what she had at her disposal could do very little. It would just be enough for a small cake for her and her son, and they would still be hungry and then die of starvation. But by placing it in the hands of the Master, it became a miracle not only for one meal but for hundreds of meals over the next three years of famine.

Sometimes, we don't understand the purpose of our suffering. Could it be that God wants to provide a miracle? If you've done all you can do, what then? God is a God of abundance and not lack. The miraculous can happen when we place what we have in His hands.

All four Gospels tell the story of the feeding of the five thousand. Let's read Matthew 14:13-17 (NLT):



¹³ As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. ¹⁴ Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.”

¹⁶ But Jesus said, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them.”

The disciples came to Jesus with a problem. They had to be surprised by His response. He told them, “You figure it out; you feed them!” They begin frantically searching, trying to figure out how they will feed this multitude of people.

In John’s account, he wrote, “Then Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up. *“There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?”* (John 6:8-9, NLT).

Matthew records Jesus’ response (14:18-21, NLT):

¹⁸ “Bring them here,” he said. ¹⁹ Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. ²⁰ They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. ²¹ About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!

When Jesus told the twelve, “You feed them,” the disciples presented Him with the limitation: “All we have is five loaves and two fishes.” What a small amount they had to feed so many. But they found a child there willing to surrender his lunch into Jesus’ hands. When it was blessed, Jesus provided the abundance. He miraculously fed everyone there, five thousand men plus all the women and children. Afterward, there was an overflow of twelve baskets, one for each apostle who participated in the miracle. Many times, we are blessed so that we can be a blessing. Not only did the apostles eat with everyone else, but they each took home a basket of blessings!

God intends for our faith and actions to work together. When we put our faith into action, we open the door for God to provide. Abraham introduces us to the name “Jehovah Jireh,” meaning “God will provide” or “God, my provider.” He is recognized as one of the “Heroes of Faith” in Hebrews 11. “Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see” (Hebrews 11:1, NLT).



The verses that follow list others who also walked by faith. They didn't just hope—they acted on their faith and, in doing so, made it a reality.



- It was by faith that Abel brought an offering that God accepted.
- Noah followed the specific directions God gave him, and he built a boat that saved his family.
- Abraham left his home and family for a land God promised him. He placed everything he had in God's hands and even put his son Isaac on an altar. God prospered him and made him the father of many nations.
- By faith, Moses' mother, Jochebed, built a boat and put him in the water. She knew he would be killed if he stayed where he was, so she stepped out in faith, placing his safety in God's hands. Her step of faith ended up delivering an entire nation out of bondage.
- Israel marched around Jericho until the walls fell.
- Rahab, the prostitute, hid the spies sent by Joshua. Despite her questionable reputation, her active faith saved her family and placed her in the lineage of Jesus.

Putting Faith into Action: *Hebrews 11 lists people whose faith was active and visible through their actions. How can you actively demonstrate your faith in a current situation rather than just hoping for a miracle?*

James chapter 2 reveals that genuine, engaged faith in God results in genuinely changed lives:

²¹ Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. ²³ And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."^[g] He was even called the friend of God.^[h] ²⁴ So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. (James 2:21-24, NLT)

Often, we declare we have faith but spend our time daydreaming about how God will work a miracle in our lives. But faith is the intersection of actions and belief. If you need a new job, pray and ask God for guidance, but don't wait for it to drop in your lap; go out and put in those applications and start networking. If you're sick or in pain, don't grumble about how bad you feel; ask for prayer from the

elders of the church. Put some legs on your faith and step out! You might declare, “I can’t heal anyone,” but when God directs you to reach out your hands in faith and pray for someone, God brings healing through you. You may say, “I can’t save anyone,” but you can teach a Bible study, and salvation will come through the shared Word of God. You are the conduit!

If you want more of Jesus, give Him more of you. Surrender to Him what you hold onto so tightly and place it in His transforming hand. We never know how God will keep His promises in our lives. We never know how He will manifest His power to us and those we influence. We never know what He will do! God requires our sacrifice. What we do know is we have to yield our last piece of cake or our last few loaves and fish into the hand of God. Everything will change when we actively make that sacrifice and take a step of faith.

Stepping Beyond Limitations: *Like the disciples with only five loaves and two fish, do you feel limited by what you have? What resources or skills can you offer God, trusting He can use them to create an impact beyond what seems possible?*

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