

Last week, we had heard about the miracles which God had done for Elijah to provide food for him in the middle of the drought. First by ravens who brought him bread and meat, and then by multiplying the flour and the oil of the widow at Zarephath, so that he would have enough to eat. It showed that God would care for those who trusted in him, that God would provide for all of their needs. And that is true also for us today.

But now it seems like that's all gone. It seems like it's all disappeared. Because disaster has come to Zarephath: the woman's son has died. A very severe illness has suddenly overtaken him and taken his life along with it. And in her grief, this widow cries out, wanting to know: "Why? Why has this happened?" That's why she says to Elijah in verse 18: "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" God must hate me, she says! God must've forgotten about me, she says! Why else would this have happened, if God had not turned his face away from me? And even Elijah himself is confused. We hear in verse 20, he says: "O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" How quickly they seem to have forgotten everything that God did for them! How quickly they seem to have forgotten everything that God has said!

But Christians, how quickly do we forget too? Because we have heard his Word many times. We have heard his promises many times. We have seen what he has done in the past, his mighty works. And we have seen how he has taken care of us in all of those years. But then a disaster strikes us, and we forget it all. Perhaps we're dealing with a sudden death, and that leads us to ask, "Why? Why has this happened? Why is this happening to me?" Perhaps we're dealing with severe sickness, something that's overtaken us quickly, and that leaves us asking, "Why? What did I do to deserve this?" Perhaps we're dealing with family troubles, something going on that we just can't quite seem to shake, that leads us to ask, "Why? Why do I have to go through this? Will it ever come to an end?" Or maybe it was something like this drought this past year. It leaves us asking, "Why? Are we ever going to get through? What is the future going to hold?" But frequently, Christians, I think that it's not even a severe thing that makes us ask "why?" either, is it? Sometimes it's just a mild trouble that comes into our lives, or even just storms brewing on the horizon, something that hasn't even happened yet. And that causes us to say, "Why, O Lord? Why is this happening to me?" Because if we remembered, Christians, the things that God says, we would not be so impatient. If we remembered, Christians, the things that God has done, we might not be so quick to ask "why?" If we remembered how God has taken care of us in years gone by, we might not throw up our hands and wonder, "Why is this happening to me?" But trouble comes into our lives, and we quickly forget what it is that God has done.

So what you going to do, Christians, in the midst of your troubles? How will you react? Will you do nothing? Will you sit around and complain to your neighbor, talking about how bad things are? Will you sit around and be sad or even angry at the things that are happening? Or will you go to the one who can do something about it? Because this is what Elijah does in our reading for today. Even though he's confused, even though he's left wondering "why?", he goes to the one place he knows he can find help. He goes to the Lord in prayer and says to him in verse 21: "O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again." He has put everything into God's hands. He is saying, "Lord, you can do something about this. You can help me in the midst of my troubles. And so I leave it up to you."

And God answers his prayer, Christians. God raises that child to life again. And he shows that widow in this way that he is trustworthy and true. That's why the widow says to Elijah in verse 24: "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth." There is no longer a question in her mind. She is no longer having to ask "why?", because she has found the answer in God, who shows that he is going to care for her.

And so Christians, that's why God does these things for us: to show us that we can trust him and to drive away every doubt in our minds. So that when we too are faced with trouble, we can go to him and call on him, because he is the Lord who can and will do something about it. And all of the miracles which we see in the Scriptures prove that very point to us. They show us that God is capable of doing something about our situation. He raises the widow's son at Zarephath to show that we can trust him. He raises the widow's son at Nain to show that he has compassion on all of our troubles. And Jesus Christ himself rises on the third day to show that he has conquered sin and death and that he has overcome all things by his death on the cross. Yes, Christians, these miracles prove beyond all doubt that God will never leave you or forsake you. God will care for you in the midst of every trouble. And we can be confident in the face of every problem.

So Christians, when you want to ask God "why?", do what Elijah did. Ask him! Go to God, ask him "why?" Pour it all out to the Lord! Don't hold anything back! Put everything before God! Give it all to him! Yell if you have to! Get it out there. Put it into his hands. Because God is the one who has promised to hear you in Jesus Christ. But when you have done that, then do also what Elijah did, and call on him. Call on him who cares for you. Call on him who is your help in every trouble. Call on him who will deliver his people. Trust him, Christians. He will not fail you. And then wait for him. Submit yourself to his will, and wait for his answer. Don't be impatient about it. Keep praying. But God will answer you, because he cares for you. And he shows that in what we hear today. God will give you, Christians, the very best answer in Jesus Christ. Because Jesus shows us that God is with us. Jesus shows us that he will hear us. And Jesus shows us beyond all doubt that we can trust the Lord, because he is with us always.

Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank you that you have promised to hear us through your Son, Jesus Christ. As we bring all of our cares and concerns to you, help us always to remember that you will care for us. And you have shown this through your Son, in whose name we pray. Amen.