

Does God perform miracles today?

-All right, this is the Bible, this is the word of God, this is the only perfect thing on the earth, this is how God first and foremost chooses to speak to us and if you want a word from God, the key is to open the word of God. For those of you who aren't familiar with the Bible, we're gonna be studying it in first Kings chapter 17, it's an Old Testament book written about 3000 years ago and I want to introduce kind of the worldview of the Bible. The Bible tells us not about just what happens in history, but what happens behind history and history texts will tell us what happens in the world we see the Bible tells us in addition what happens behind the scenes, the scenes that only God sees and the storyline of the Bible is that our history is supernatural and not natural. That in addition to the world we see there's a world that God sees in addition to the physical, there is the spiritual and these two worlds, they do impinge upon and effect one another, what we do in our physical world affects our relationship with God and also with Satan and demons and the decisions that God makes, they show up in the world in which we live and the same is true of demons and Satan himself, that there is this twofold realm that forms one reality and the result is that the Bible is a supernatural book and it presents a supernatural worldview, you're gonna see that on full display as we investigate two miracles in first king 17. A miracle is by definition an event that defies common expectations of behavior and subsequently is attributed to a supernatural agent and occurrence that demonstrates God's involvement in the course of human affairs, a miracle is simply this, there's no explanation by the natural, it defies the natural, it requires the supernatural. Some in the world would have a view that is more naturalistic, it's anti supernatural and there are things that can't be proven through a microscope or a telescope are things that happen that defy just human explanation. Within the church, there is a teaching called cessationism it basically teaches that God used to do supernatural things, but not so much anymore, that's wrong, that's wrong, that's wrong. Those are people who are trying to control God rather than follow God, those are people that want to limit what God can say and do rather than receive what God says and does. There is a great theologian, his name is Craig Keener and I just wanna do a bit of introduction then we're gonna get into the story, two volumes set here called miracles. For those who are watching online, I know there's a lot of pastors, got a few nerd friends, what he does, he argues against the natural worldview for the supernatural worldview and he gives the reasons why. If you believe in the Bible, you've gotta believe in the supernatural that there is a God who is bigger than the world and he can show up in it and do whatever He wants whenever he pleases. If He wants to speak, He can speak, if He wants to save, He can save, if He wants to perform a miracle, assign a wonder, then that's exactly what He can do. He looks at all of the occurrences of miracles in the New Testament as well as in the early church as well beyond the days of the closing of the Christian cannon, as well as globally looks at them historically, medically, theologically and comes to this conclusion, does God perform miracles? Answer yes and if you'd like to know more, feel free to get the two books and spend a year of your life reading them, it's all there for you. That being said in the Bible, when it speaks of a miracle, sometimes it also uses another word called a wonder and a wonder is when God shows up, there is this sense of awe that comes upon God's people like we've been visited, God has arrived, He's revealed himself, He's done something and the people then are filled with awe and the response is worship and praise and celebration at the coming of God's presence in a fresh way. Sometimes when the Bible

speaks of the supernatural and the miraculous, He uses the word sign and a sign is it points to the other world. See, when God finished our world, God and people were together, the supernatural was very normal, it's when sin entered the world and we separated the realms that we lived a more natural life and a more demonic life to be frank, and less of God's presence and what happens when a miracle occurs? It's a sign pointing When Jesus comes back and the curses lifted and Satan and demons are defeated and we're reconciled between God and man, between the seen and the unseen, it's a miracle that points as a sign saying that's what it's going to be like every day and occasionally we get a day like forever to prepare us for forever. When miracles happen in mass, it's called a revival, it's when God is healing and saving and delivering and freeing, not just a person but the Holy Spirit falling on a group of people to say it simply a miracle is this, a miracle is when God shows up. It's when God shows up everything that was normal suddenly this day is abnormal, everything that was natural, suddenly this is supernatural. We felt very alone and now we feel his presence very near, you're gonna see two miracles in first king 17, the first one is that our God provides in this life. I'll read the story of the first miracle, and this is the life of a man named Elijah, "Then the word of the Lord came to him." God said "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon and dwell there." time to move, "Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you. So he arose, he's obedient, he went to Zarephath and when he came to the gate of the city, behold a widow was there gathering sticks." we don't believe in circumstance, chance, happenstance, we believe in providence. God has you and them at the same place at the same time because he has a divine meeting for you with them and he called her and said, "Bring me a little water and a vessel that I may drink and as he was going to bring it." he called her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." And she said, "As the Lord." here's the pregnant phrase, "Your God lives." that's not her God, not yet. He knows the Lord, she doesn't know the Lord, that's your God she says, "As the Lord your God lives I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour and a jar and a little oil and a jug and now I am gathering a couple of sticks." she's going to start a fire, "That I may go and prepare it for myself and my son that we may eat it and die." They're starving to death, this is their last supper and Elijah said to her, "Do not fear, go and do as you have said, but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me and afterward, make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, the jar of flowers shall not be spent and the jug of oil shall not be empty until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth." God had already promised and prophesied that through Elijah, there would not be rain on the earth for more than three years and she went and did as Elijah said and she and he and her household ate for many days, the jar of flower was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah. Here's the story, let me start with the widow in the son and then we'll examine Elijah, the widow in the son they're gentiles, not Jews. They don't know his God and they're not descendants of Abraham as Elijah is, they're gentiles and sometimes the question is, well, does God love the whole world? Yes he does, He loves all the nations, all the races, all the cultures, if you truly are cross-cultural and believe in diversity, you should love Jesus because his movement is the biggest of any sort or kind in the history of the world and so here, God loves this gentile woman. No one knows her, but God knows her, no one pursues her, but God pursues her, no one speaks to her, but God speaks to her because God cares for her and he's going to save her and she is suffering mightly so she's a widow, so we know that her

husband has died and she's exceedingly poor. You see this incredible desperation, there is a season without rain and he asks her for a drink of water, that's all she has. It is a season of famine, she's just got a small bit to eat for her last meal before she and her son starved to death and he has to eat it these two people, this woman and her son, they are not evil, but they are lost, it's very important to distinguish between evil people and lost people thus far in the story, who's been evil? Ahab and Jezebel they're evil, this woman and her son, they're not evil they're lost, they don't know the Lord. She says, "Your God." she doesn't know God she's lost, these are decent lost people. You need to know that sometimes Christians can be mean spirited, nasty people 'cause we're saved by grace, not by our attitude. God didn't choose the nice people and sometimes there are people that are just lost pagans and they're decent people, they're actually a lot nicer. Here she and her son, they're decent lost people, they're nice, they're very generous, they give the last of what they have it's amazing to me. Just think in our world we have so much abundance and we share so little, our big issue is obesity not starvation, how many of us, God has been so generous to us and we're just not generous. She has literally next to nothing and she gives it away, she shares it generously, she demonstrates incredible hospitality in addition, incredible humility, she welcomes a stranger into her home so that she can serve him. And it was common in ancient Middle Eastern and central Asian cultures that you would feed your guests first because if there was only enough for you or them, you would feed them, this is hospitality and humility. It does seem a little weird as Americans, we read the story the man shows up and says, I want to eat all your food and drink your water and it's your last day, but you're not gonna get your last meal, that seems a little rude. How many of you if somebody knocked on your door, "What do you have I have one meal they said I'll take it, no you won't we're Americans we don't roll that way." So what we see here is she's acting according to her culture and she's being honoring and what God does here is he honors that, so just like the Jewish people who spent 40 years in the wilderness and God provided their daily bread manna, that's what's going to have happened to this woman is God's going to provide and she gives the little meal that she has to the man of God and it's multiplied. This is kind of like when the little boy took his lunch and gave it to Jesus and then Jesus multiplied it and it feeds a multitude, it's a miracle, there's no other way to explain oil that does not run out and flower that multiplies itself. And what you see here and this is my hope and prayer for you my friend, she's got a burden and her burden becomes her blessing, my hope in my prayer for you is that you would take your burden and give it to the Lord and that God would turn it into your blessing. Her burden was, I have no food and I have little water. She takes her burden, she shares it, she gives it to the Lord, she trusts by faith in the word of God through the man of God and what God does is he takes her burden and he makes it her blessing. I don't know what your burden is friend, I don't know what your burden is, I felt it all week, I felt it all day I I was in tears before the sermon just praying for you. Some of you have severe burdens physically you have a burden, spiritually you have a burden, relationally you have a burden, marital you have a burden, parentally you have a burden, vocationally you have a burden, psychologically you have a burden, emotionally you have a burden. Take that burden, give it to the Lord, see if the Lord doesn't turn that burden into your blessing, she took her burden, she gave it to the Lord and God gave it back as a blessing and what we see here is that the man of God brings the presence of God. This is crucial when if you belong to the Lord, you have the same spirit as

Elijah, the spirit of God resided in him and the spirit of God resides in every believer, so when he enters the room, God enters the room because God is working in and through Elijah, same as true of you my friend. If you are a believer when you walk in the room, the presence of God comes with you, you need to be aware of that, you need to think, what would the Lord have me to say? What would the Lord have me to do? Particularly if you're with someone that doesn't know the Lord or they have a need that you can meet or a prayer that you can pray. This is why some of you as well, I just feel inclined to say this, some of you have strained relationships or conflict or you have criticism from your extended family. It's because when you show up, they feel uncomfortable so they attack you or they oppose you or they despise you and it could be something in your character or disposition or maybe an unhealed heart or bitterness from the past, but it may just be the presence of God. It may be that they're not used to having God's presence around them and when you enter into their presence, God is present in and through you and that feels unsafe or uncomfortable or abnormal for them, He brings the presence of God comes with the man of God in addition, here's the great story, let me ask all the ladies, where does God meet this woman in her kitchen? I love that you would think that she would need to travel hundreds of miles and that she would need to go to a temple and she would need to schedule a meeting and instead God says, I'm going to her kitchen, I love that about our God. God is still meeting with people in their kitchen, on their commute, at their job site, at the gym, on their day off, God is seeking people. See, this woman isn't looking for God, but God's looking for her, this woman doesn't know how to find God, but God knows how to find her and this woman can't make the journey to be with the men of God, but God sends the man of God on a journey to be with this woman, He literally travels about a hundred miles to her house, how many other people does He visit with? Zero. It's just for her, how many of you God has met you in an unexpected place? God just showed up in my life at a place that I did not anticipate, I talked to a guy recently I said, "When did you get saved?" he said, "God met me in a bar." wow okay, yeah, God really likes you. He was like, "I was in a bar." and he said, "Somebody sat next to me and told me about Jesus and I got saved and went home." he was like, "Well, there you go." Yeah, there you go, I hope you paid for the guy's drink, I mean that was nice. Isn't it amazing though that sometimes God can just meet you in the unexpected places of life, I love that about this story, she meets her God in her kitchen. Some years later, Jesus honors this woman and He actually says that this story is true, I'll read it to you in Luke chapter four. Jesus is in his hometown of Nazareth and they reject him because a prophet is without honor in their hometown still true, "No prophet is acceptable in his hometown." Jesus says, "But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah." Here we are, he's back to first kings "When the heavens were shut for three years and six months." Jesus says it's all true, "And a great famine came and Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, inside and to a woman who was a widow, when they heard these things, they were filled with wrath." Jesus says, you know in the Old Testament there was a guy named Elijah and I'm the greater Elijah, see Elijah was the man of God, Jesus is God became a man, see Elijah is the man of God, Jesus is the God man. And what he says is in the days of Elijah, Elijah traveled about a hundred miles to go to a town to meet with a woman and she welcomed him and what Jesus is saying, "I've come all the way from heaven to earth and none of you have welcomed me." you've all rejected me, you've rejected me and there's no honor for me in my hometown in

hearing that they became filled with wrath, they wanted to kill him. The question that I have for you my friend is this, we see the widow welcoming the man of God into her home and life and then Jesus comes and says, "You need to welcome me as the God man into your home and life. Here's my question, have you welcomed Jesus as she welcomed Elijah, Jesus came as the greater Elijah, do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Do you serve Jesus? If you said Jesus, please come into my life, please come into my home, I welcome you to be with me and what Jesus is saying is simply this, that he is the greater Elijah and that in his day there were zero people that welcomed him my question is, have you welcomed him, back to the story of Elijah. We know we've looked at the widow and her son, let's look at Elijah, his name literally means strength of the Lord, so his name is in two parts, eli means strength of the Lord, jah means my God is Jehovah. His name literally means I live by the power of God or to say it another way, he's spirit-filled, he's spirit-filled and he's spirit led. Now what we see is that when he first enters the scene in first king 17 and he rebukes King Ahab, he's in Samaria and then God sent him. We looked at in the following week to a place called Cherith and that was to hide him for the few years of the famine where there is no rain because he was the most wanted man in Israel. Cherith as we looked at it means to cut off and to cut down, it's his Cherith season, some of you are in your Cherith season, God has cut you off from your job, from your family, from your health, from your success, from your wealth, from your income, God has cut you off and he's cutting you down not because he is punishing you, but because he is preparing you. He is allowing you to be broken down so you can be built up as someone who is stronger and ready for the next season of life, at some point we all get our season by the Brook and Cherith. He spends his season at the Cherith and then suddenly the water that was sustaining him, it dries up, the Brook dried up, we looked at how sometimes in our life the brook dries up, the job goes away, the company flounders, the church goes woke, the spouse dies, the divorce papers are served. The city we've been living in is not governed well, so we have to move because it's not habitable for a family, the Brook dried up and so he goes from Samaria to Cherith and then God sends him here to the woman's house in a place that is here called Zarephath and it's in a region called Sidon and what is happening here is separation for preparation. He's not being punished, he's being prepared, some of you are in a season right now, you need to receive this, it feels like God is punishing you, He's not punishing you, He's preparing you. God knows that you're not ready for what is coming, so he is going to increase your resiliency and your pain tolerance and your faith because He wants you to have a victory in the next season, so you're gonna have a little preparation in this season. Well nonetheless, he makes the journey and this is much like Moses in Midian, we see this in Exodus two and three where God has a season of separation and then preparation for Moses, we see this in the life of a man named Joseph in Exodus 39-41, there's a season where he literally goes to prison falsely accused of sexual assault, that's his season of Cherith, it's separation for preparation, it's cut off and cut down and then God sends him to literally be a type of Jesus ruling and reigning over the kingdom of Egypt and bringing salvation to a multitude. Well here what we see is the word of the Lord comes to Elijah and I just wanna say this, the word of the Lord keeps coming to Elijah and the word of the Lord is how God reveals himself. First and foremost, the word of the Lord starts with literally the word of God and if you want to know who God is and what God says, you need to hear the word of the Lord, which means you need to study and read the word of God. But there are other ways

that God speaks, I can't get into all of this, but sometimes it's an angel or a vision or a dream or a prophetic word through someone or a miracle, an angel, God has creative ways of communicating his word. And then what happens is he receives the word of God and he travels in obedience about a hundred miles, here's what I firmly believe, I believe that God is speaking a lot more than people are listening. I've heard this from Christians dear saints that I love that God has never spoken to me, yes he has you weren't listening, you were not listening. We're gonna get into this a little later, how to hear the voice of the Lord, there's a day coming up in the story of Elijah where there's earthquake and thunder and God's not speaking in those ways, but instead with a gentle whisper, which means if he had his phone on or his TV on or his tablet on or his radio on, he would not have heard the gentle whisper of God, I believe God is speaking and people aren't listening. When the word of the Lord comes, Elijah hears and obeys and here he gets a word from God and so he is told travel a hundred miles rugged, rough terrain and he's the most wanted man in Israel. There is a bounty on his head and the region that he is told to venture toward is the heart of worship to the demon false God or the demonic false goddess Asherah, it's the heart of Asherah worship. He has picked a fight publicly prophesying no rain for more than three years, they are worshiping Baal and Astra, he goes right into the heart of enemy territory, he goes right into the darkness. This is the last place that Elijah would choose to go, but it's the first place that God has chosen for him to go, what we see here is that Elijah is fearless and I was talking to my pastor recently and he said something very interesting. He said, "Fear is where you look into the future and you trust that Satan is going to act, faith is where you look at the future and you trust that God is going to act." the difference between faith and fear is who you think is gonna show up and act. He doesn't have fear, he has faith, the Bible says that God has not given us a spirit of fear, spirit of fear is literally a demonic spirit that causes us to think that God is not in tomorrow, but Satan is God will not show up, but Satan will. Elijah is a man of faith, he trusts the God who was faithful yesterday will be faithful today and tomorrow and so he obeys the word of the Lord. The key, my friend is this, not to be safe and not to be successful, but to be obedient, not to be safe and not to be successful but to be obedient, you will be judged according to the obedience that you have, to the calling that you have, God is telling him to go, that's all he knows and when he arrives, he arrives at a place called Zarephath. Now this is curious because this means to smelt or to melt, that's what it means, it was an ancient place where you would take precious metals and you would cause them to increase in value, gold, silver, bronze, various metals, they're precious but they're not pure. If you can find a way to increase their purity, you increase their preciousness and so they would have places for melting and smelting, it's where you would bring your metals and someone who was trained in this would take your metals and what they would do, they would use two things to increase the value of your precious metal, heat and pressure, heat and pressure. You would have heat and pressure and then the impurities would rise to the top and through increased heat and increased pressure, what you would do, you would take the precious metal, you would purify it and make it more precious, it became more valuable. Now let me say that it is very interesting that he arrives at this place because what is true in the natural is true in the supernatural, this is not just a place that God is going to purify metal, He's going to purify the man of God through heat and pressure, this is his place of preparation. Let me read this to you, tell me if this doesn't sound very similar first Peter one, six and seven about a thousand years later, Peter the leader of the

disciples says, "You have been grieved by various trials." It's like saying you've had your time at Cherith where you've been cut off and cut down "So that the tested genuineness of your faith more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter takes this same concept of Zarephath, of melting and smelting of purifying and preciousness and he applies it to you as a Christian. If you are a Christian, you need to know that the most precious thing that you have is faith in Jesus Christ, it's the most precious thing you have, it's the most priceless thing you have. And God wants your faith to be as pure as possible so that you'd have a pure heart holy devoted to him, now for that to happen, your faith like a precious metal, it's not pure, but it'll be purified under two circumstances, heat, pressure. When you feel the pressure and you sense the heat know this, God is not punishing you, he's purifying you, God sees you as precious, God sees your faith as priceless, God loves you so much and wants you to know him so well that he's willing to allow you seasons and Zarephath where the heat and the pressure are going to purify your faith so that it becomes more pure and more precious and more priceless. My friend if you're under the pressure and you're feeling the heat, hear me in this God is not punishing you, He's not. If you are a believer, he doesn't punish you because he already punished his son, Jesus Christ, He's not punishing you, He's purifying you and He's preparing you. Until Elijah can deal with being in the presence of those who worship Asherah, he will not be ready for the showdown on Mount Carmel with 850 false prophets of Baal and Asherah, this is preparation until he can be with one woman and her son, he can't be with Ahab and Jezebel. This is all preparation, this is purification, God is not punishing you, He's preparing you, God has something for you and I will say this as our church family, God has something for us. We've had our seasons of Zarephath, we've had times of heat, we've had times of pressure and it was just to purify our faith so it would become more pure and God wasn't punishing us and God is not punishing you, God was preparing us and God is preparing you to live at another level of faith. Miracle number two or God raises the dead first King 17, 17-24, "After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house became ill and his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him." her son died, how many of you have a child? Your worst fear or nightmare is that you will be at the funeral of your child? I can't think of anything more horrifying than being at the funeral of your own child and she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, oh man of God, you have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son." who's she blaming? God and Elijah, how many of you you've blamed God, you've blamed God? And he said to her, "Give me your son and he took him from her arms and carried him into the upper chamber where he lodged and he laid him on his own bed and he cried to the Lord, O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourned by killing her son?" that's his question. God, did you kill this boy? Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord and this is a prayer. "O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again. and the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah." the Lord listens, the Lord listens, hear me the Lord listens to those who pray to him. He hears your voice, He heard Elijah and the life of the child came into him again, death to life and he revived and Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to the mother and Elijah said, see your son lives and the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is true." I've said it before, many of you are

new, it's an analogy that a pastor once told me, we tend to think that our life is seasons, I'm in a bad season, I just need to hang in there to get to a good season. And what this pastor told me he said, "Life is concurrently like train tracks, every season has good and bad and those who are just, I just need to get to the good season." Well, it's called heaven and it's gonna be a while. How many of you've lived long enough that if you want to be positive, you can look at one track, you wanna be negative, you can look at the other, if you wanna praise God, you can look at one track, if you want to question God, you can look at the other. So look at her life first and foremost, God sends a prophet, a man of God to her house, He speaks to her, she gets a miracle, God provides food for her to live and her son dies. This is life, this is life, her son dies, she's already lost, who? Her husband, now she's lost her son, she has no one, she has no one. I couldn't imagine burying grace and then burying our children emotionally, I can't even consider visiting there for a moment. Now this woman who has buried her husband and now she lost her son, now what we see is she doesn't have a correct view of God, your view of God comes out at Zarephath, it comes out at Zarephath, your view of God comes out under heat and pressure. Who you think God is comes out under heat and pressure. She thinks God is cruel, mean, unforgiving, "You killed my son God." and she says He did so because of my sin. Now let me say one thing I really appreciate about this woman, she begins by accepting and understanding that she is a sinner that's better than most people she says, "I am a sinner, I have sin in my life, I think God killed my son because my sin." not only does she blame God, she blames Elijah, she blames Elijah. Some of you have experienced death, some of you have experienced loss, some of you have experienced tremendous grief and in those moments who you think God is, is most evident and revealed and oftentimes we're wrong and in those moments where we declare who we believe God to be are also those same pregnant moments where God reveals to us who he truly is. Yes. Here's what I love about this story, how did God and Elijah respond to her false accusations and her anger? God, you killed my son and it's because the prophet of God is in my house that my sin has been made known and so she attacks God and Elijah and what do they do? They bless her because that's not how God wants to relate to her, there are people that cause effect, reap, sow sin and judgment, there are other times in life that we just don't know, was there a particular act in her life cause effect that led to the death of her son? There does not seem to be any sort of direct correlation or causation, you need to have a box my friend in your life and just write the word mystery on it and there are a lot of things you're just gonna need to put in that box. Say, I don't know, I don't understand, this doesn't make any sense to me, my husband died, my son died and I don't know why, put it in the mystery box. The Bible says when you see Jesus first Corinthians 13 comes to mind, "When you see him face to face, you will know as you are fully known, there's a lot of things that you just don't understand until you see Jesus and he'll help you understand she's wrong, but God's good to her, what I love is God doesn't rebuke her and Elijah doesn't argue with her. Lemme say this, when you're dealing with someone who's in crisis or trauma or brokenness or they're hurting, it's just the worst day of their life, don't try and argue with their theology and don't try and take it personal and talk about how you feel. Minister to them, love them, serve them, pray for them, be there for them and down the road maybe you have a conversation about theology or feelings, but in that moment, don't be selfish, be present, that's what Elijah does. He doesn't argue with her, you don't say, well, actually I've got a lot of verse, you don't understand who God is 'cause at this point she's

broken and what she needs is healing and let me say this, there are some people that are bad. They have Jezebel, they're bad, some people are broken, she's broken, she's a sinner to be sure, but she's not a bad woman. God only sends the prophet to one woman and it's her, she's not a bad woman, she's a broken woman, so God doesn't argue with her or rebuke her, and neither does the man of God, they serve her and they bless her, two scriptures just come to mind. Proverbs 19:11 translation says, "If you are sensible, you'll control your temper, when someone wrongs you, it's a great virtue to ignore it." just gonna forgive you. Put grace on it, let it go, you've got a storm in your life, I'll be the lightning rod and just ground out your storm. Just so you know, this is called marriage, it's called marriage, lot of healing in the room right now. Another one, 1 Corinthians 13:5 says in one translation, "Love is not irritable or touchy, it does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong." he's loving her, Elijah is so is God and what is happening here, Elijah is the man of God. He shows up and now her son dies, she thinks it's God and Elijah who killed her son, we would call this a test. This is a test for Elijah and a test for the woman and what you're gonna see and I want you to hear this, your test is for your testimony, your test is for your testimony and God wants you to pass your test and share your testimony. The woman is being tested, the man of God is being tested and it's part of their testimony, here we are 3000 years later talking about it because it's their testimony. Two things I want you to see here I told you, if you were paying attention when we read Elijah ask God a question and he also prayed a prayer, God didn't answer his question, but God answered his prayer. Here's the question, he cried to the Lord, "Oh Lord my God, have you brought calamity upon the widow by killing her son?" That's his question and God does not answer the question, some of you have questions for God, He may answer some of them now or in the future as you grow and study, there's gonna be certain questions that God never answers. You're gonna need to trust him, God doesn't answer the question, but He does answer the prayer, here's the prayer, the prayer is he cried to the Lord, "Oh Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again. God, save and raise the boy." and the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. Yes I love you your pastor, this is a bit of a prophetic sermon and a prophetic book question for you not to condemn you, what things have you been questioning God about not praying to God for? God where are you? What are you doing? What's your plan? What are is this right? Why are they winning? How come this keeps God? Gotta have a lot of questions God like I love you, I'm gonna treat you just like this widow. I'm gonna be patient and loving and gracious and kind, but learn from the example of Elijah, don't send me questions, send me prayers. Some of you, I think that there's a supernatural breakthrough that God has for you, if you'll stop questioning and start requesting, what are the things that you've judged God, you don't like those parts of the Bible, parts of your life where you just frustrated and you have strong opinions about how God has failed you or the man of God has failed you, my pastor failed me, my church failed me, my Christian father failed me, my Christian mother failed me, the Christian school failed me, the youth pastor failed me, God failed me and so did the servant of God, that's the widow and God doesn't answer the question, but he does answer the prayer. Lord help me forgive them, I'll help you with that, Lord help me overcome that brokenness so I can be a healthy person, I'll help you with that, God help me to love that person the way that you love me, I'll help you with that. I just thought of it, I hadn't thought of it previously, you know the difference between a question and a prayer humility, comes to mind, God opposes the proud and he gives grace to the humble,

crowds like, "God, I have a lot of questions, you need to take this test." Humility says, "God, I have a lot of needs would you help me?" He gives grace to the humble, He opposes the proud, He gives grace to the humble. I'm sorry for what you've been through, I know it hurts like hell, I know some things don't make sense and it just seems evil and I don't have an answer, but I do have a God who answers prayer and what we see here is that Elijah and the Elijah story is part of a bigger story and it's the story of Jesus, Jesus is the greater Elijah let me pivot this, so when you look at Elijah, you need to look through Elijah and then look at Jesus. Okay, that's the point of Elijah and what Elijah is, he's a type or a sign, he points to a greater reality. I'll prove it to you, Elijah and Jesus multiplied food we just saw with Elijah, he multiplied food, did Jesus multiply food? Yep, took the lunch from a little boy and multiplied it, here we see that Elijah raises a widow son from the dead, did Jesus ever do that? He actually did. In Luke chapter seven, he raises the widow son at , so Jesus comes and he's the greater Elijah. He's not just the man of God, he's gotta become a man, that's why when Jesus asks, "Who do people say that I am?" they say, "Well, some people think you're Elijah." and so what we see here is the little boy or this son is dead. What I love is rather than arguing with her, he intercedes before him. See, sometimes we're having arguments with people that we need to be interceding for, there's just a lot of revelation today just thinking of stuff. How many of you, you're arguing with someone you need to be interceding for? Like, I'm not gonna talk to you about God, I'm gonna talk to God about you, that's what I'm gonna do today and so what he does, he doesn't argue with the woman he intercedes, there's no arguing, there's interceding. I'm gonna go upstairs and I'm gonna ask God to resurrect this boy and then what's really curious is he puts himself on the boy or the young man three times, why? I have no idea, I mean maybe the first time he is like, please, pretty please, pretty, pretty please, I don't know, I don't know. Isn't it weird sometimes you're like, well, I tried that and it didn't work, try it again, I prayed that prayer and it didn't get answered, prayed again, I studied that book of the Bible and I didn't understand it, study it again. Third time the boy is healed, resurrected from the dead, what's really interesting is according to Leviticus and numbers, it's in the study guide, get it for free on the way out or real faith.com. According to the Old Testament, what happens to a man of God if they touch a dead body? They're unclean, what Elijah is saying is, I'm willing to be made unclean for a resurrection, this is the first resurrection in the Old Testament, this is the first fruits in the beginning of resurrection. Ultimately, this is a type and a sign that points to Jesus, this is the beloved and only son who dies and is raised from the dead, it foreshadows the coming of Jesus who is the beloved and only son of God who was dead and raised from the dead and what's really interesting is what Elijah does is prophetic. He identifies with sin, death and uncleanness, to bring about forgiveness and resurrection, you need to know that what Elijah did for the son, the son of God did for you. Second Corinthians 5:21 apostle Paul says it this way, "God made him who knew no sin to become sin unclean so that in him you might become the righteousness of God." Jesus came and he did for you what Elijah did for this son, he made himself unclean so that you could be made new. Jesus was defiled so you could be cleansed, Jesus died so that you could live, Jesus was separated so you could be reconciled to the Father that Jesus took your place so that he could put you in his place, a couple of things I wanna say and then I'll say what I really want to say, so let me speak to the men, can I speak to the men? Men give me your ear, gimme your ear men. Okay, I love you you know that, I love you men with the father's

heart I truly do. This story is 3000 years old, but it seems very contemporary, it's a single mother who's broke raising a son who's not doing well. This is now our nation and there's no hope and there's no provision until there's a man of God in the house. Men you need to need to own that, your family needs a man of God in the house, your wife needs a man of God in the house, your children need a man of God in the house, what makes the difference in this house is a man of God is in the house. My heart is to help you men be like Elijah, not like Ahab passive, not like Jezebel, controlling like Elijah assertive, not led by demonic spirits, but by the Holy Spirit, we'll have our final real men this week, I'd love to have you men there with us. Well just know this, my heart for all of your families is that there would be a man of God in the house, don't miss the big obvious point, everything changes when there's a man of God in the house. Now say this men, there's a man in the house, but is there a man of God in the house? That's the question you've gotta ask you, are you leading your family in prayer? Are you providing? Are you setting a good example? Are you worshiping? Are you repenting of your sin? Are you the leader in head? See, there are families that have a man in the house, but not a man of God in the house, nothing changes just because there's a man in the house, everything changes if there's a man of God in the house. In addition, what we see here is not just the man of God but the miracle of God as I told you, this is the first resurrection recorded in the Bible. This leads us to what we are on the precipice of Good Friday and Easter, Good Friday is the day of Jesus' death where the Son of God died just like this day that the woman's son died. We'll celebrate that online Good Friday, you could pray, we had a last minute idea, we threw together a quick documentary, we're putting it online. I'm praying that 10 million people watch it on Good Friday and hear about how Jesus did for them what Elijah did for this son, he became unclean so that they could be forgiven and have resurrection and then the church of Jesus Christ gathers globally for Easter. It's the resurrection of Jesus, it's the most significant event in the history of the world, it's how Jesus confirms that He is God, it's how he forgives sin, it's how he opens up heaven and his resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection, what happened to this boy will happen to you if you believe in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. You'd like to be baptized, we'd love to baptize you if you're a Christian, find a church, go that weekend and baptism is where we show that Jesus died in rose and we believe in him and we will raise to be with him and like him and for him forever, Christian baptism is just showing our faith and resurrection. Now that being said, I feel like I'm supposed to do something here and that I'm supposed to say something and I'm not sure what I'm gonna see and I'm not sure what I'm gonna say at this point in the sermon, I felt like I was supposed to pray for you and then tell you what I see, so that's what I'm gonna do. Holy Spirit, spirit of Elijah, we invite you into this house, a Holy Spirit as we see this woman who lost her husband and lost her son, Lord God, she didn't know you and she didn't know about resurrection and Lord God, I just pray right now that you would show me what I am supposed to say and Lord God we live in the hope of resurrection, the death does come, but so does the Son of God to defeat death and to empty the grave. I see some of you who are widowed, your spouse knew the Lord and they died and you just need to know that resurrection is real and that you're going to have a family reunion in the kingdom of God. Just as this woman had a funeral and then a reunion with her son, you've had a funeral and a reunion is coming, I see some of you have had a miscarriage. You've lost a child like this woman and you have wondered, will you see that child again? Is there a family reunion? The father would tell you that his is a

father's heart, the father would tell you that just as you could trust him with your eternity, you can trust your child and Jesus words should comfort you, do not hinder children from coming to me for the kingdom of God was made for such as these. I see some of you have Christian relationships, friends, family, but particularly with your parents and your grandparents. You're all Christians, but there's a lot of conflict, the relationship is strained, it's very painful, it's complicated, it's a burden. And you're wondering why things can't be better if the family members are believers, I need you to know that you can forgive them and you can love them, doesn't mean you have to trust them, but you can bless them and I need you to know that there is going to be a family reunion upon the resurrection of the dead. Your family, all who are believers are going to have a perfect relationship, you're gonna be happy together forever, you're gonna enjoy being with one another. The pains and the problems and the perils that you have in this life will not follow you into eternal life, you need to know that there are people who have died before you were born and there are people who will die after you are gone, you're gonna meet them in the kingdom of God, there's gonna be a massive, joyful, perfect family reunion forever. Lastly, I feel inclined to just speak to those of you who have had an abortion, life wasn't taken from you, it was taken by you. For some of you, it's your secret that you've never surrendered, but the Lord knows some of you were you young and you didn't understand and you didn't know and a bad decision was made, but it wasn't made solely by you, others were pushing, pressing some of you it was your decision and it was made out of fear, not out of faith. Some of you are the fathers who tolerated it, some of you are the boyfriends who encouraged it, some of you are the men who made the drive to the clinic. A life was taken, you need to know that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, that when Jesus prayed on the cross, I can just kind of hear him and see him. He says, "Father forgive them." if Jesus could pray forgiveness for those who murder the son of God, then there is forgiveness for those who take the lives of sons and daughters. For those women, you need to know that a child doesn't need to be born to be saved, the Bible says that God knows us from our mother's womb, the Bible says that some are set apart from their mother's womb, the Bible says that John the Baptizer was filled with the Holy Spirit and worshiped Jesus in his presence from his mother's womb. I don't want to go beyond the scriptures, but I do see, I see a lot of mothers meeting their children at the resurrection of the dead, I see Jesus there for those reunions and I hear the verse in revelation where it says that he will wipe every tear from their eyes and I'm sorry for your tears and you need to know that at the resurrection of the dead, many of you will be meeting the child that you've never met and that you will be weeping with a combination of grief and joy and that Jesus is going to look you in the face and he is going to smile and your faith will become sight and he will wipe every tear from your eyes with nail scarred hands that provided resurrection through his death and the only tears he will cry are tears of joy forever. All right, let me tell you the last thing that I feel like I'm supposed to say, I know it's long and been hearing and seeing things all week, it's been an unusual week. Here's what I want to tell you, abide in the thin place, that's the word that I believe is from God, abide in the thin place, how did Elijah do it? I mean you hear from God, you travel a hundred miles, you face death, you call down fire from heaven, you see a boy raised from the dead and God sends a chariot to take you home, like what a life. We're gonna worship in a moment and and you need to do that, the spirit in you needs to process with you. James chapter five, verse 17, about a thousand years after Elijah

here's what it says, Elijah was as, put the scripture up please, "Elijah was as human as we are." He's not a superhero, he doesn't have a superpower, he has the Holy Spirit just like you and me, he was as human as we are and he what he prayed earnestly. Elijah's government was at least as bad as ours, five generations of demonic evil, I mean it's a coin flip, but it was a bad government. The culture was completely demonic, satanic, they canceled Christian education or Bible-based education, they murdered the prophets, God's people then went into the church and you know what the church was? The church in large part was compromised and led by cowards and Ahab's, it was compromised, it's a little bit of God and a little bit of anti-God and cowards were trying to make everyone happy rather than God happy, there was gender confusion, sexual rebellion and then here comes Elijah. Here's what I want to tell you number one, be a true believer if you're gonna be a believer, be a true believer and be part of the remnant Elijah's part of a remnant, Paul talks about this in Romans and he says, God always preserves a remnant and the remnant then makes way for the revival where the miracle that happens in the life of the individual becomes the revival that happens for a multitude. Number two, live in word in spirit, this is what I felt like I'm supposed to tell you, Elijah is a word guy and a spirit guy says over and over, the word of the Lord came to him, he's a word guy and a spirit guy, he does power by the power of the Holy Spirit. Too many churches are word or spirit, the word churches it's all true and no power, the other churches it's lots of power and no direction. God wants this house to be a place of word and spirit, Elijah was a man of word and spirit the word guys will read the story and say he knew the word. Yeah and he lived in the spirit. The spirit guys will read and say he had a lot of power, yeah and it was tethered and guided by the word of God. In addition follow God's leading, you've gotta find God's will, you gotta turn your phone off, you gotta turn your soul on, you need to get rid of all the other voices and hear the one voice that tends to whisper, don't overlook the ministry opportunities in front of you. This was a widow and her son, who's God placed in front of you and here's what I wanna say to you, this is actually my point of the whole sermon, the rest was the introduction so here's the point. As I was praying for you this week and studying the word of God, I kept seeing Elijah it's like I was watching him and I saw him in prayer and I saw him in worship and I kept thinking of James 5:17. He was as human as we are and he prayed fervently and I felt like the Lord spoke to me and said and I wrote it down, abide in the thin place and as I saw Elijah, I saw him in a thin place. Over and over and over, I kept seeing Elijah in a thin place and by a thin place I mean there's the unseen and the seen, there's heaven and earth and there's some thin places between the two. When you're in those places, you hear the word of the Lord and you receive the power of the Lord, those are thin places. Elijah spent a lot of time in thin places, Cherith for him was a thin place, Zarephath was a thin place. He didn't have a wife, he didn't have kids, he didn't have a job, he didn't have to go hunting for food, instead what did he do? He spent a few years listening, worshiping, praying in those thin places where it's a little closer to heaven and a little further from Earth than most of our typical days, I believe that Elijah's power came in the thin places. Let me say this when we pray, prayer is a thin place 'cause it says that he prayed in the Lord, the Lord heard him must be thin there when you pray, when we worship, worship is a thin place, I see it in Revelation where John is taken up into heaven in the Spirit and there's Jesus and he's being worshiped in God. The Holy Spirit is present as the sevenfold spirit of God and it says that the prayers of the saints ascend like incense into the presence of God it must mean that when

you're in the spirit, that's a thin place. That when you're in prayer, that's a thin place, that when we're together in worship, which is corporate prayer, that's a thin place. I'll just pray for you in a minute, but I and the Lord said, thin place, I was like, what? I looked it up right before I came on this stage, thin place is what the ancient Celtic Christians would call meeting with God, where it felt a little closer to heaven and a little further from earth, I'm Irish where were the old , my last name means messenger of God, I name literally means prophet. The key is to live in the thin places, to spend more time in the thin places, to listen more in the thin places, to intercede more in the thin places, to sing more in the thin places. Elijah was an incredible man of God, but he was just like you and me, he just spent a lot more time in the thin places. I'm praying that our church is a thin place, I'm praying that online ministry is a thin place and I'm gonna ask you now to just spend some time with the Lord and see if this is not a thin place for you. I'll just pray, then I'll have you stand and join us in worship, here's my prayer, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Lord Jesus, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Heavenly Father, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Holy Spirit, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Holy Spirit, we invite you to make this a thin moment, to make this a thin space with the people who have been questioning start praying, with the people who have been arguing start interceding and where the people who have been living in the flesh would start living in the spirit, we invite you now in Jesus' name.