

Margaret Tate reflects on 1 Kings 17:1-24

When something serious happens to you, who do you turn to? What is your anchor in life? When I was told I had lung cancer, I was shocked and felt as if my world had fallen apart! How would you feel?

I entered Guy's Hospital and the surgeon came and spoke to me before the operation and explained how serious it was; that my left lung would have to be removed and there was the possibility I might die. I prayed with her for God's guidance on the operation.

A few days later when I was beginning to recover I did my daily Bible reading, 1 Kings 17:1-24. "Lord my God let this boy's life return to him," I read, and God said to me "Let your life return to you."

After Elijah had spoken to Ahab, he was called to solitude. "When we cannot be useful we must be patient, and when we cannot work we must sit quietly before him." (F.F. Bruce, biblical scholar).

I spent a lot of 2019 in hospital or at home very inactive. God was teaching me patience. In his letter, James reminds us "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. (James 1:2-3). When the going was tough I had to constantly remind myself of God's promise to me.

What unlikely caterers were appointed to care for Elijah! He drank from the brook and ravens (birds regarded as unclean – Leviticus 11:15) fed him morning and evening. He did not question where to food came from, he was fed and was thankful. As Paul tells us in Colossians 3:15 "As God's chosen people ... let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts ... and be thankful." And a very unlikely neighbour offered to do my weekly shop.

Have our supplies run out? We are rich beyond measure compared with many other parts of the world! They cannot even wash their hands in clean water, let alone for 20 seconds. The widow of Zarephath was very humble and generous even though she had nothing, yet she provided for Elijah first. She had good reason to think the Lord was blessing her. But in the midst of her peace and prosperity the death of her child came as a surprise to her.

"Did you come to remind me of my sin?" She asked. Do we need to be reminded that we are sinners saved by Grace? Yes, I do regularly. We all need to be reminded to come to the foot of the Cross and to look at our relationship with Jesus Christ, and to be disciplined in our times of daily Bible reading and prayer, and when we are able to come regularly to worship him.

One far greater than Elijah has come: Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Christ's Resurrection is a guarantee of eternal life. Since having been given a new life after my operation, each new day is a blessing from God, and I give thanks for it and try to use it wisely. May you also be able to do the same.

"I know whom I have believed ... and am convinced he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day." (2 Timothy 1:12)

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