

Surrender to God's Love

1st Kings 17:8-16; Mat 6:25-34; Rom 8:31-39

How am I going to get through this? I don't see how things will ever work out! What can I do about it? We concern ourselves with many things that we cannot control. We worry about a future that we cannot foretell. We fret over uncertainties we can do little or nothing to change. Jesus calls us not to worry. Is it so difficult to trust God's love and provision for our needs?



When Elijah came to Zarephath, he brought a challenge to a poor widow. *Yahweh* had sent him to speak to her, charging both Elijah and this widow with trusting God to provide for them. I am not sure that I would have wanted to be in Elijah's sandals. He was told to ask her to give of the meager resources at her disposal to feed a foreign prophet.

She knew who he was. She knew of the confrontation between Elijah and Ahab, king of Israel. She knew that *Yahweh* had spoken through Elijah that the heavens would be sealed against Baal's reported power to bring rain and fertility. Drought had come over the land since Elijah's words to Ahab. Baal had been unable or unwilling to thwart *Yahweh* and send rain.

Elijah called this widow from Jezebel's homeland to trust *Yahweh* to provide for her needs. Placing my own life at risk by trusting God's provision is one thing. Challenging someone else to risk their livelihood by trusting God is another. Elijah had experienced God's provision at the brook now dried-up. Based on that experience of God's faithful love and provision, he accepted the charge to call this poor, idolatrous widow to trust to God's love and provision for her as well.

When Jesus spoke of God's love, he often spoke of provision. That major issue consumed the people of long ago. It was the issue underlying the fertility cults prevalent throughout the ancient world and is still the major issue that consumes the anxieties of people around the globe. All too often, we worry about financial resources and provision of things beyond our control. While our nation might not be as preoccupied with financial provision, we allow health and safety concerns to control much of our time, energy, and thought. Jesus addressed the underlying issue of these concerns as being our need to trust God's love and provision.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed the issue of God's care, love, and provision. He reminded us of the care God takes of the birds and the lilies. His message was to trust God into the unknown future, relying on God to provide for our needs. The message was simple, but it turned many people away, for it seemed ridiculous. The rich young ruler could not bring himself to give everything away to the poor and trust God to supply his needs. It was somehow easier for a poor widow to place her mite in the temple coffers than for the rich to trust God to supply their needs. Those who do not have control over their lives often can more easily trust God to provide, for they have no other means. Those who have more control find it harder to give it up.

"Be anxious for nothing.... Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ...seek first God's rule in your life and His righteousness, and He will supply your needs." Those words are simple, but hard to live by.

Paul said that God's love makes trusting God worth the risk. Nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus. God's provision may not match our desires, but God's love transforms everything and every event in our lives for our benefit. If nothing can separate us from God's love, can we not trust Him to provide for our needs? If nothing can interfere with God's will to work all things for our good, can we not trust Him to meet our daily needs and provide us with a future?

Probably our biggest obstacle to trusting God's love and provision is that we don't recognize our true needs. Since we don't understand what life is really about, we worry about things that are just not important. Alabama sings a song that summarizes the worry that pervades our society:

*I'm in a hurry to get things done.
Oh, I rush and rush until life's no fun.
All I really gotta do is live and die,
But I'm in a hurry and don't know why.¹*

Though time may not be our biggest worry, it is worry that destroys the joy of living. Worry replaces confidence in God's love and provision and keeps us from resting in and enjoying God's care.

Worry is a thief. It steals the joy out of life. It keeps us from accepting and trusting God's love and provision. It keeps us from experiencing the fullness of life that God has for us.

If the widow of Zarephath had not risked laying worry aside to trust *Yahweh's* faithful provision, would her resources have lasted the drought? If Elijah had not trusted God's provision through the means of a destitute widow, how would he have eaten? If we are loathe to trust God to meet our needs and shower us with His love, how will we experience the true joy of life that God has in store for us?

Nothing has the power to separate us from God's love. If God loves us, He will provide for our needs. When worry creeps in, it destroys the blessings and joy of God's provision. We often rush around so much that we lose track of where we are headed. We can worry about things that make too little difference in the long run and lose track of what is important—what life is really all about.

Few things are truly necessary for us to do. Worry is not one of them. We have a God who loves us, and in loving provides for our needs. Are we up to the challenge of surrendering to His love and provision? Are we up to the challenge of enjoying God's blessings, or will we hold tightly to our perceived control over our lives? If we are not careful, we may allow worry to keep us from enjoying God's greatest blessings: His love and provision.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, make your requests known to God with thanksgiving.”² It sure beats the worry and pressure of having to be in control.

—*Christopher B. Harbin*

¹ Alabama. “All I Really Gotta Do is Live and Die (But I'm in a Hurry and Don't Know Why)”.

² Philippians 4:6.