



THE VISIBLE HAND
— OF THE INVISIBLE GOD —

PART TWO

Sermon Overview

Obedience is always accompanied by a test, as illustrated by Elijah meeting a starving widow on the verge of death. Remembering that God is already at work behind the scenes allows us to face these tests well, and take risks in our faith.

PART TWO

Obedient faith that takes risks for God is honored by God. The prophet Elijah has such faith.

⁷ *Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land.*

⁸ *Then the word of the Lord came to him:*

⁹ *“Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.”*

¹⁰ *So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?”*

¹¹ *As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”*

¹² *“As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”*

¹³ *Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son.*

¹⁴ *For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.’”*

¹⁵ She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.

¹⁶ For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

1 KING 17:7-16

Shortly after the brook that Elijah relied on dried up, God called him to the village of Zarephath, a village that was 100 miles away, stricken with famine, a center of Baal worship, and very close to Queen Jezebel's hometown. This calling is irrational to human minds, but God was at work behind the scenes.

The call to Zarephath ensured that Elijah would not starve, but also that God's mercy and grace would be preached to Baal worshippers as Elijah lived among them for two years.

FIRST IMPRESSION BLUES

Obedience is always accompanied by a test, as illustrated by Elijah meeting a starving widow on the verge of death. Elijah responded to this test by challenging the widow to bake bread for him—and by extension God—first. She answered this challenge and was provided for.

GOD'S WORK ON ALL FRONTS

Elijah was willing to risk everything for God, believing that God would be at work on the other side. Throughout Scripture, we see God working in similar situations: God sent Joseph ahead of his brothers to Egypt, Joshua's spies to the house of

Rahab, Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch, and Peter to Cornelius. Remembering that God is already at work behind the scenes allows us to take risks in our faith.