

Sermon for the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

“We Can Trust God”

1 Kings 17:1-16

11/11/18b

1. The “last supper” (1 Kings 17:12) for a Gentile widow and her son ~ *What hope was there?*
2. Have you ever faced a “last supper” moment like that? The loss of your job? The crumbling of your financial situation? Victim of a crime? Had an accident? Natural disaster? Trouble with your children? The disintegration of your marriage? The diagnosis of an illness—for you or a loved one? The death of your spouse? Where did you look for help, for hope? Where did you reach? To whom did you cling?
3. The widow of Zarephath knew of Yahweh, the God of Israel. But it seems He was just that—the God of Israel, not her God (cf. her words to Elijah, v. 12: “As the LORD *your* God lives...”). She was about to learn about His power and grace: that He wanted to be her God, too, and to save and help her and her family... (*Here relate how God saved her through Elijah. He said what He would do and He did it.*)
4. This account of God’s amazing provision—much like the feeding of the 5,000—puts to shame all our faithless worries and doubts, doesn’t it? To fret when trouble arises reveals that our hearts are not set on God, nor do we know Him truly. Though God is ever present, we so easily turn to idols.
5. God nevertheless loves you. He still wants to be your God and provide for you. Even though you don’t deserve such a gift, God sent His Son, Jesus, for you.
6. As Yahweh had promised through His prophets from of old, His Son Jesus came from heaven above to earth below for your salvation. Jesus entered the gates of Jerusalem to gather a couple of sticks for you—a cross—to go and to die. But before doing this Your Savior ate His last supper—which was really not His, but yours. There He gave His weak and faltering disciples, these unworthy, sinful men, His true body and blood under bread and wine, to eat and to drink, before He then went to die for them and for you.
7. Because of Jesus’ death on the cross, and His resurrection, the Gospel message from God offers you the priceless gift of salvation. Jesus’ body and blood in His Supper, which are still given to His Church today, forgive you and sustain the faith that He has worked in you. Like the meager meals in drought-stricken Zarephath, Christ’s Supper may not look like much, but according to Christ’s Word this Supper is a divine feast and a precious treasure for you, today *and tomorrow*. Yes, as the bin of flour was not used up for the widow and her son in our text, nor did the jar of oil run dry, until the day that the LORD again sent rain on the earth, so the means of grace, God’s Word and Sacraments, will neither be used up nor will they run dry for Christ’s Church until the Day when our Lord comes again from heaven to take us to Himself. Think about that.

8. You know, after receiving Holy Communion, we, God's baptized sons and daughters, depart from His table "in peace," with sins forgiven, for this is what Christ our Savior has promised us concerning this Sacrament ("given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins"). Singing with faithful Simeon we "depart in peace *according to Thy Word*". Refreshed by His Supper, we return to our lives of service to our neighbor—in the home, school, work, church, community, nation, and world. We return to our lives of service to our neighbor, like the widow who prepared a cake of bread for Elijah, like the poor widow in today's Gospel who contributed her offering for God's service there at the temple. Refreshed by Christ's Supper, we return to our lives of daily reliance upon God's provision for all our needs, learning to pray that profound prayer of contentment and trust: "give us *this day* our *daily* bread". Refreshed by Christ's Supper, we return to our pilgrim's journey as God's baptized children through life to death to resurrection and everlasting life with God. All the while we trust that God will do what He has promised.

9. The account of the widow of Zarephath shows us how foolish and unnecessary all our fretfulness and anxiety are; here God calls His children to repentance. This account reminds us that God is almighty, God is good, God is present, and God keeps His Word; He keeps His promises to mankind. This account points us to the cross of Jesus where Jesus "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26), and it points to His holy Supper spread for us. Since Jesus is risen, through His Gospel we have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. We are God's children, and He will not forsake His own; we can trust Him for all things, daily grace and daily bread as well. We know that Elijah's God is our God, and that we also are His people through Baptism, and that all things will be done for us just as our God has promised, exactly "according to His Word".

In Jesus' name. Amen