1 Kings chapter 17, 1 Kings chapter 17, and I told my wife this morning I'm starting a new tradition today, I know the church probably has work with comp insurance but I'm tired of fighting this goofy cord around me so I'm taking my jacket off at the very beginning so I don't have to wrestle that thing anymore. I told Mitch I might wait but I want to do this now. If you're in your 20s, 30s, maybe even early 40s, would you stand for me? 20s, 30s, early 40s, I'm going to call you out. I got 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. You got 16 here, I know we got quite a few more that's, y'all can sit down now, that's normally here, that's not here today, lots of folks going on vacation. I'm tickled that beginning of the first Sunday in September, we're starting a new Sunday school class. For the 20s somethings, 30s somethings, even early 40s, Ethan and Brittany Humphries is going to be leading that class. I'm excited for that to begin. We've got Sunday school classes for every age from the little ones all the way up to the older ones and every age is important, every age is important. But I told somebody the other day, I remember being a child and I grew up in a house where you didn't have a choice. You was, when I lived in Robert and Jennifer Weem's house, you was going to church whether you like it or not.

And that's a good thing. But when you're in your 30s and you have your own home, these mamas and daddies have made their own decision that they're coming to church, which implies that they're wanting to raise their children under the leadership of the Lord and His Word and His church. And we need a class for that age. Also, let me say this, I love coming into the worship service. I like everybody in here together. Little Dean's right back here with his grandmama right now. Little Lily's back there, she's cutting up a little bit. Well, they're in Sunday school.

I love it that we all come together and I never want that to ever stop. The Spirit of God, He knows how to speak to every level. But that being said, maybe some of you mamas with little bitties, you're hesitant to come to Sunday school because of wrestling your kids. My wife has volunteered. If you've got one that you want to drop off during the Sunday school hours, she'll help with that. We're not beginning a nursery for our preaching service. But for that age group particularly during Sunday school, I know we'll

have some hands on deck if you need a little help
with your youngest. So don't let that stop you
from coming to church. 1 Kings chapter 17 from Sunday
school in particular. Begin reading verse number
one. Good to see everybody here today. 1 Kings chapter
17 beginning in verse number one. We'll read down
through verse number 10. We have spent a lot of
time recently in the New Testament, worked our way.
I took about 15, 16 lessons or messages to work
through the book of Ephesians. We spent a lot of time in Matthew 6 on how to pray.
But this week, the Lord has really drawn my heart to the Old Testament.
And unless the Lord leads differently,
we're going to spend a little bit of time here
in the book of 1 Kings and talk to you about the God of Elijah.
This morning in particular, divine provision.
The God of Elijah, 1 Kings chapter 17.
The Bible says in verse number one,
And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab,
As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I
stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years,
but according to my word. And the word of the
Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence,
and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the
brook Cherith that is beyond Jordan. And it shall be
that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have
commanded the ravens to feed thee there.
So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he
went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan.
And the ravens brought him bread and fish
in the morning, and bread and fish in the evening,
and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass
after a while that the brook dried up, because
there had been no rain in the land. And the word of
the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee the
Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there.
And we find this statement again, Behold,
I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.
Lastly, in verse 10 says, So he arose and went to Zarephath.
And when he came to the gate of the
city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of
sticks. And he called to her and said, Fetch me, I
pray thee, a little water and a vessel that I may
drink. Let's pray.
Dear Father, we bow before you this morning, Lord,
with a grateful, grateful heart, Lord, that you have us
hid in the cleft of yourself, your strength, your mercy, your power, your love.
Dear God, I pray today that you would open up the

scriptures, open up our hearts, open up our minds.
Lord, there's not a God of the New Testament, a God of the old. There's only one.
Now, Heavenly Father, you haven't lost an ounce
of your strength or power or mercy or mind.
Lord, I pray today as we open up your word that
you would use it, Lord, to convict those who are
outside your will to comfort and strengthen those who are in it.
Have your way in this service today,
Lord, in Jesus' sweet name we pray. Amen and amen.
Almost any time I feel led to spend any length of time
at all in the Old Testament. I like to refer
back a little bit to what the New Testament
says about the Old Testament. Paul wrote in the
book of 1 Timothy or 2 Timothy. I want to read that
scripture to you, 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16.
He says, all scripture is given by inspiration of God
and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,
for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be
perfect or complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
Paul is talking about the Old Testament
when he pens that to Timothy in the New Testament.
Paul's writing to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 10,
and he's talking about the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness.
He said, those things happen for our examples and they
are written for our admonition. Those things are
recorded that the New Testament church might learn
from those things. The Old Testament is the Bible
that Jesus read. The Old Testament is what Philip
views there out in the wilderness to preach unto Jesus,
to preach unto that Ethiopian eunuch, the Lord Jesus Christ.
The Old Testament is far more
than a collection of old stories just to retell.
Folks, they are deep wells that reveal to us
unchanging truths about men, unchanging truths
about God, and in particular how this great God
often deals in the lives of men.
I love the stories of the Old Testament, David and Goliath,
Daniel and the lions then, Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego, Moses, Jacob, all of these, all of these stories.
But I love in particular, God's dealing in the lives of a man
named Elijah and later on in the life of a man named Elisha.
And this morning I want to do more than just simply
retell a story that many of us are familiar with.
I want us to see some unchanging truths about God, some unchanging truths about men,
and how this God continues to deal with men.
So let's look here in verse number 1, 1 Kings chapter 17.
And here we find God's judgment on sin, or God's sentence upon sin.

Scripture says in verse 1,
And Elijah the Tishbite, who is of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab,
As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand,
there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.
Elijah goes and he shows himself to Ahab,
And he says a drought is coming.
Not a couple of days, not a couple of weeks, not a couple of months.
But a drought for three and a half years.
No rain whatsoever.
But something grabbed me Friday night as I pulled
into my home about 11 o'clock after revival.
The Lord said through Elijah, there won't even be any dew.
I pulled into my house at dark, and as I pulled into my driveway,
my headlights go across my yard.
And though it hadn't rained, the dew had already begun to fall.
I'd seen the glistening of the dew all across my yard.
But the scripture says here that there would
not even be dew for three and a half years.
No rain.
Folks, here's the thing that may trouble some of us.
God is the one that turned it off.
He's not just pronouncing it.
But God says, I'm shutting off the heavens.
There'll be no rain.
There'll be no dew.
There'll be no refreshment.
Now this is the same God that Jesus says when we pray,
Give us this day our daily bread.
We can come to you for sustenance.
We can come to you for rain.
We can come to you for food.
But God says to Elijah, I'm shutting this thing down.
To understand the reasoning behind this, To understand the action
of God behind this, We need to turn back just a few verses.
Look at chapter 16, verse number 30.
And the Bible says, And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight
of the Lord above all that were before him.
And Ahab was the king of Israel, if you're not familiar.
And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight
of the Lord above all that were before him.
And it came to pass, as if there had been a light
thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam,
That he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Jezebel, king of the Zidonians,
And went and served Baal and worshipped him.
And he reared up an altar for Baal in the
house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.
Look at verse 33.

And the Bible says,
And Ahab made a grove, and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger
than all the kings of Israel that came before him.
God looked down upon the man that he had called to lead,
upon the nation that was supposed to be his,
and he sees idolatry, he sees rebellion, he sees wickedness,
and God makes the command, he makes a declaration,
I'm shutting off the reign of heaven, I'm shutting off the dew.
Folks, there's more in this than I have time to unfold.
But I was studying this and thinking about this,
there's something that was really pressed upon me.
It was a quote that I heard years ago.
And so a preacher said that sin is no pebble
cast into a pond that leads to gentle ripples.
It's a boulder in a bathtub.
It's an earthquake that leads to tsunamis of destruction.
It's not something small that just makes a little ripple where we are.
But when sin comes in, and it begins to rain, and it overcomes,
and it becomes the driving influence in our life,
that it is a category 1,000 earthquake that causes tsunamis and waves of destruction.
Ahab and his would be affected.
The rebellious nation of Israel would be affected.
But what is also true in this passage of Scripture,
the prophet of God would be affected.
A mama and her little boy would be affected by this sin in the land.
And some of us may object, say, preacher, that doesn't sound fair.
What did this mama do?
What did this little widow of Zarephath do?
What did Elijah do?
He's now caught in the wake of this drought.
That doesn't sound fair at all.
Can I say this?
None of us dare ask God for fairness.
None of us dare ask God for fairness.
But the Bible does teach us that every man shall answer for his own sin.
Every man will still give account for himself.
That I will be judged not based upon you, but I will be judged based upon my life.
So in that sense, God is fair.
But the Bible also clearly reveals, folks,
that the effects of sin are so much larger than the individual.
God writes, Ahab, you have done more to provoke anger
within me than every king that has come before you.
And my sentence upon this sin have been passed down.
I am turning everything off.
And the sad reality of it was,
the sad reality of it is,
that everyone was caught in the wake of it.

There's a term that has become popular in recent years.
And it's called a victimless crime.
They use it to talk about things like recreational drugs, pornography.
It's not the same as robbing a bank.
It's not the same as going and taking somebody's life.
In other words, there's really no victim in this.
This is just this individual.
I'm going to use some deep theological terminology with you.
That's a bunch of garbage.
There is no such thing.
There is no such sin as a victimless crime.
You ask some mama whose son is caught up in drugs
if it doesn't affect the family.
You ask some wife whose husband is wrapped up
in pornography if it doesn't affect the family.
No, there's no such thing.
But number one, friend, God is offended.
If nobody else is offended, God is offended.
The offender suffers.
But also what is true is so many others are caught in the wake of sin.
It is true in Ahab's day.
It is true in our day.
And this great God rendered judgment.
Folks, a just God must act justly.
A God that is right must do that which is right.
But praise God, the same principle holds true
that for a God who is gracious must be gracious.
A God who is merciful must be merciful.
A God who is loving must be loving.
And that this great God is never without a remedy.
We see God's judgment on sin.
But in this passage of Scripture, we see God's remarkable provision.
Look at verse number two.
It says, And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,
Get thee hence.
And the word of the Lord came unto him,
saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward,
and hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is beyond before Jordan.
And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook,
and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.
So he went and did according to the word of the Lord.
For he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that is beyond before Jordan.
And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning,
and bread and flesh in the evening.
And he drank of the brook.
And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up,
because there had been no rain.

And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,
Arise, get thee to the Zarephath, which belong to Zinon, and dwell there.
Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.
There's two phrases in verse 4 and 9
that never really grabbed me until recently.
I want you to see where God's at.
A just God must do that which is just.
God must punish sin.
God did punish sin.
God judged sin.
God judges sin.
God will judge sin.
But notice what God doesn't say here.
Elijah, my hands are tied.
Elijah, because of what's been done, there's nothing less that can be done.
The Lord doesn't tell Elijah, you get going and somehow I'll figure this thing out.
No God has passed sentence upon this.
And I love this.
He says, get thee hence.
I have commanded.
I love verse number 4.
I have commanded.
I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.
This great God in heaven who must act on
sin and judge sin was not without provision.
Folks, even the birds are at the disposal of God
when it comes to accomplishing the will of God
in the lives of the child of God.
He says, I have commanded the birds to feed thee there.
The great provision of God.
But I love verse number 9.
He says, for I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.
Folks, here's the point.
God wasn't bum-fuzzled.
God wasn't in some type of conundrum.
He wasn't wringing his hands.
God was already, friend, God is already a million steps ahead of the situation.
I thought about it when God turned on the rain in Noah's day.
Listen, God had already made provision.
He had already called Noah by grace and provided him for the plains of the ark
because rains are coming.
Great rains are coming.
The ground is going to burst forth.
Everything's going to die.
Why?
Because God judged and judges sin.
But God had provision before he turned on the rain in Noah's day.

And folks, God had provision made when he turned it off in Elijah's day.
Folks, this is a real event of real people in real time.
But it is also a very, very clear picture of a current day reality.
Folks, Ahab's sin is our sin.
The New Testament tells us that all we like sheep have gone astray.
We have all turned to our own wicked way.
The sin of idolatry.
The sin of rebellion.
The sin of betrayal.
Folks, that is the reality of every single one of us in this great God.
And I can't paint this dark enough, bleak enough, desperate enough.
God sent us upon us and this all of humanity.
It isn't some three-year drought where it turns off the rain and turns off the dew.
No, God's sin is that of eternal death.
God's sin is that of separation.
Because we've walked in the line of Ahab.
We've walked in the line of Adam.
And this same God who turned it off in Elijah's
day indeed has passed judgment upon this day.
Folks, we're going to dive in into what men must do.
But folks, those things are the latter things.
Before we get to the latter things, we must recognize and appreciate the former thing.
And folks, that that great God, who is a God
of judgment, is also a great God of provision.
He told Elijah, I got this thing handed already.
You go and you're that wicked Ahab.
I'm shutting it all down.
I'm telling you, ain't a thing going to grow.
But I have commanded my birds.
I've already made provisions through the ravens to take care of you.
And that brook's going to dry up because there's not any rain.
That's a whole other picture, friend.
It's a whole other picture that sin would just soak up the refreshment inside of us.
But when that brook did dry up, he said, I've got another command.
I've got a winter woman over there and she is going to take care of you.
I love the tense in this.
I have commanded.
In other words, this was already settled before the rain got turned off.
Folks, when it comes to sin and salvation, this
is more than just a story in the Old Testament.
Can I tell you what?
That provision, we've got to act.
There's got to be faith.
We've got to move.
Friend, if we don't do nothing, we would die in our condition.
But the reality is, that's the latter thing.
And without the former thing, there is no use for the latter thing.

And when it comes to sin and salvation, can I
tell you that provision has already been provided.
The price has already been paid.
The cross is the complete work.
I love the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.
He says, it is finished.
It is accomplished that the tomb of our great Lord is empty.
That all of that has already been done.
Folks, we need to grab hold to Revelation 13 in Ephesians chapter 1,
where it speaks of that lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world.
That we was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.
What I'm saying, Matthew, is the fall of Adam in Genesis,
the sin of Ahab in Israel,
my sin, your sin, this world's sin,
none of this stuff caught by surprise.
God is our mission.
And this same great God who passed judgment on
sin has already made provision for you and I
and what separates us from God.
It's done!
With sin and salvation!
With our strength!
It's sanctification!
I want to encourage you this morning.
If you're here and you don't know God,
you're going, what must I do?
Well, before you do anything,
you must see what God has already done.
But for the Elijahs,
for these widows,
for us in this life,
our current strength and growing in the Lord,
that provision's already been made.
Folks, the Spirit of God has come.
If you're a child of God,
that Spirit of God dwells within you.
The church of God is here.
The Word of God is here.
Everything that we,
it's already been done, did.
That's bad English, but y'all get where I'm coming from.
We're not waiting on something to occur.
The cross is a complete work.
The tomb is empty.
The Spirit is here.
The Word is here.
The church is here.

Everything that I need to do to walk in the will of God,
through the glory of God,
that remarkable provision
has already been accomplished.
Folks, when it comes to the future
and the unknown
and that's what so many of us grapple with and wrestle with.
Can I tell you this?
That the pen,
that pen,
the book of Revelation
has already been put down.
Now, I'm not the best in the world to teach about the fourth toll and the beast
and all of that stuff in the book of Revelation.
God, I can't tell you what that book's about.
I can tell you the resounding theme.
You know what it is?
God wins
and those within him win
and that is a settled matter.
It is done.
It's already been penned.
It is already complete.
So I look at this scene.
I look at my life and I see that God
has passed judgment on me
because of my sin.
God has passed judgment on Ricky Crittle because of his sin.
God has passed judgment on Aaron Crittle because of her sin.
He can't tolerate it.
He can't be near to it.
It is separation.
It is eternal death.
But God's hands wasn't tied.
No, before the world was ever made he was so far out in front of it
he said I've got provision.
This provision is my son
for the salvation of man
for the strength of man
for the eternal home of man.
All of those things are accomplished.
This Elijah,
this widow,
God said I have commanded.
I'm in front of it.
I think often times we live
that just somehow God is lagging behind

waiting for him
to catch up.
Friend,
that's not the reality at all.
I was just reading this morning.
You know now the song that's being sung in heaven
ain't got anything to do with the beauty of it.
It has everything to do
that worthy
is a lamb
that was slain who served as the provision of mankind.
What would it do for your soul?
Alton,
if you wrapped your mind
around the simple fact
that this great God
has already provided
everything
that I need
for my salvation,
for my sanctification,
for my strength,
for my tomorrow,
for my eternal home,
because that is exactly what God
has done.
But that's not all there is to this story.
We see God's judgment on sin.
We see this remarkable provision of God.
I don't think,
I'm telling you, this has got all over me this week.
Brother Ferris, I bet you're busting the priest today.
I am because I've been watching them birds
make two trips a day.
two trips a day.
But they quit coming.
They quit coming.
And God said, don't worry, Elijah.
I've got a woman over there
and she's there to sustain you.
I've commanded her.
Well, that's a great story,
preacher.
It pales in the comparison of what the Lord has done for me.
What else is there in this, Brother Brian?
Folks,
there's the faith

that we must embrace.
Look at verse number 10.
Look at verse number 9 first.
He says, Arise,
get thee to Zarephath,
which with long with the Zarephath.
I'm not even talking about the faith of Elijah this morning.
You know, Elijah had faith too.
By the way, you can't operate without it.
It took faith for Elijah to walk up in front of Ahab
and I'll tell you what, we're shutting this thing down.
God is.
God says, you go over there by the brook out in the wilderness,
I'm going to take care of you and Elijah went.
Now I want you to go to Zarephath to this widow.
Elijah went.
He said, Behold,
I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.
So he arose and went to Zarephath and when he came to the gate of the city, behold,
the widow woman was there
gathering of sticks and he called to her and said, Fetch me,
I pray thee,
a little water in a vessel that I may drink.
Faith that we must embrace.
Lord willing, we're going to hit this a lick tonight.
Just one very briefly that I want to share with you this morning about this woman.
What do we see
in this woman's life?
Because this story keeps going, by the way,
and it gets even better.
We find
expectant faith.
The Bible says that she's found there in the gate of the city.
I love going to brother Ricky's place out there in the woods.
My little piece of heaven on earth.
Brother Ricky's got a gate
that goes on to his property.
That ain't what this is about.
No, the gate of the city,
it was like the central hub.
It was the social hub.
It was the place where people interacted.
It was the place of business.
I said, Preacher, what difference does that make?
I'm going to tell you what difference it makes.
She wasn't at home moaning and moaning.
She wasn't at home throwing a pity party for herself.

She's out and about and she's visible in town.
You say, Preacher,
why is that?
Because here's what I know.
What had happened?
God had already
told her
Elijah was coming.
She had been commanded.
God had already commanded her
to sustain him.
Here is a woman
who had a promise from the Lord.
She's not at home sucking.
She's not at home dying.
No, she's out and about
with everybody else.
That is what I know for sure.
And what I believe
is that she's gathering her last two sticks.
She is watching and waiting
fully expecting for Elijah to arrive.
Y'all see it?
No doubt she didn't
understand it all.
And I think in a little sense she might have even struggled with some of it all.
But here's the fact.
God had spoken and she fully
expected God
to be true
to his word.
Now at this point,
who's getting sustained?
Dickie?
Ain't nothing been said to her
about Elijah
coming to sustain you.
No, this was all about I'm sending a man for you to sustain.
But I find this woman.
I mean, it's so easy.
Sister Sherry, boy, it'd be so easy for you to just
park that thing in a closet somewhere
and sit at home.
I didn't know I was going to go here.
I want you to think about it for just a minute.
Widow woman,
no children

anywhere around.
Where's this great God?
I'm going to tell you he's a God who has made provision.
He has promised,
he has promised,
he has promised relief for your soul.
He has promised home in heaven.
He has given you this word.
He has given you this church.
He has given his spirit
to strengthen you
and to sustain you.
And because you believe it,
you don't camp out there.
You're out and about in town.
Why?
Because the quality of hope hinges on the
character of the one in whom hope is placed.
The quality of faith
hinges not upon Sherry,
not upon me.
It hinges in the character and the reality
and the goodness of God.
And this little widow that's out there says, God has commanded me
so as I gather my last two sticks before I die,
I'm watching and I'm waiting and I'm looking
for the man of God.
I want to prove to you that's the case.
There's no introductions.
He doesn't walk up as I have.
I'm Elijah.
The only thing that said,
fetch me,
I pray thee,
a little water that I may drink.
Now, it ain't rained in three and a half years.
At this point, I don't know how long it rained.
But here we find this woman.
I'm going to step on my toes.
Expecting
God
to do
what God
has said.
Church,
some of you
can't see God

because you ain't got enough faith to look for Him.
Open your eyes.
Turn to Him.
Make your way out to the gate of the city.
And friend, I promise
you'll meet Him there.
The God
who would go on
to do great things in her life.
The God who would go on to sustain her
but only after she was obedient to do what God had commanded her to do.
This great God in heaven who is pronounced.
What's wrong with this word in which we live in?
Can I tell you?
It's under a curse.
It's under God's curse.
The sentence has been rendered.
The verdict has been given.
This thing's going to crap.
It is.
That's why there's a new one coming.
A new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.
But while I'm here this great God has passed judgment
but He has also provided provision.
I've got a Savior.
I've got the Spirit.
I've got His Word.
I've got the church.
I've got my wife.
I've got everything that I need in this world
to live for the glory of God.
Now God says because I am who I am and I promise
what I promise I'm going to do what I'm going to do
you must walk in faith.
Expect in faith.
Looking for me.
to move in your life.
Brother Alton if you'll come and get us a song I want to ask you this morning.
It is so easy
it is so easy
to become
a professional here.
But friend the blessing comes.
This widow is going to have to do some things.
Elijah had to do some things.
but Nicky the only way they could do it
was because God had already done

what God had done.
Church
are you looking I mean I mean like an audacious faith.
I mean almost like a careless reckless faith
that I can trust him
because he is who he is and he says what he says I'm going to look and I'm going to
look and I'm going to look and I'm going to
gather and I'm going to gather until God does
what only God can do.
Let's pray.
Heavenly Father
I thank you for your word.
I thank you for your truth.
Lord you are never reactive.
Lord you are the initiator.
You are the pursuer.
You are the author and the finisher of our faith.
Lord you already stand at the end of time.
Your great provision has been
poured out
upon us as sinful people.
But dear Lord may we move
in this faith.
May we
more than
just facts to fill our head but a reality that burns in our conscience.
Lord if there is someone here this morning that doesn't know you may they understand.
God you have already accomplished it all.
The cross is complete.
The tomb is empty.
That work has been done.
May they come in repentance and faith and believe.
But dear Lord may your saint this morning
who is hungry
who is thirsty
grab hold to the God Elijah
in Jesus sweet name I pray Amen.
Let's stand.