



UCJCI 43rd SYNOD THEME – **Rooted, Resilient: Re-ignited by the Spirit** (Return, Reconnect, Realign, Re-ignite)



Reconnect for Blessings:

A Mother's Love

Mrs. Sonia Wallace

Please read 1 King 17

On this Sunday, May 14, 2023, we will celebrate Mothers' Day and we thank God for all women who still nurture children with love and care. We pray that your resilient love for the children in your care will reflect God's unconditional love for you.

To those whose memory or experience of mothering may not be pleasant, we pray that the supernatural arm of our God who draws us to God's bosom, will by God's mothering love, bless you with resilience and strength to overcome, through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Reconnect for blessings and our focus is on Mother's Love.

I will highlight two revelations from the Biblical account of the woman of Zarephath, but first let me explain the context.

Mention of her story is found in 1 King 17. She was a widow who lived in Zarephath, in Sidon, the home region of Jezebel, wife of Ahab. The residents of this region were known for their worship of the wooden image known as Baal. God's prophet Elijah had declared a three- year period of no rain or dew. Fulfillment of the declared word would show that Elijah's God had command over nature and was the true God. As this dry season took effect, a famine resulted as the people were unable to grow their crops. Elijah was fed supernaturally at a brook but

was then sent by God to this widow of Zarephath. The widow was unnamed, so we will call her the Zarephath mom.

Food was scarce and Elijah met her while she was collecting sticks to make her last meal for her and her son. Although she explained that she had only a handful of flour and a little oil, the prophet asked her to make a cake for him first and declared the word of God. In vs 14-15 of chapter 17 we read the prophet's word and the mom's response: *"for thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'the bin of flour shall not be used up nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.' So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah: and she and he and her household ate for many days."*

My first highlight from the story is that the mother's love grounded in faith, brought her blessings.

Our Zarephath mom, was a Gentile (not of Israel) and possibly had no encounter with Elijah's God, yet believed God's word through the prophet, obediently acted in faith by sharing the meal and received her blessings of provisions that saved her family.

There is no denying that she acted for the survival of herself and her son. As a widow who lived alone with her son, she was the provider in the home. She openly mentioned to the prophet that she was not alone in this dire situation. Her son mattered and was an intricate part of her life. She would do what was necessary for his survival and for her to be able to look after him. Such was this mother's love for her son.

In his Bible commentary Dr. Tony Evans states "A true blessing... is a God-given capacity to experience, enjoy, and extend God's goodness in life. Regardless, of whether God's blessings include **external** components, they are intended to bring about **internal** change so that our lives display God's kingdom relationship and rule."

What did our Zarephath mom enjoy and experience of God's goodness? We have seen that whereas, externally she thought she would eat and die, she was saved from starvation, whereas internally, she experienced desperation and insecurity as a single mother, she was bestowed with the blessing of divine safety and contentment during famine. This Gentile mother was favoured with provisions that foreshadowed how God would be the source of blessings not only for those from Israel but also for Gentiles.

To all mothers, our loving God is aware of who you are, your circumstances and your future. God's desire is to bless you. In

Acts 17:28 and 29 the word of God says “God is not far from each one of us; for in God we live and move and have our being... For we are also God’s offspring.” God is present in your situation. As one writer puts it, “God is the sum total of all of life. God is closer to you than your own breath.” I encourage you to believe God and consider acting in faith by taking time to speak to God about your needs and that of your household. Trust God to show you God’s way and be your Provider.

My second highlight of this story is that the mother’s love by faith portrayed God’s love

In verses 17 and 18 of 1 Kings chapter 17, we read “*Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, “What have I to do with you, O man of God?” Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?”*

Our Zarephath mom was now facing another desperate situation, literally a tragedy. Her words revealed the depth of the pain she felt at the death of her beloved son. The Message Bible translate her words to Elijah: “*Why did you ever show up here in the first place – a holy man barging in, exposing my sins, and killing my son?”* It would seem this mother’s love for her son, her obedience to the man of God and her care for both, were rewarded with grief. She was confused, angry and disappointed. Whereas she was saved from sure death and trusted the word of God through the prophet, she had now lost a cherished son; this she could not understand.

This reminds me of a New Testament encounter in Lk 24:13 – 30. Having lived and walked with Jesus, His disciples witnessed His brutal whipping, crucifixion and death and now the mother who sincerely loved him and risked going to His tomb, reported the devastating news that the body was not in the tomb. Two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus were discouraged, filled with unbelief, confused and reported that their hopes were dashed.

Death brings grief, a sense of loss and separation, but there is a deeper meaning to this. On a spiritual level, the Bible tells us that our sins separate us from a loving God and leads to spiritual death.

Ezekiel 18: 19 -20 states ‘the soul that sins shall die’ and Romans 6:23 tells us that the “wages of sin is death.”

But there is good news, and that’s what the Gospel means. Romans 5:8 says, “while were still sinners Christ died for us”. In the death of Jesus Christ, Son of God, the penalty and punishment for sin was paid in full. For the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus, hope was restored, and faith revived when they came to the full realization that they were speaking with the risen Christ Himself. He overcame death to give us an eternal future with God.

I therefore propose that our Zarephath mom’s love for her son is an earthly picture of the love of God for us God’s children. Her love resulted in an act of restored faith that made her surrender over her dead son to the prophet. In reconnecting with the prophetic word, her son was raised back to life; She was not

condemned. In Kings 17 vs. 24 she confirmed her faith in Elijah’s God stating, “Now by this I know...that the word of the Lord in your mouth is the truth.”

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.” (1 John 4:10) Truly, God’s love was freely and generously given for you, with no charge.

May the blessings of God our Father, Jesus the Son and His Holy Spirit be with you now and always. Amen.



Mike and Mary Bowerman - members of the Elmslie Memorial United Church - spent ten days in SVG at the invitation of Pastor Walford Thompson of the Arnos Vale Covenant Assembly (AVCA) during Holy Week.



Pastor Walford and Jen Thompson standing between Mary and Mike in front of AVCA on Easter Sunday morning.

Mike was asked to preach at the Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter services and, during the week, led a Bible conference from Monday to Thursday on the book of Philippians, speaking in all on eight occasions. In addition, Mike and Mary were also guest speakers on separate events held for men and ladies on Saturday.

AVCA is a church of about 60 members which Walford, although already well into his 80s, and his wife Jen started about eight years ago on their home island of St. Vincent. He had recently retired as President of Ministries in Action, based in Miami. Mike and Mary found the church folk warm, responsive and appreciative of the week-long ministry.



Mike conducting a mid-week Bible study.

Many in Cayman know that Pastor Walford has visited Cayman on many occasions, holding evangelistic meetings, providing training in church growth strategies, and encouraging many short-term mission trips, especially to Haiti.



View from the Thompson's home, overlooking the Grenadines, with Bequia in the foreground.

AVCA was a primary focal for relief donations following the eruption of La Soufriere Volcano two years ago, raising a million EC dollars and continually providing 50% of its income to missions and relief work.

Mike and Mary appreciate and thank the many who supported them with their prayers in what proved to be a rewarding and worthwhile trip.

Welcome, New Members!

On Sunday, April 30, 2023, thirteen (13) new members were admitted into membership in the John Gray Memorial and South Sound United Churches under the leadership of the Rev. Donovan Myers. The new members received a heartfelt welcome from the Elders and members of the Congregations. May their joining be a blessing for them and their new spiritual fellowships.




The reception of new members at John Gray Memorial UC.




The reception of new members at South Sound UC.


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**WORSHIP
THE
LORD**

Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council
Sundays at 7:45am on Radio Cayman

on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

May 14, 2023
Mrs. Sonia Wallace

Published by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
292 Prospect Point Road
P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS
Tel: 1 345 947-1963 Email: rdgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
Website: unitedchurch.org.ky