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"Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath," ORU Chapel Transcript

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Oral Roberts

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Thank you and good morning. Open your Bibles again to 1 Kings 17. We're going to study those first 16 verses, 1-16, and you may have to share your Bible with someone else. But we want to study this because this scripture has wrought one of the great miracles of our entire ministry and it's done it since July. In July the income of the ministry and for the university and everything was on a decline, had reached a 39 percent decline over the same period last year, while the needs were even larger than they were a year before. And we went to this chapter first, we went to others, but particularly this one, and through July we were able to stop the downward decrease. It had been going down from about January and we didn't pay much attention because the income of this ministry has to be based on a year. We have a low month and a high month, just like everybody. But it's the end of the year that begins to count. As we reached July we saw an alarming trend and had that continued, then we were facing disaster and we had some top people come in and look at us and they predicted what would happen on what month, what week, what day, that if the decline kept going that we would be gone. And when we realized that a ministry as precious as this was on such a decline, we had to get back to our Source because there wasn't anyone else to go to. And our study and application of this, along with other scriptures, but this was the main one, our starting point, we arrested the decline and most of it in July. It bottomed out in August. Now that may not seem like much, but when you stop it from going down, stop it from going further down. Say that you're making a hundred dollars and it declined to $61. Maybe next month it would be $55. Well, if you could stop it and make it stay at $61 for you to get your breath, and then bottom it out and then start back up. In August we bottomed out. In
September we started back up. And we came from about 39 to 34 percent and in October, which has just ended, it has gone up so dramatically so that we're only down 20 percent. We stopped it at 39, turned it around, we by our application of God's Word, and we are within 20 percent of not only last year, but of what we actually need beyond that. And as we keep trusting and working, I predict by March it's possible that we can have this thing 100 percent back on the road and then get ready to do the thing that we've been preparing for for two years. You remember that we bought a video-truck? Some of you students were here then. And we told you what we were going to do and it sure looked like we didn't tell you the truth. It sat around and waited and it looks like by March or April we'll be on television every day for one hour, Monday through Friday, live across this nation and in other parts of the world. And we'll strike out toward the masses and then see God build this work like He planned to to begin with. Now that's where we are now. I don't know what will happen in November or December, but we are working, have our plans out, our Seed-Faith out, and we're living in this chapter plus over in the new covenant. I hope I'll have time to mention a word of that, then later in the message go into that. Then we shared with you how a year from now we are trusting God with you that your own faith will rise so that you can pick up a larger part of your tuition, but not only pick that up, but to see God put money in your hand far beyond that so that whatever trend you've had that's caused you suffering will not only cease and bottom out, it will be reversed and we'll all be going up together. I hear Brother Jimmy Buskirk as he tells his story of the healing of his eyes, tell about a woman who was awakened at night to pray for him and she went to him and said, "If God wakes me up at night, I've got to know what's wrong with you." And he finally admitted he was going blind. And through her and others, God healed his eyes. Well, for several nights I've been waking up over you. You've been waking me up and I've got a
right to know what your problems are. If your problems are waking me up and I've been praying, I need to know more about it. So you drop me a note or send word, because I'm committed to God to share with you what methods we're using and then to help you get every need you have met. I want the smile back on my face and back on yours. And my smile is coming back. I'm delighted because I enjoy seeing myself a little better in the mirror. Now open your Bible to 1 Kings 17 and notice Elijah was a prophet of God, did something that God told him to do which threw the whole nation into chaos. He said to Ahab the king, "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." How cruel can you be? The fact is that Ahab the king and Jezebel the queen had departed from God, had broken God's covenant and the people followed the leader. And they always do, except for a small remnant who still follow God. But the mass of the people followed the leaders. And if the leader goes wrong, he really brings suffering upon people. If the leader goes right, then he has God's Word in his mouth. He speaks it. However, one thing about the prophet of God that many of us may not have realized is that he has more to do with your life, including your finances, your healing, your salvation, the overcoming of problems with your circumstances. He has more to do with the economy. When he or she is a true prophet of God, they are moved by God as though you move a checker on a checkerboard. They feel themselves being moved and they hear words coming out of their mouth from God. And they issue words that affect millions of people's lives. They affect this country. All the energy shortage, the high rates of what you pay for a loan, interest rates, inflation, the instability of this country, I want to point out to you that what is happening in America is not always caused or solved by a president or a governor or a mayor, a Congressman, a Senator, business leaders, or other kinds of leaders. A man or woman of God who's really in touch with the Lord gets a
word from Him and here it is. He said, because you've broken God's covenant and led the people into backsliding and you won't listen, God is not going to let you go to hell comfortably. And it will not rain or have dew on the earth except when I give the word. From this time it won't rain. Israel has two rainy seasons, fall and spring. That will all stop. There won't even be dew upon the earth. And not until I say the word. And they knew the prophet Elijah had the power.

He had the power with God. And God withheld the rain and the dew. And the world today will look at that and say it's the cruelest act that they could conceive. Well, it was felt that way then because Ahab tried to arrest Elijah. The authorities pursued him. And if we'd had newspapers then, the headlines would have been used similar to what the media would say today: Prophet Bring Drought To The Land—Authorities Seeking To Question Him. Yeah, that's what you'd read on TV. That's what you'd see on the front page of the newspaper. And the man fled for his life. And the only place he could conceal himself was in a cave. His money ran out, his food ran out, and he was suffering along in the famine. But then God went into action, because the prophet had spoken in the name of the Lord. Not in his own name. He had not given his own words, but God's. And the Lord invaded the animal kingdom. He commanded ravens to feed Elijah. Now I want you to notice the word "command," and this is in verse 4. "Thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." There was a little water left. The brooks hadn't dried up yet. But there was no food. But he said, "I have commanded the ravens." Now can you imagine that in God's creative power He made it possible to speak to birds. And now the headline comes: Prophet Claim Birds Feed Him. Well, you know, I'm so conscious of the media today I can just see all these headlines. And had they sent someone, well they did send someone to find him but they couldn't, but had they been there they would have seen Elijah come out of the cave every morning and look up, stand there looking up.
And then out on the horizon you'd see the ravens flying in with their beaks full and you wonder where in the world they got the bread and the meat. Probably from Ahab's palace. That would have served him well, you know. And he stood there expecting a miracle. Prophet without money, his work is going down, still expects miracle. Can't you see the media doing that? They've had a field day with us. You haven't read it all across the country that it's been kind of interesting in a way. I'm glad it will be changing by the grace of God. I got tired of opening the paper seeing my name and my picture. I wouldn't turn on the TV. I got tired of myself on the media. Now He commanded the ravens and they fed him. That means to me that God can do the unexpected. God can tap resources that we don't think are available, that looking up, expecting a miracle, has some reality to it. It's not just words to people who believe God. Then the next thing was that the brook dried up and the ravens stopped coming. So now the man, the prophet, who is affecting the destiny of the people, is again without supplies. And the Lord came to him and I want you to notice verse 9. "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." So the headline reads: Preacher Demands Widow Share Her Money With Him. Wouldn't that have made a headline? You should have read some of the mail I got this summer and fall. I don't know whether you should have or not. Two preachers in particular preached my funeral. You'll never have to worry about my funeral being preached. They preached it. How I was praying upon the widows of their church, and when they got through putting me into hell, they had a little line at the bottom—P.S. Reproof sent in love. And I wrote back and said, "If you had put the love in the main part of the letter, the reproof at the bottom would have read better to me." And I wrote back and I said, "I invite you to telephone me and I invite you to have those widows phone me. I'll take their calls." And I said, "Furthermore, when I go to church, which
I do, they take up the offering before I even get to see what the sermon is going to sound like. You know, we have to go on the air and they hear the whole thing, then they decide whether they like it or not. I have to pay mine in before I even hear." I said, "Pastor, do you realize that's what you're doing at your church? Plus you go out over your community with your pledge cards before you've ever had the meetings." I thought I'd drop a little thought in his mind so he could think again. And then I said, "Under separate cover I'm sending you MIRACLE OF SEED-FAITH, if you get time to read it." One day I thought I was going to lose my mind because they sent the critical letters in and we answered them all day long and all the next day. We didn't throw one away, we answered and sent back the best we knew how and I thought that was about all we were getting. And come to find out, there had been 100,000 people responded and 556 had been critical. I said, "556 out of 100,000? Why didn't you tell me? Here I thought everybody was against us." And that sure changed my thinking a lot. I can live with 556 criticizing me if I've got 100,000 praying for me and supporting me. Now he commanded this widow. Could you imagine how many other people he could have commanded, other than this widow? Why would God pick on her? And that's exactly the way we think about it when we ask somebody who is poor to send a gift of money. But that's not the way God thinks. God had commanded her for her own life, for her own salvation, her own supply, as well as the man of God. "So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow was," well, she was gathering up some wood to prepare the last meal. And they were going to eat it and die. She had planned her funeral. And that is a very profound fact among many people. They have planned their own defeat, and I tell you that I came as near accepting defeat as I have in my whole ministry. And I want to confess that. I don't want it to fester in my soul. I want to get it out. When we began to run out of things and had no place to look that we think, then we make terrible
kinds of plans. And this woman had planned her own funeral. Now from one side it looks bad, especially the media would see it like that, that Elijah would obey God and say that he'd heard God's voice. One of the things I've been struggling with is that so many people read the Bible and see where God spoke and they get up and read all about that and when someone today says God spoke to me, they say, "Well, who are you to say God spoke to you?" Well, I'm not anybody special, but I am somebody. I know the Lord. Why can't God speak today? Has He just died? Have they held His funeral? Is it all over? Does He not speak anymore? Is He no longer concerned with prophets? You know, prophets get hungry too. Prophets run out of money too. Prophets suffer too. Widows suffer too. Some of the top Christians of the world suffer. If we had a fraction of what the government is spending on what we send in, when they give one dollar from the government to the welfare system of this country, they spend three dollars to get that one dollar out to the people. In the work of God in a recent poll that was taken of churches and groups like ours, for every dollar that is spent, 18¢ is the cost of spending that dollar, whereas with the government it's three dollars to get one dollar back to somebody in need. And you know, that three dollars comes out of our pockets. That's our tax money. The best bargain this world has is God's work and God's people. More of it gets to the need and to the people than any other group in the world. Furthermore, I think God's prophets, and I'm taking them as a whole, such as He speaks of in the Bible that He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, pastors, those people who have the call, the call on those people is so important that you wouldn't have any faith without them. Because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word. And how can they hear except they have a preacher. Now how can he preach except he be sent? You take God's ministers, evangelists, pastors, teachers, apostles, prophets, out of the world and you're not going to hear anybody. You're not going
to hear the Word of God. (End of Side #1)...think that's one reason He's been
turning us around. And if I'll continue to be bold in the Lord, which I intend
to do, I expect to see the time when this whole thing is turned around. And not
only turned around, but we have the money to do what we need to do for God in
this world. And I want us all to think like that. Now this man said to her,
"Well, you go ahead and cook the meal, but first would you bring me a drink of
water," which she was glad to do. "But as you cook the meal, you take a little
cake first and give it to me." That takes a lot of nerve to ask that, takes a
lot of nerve. But what he was saying to the widows of the world, the best news
I can bring you is that you're commanded of God to take care of God's work first.
And if you'll take care of God's work first, He'll take care of you. "Little
widow, you've said you're going to die today, that is, you're going to give up
and just wait for your funeral because you have no food left except for one meal.
But if you'll give me a little cake first and sustain the life of the prophet
that has God's word for the people, thus saith the Lord." I want you to look at
those four words because they're what I want to talk about. They're the absolute
key to what God will do to meet your needs. Thus saith the Lord. Before he
said that, the woman's mind said, "This isn't possible. I can't give you part
of what I've got. I don't even have enough for tomorrow. We only have enough
for one meal, for me and my family. We're going to eat it and die. You want part
of that. That means we'll have less for our last meal." He said, "I want you to
give a part of it, give it first, for thus saith the Lord." And that was the code
word of the old covenant. She was a daughter of Abraham, that is, she had des-
cended from Abraham to whom God gave the covenant that God would be their God,
they would be His people. He would be El Shaddai, God Almighty. He would be
their shield. He would bless them and multiply them and she was in that family.
The reason the famine came was not because God wanted it, but because the people
broke the covenant. And when the divine agreement, which was the covenant, was broken, then the supply of God was cut off. God didn't cut the supply off. The people's rejection cut the supply off. And when he said, "Thus saith the Lord," she immediately recognized the code of the covenant, that this man was not speaking in his own name. This man wasn't interested in getting part of her food for himself. That wasn't why he was there. God had commanded him to come. God had commanded her to sustain the prophet of God. And whoever sustains the prophets, the teachers, the pastors, the evangelists, the apostles, the leaders of God's people, whoever sustains them will hear those four words if they're listening—thus saith the Lord. He says here, "The meal in the barrel and the oil you have in the jar with which you're going to cook will not diminish. It will not decrease." Now that's a mathematical impossibility. You can't take part of the supply out without it being less. But God had a different barrel. He said, "I want you to eat out of my barrel. There's a bottom to your barrel. But my barrel doesn't have any bottom." I was in Indiana in a crusade, sponsored by a lot of pastors and the chairman was Rev. Lester Sumrall of South Bend, Indiana, and in one of the meetings I presented the Blessing-Pact covenant to my partners and a lot of them took it. And he was sitting there and he saw a lot of his members and he wrote this article which I have in my pocket. He said, "When I saw my members joining that Blessing-Pact covenant for $10 a month, I went into a state of shock. I knew that Sunday morning we wouldn't get anything to run our church with. Meanwhile," he said, "I went to Oral and asked him if he had a few moments Sunday morning to come by and just say a word to my people, and he did. We took up the offering and to my absolute amazement we got the largest offering we've ever received in the history of the church." And the article which was just recently written says, "I am now the sole owner of a Christian television station and God said to me, 'You have been eating out of the wrong
kind of barrel. The barrel's got a bottom to it. "Shift over to God's barrel!"

He says, "Since that time God has supplied my needs." He switched barrels. We have a student that's now gone from ORU and is having a powerful ministry in the United States, even on television. He came to one of our crusades and was working in that meeting with us and during the Blessing-Pact covenant service we gave out yellow envelopes with a pencil inside where the people could write in their Seed-Faith pledge and he was so anxious to do it that he began to weep because he didn't have any money. He wept because he had no money to give. And in that yellow envelope was a pencil. He took it out and said, "Lord, all I have is this pencil. I'm putting it in the envelope to start my Blessing-Pact covenant with You." He said, "I handed it in and I felt someone tugging at me. It was a woman and she said, 'Young man, are you with the Oral Roberts' party?'" He said, "Yes." "The Lord laid on my heart to give you $10." And he thanked her and he pulled the pencil out and put the $10 in, sealed it and with a smile, handed it in. Going to school at ORU, he had a wife and a child. He owed $20,000, was behind in his tuition and changed his whole thinking toward God. He paid off the $20,000, he paid his full tuition. Today he's in a ministry—if I called his name three-fourths of you would know him. He told me that story this summer, and as he told me, the tears were running down his cheeks. He said, "Brother Roberts, if you prophets do not tell it like it is, like it's in the Bible, people are going to be cheated by the devil. Do you know what the devil wanted me to do, was to leave ORU with a $20,000 debt hanging over me and go out and go into bankruptcy, ruin my name." He said, "God wanted me to have what I needed, but I had to give first to Him." In other words, God had commanded him to do something and to do it first. He commanded the widow and although she argued about it, she finally heard the code word, thus saith the Lord, for that meant the covenant is now applicable to you, lady. And I was read-
ing this morning in Luke 4 where Jesus said there were many widows in Israel
during the famine, but Elijah was sent only to one and why was he sent only to
one? She was the only one who would do what God commanded. And she alone es-
caped it. The others who had broken the covenant ran out of food. Their gardens
did not produce. The famine lasted 3½ years until they got on their knees and
sought God, when He sent the rains. And her food now lasted. That same supply
was there the next day, the next week, the next month. It lasted until the rains
came when she could go out and plant garden and make her own living. But God
supernaturally intervenes until we can work or we can earn the money. God super-
naturally sent the ravens. God supernaturally sent Elijah to a widow who was
commanded of God to take the first part of her last meal and give it. Now, I
wish the media ran the headline on that. Widow Remembers God’s Covenant, Starts
Giving First To God’s Work, Has A 42-Month Miracle Of All Of Her Food Being
Multiplied. I’d like to hear them print things like that. In fact, I’d like
for them to interview all of you. They’d find some amazing stories to put in
the paper of how God gives you miracles and supplies your needs. And I hope
when this thing is over they’ll be man enough to report how we came out of it.
They reported us getting in it. Don’t you think they ought to report us getting
out of it? I think that’s news too. Let’s skip over in our minds to the New
Testament. We don’t have time but for three or four minutes of it, but they’re
very precious minutes. What is the code word of the new covenant that Christ
brought which fulfilled the old covenant that Elijah was under and the widow of
Zarephath was under? The code word was in the name of Jesus. The first time
Jesus gave His name to His disciples was the last night of His life. Nobody used
His name in His lifetime. Nobody asked in His name. The last night He said,
"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." That’s John 16:24. "Ask, and ye
shall receive, that your joy may be full." Well, He died the next day on the
cross and God cut the new covenant which is a better covenant because it's based on better promises, Hebrews 8:6. And then three days later Christ rose from the dead, and then 50 days after His crucifixion on the day of Pentecost, He sent the Holy Spirit to seal the new covenant in our hearts. And He put the Holy Spirit in us, the same Holy Spirit that was with Elijah but not in him, was now with us, but put in us. So the Holy Spirit indwells us in the new covenant, and the first time they used the name of Jesus was after the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost. That was in Acts 2. The very next chapter, Acts 3, Peter and John, who now have the new covenant, are the way to the temple of God in Jerusalem and they pass a lame man who's also a beggar, who has been brought there since for many years, day by day to beg. And Jesus had seen him many times. He'd seen Jesus. Peter and John had passed him many times before on their way to the temple, for they put him right in the entrance of the place. You couldn't miss him. And as Peter and John passed by that time, they had the name of Jesus for the first time. And they said to him, "Look on us," and he did. And they said, "In the name of Jesus." And he looked up expecting to receive, because that struck a chord in his mind. He too was of the Hebrew faith. He too was the son of Abraham. But they had broken the covenant when Jesus came. The miracles were gone when Jesus came. They broke the covenant and therefore the miracles were gone. Jesus put the miracles back in the covenant and then increased the miracles in the new covenant and gave the new covenant to His people who had become Christians. And these men now are using the code word, "In the name of Jesus, such as we have, we give you." The first time the name of Jesus Christ was ever used was at a point where people were giving with it. And you cannot use the name of Jesus the way He intended without giving, giving of your love, your prayers, your faith, your money, your time your talent. They're linked together. Therefore, the code of the old covenant and the new covenant are these word—thus saith the Lord, and,
in the name of Jesus. Say it. Thus saith the Lord, and, in the name of Jesus. Say it again. One more time. See, thus saith the Lord means that God is speaking as He did as described in the 11th of Hebrews, that He spoke the worlds into existence. When thus saith the Lord, that means God's voice penetrates. And people hear it. When we say, in the name of Jesus, we're saying the name that St. Luke says in the book of Acts is the only name given among men whereby we must be saved. Where Paul said, "That's the name before which every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess." We're talking about the name of names. We're talking about the only name in the whole wide world, in eternity. So when we speak in the name of Jesus with our giving, with our seed planting, we're going to run head on to a miracle. God is going to put every dollar you need in your hands. Any worry you have about next fall, you give that worry to Jesus. You give that concern you have today about rent and tuition and car payments and clothes that you need and other needs that you have, you go around saying, "Thus saith the Lord, in the name of Jesus I plant my seeds of faith, I give first, I take care of God's work first and God will take care of me." Praise God. In the month of October that just passed, God sent in more than any three months between January and July. More. And we were going around, if you'd listened to us, been close enough to hear us, we were all saying, thus saith the Lord, in the name of Jesus, thus saith the Lord, in the name of Jesus. We were planting our seeds like they were going out of style. And I sent a check off to a man of God whose work I believe in and that check was so desperately needed here till my mind said, "Don't send it." But you know, when I sent him that check he got on the phone and said, "The Lord gave me a word for you and for the university and for the students," and what he said in prophecy is coming to pass. Part of what's happened has come through his prophecy. If I hadn't sent that check out of my need when I was hurting so badly, I wouldn't have got that word, thus saith
the Lord. I say to you, there's a new day dawning. I say to you that God's
going to do what He planned to do here. I say, God's going to do in your life
what He gave you birth for. I say, you're going to reach out. You're going to
rise up. You're going to spread your wings. You're going to fly. You're going
go. I may not be able to talk. I want to shout. I want to cry. I want to
say hallelujah! Hallelujah! Then the Lord showed me two reasons why our prob-
lems happen to us. Number one, the devil saw that was his only chance to kill us.
He would never get that good a chance again. And he loaded the biggest gun he had
and shot his biggest shot and he couldn't get us. He couldn't get us. But let me
tell you, while the devil was loading his gun back in July, there was nobody here
but me and a few others who knew how near we were to being destroyed by the devil.
And the second reason He said, "If you don't get tough enough in your faith while
you build the City of Faith and carry on the work, you won't be able to run it
after you build it." He said, "I'm preparing you and the students, not only to
build and maintain the City of Faith, but to become healing teams who can face
any problem that people have, face any trial or tribulation, go anywhere in the
world without fear, and know God will take care of them. I'm teaching you now
how to program your faith." And so I relaxed when I knew what the problem was
all about. I know the devil will keep shooting but he isn't going to shoot as
hard as he shot in July because he can't. He hasn't got any shot bigger than
that. And God is toughening us up getting us ready. Now everybody take out
your billfold. I'm not asking you for any money. You can forget that. Take
your billfold out or your purse. Ladies, take your purse. I want you to hold
it in your hands. Get it in your hands. Darling, where's your purse? It's in
the office? Somebody run get it, Bob. I want my wife in on this blessing.
Somebody—in fact, God's going to give about 5,000 blessings here in the next
60 seconds. I want everybody, if you haven't got a billfold or purse, take
something and make it represent it. Remember the student I told that took the pencil out of the envelope and said, "I don't have any money but I'll put this pencil back in as Seed-Faith." I mean, get something in your hand. I realize that my billfold is flat, it's not very bulgy, but I tell you, I want it to bulge some. I'm ready for the bulge, aren't you? I'm tired looking in there without anything in there. I'm sick and tired of one dollar when I need ten dollars, of ten dollars when I needed fifty dollars, or hundred dollars. I'm tired of reaching in there and it isn't there. God commanded a widow, well He certainly can command Oral Roberts and command you. If He'd stoop that low to take food out of a poor widow woman's mouth, that's the way the media describes it, if God would stoop that low and the preacher would stoop that low to take it, now you turn that around and you say if the widow will take her billfold and open it up and give the first part to God so God can multiply it, then the story reads better and she eats better. Have you got it in your hand? Evelyn? All right. Stand up, will you, with that thing in your hand. Put both hands on whatever you're holding. OK, Brother Bob, you got here just in time. I want you to repeat after me. My money supply has been giving me problems. Now listen to me, money supply, I speak to you the code of the covenant, thus saith the Lord, and in the name of Jesus I'm giving the first part to my God for His work and I expect God to multiply it for tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, for thus saith the Lord and in the name of Jesus. Thus saith the Lord and in the name of Jesus. I'm a covenant person. I'm in God's covenant. And I know the code and by faith we're going to break it wide open so that God will rain His riches and His treasures and His supplies upon me, my family. He's going to take care of me. Because I'm taking care of His work. Thus saith the Lord and in the name of Jesus. OK, get and God bless. Get. Carry the code with you, you hear? And just find places to start giving. Find places to start planting your seeds. Praise the Lord.