

Young Women Active for Christ



Alone, Afraid...Hopeless.

Alone. Afraid. Tired. Hungry. Desperate. Hopeless.

What do you think of when you hear those words? Do you picture people in a faraway country, where there's no running water or electricity? Do you picture people who live under the bridges in the dirty streets of big cities like New York? Do you think of people caught in slavery?

Those kinds of people may seem so far away from our neat little lives. Most of us have warm homes, beds with clean sheets, food whenever we want it. But the truth is, there's not much separating us from *those* kinds of people.

Look at these words again: alone, afraid, tired, hungry, desperate, hopeless. Have you ever felt that way? Chances are, someone in your church feels that way now. These feelings are weapons the devil uses to keep people from accomplishing what God wants them to do.

In 1 Kings 17, the prophet Elijah meets a woman who feels exactly this way. After he predicts a drought in Ahab's kingdom, Elijah follows God's leading and goes to Zarephath. The drought has affected Zarephath as well, so the crops are dried up and there's little food. When Elijah gets there, he meets a widow woman who is gathering sticks. He asks her to go get him some water, and she obeys without a word. As she is going to get the water, Elijah calls after her and asks her to bring him some bread.

The widow turns to Elijah and says, "I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

Can you imagine how she felt? This stranger just walks up to her and asks for water, knowing there is a drought. Then, he asks for food. She's alone, without a husband. She is afraid of dying. She is tired of worrying about her next meal. She is hungry, and her son is hungry. She is desperate and she is hopeless—she expects to prepare one last meal for herself and her son, and then they will just wait to die.

Then, Elijah tells her to go make bread, but to make some for him first. Seriously? She just told him that she and her son were going to eat their last meal and then wait to die and he still wants her bread? Just when the widow is probably ready to leave Elijah and his bossy self in the wilderness, he makes her a promise. He tells her that his God will keep her barrel of meal full and her cruse of oil from running out. He promises her that they will have food until the drought is over.

I don't know if the widow believed Elijah or if she was just too tired to argue with him, but she obeyed. And just like Elijah promised, the jar of meal was never empty and the oil never ran out.

God used this widow woman to fill a need in Elijah's life. At the same time, he used Elijah to fill a need in the lives of the widow and her son. God's faithfulness to Elijah and the widow turned her life around.

God gave her companionship to battle her loneliness and faith to conquer her fear. He provided her physical needs with food and rest. He took her hopelessness and made her see that there could be a better tomorrow.

YWAC in Action

So, how does this story apply to us?

Think about the people in your church, school and community. Do you know someone who's alone, frightened, tired, hungry, desperate or feeling hopeless? List some of these people below:

What can you do to help someone who's feeling that way?

(Suggestions: Send a card, visit someone, offer to help an overwhelmed mom with babysitting.)

Now bake a little cake...

In honor of the widow of Zarephath, get together with some friends this month and bake a cake or some cookies for someone you listed above.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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