

**Sermon Series: A Believer's Family Album—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—6/8/2003**

**Title:** "A Double Blessing for a Single Parent"

**Text:** 1 Kings 17

**Intro.:** *Ills.: Statistics on Single parenting*

**Theme:** When life's circumstances leave parents with the solo responsibility of raising their family, they can know that God has not abandoned them but out of his miraculous mercy and grace will provide for all their needs.

***When a single parent feels all alone—***

- Life's circumstances beyond your control (**Print and read 1 Kings 17: 1, 7-10a**)
  1. Her husband was taken when she still had a dependent little boy and her society afforded her little means of survival
  2. Little know to the widow a spiritual battle, fought miles away, was bringing a famine upon her and her son
  3. Often a divorce or death has thrown the other spouse into financial, family, and personal dilemmas
- Increased demands (**Print and read 1 Kings 17: 10b-11**)
  4. God sends Elijah into her life with the extra demands of food when she had none to provide for her family
  5. Just because you are in desperate need does not mean that God does not want to use you to minister to another
- Limited resources (**Print and read 1 Kings 17: 12-16**)
  6. With God's promised provision, we are never out of resource to address what he is taking us through
  7. **Ills.: See what you have**
  8. *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19*
- When the world caves in around you (**Print and red 1 Kings 17: 17-18**)
  9. **Unexpected affliction**
    1. Just when you think it couldn't get worse, a fallen world piles on (*little boy got ill*)
    2. *Strengthen the disciples and encourage them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Acts 14:22*
  10. **Impossible situations** (*little boy grew worse and died*)—mother helpless stood by and watched – beyond us/not God
  11. **Resentful reactions**
    1. Guard your heart against sinning against God (*Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. Eccles. 5:2*)
    2. Guard your heart against guilt driven despair (*remind me of my sin and kill my son*)

***When God comes through for the single parent (Print and read 1 Kings 17: 19-24)***

- When does the Heavenly Father promise to come through for you --- **Always!**
  1. He does not promise a replenished food pantry or a bottomless check book or children who never get sick
  2. He does promise —
    1. *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5*
    2. *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8: 38-39*
- Sometimes He will use another person to meet your need — **LET HIM!**
  3. Sometimes our own ego and self-dependent independence blinds us to the benefactors which God placed around us
  4. **Ills.: Willing to follow**
  5. *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10*
- Sometimes He will use circumstances — **THANK HIM!**

6. God sometimes allows things to be taken away to make room for the better thing he has in store to replace it

7. **Ills.: God is always bigger**

- Sometimes He will even perform a miracle — **BELIEVE HIM!**

8. The most important thing for you, as a single parent, can accomplish is to model trust in God above all things

9. **Ills.: I believe in God**

- As a friend of a single parent allow God to use you to double bless them

10. *You will honor God through this genuine act of service because of your commitment to spread the Good News of Christ and because of your generosity in sharing with them and everyone else. 2 Corinth. 9: 13*

### **Statistics on Single Parenting**

- There are 11.9 million single parents in the US.
- 28% (20 million) of all children in the US under 18 live with one parent.
- 84% of children who live with one parent live with their mother.
- 32% of all births were to unmarried women in 1997.
- The number of single mothers (9.8 million) has remained constant while the number of single fathers grew 25% in three years to 2.1 million in 1998. Men comprise one-sixth of the nation's single parents. **(Facts obtained from Single Parent Central web site)**

### **See What You have**

If Danny Simpson had known more about guns, he might not have needed to rob the bank. But in 1990, in Ottawa, Canada, this 24-year-old went to jail, and his gun went to a museum. He was arrested for robbing a bank of \$6,000 and then sent to jail for six years. He had used a .45 caliber Colt semi-automatic, which turned out to be an antique made by the Ross Rifle Company, Quebec City, in 1918. The pistol is worth up to \$100,000—much more than Danny Simpson had stolen. If he had just known what he carried in his hand, he wouldn't have robbed the bank. In other words, Danny already had what he needed.

### **Willing to Follow**

S. I. McMillen, in his book "None of These Diseases," tells a story of a young woman who wanted to go to college, but her heart sank when she read the question on the application blank that asked, "Are you a leader?" Being both honest and conscientious, she wrote, "No," and returned the application, expecting the worst. To her surprise, she received this letter from the college: *"Dear Applicant: A study of the application forms reveals that this year our college will have 1,452 new leaders. We are accepting you because we feel it is imperative that they have at least one follower."...*

### **God is Always Bigger**

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. He eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements, and to store his few possessions. One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. It was just more than he could take. He was stunned with grief and anger. "God, how could you do this to me!" But the next day, he woke to the sound of a ship approaching the island to rescue him. "How did you know I was here?" he asked in wonder. "We saw your smoke signal," they replied. We will not always understand, but we can always trust, that God is Bigger:

## **I Believe in God**

Scratched on the walls of one of the Nazi prison camps were the words, *“I believe in the sun even when it does not shine. I believe in love even when it is not expressed. And I believe in God even when He is silent.”*...

### **1 Kings 17:1-24**

<sup>1</sup>Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word." <sup>2</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: <sup>3</sup>"Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. <sup>4</sup>You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there." <sup>5</sup>So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. <sup>6</sup>The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. <sup>7</sup>Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. <sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to him: <sup>9</sup>"Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." <sup>10</sup>So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. / He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" <sup>11</sup>As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." <sup>12</sup>"As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread--only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it--and die." <sup>13</sup>Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son." <sup>14</sup>For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.' <sup>15</sup>She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. <sup>16</sup>For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah. <sup>17</sup>Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. <sup>18</sup>She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" <sup>19</sup>"Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. <sup>20</sup>Then he cried out to the LORD, "O LORD my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" <sup>21</sup>Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!" <sup>22</sup>The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. <sup>23</sup>Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!" <sup>24</sup>Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."

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