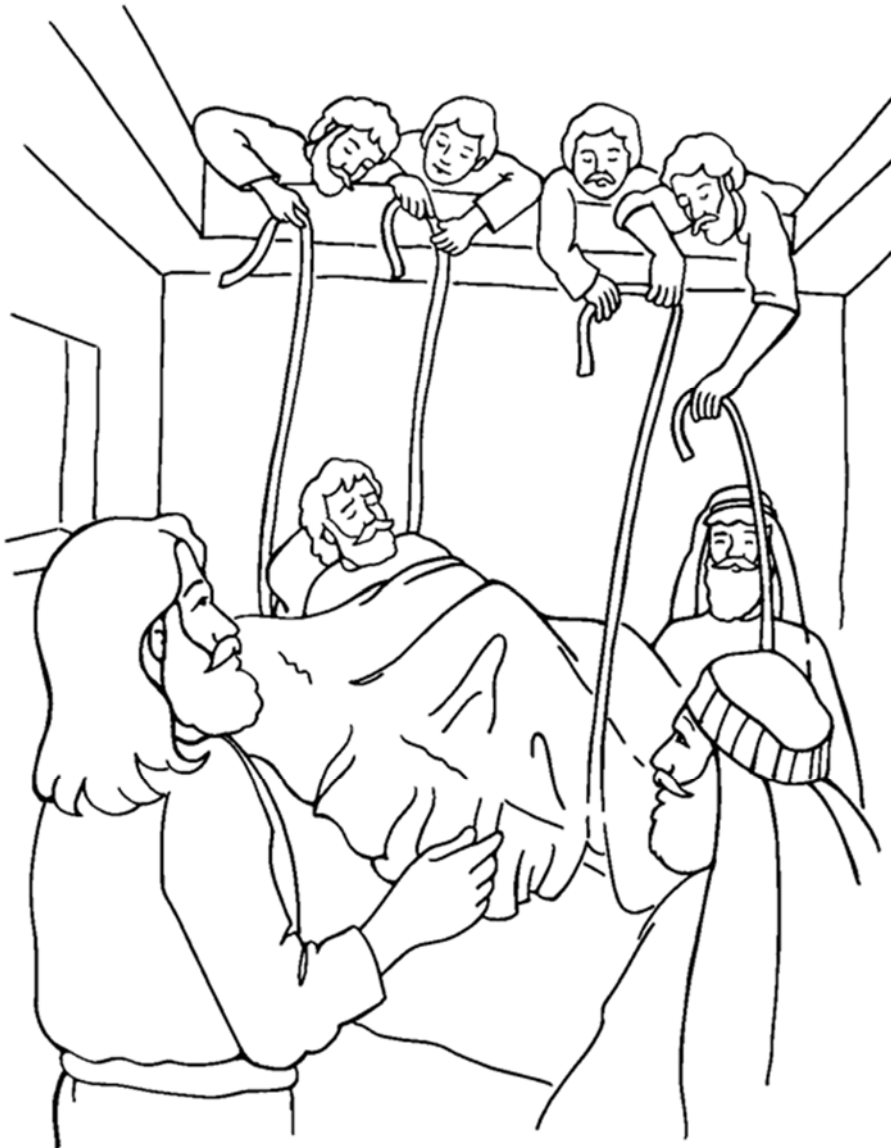


7 February 2016: More miracles

Primary: Four friends (Mark 2:1-12)



And here is a picture to colour in:



Seniors: God reveals his power. [Luke 4:25-26](#) and [1 Kings 17:1-24](#).



of-zarephath.html

from: <http://handsonbibleteacher.blogspot.co.za/2012/09/elijah-widow->

When he preached in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus referred to 2 Old Testament stories.

This story took place during a terrible drought in Israel and in the lands near there. By the way, this drought was so bad that even other history books mention it!

But only the Bible explains that the drought was God's punishment on Israel because their king had decided not to obey God and the people were following his bad example! King Ahab married a very powerful heathen woman, Jezebel, and then ignored God and instead worshipped the idol, Baal, whom she believed in. The followers of Baal believed that Baal provided the rain so, to prove that this was nonsense, the prophet Elijah asked God to dry up the rain!

Jezebel was furious! To protect Elijah God told him to go and camp near a little stream near the Jordan River. There he was safe. The stream provided him with water and God sent ravens to bring him bread and meat every morning and evening. However Ahab and Jezebel continued their wicked ways, so the drought went on. Eventually the little stream dried up and Elijah had to move on.

God then sent him to Zarephath in Lebanon, telling him that a widow (a lady whose husband had died) there would feed him and give him a place to stay. I am sure Elijah wondered why God was sending him there. Zarephath was in very country that the wicked Queen Jezebel came from and the people there were Baal-worshippers!

When Elijah got there after travelling about 100kms, he saw a widow gathering a few small sticks and he begged her for 'a little water'. When she had given him some, he asked for a little bread. The widow replied that she had none – all she had left to eat was just a small jar of flour and a little oil. In fact, she explained, that was why she was gathering the sticks. She was going to make a tiny fire, cook the last little bit of food in the house for herself and her son as a last meal together before they died. There would be nothing more to eat after that.

I wonder how she felt when she heard Elijah's next sentence! 'Don't worry. Just make me some bread, before you make yours,' he said. Elijah then explained that God was promising that the flour jar and the oil jug would not run dry until it rained again. Imagine how excited the widow must have been when she realised the jars weren't any emptier after she had used some for Elijah. Because she

took Elijah's words seriously, she and her son and Elijah were saved from starvation. Why her? Why her son? We don't know – but God used her to save Elijah also.

But they didn't live 'happily ever after'. Some days later the widow's son became so ill that he died. The woman was so sad that she blamed Elijah for not preventing this. He was also upset and took the body of the boy upstairs to his room. There he prayed angrily to God, demanding to know why this had happened. He begged God to enable him to bring the boy back to life and, as he did so, he stretched himself over the boy 3 times. At once the boy showed signs of life!

When the widow saw that her son was alive again, she realised that Elijah was the servant of a God much more powerful than Baal. I am sure she told her friends and they told their friends and others recognised that Elijah's God was the only God.

So both the stories that Jesus mentioned in Nazareth contained miracles – the very thing the people were hoping Jesus would perform. But God's miracles are never just for 'show'. It is OK to ask for them; it is OK to get angry about sad things which happen. But it is important to remember the covenant prayer. God doesn't cause suffering, but he may allow us to walk through hard times so that we can discover that he is great. Maybe we all need hard times so that we notice that God is there for us and that he loves us.

The people of Nazareth didn't get the message. They chased Jesus away and lost the opportunity to get to know him better. We mustn't make the same mistake.

Puzzle Corner:

Can you unscramble these words from the story? (See 1 Kings ch 17 if you need help). You can either bring your answers to Sunday School or email them to me at: moragventer@icon.co.za

Arni, daber, mtae, Diwwow, ilo, ulofr, versna, zebjele, jaleih, peahhrazt