

1 Kings 17:1-6  
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Proper 13 A  
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## God Provides

Isn't it easy to feel like your life is missing something right now? The face to face personal interactions we had before aren't happening as much. We can't go watch a new release movie with giant bucket of popcorn and half gallon of soda. We haven't had snack and fellowship time here after worship since March. It can feel like we're missing out on life!

But, even right now, I still think we'd pick our lives over Elijah's any day. Where we pick things up, he's at the start of a years-long famine. Death would be all around him. Plants, animals, people, when there's no water it all falls apart. When there's no rain for that long, your life begins to center around what you're missing.

These are the first words we hear from the Old Testament prophet Elijah, "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." Famine is here. And you won't get any rain, not even a few drops. Not the nicest message to relay as God's messenger...

But this was the awful time of the kings, and there was no one like evil king Ahab. He'd make a good Disney villain. There had been some bad kings before him who turned the people away from the LORD, but Ahab did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than all the kings before him. He was openly against the LORD.

He built a temple for Baal, a false god, and led the people to worship Baal. Why Baal? Because he was supposed to be the god that brought rain. Which would lead to crops. Which would lead to stability and money. If Baal would have been real, this would have been the right move.

But Baal was nothing and the LORD was going to help Ahab understand. The drought and famine was Ahab's call to repent. As the months went by without rain, it should have been obvious to Ahab that he had messed up. For years he and the people were missing out on what they needed to live.

For the other people we heard about today it hadn't been years. Probably more like hours. Jesus had been healing their sick and showing everyone who he was. So even though their stomachs would start growling for dinner, they weren't leaving. The five thousand plus would rather be around Jesus. Food was not their focus. But Jesus cared. He was going to provide what they needed. So with five loaves of bread and just two fish, **God provides**. In a real, physical way, Jesus was teaching that **God provides**.

Elijah was going to be reminded too. But can you put yourself in Elijah's shoes? The famine would be real for Elijah. No rain means no food for him. It must have been challenging to share that news knowing what it would mean for so many, including himself. It must have been easy for Elijah to doubt that **God provides**.

Are you struggling with that truth right now too? It's hard to see it. If your earthly needs, for food or clothes or a way to make money, aren't being met, how could it be true that **God provides**? And the more you experience your needs not being met, the more bitter you become toward God. Because He's all-powerful and He's not providing what you want.

Or maybe the devil's got you convinced God doesn't provide with the other trick. When you've got everything you need and it comes day after day, year after year, it's easy to forget that God's even involved. When you're not thinking about where you'll get food or clothes or shelter, you stop noticing how **God provides**. When life is good, do you struggle to appreciate who God is?

If we were left on our own, the devil and our own sinful natures would have us convinced that God doesn't provide, that we can't trust him.

What's helpful to hear today is that this isn't where God stopped with Elijah. "Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there." God revealed himself as the God who provides in his Word. So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. Elijah acted with confidence knowing **God provides**.

And then a raven comes. A bird that is naturally a scavenger, one who wouldn't share a bite if they had enough food for life. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. Day after day God gave Elijah a physical reminder of who He is. **God provides**.

Knowing our own sins and struggles and lack of trust is not where God wants to leave you today. Your lack of trust doesn't change who God is. **God provides**.

Elijah learned in a unique way. In what ways is God teaching you that He provides? Do you have more than one meal a day? Do you get to eat snacks? **God provides**. How many outfits did you have to choose from

today? **God provides.** Do you have a place to keep dry from the rain and probably cool from the heat? **God provides.** Think about all the physical blessings God has given you in your life. Take ten seconds and think through as many as you can. Isn't it crazy how much **God provides?!**

**God provides** for our food and daily needs but **God provides** so much more! Think about the purpose of Elijah the prophet. Why did God keep him alive? To point people to repent from their sins. To point people to the Savior to come. To get their hearts ready for the good news that He would provide a free and full solution to the problem of sin.

And that's what **God provides** for you. He gives you certainty and solid ground in the forgiveness that Jesus provided for you on the cross. In his Word he tells you again and again that you are His and that nothing can separate you from His love, including sins that feel too big. In baptism he marked you as his child. In the Lord's Supper he gives you his body and blood for you, for your forgiveness. You can say that God's Word centers around this truth: that **God provides** in Jesus.

Did you notice the repetition in the Psalm today? His love endures forever. His love endures forever. His love endures forever. It's that kind of reminder that God wants you to focus on right now. Whenever you find yourself with some physical or spiritual blessing let those words run through your head "His love endures forever." Instead of focusing on yourself and what you have or don't have, you'll keep your focus on the amazing truth that **God provides.**

Even in a pandemic, when you feel like you're missing out, **God provides.** God bless you and keep you in that truth in the ups and downs you've gone through in these last few months and for everything you'll experience for the rest of your life. **God provides.** Amen.

