

LIVING OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE



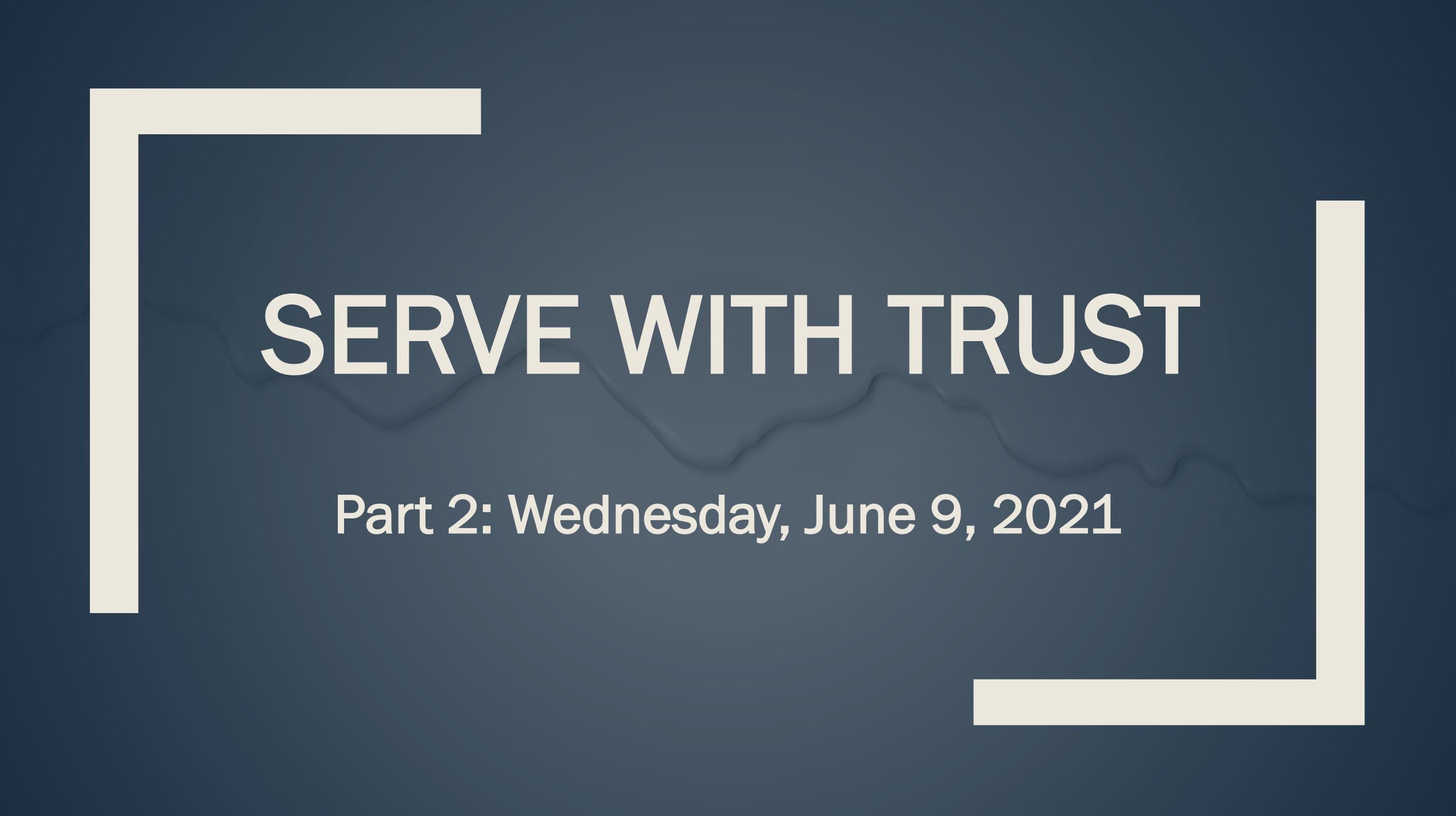
WEDNESDAYS @ 7:00 PM EST



LIVE



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SERVE WITH TRUST

Part 2: Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Serving God over the long haul demands we step out of our comfort zone and exhibit courage in the face of opposition and uncertainty.

Serving God requires real trust.

- For many trust is not something that comes easy.
- We've been disappointed and let down by others. Therefore, trusting can be difficult.
- However, living outside of your comfort zone requires a certain level of trust.
- This type of trust is what we call Faith!

- In 1st Kings, Elijah was called by God to speak truth to power and oppose the government sanction idol worship.
- Elijah's declared a famine to prove to the people that Yahweh was God of all as oppose to Baal.
- During the Famine God provide for Elijah at the Keirth Ravine.
- But once the brook ran out, Elijah had to learn to trust God in a new place and space as God sent him into pagan territory.

1ST KINGS 17:7-12

⁷ Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him: ⁹ “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” ¹⁰ 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?”

11 As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.” **12** “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 olive 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.”

Verses 7-9: We don't know how long Elijah stayed at the Kerith Ravine. Yet during that time it provided Elijah's need.

- When the Brook dried up Elijah didn't display signs of anxiety

God told Elijah to now go to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and to **stay there.**

- Zarephath was located deep in Pagan territory.
- Jezebel's father was king of Sidon.
- Sidon is where false god Baal that Elijah had previously preached against in Israel was worshiped:

- Elijah had to decide to Trust God's direction even when leading him into enemy territory.
 - *Isaiah 58:11a* - "And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong;"
- God told him that a widow woman there would provide for him.
 - Widow weren't normally financially secure. Would she have enough as we'll be willing to give him food.

Q: How do you trust God when God's guidance doesn't make sense?

Verse 10-11: The text says that Elijah did as the Lord commanded went to Zarephath without any complain or concern.

- Elijah's actions exhibited courage.
- His courage may have sprung from his recent experience at the ravine.
 - *Psalm 105:5* - “Remember the wonders He has done, His marvels, and the judgments He has pronounced.”
 - *Past experiences with God ought to build your faith for God's present & future instruction.*
 - “If he did it before, he can do it again.” - Tye Tribbett

As soon as Elijah arrived from his long journey, he saw a widow gathering sticks.

- God rewarded Elijah's trust with visual proof of his answered promises.
- This also means that before Elijah arrived GOD has arranged for the widow to be where Elijah would be.
 - God rewards us for our faith and trust.
 - *Luke 11:28* - "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

The fact that she was gathering sticks was not a reassuring sight for Elijah.

- Gathering sticks indicated her impoverished situation.

- *Sticks: meager scraps just enough to make a fire.*

- Elijah still trusted God to provide as God said. He asked her for water to drink and some bread.

- ***Romans 10:17*** - *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God.”*

- **We must look to God not based what we see for our provision**

Verse 12: The widow's response to Elijah's request is bittersweet.

- “as surely as your God lives...I didn't have any bread. Just a little flour and oil for me and my son to eat and die.”
 - *It's bittersweet sweet because while she wasn't a believer of Yahweh she recognized Elijah as a follower of Yahweh.*
 - *She was indifferent but not disrespectful about Yahweh.*
 - *If she could she would have, However the famine that Elijah had called for had adversely affected her as well.*

The next few verses Elijah used the widow's situation to encourage her to also trust God outside her comfort zone.

1ST KINGS 17:13-14

13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. **14** 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 sends rain on the land.’”

Verse 13: Elijah responds to the Widow woman's concern and pushed her to leave her comfort zone.

- Elijah told her to not be afraid as she went home.

- Fear and courage are contagious.

- As Head of the House remember others will follow your lead. *If you have faith, they will have faith and vice-versa.*

 - *Joshua 24:15* - “as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

Elijah told her, it's fine to make a meal for you and your son but make me a small loaf and bring it to me first.

- This instruction had to be hard to follow.
 - She was broke and prepared to die.
 - The man of God told her to use her last to bless him first and trust God to care for your family.

Q: Do you have faith to give to God/Church first?

Many people have faith except when it comes to finances.

- Jesus spoke about money/wealth/positions roughly 15% of his preaching and 11 out of 39 parables.
- Money is a Heart issue.
 - *Matthew 6:21* - “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Verse 14: Verse 13 without verse 14 seems dejecting.

- In v. 14 Elijah prophesied that if she did for him, the oil and flour in Her house would not run out during the divine drought.
- Elijah's experience at the Ravine gave him confidence to challenge this widow to trust God as he did earlier.
- He was able to make this promise on behalf of God because he believed God's promise to her that she would have the means to provide for him.

The fact that she was without oil and flour was an indication that God was true to God's word.

- Zarephath was in the center of Baal territory. The drought was a challenge to this false god to provide.
- Baal couldn't provide Zarephath major export then that was an additional information that Yahweh is God of all and everything.

Elijah's confidence in God makes his requests less alarming. It is not that he wants this widow and her son to be without. He believed God to provide for them as God provides for him.

- The promise he made to her was not in his name but in God's name.
 - **Living outside your comfort zone requires a deep trust in God's name and nature**
 - He urged her not to trust him, but the God of Israel.
- *Psalm 20:7* - "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God."
- *Number 23:19* - "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"

1ST KINGS 17:15-16

15 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. **16** 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.

Verse 15: The widow trusted God and obeyed Elijah.
Her faith and obedience led to a miracle.

She lived outside her comfort zone in various ways:

- Elijah was a stranger, and she trusted his words.
- She trusted God when neither her or no one she knew followed God.
- She had no previous reference to rely on.
 - *Hebrew 11:1* - “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

- Because they both stepped out on faith God fulfilled Elijah's promise. Elijah, the widow and her son had food everyday from her jars.

I tried him and I found that he alright with me.” - Edwin Hawkins

- It's good to read the word to gain confidence in God's ability based on what God did for others.
 - *There's another thing to develop confidence in God based on what you seen God do for you.*
- Living outside your comfort zone requires a personal trust in God.

Verse 16: Everyday the oil and flour never ran out. God kept God's promise.

The widow's daily provision were provided if she kept trusting God.

- She fed Elijah first and continually found enough to feed her and her son.
 - The more you exercise your faith the easier it becomes to trust God.
- Her faith was strengthening daily because she saw her neighbors struggle during the famine, yet God continued providing for her and her son.
- ***Matthew 6:33*** - "Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need."

■ Her faith was strengthening daily because she saw her neighbors struggle during the famine while God kept providing for her and her son.

■ **Matthew 6:33** - *“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”*



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