

The Refuge Church Of Deltona

Disclaimer – Christian Mental Health Resource: This downloadable material on Christian mental health and healing is intended for spiritual encouragement and educational purposes only. It draws from Biblical principles (NKJV) to offer hope and guidance from a faith-based perspective.

Please Note: This resource is not a substitute for professional medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Mental health is a complex and deeply personal matter that may require support from licensed professionals. If you or someone you know is experiencing serious emotional distress, depression, anxiety, or any mental health condition, we strongly encourage you to seek help from a qualified mental health provider.

This material only scratches the surface of mental health through a Christian lens. We encourage readers to do their own research, remain open to learning, and consult trusted Christian counselors, therapists, or mental health professionals as needed.

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1 Kings 17:8–12 (NKJV)

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him (Elijah), saying,

9 “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow **was there gathering sticks**. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.”

11 And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”

12 So she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, **I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.**”

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Main verse: "...that we may eat it, and die." (v. 12)

- What do we know about her?
 - She's most likely a Gentile. **Zarephath** is in Gentile territory, outside of Israel.
 - She's a widow.
 - In the Old Testament, widows were generally viewed as vulnerable members of society needing the protection and care of others. Their social and economic status often depended on their husbands, so the loss of a husband could leave a woman without financial support or **legal standing**.
 - A widow did not automatically inherit her husband's land or estate unless she had sons who could claim it.
 - This story unfolds during a time of national drought and famine.
 - The widow voices her **crisis**.
 - She is at the end of her resources. emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

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- Her statement, "*that we may eat it, and die,*" reflects profound **hopelessness and despair**, making this a powerful passage to explore issues like **depression and suicidal thoughts**.
- As a single parent with no means, living in famine, preparing a final meal. Her words are saturated with, **Hopelessness, Mental exhaustion, and Resignation to death**.

This widow, among the most vulnerable, is now tasked with sustaining Elijah.

This moment can be paralleled with **clinical depression**, where individuals often feel there's no way out.

Clinical depression, also known as **major depressive disorder (MDD)**, is a **serious medical condition** that affects a person's mood, thinking, and daily functioning. It goes beyond occasional sadness or feeling "down" and typically involves **persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest or pleasure** in most activities for most of the day, nearly every day, for **at least two weeks or more**.

Key symptoms may include:

- Persistent sadness, emptiness, or hopelessness

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- Loss of interest in hobbies or activities
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Clinical depression can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, or background, and is **not a sign of weakness or lack of faith**. It often requires a combination of treatments such as **therapy, medication, lifestyle changes, and spiritual support**.

- Despite her despair, she listens and **responds to Elijah's request**.
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I. Depression and Suicide — Modern Realities

Global and U.S. Statistics:

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- **World Health Organization (WHO, 2023):** Over **700,000 people die by suicide each year globally**, one every 40 seconds¹.
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023):**
 - In the U.S., **12.3 million adults seriously thought about suicide** in 2022².
 - Suicide is the **11th leading cause of death** in the U.S.³.
 - Among youth aged 10–24, suicide is the **second leading cause of death**⁴.
 - In 2022, There were nearly two times as many suicides (49,476) in the United States as there were homicides (24,849)⁵.
- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** An estimated **21 million U.S. adults had at least one major depressive episode in**

¹

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(25\)00006-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(25)00006-4/fulltext)

² <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/index.html>

³ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

⁴ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

⁵ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

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2021, that's 8.4% of all adults⁶.

II. *Divine Intervention in the Midst of Darkness*

"Then the word of the Lord came to him..." (v. 8)

Before the widow even voiced her despair, **God had already made provision**. He sent Elijah to her. God was **actively pursuing her**, even in her isolation and suffering.

- God sees *us* even in *emotional famine*.
- God sees *us* even in our mental distress.
- Depression often convinces us that we are forgotten, but Scripture shows God **intervening in personal suffering**.
- He often sends **"Elijahs"** (people, counselors, pastors, or friends) to meet us in crisis. **Who is your Elijah???**

⁶ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression>

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III. When Death Feels Like the Only Option

Biblical Correlation: Elijah Also Faced Dispair

Elijah is considered one of the greatest prophets and did many miracles like:

- God sent Ravens to feed him,
- Raised a widow's son from the dead,
- Called down fire from heaven on Mount Carmel
- Outrun a chariot
- Parting the Jordan river
- Elijah prayed for the drought to end and it ended

Just one chapter later, in **1 Kings 19:4**, Elijah himself says:

“And he prayed that he might die, and said, It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”

Even God's prophet was not immune to **suicidal thoughts**. He felt overwhelmed, isolated, and hopeless.

This underscores that **depression is not a sign of weak faith**. It's part of the human condition, and even spiritual leaders face it.

IV. God Provides More Than Bread, He Gives Hope

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In verse 13, Elijah tells her not to fear. “Do not fear; go *and* do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring *it* to me; and afterward make *some* for yourself and your son.

In verse 14, Elijah gives her a promise from God: the flour and oil will not run out. And indeed, **they ate for many days.**

Spiritual Meaning:

- God met her *physical* needs as a way to restore *hope*.
 - Often the first steps in healing are small provision, therapy, support, medication, scripture, and community.
 - The **miracle didn't remove all her problems**, but it gave her the strength to live again.
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V. What the Church Can Do

Practical Tips for the Church Body:

1. **Normalize Mental Health Conversations:**

Depression and suicidal thoughts should be met with compassion, not shame.

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2. Offer Support Resources:

- Partner with Christian counselors.
- Have referral info for crisis lines.

3. Create Safe Testimonies:

Encourage people who've walked through depression to share how God helped them.

VI. Here's what the Bible says:

- **Psalm 34:18 (NKJV):**

"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit."

- **2 Corinthians 1:8–9 (NKJV):**

"...we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life... that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead."

- **Romans 15:13 (NKJV):**

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing..."

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VII. Conclusion: A Message of Life


Just as God reached out to the widow at her lowest point, He reaches for all of us, even in depression, even when death seems like the only escape. This passage is not just a miracle story; it's a **reminder that God sees, provides, and restores.**

When things get blurry... God still sees you clearly!

There's a good ending to this story.....

Resources & Hotlines

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (U.S.):**

 **988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

 988lifeline.org

- **Christian Counseling Services:**

- Focus on the Family Counseling

- [American Association of Christian Counselors](https://www.aaccounselors.org)