

# What You Need When You Need It



by Rolaant McKenzie

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In Rod Serling's famous television series, *The Twilight Zone*, there was a fascinating episode called *What You Need* (Season 1, Episode 12, 12/25/1959), based on a 1945 short story of the same name by Lewis Padgett. It told the story of a kind, elderly neighborhood street peddler, Mr. Pedott, who had the uncanny ability to provide his customers with just what they needed shortly before it was needed.

Pedott enters a nearby bar, where he first gives a woman at the counter a small bottle of cleaning fluid from his case. Then he gives an unemployed former Chicago Cubs pitcher a bus ticket to Scranton, Pennsylvania. Moments later, the baseball player receives a call on the bar's pay phone offering a coaching position for a minor league team in Scranton. His excitement is diminished a little when he notices a spot on his jacket. He wished he could remove it so that he might look his best when he met his new employers in Scranton. The woman offers to scrub it out with the cleaning fluid she received from Pedott.

Later in the episode, Pedott was provided with what he himself needed to save his life from the murderous intent of a frustrated, greedy small-time crook seeking to exploit it for his own desires.

Pedott's gift of providing people with what they need at the

proper time is a reminder of God's timely provision for the needs, not necessarily wants, of His children for their benefit. This is true at all times, but especially so in trying times.

After the death of his father, Omri, Ahab (874–853 BC) became king of Israel and followed his evil example. Encouraged by his Phoenician wife Jezebel, he led Israel more than all the kings before him into rebellion against



God through the worship of Baal (1 Kings 16:28-33).

Because of the unfaithfulness of the leadership and the nation, God sent the prophet Elijah to tell King Ahab that rain would not fall. For more than three years, severe famine plagued the land, and an angry and desperate Ahab sought to find Elijah, even earnestly seeking him in other nations (1 Kings 18:1-18).

During this terrible time, God protected Elijah and provided him with what he needed at the proper time (1 Kings 17). He told him to hide east of the Jordan River by a small brook called Cherith, where he would have water to drink. The Lord also sent ravens in the morning and evening to bring him bread and meat.

When the brook dried up due to the drought, God sent Elijah to stay at a widow's home in the Phoenician city of Zerephath, where he lodged in the room on the roof accessible from outside the house. When he arrived, he asked her for some

water and bread, but she revealed her desperate poverty. She told him that all she had was a handful of flour and a little oil that she was going to prepare, along with a few sticks, for herself and her son as their last meal.

Elijah told her to make a bread cake for him first, then make one for herself and her son, prophesying that as long as the drought and famine continued, the Lord would make sure that neither the flour nor the oil ran out. On another occasion, when her son became sick and died, the Lord, through Elijah, restored his life. So God provided the widow and her son with what they needed at the proper time: sustenance and life, which strengthened their faith in the God of Israel.

A man likely encouraged by this account in the Bible was Christian evangelist and pastor George Müller (September 27, 1805 – March 10, 1898), who, with his wife, established orphanages in Bristol, England.

Müller was in continual prayer and totally dependent on God's provision through donors for food, clothing, and money. One of many documented examples of this was a time when the children were sitting around the breakfast table, though there was nothing to eat in the house. As they finished thanking God for His provision, the baker knocked on the door with enough fresh bread to feed everyone, and the milkman gave them plenty of fresh milk because his cart had broken down in front of the orphanage.

Throughout his ministry, the Lord provided Müller with what he needed when he needed it to care for and educate more than 10,000 orphans. He never solicited financial support, nor did he go into debt. Every morning after breakfast, there was a time of Bible reading and prayer. The children were well nourished, dressed, and educated, preparing them for a godly, productive life.

The people of Israel were told by the prophet Samuel that if

they rejected God's rule and adopted a king, he would take an exorbitant portion of their income and property for his friends and servants, and they would be oppressed with increasing poverty and decreasing liberty (1 Samuel 8).

It is said that one of the slogans of the American Revolution was, "We have no king but Jesus." But God has largely been rejected in America, and another king has been put in His place: corporate/government central bank cartels such as the Federal Reserve, supranational firms, and the government regulatory agencies they control.

This collective "king" inflates the currency supply, decreasing the purchasing power of families. It taxes, fees, fines, and destroys freedom through the rules of unelected bureaucracies, benefiting large corporate donors and causing increasing economic hardship and destitution for the average citizen struggling to provide for themselves and their families.

As many of us struggle to make ends meet in this intended environment of increasing costs for food, fuel, clothing, health care, and other essentials, we may be tempted to forget God's ability to provide for our needs and lose hope.

The Lord Jesus said these words in a country ruled by the Roman Empire, which imposed oppressive taxes that impoverished most of its people:

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**" (Matthew 6:31-33)

The prophet Elijah, the widow of Zerephath and her son, George Müller, and countless other faithful through the centuries who lived through challenging and dreadful times, found their

trust in the Lord justified and strengthened in His timely provision for their needs (Philippians 4:6-19).

Have faith in God through His Son Jesus Christ, and seek His righteousness, not your own, to be reconciled with Him. Famine, financial hardship, oppressive rulers, war, or any other severe circumstances cannot prevent Him from providing what you need when you need it and taking you home to His kingdom, where want is no more (Revelation 7:9-17).

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