

## 2 Kings 4 – Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016

1 A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves.”

- We begin with yet another miracle on the heels of the last miracle in the previous chapter, this one involving a certain widow.
- According to the Law of Moses, her sons would have to become slaves in order to repay all of the debts the father left behind.
- As we're about to see, God is going to provide miraculously yet again, and this because of the faith on the part of this widow.

2 So Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?” And she said, “Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil.” 3 Then he said, “Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. 4 And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones.”

- What Elisha does here is interesting in a couple of ways, the first of which is that he has her do this between her and the Lord.
- In other words, he doesn't want in any way for this widow to give him the credit for that which God is about to do miraculously.
- This clearly speaks to how that no flesh will glory in God's presence, such that it's only the Lord Who is to receive all the glory.

- The second interesting thing Elisha does here is that he has her borrow vessels from everywhere, and not just a few of them.
- Not only does he have her get as many as she can, she's also told the vessels need to be empty and that God would fill them.
- I believe we're given these details here in the narrative because it shows the importance of empty vessels having a big faith.

Charles Spurgeon of this said, “The vessels also had to be empty before they could be filled with oil. It did no good to bring the widow full vessels. “A full Christ is for empty sinners, and for empty sinners only, and as long as there is a really empty soul in a congregation so long will a blessing go forth with the word, and no longer. It is not our emptiness, but our fullness which can hinder the outgoings of free grace.” ...“If she borrowed few vessels, she would have but little oil; if she borrowed many vessels they should all be filled, and she should have much oil. She was herself to measure out what she should have; and I believe that you and I, in the matter of spiritual blessings from God, have more to do with the measurement of our mercies than we think. We make our blessings little, because our prayers are little.”

5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out. 6 Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, “Bring me another vessel.” And he said to her, “There is not another vessel.” So the oil ceased. 7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest.”

- This is yet one more account to add to the numerous accounts in scripture, where God provides all that is needed for His glory.
- Often times God may choose to use a miracle in the supernatural, and at other times, God may choose to do it in the natural.
- One thing is certain, regardless of how God will do it, or when God will do it, we by faith can believe that God will in fact do it.

Philippians 4:19 (NIV) — 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

8 Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. 9 And she said to her husband, “Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. 10 Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there.” 11 And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there. 12 Then he said to Gehazi his servant, “Call this Shunammite woman.” When he had called her, she stood before him. 13 And he said to him, “Say now to her, ‘Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?’ ” She answered, “I dwell among my own people.” 14 So he said, “What then is to be done for her?” And Gehazi answered, “Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old.” 15 So he said, “Call her.” When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. 16 Then he said, “About this time next year you shall embrace a son.” And she said, “No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!” 17 But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

- It's important to understand that to be barren in that culture was a sign the woman was under a curse from God because of it.
- I find her response to Elisha somewhat surprising in the sense that she doesn't want to get her hopes up when he tells her this.
- This tells me that she didn't take Elisha in thinking that she could ask him for this, which would have meant she had an agenda.

18 And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers. 19 And he said to his father, “My head, my head!” So he said to a servant, “Carry him to his mother.” 20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out. 22 Then she called to her husband, and said, “Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back.”

- What this Shunammite woman does is remarkable in that she demonstrates a tremendous amount of faith in seeking Elisha.
- The reason I say that is because instead of preparing the body of her dead son for burial she's trusting God for his resurrection.
- As such, she believes by faith that the prophet Elisha, who had received the double portion of Elijah, could obtain this for her.

Adam Clarke said it this way, "She had no doubt heard that Elijah had raised the widow's son of Zarephath to life; and she believed that he who had obtained this gift of God for her, could obtain his restoration to life."

23 So he said, "Why are you going to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath." And she said, "It is well." 24 Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." 25 And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman! 26 Please run now to meet her, and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?'" And she answered, "It is well." 27 Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me."

- What Elisha says here is very fascinating to me because it seems to indicate he had such an intimate relationship with the Lord.
- So much so, that it was unusual for the Lord to hide what He was doing from him, such that doing so was not the norm for him.
- The norm was that Elisha was always so in tuned with the Lord, that he understood what the Lord was doing or about to do.

I like how one commentator said it, "Elisha seemed mystified that this woman was in a crisis that was hidden from Elisha. In this circumstance Elisha was more surprised that God didn't speak to him than if God had spoken to him."

- There's something that I would like to point out, however, it's not so easily seen at first read concerning what Elisha says here.
- Namely, that of Elisha telling his servant Gehazi to take his staff from his hand and go lay it on the face of the woman's son.
- Here's what I'm thinking, Elisha is once again giving someone else the opportunity to experience the miraculous hand of God.

- One has suggested that this was a pattern in Elisha's ministry as evidenced by him telling the alliance of kings to dig ditches.
- He has the widow gather vessels and pour the oil herself instead of Elisha doing it for her so as to not rob her of the blessing.
- Then, here, he does the same thing by having his servant Gehazi take his staff to lay on her son, instead of just doing it himself.

28 So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" 29 Then he said to Gehazi, "Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child." 30 And the mother of the child said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. 31 Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, "The child has not awakened." 32 When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. 33 He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. 35 He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 36 And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Pick up your son." 37 So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.

- I find it interesting Elisha would do that which he saw his mentor Elijah do when he prayed for the resurrection of a widows son.
- The reason that I mention this is because it speaks to how important the Elijah's of this world are to the Elisha's of this world.
- More specifically, the importance of demonstrating a walk of faith, which Elijah had, so much so, he would inspire Elisha's faith.

38 And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." 39 So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were. 40 Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "Man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it. 41 So he said, "Then bring some flour." And he put it into the pot, and said, "Serve it to the people, that they may eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot. 42 Then a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give it to the people, that they may eat." 43 But his servant said, "What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?" He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" 44 So he set it before them; and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

- What comes to mind here is the miracles of multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed the multitudes even having some left over.
- I would submit that this whole chapter, with all of the miracles in it has the common denominator of God's miraculous provision.
- No matter the situation, no matter the impossibility of the situation, God has always been and still is the God of the impossible.