

What You Need to Know About ELISHA:

**“Heir of the Spirit:
‘What wish shall I grant you
before I am taken away’ (2 Kings 2:9)”**

Study Number Three – 2 Kings 4:1-44

In our first two episodes in the life of Elisha we saw him take over for Elijah, the healing of the waters of Jericho and the encounter with the young men at Bethel. We also saw him come immediately to international prominence.

He is consulted by the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom. And in the consultation he told them that they were going to have victory. And as the chapter ended, it came out just exactly the way the Lord had said it would.

Now the scene opens in chapter 4. With this international prominence he’s also made a lot of personal friends. And as we look at chapter 4 we’re going to underscore five miracles, or five accounts of things that happened in his life that we want to share together.

Let’s pick up at verse 1 in our study of 2 Kings 4.

v. 1 Now a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my

husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.”

“Now a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, ‘Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.’”

This woman comes in an hour of frantic need and great grief. She’s evidently a seminary wife. And when someone goes to seminary they don’t have a piece of the rock so without Prudential she’s totally unprepared for this inadvertent circumstance that’s happened.

Evidently this is a personal friend of Elisha’s—one of the students. One that he was close to because the guy “feared the Lord,” walked with the Lord. And she comes crying greatly naturally in her grief.

In those days when somebody couldn’t pay a debt, they could take their children. They could put them in bondage. They could do whatever they wanted to see to it that the debt was taken care of. So this is no small deal here. She’s very upset. She’s just about to lose everything that she’s ever had.

v. 2 And 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 except a jar of oil.”

“And 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 except a jar of oil.’”

Two questions come to the surface:

1. “What shall I do for you?” and
2. “what do you have in the house?”

It’s a scriptural principle that God takes what we have and multiplies it to meet our needs.

Invariably God doesn’t want us to be something we’re not. He wants to take what we are. He wants to take what we have. That’s the reason for the question, “What do you have?”

All she has is a “jar of oil.” All the focus of attention of the prophet is on that “jar of oil.”

We need to analyze ourselves. What do we have? What is our gift? What are our abilities? And then give those things unreservedly to the Lord. Watch Him multiply and use that to meet our needs.

Verse 3—now here the prophet gives her a command.

v. 3 Then he said, “Go, borrow vessels at large for yourself from all your neighbors, even empty

vessels; do not get a few.

“Then he said, ‘Go, borrow vessels at large for yourself from all your neighbors, even empty vessels; do not get a few.’”

Elisha says to her, “Go and get as many vessels as you can. Get large vessels. Get not a few.”

And the reason he says that is as we make provision, so is going to be our provision. “Now get a whole bunch of them—whatever it takes. Get all you can because of your plans, so will be your provision.”

v. 4 And you shall go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all these vessels; and you shall set aside what is full.”

“And you shall go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all these vessels; and you shall set aside what is full.”

“Take your boys, go in the house. After you get all the jars in there and you start pouring out of that little jug you’ve got. We’re going to watch and see what’s going to happen.”

v. 5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons; they were bringing the vessels to her and she poured.

“So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her

sons; they were bringing the vessels to her and she poured.”

She got them organized. She had one of the boys bring the empty vessel and she filled it. The other guy took the full one and set it over here and they’ve got a veritable oil well going on inside the house here.

v. 6 And it came about when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, “Bring me another vessel.” And he said to her, “There is not one vessel more.” And the oil stopped.

“And it came about when the vessels were full,”

Everything she had—completely full.

“that she said to her son, ‘Bring me another vessel.’”

She’s so excited. Vessel after vessel is full—she wants more.

“And he said to her, ‘There is not one vessel more.’ And the oil stopped.”

With the plans go the provision. But it’s neat. They really did think big enough because she’s very excited.

Many times, especially college students, limit God. God has put His hand on their lives but they limit Him to the present resources and all that they can see.

And God delights for us to step out in faith and really trust Him. And believe Him for big things. To meet our needs, to get positive, to get excited about how He can use us. And invariably we limit it by saying, “Oh man, I can’t do that. You know I don’t have the funds for that.” And we’re always thinking down. Always thinking on the basis of just what we can see rather than on what God could do with what we’ve got to make a tremendous provision.

Now look at verse 7.

v. 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 can live on the rest.”

“Then she came and told the man of God.”

She’s not crying anymore and grieving and under pressure. She’s excited.

“And he said, ‘Go, sell the oil and pay your debt, and you and your sons can live on the rest.’”

She at least thought big enough to have enough to pay the debt and then to sell the rest of the oil so that they’ll have something to live on for the remaining years of their life. That’s the way God does things.

John 10:10

“I am cometh that they might have life and they’ll have it more abundantly.”

Ephesians 3:20

Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we could ask or think...

Romans 8:32

He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Now we move from this particular story to story number two. It involves another woman, but it’s a woman in complete contrast to the first one.

v. 8 Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food.

“Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food.”

Now we have to get the picture. His headquarters is in Samaria. That’s where they have the religious headquarters

as well as the political headquarters.

And a lot of times he needed to go to Camp David. He needed to go to his retreat. Only his was not Camp David it was Mount Carmel. And he'd go up there to spend time with the Lord.

Well between Carmel and Samaria was a little city called Shunem. And as he moved down the interstate from Carmel to Samaria there was an exit about half way. And he used to stop there. And this very prominent woman who lives there, married and childless, invited him in to have supper with them.

Now there's a great deal of difference between these two women. The first woman is destitute. She has no funds. She has no husband. She's got a couple of children. This lady is very prominent. She's got lots of money. She's got a husband but no kids. And there's just a complete contrast between the two of them.

And as we come now to the unfolding of this account, he finds out she's really a good cook and so he makes it a regular stopping place. When we're hungry we go to the place where the food is, right? And so he stopped often at Shunem.

v. 9 And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually.

“And she said to her husband, ‘Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually.’”

What happened? They’d sit down and eat, they’d get talking about spiritual things and she was really impressed that this guy really had it together. That he was something special.

And because of that, she turns to her husband and she says:

v. 10 Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there.”

“Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there.”

“Look, you know many times he comes and eats supper but he leaves about dark to head toward Samaria. We need to provide a place for him to stay where he can rest and relax and eat dinner and then he can go on the next morning. Let’s provide hospitality honey. Come on. Let’s take out a home improvement loan and let’s really fix this place up. Give him a place to stay.”

Then they get a little prophet’s chamber together.

She wanted for him to have a place to stay where he could

rest, relax, study, pray, regain his strength and then get on with his ministry.

v. 11 One day he came there and turned in to the upper chamber and rested.

“One day he came there”

They got the job done and now the improvement project is over.

“and turned in to the upper chamber and rested.”

v. 12 Then he said to Gehazi his servant, “Call this Shunammite.” And when he had called her, she stood before him.

“Then he said to Gehazi his servant, ‘Call this Shunammite.’ And when he had called her, she stood before him.”

He’s sacking out there and just thinking, “Boy, isn’t this fantastic. Having a place to eat and to stay. Aren’t these people good to take care of me? I wonder what I could do for them in return, just some small favor or something?”

So he says, “Gehazi, call that woman. I’ve got to talk to her.”

And so she comes and stands before the door.

v. 13 And he said to him, “Say now to her, ‘Behold, you

have been careful for us with all this care; what can I do for you? Would you be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the army? And she answered, “I live among my own people.”

“And he said to him,”—talking to Gehazi—“Say now to her, “Behold, you have been careful for us with all this care; what can I do for you? Would you be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the army? And she answered, ‘I live among my own people.’”

Now he says, “Look, you’ve done a lot for me. How about me doing a favor for you? You want me to speak to the king or the captain of the army?”

See that’s no small opportunity there. Because with his international prominence after that last deal with the king of Edom, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram, he does have national prominence. And he can seek a favor whenever he wants because of what he did for those guys when they won the battle.

Isn’t she cool? We’d probably think, “Oh boy! Here’s my opportunity! I can run and make headlines, really go to town!”

Listen, no thanks. That’d be just like saying, “You know, that’s alright for some folks but I live among my own people. I’m just happy here in Shunem. I like it here and I’m just not interested.”

Isn't that great? What does that tell us? That tells us that woman is content with her present circumstances. She's not going to make any big splash. She's not going to make any big waves. She's just happy to be right there, to be a godly woman. When a prophet comes by she had a place for him to stay and gave him a meal, no big deal. She just wants to be happy and stay right there.

We don't find very many contented people today. And the reason is Paul says to Timothy, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." (ref. 1 Timothy 6:6)

The more godly we become, the more content we become. The more we're aware of the fact that God's got control of the circumstances and we don't have to get hassled and fussed up about some of the things that are going on in our life, we begin to trust Him. And we're just living and exuding contentment over where we are, even though the circumstances are rough and things might be falling apart. We've just got that sweet spirit of trust and contentment.

That's just like she's saying, "You know, I don't want you to go to any hassle. Just don't bother. I live here among my own people and I'm totally satisfied."

v. 14 So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Truly she has no son and her husband is old."

"So he said, 'What then is to be done for her?'"—talking to

Gehazi.

Now Gehazi is a hot dog that we're going to meet in our next study. It's difficult to understand how in the world he ends up as a servant to Elisha, but we're going to see him get blown out of the water when we get a little further along. But he at least has some information. Look what he's got to say here.

“And Gehazi answered, ‘Truly she has no son and her husband is old.’”

God has been famous for giving women kids that couldn't have any. Abraham and Sarah had that promise and for twenty-five years they waited and finally Isaac was born. Hannah had Samuel. Elizabeth had John the Baptist. The Virgin Mary had the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 15 And he said, “Call her.” When he had called her, she stood in the doorway.

“And so he said, ‘Call her.’ When he had called her, she stood in the doorway.”

v. 16 Then he said, “At this season next year you shall embrace a son.” And she said, “No, my lord, O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant.”

“Then he said, ‘At this season next year you shall embrace a son.’ And she said, ‘No, my lord, O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant.’”

Now what kind of expression is that? It's an expression of something that has been the pulsating desire of the heart. Every woman in the east wanted one thing out of life. That was to give their husband a child.

And she had been barren all of her life. Her husband was old. It looked like there wasn't going to be any children for her. And she's just spiritual enough that she doesn't go running around talking about all of her troubles to everybody who wants to hear.

And some of these Christians say, "Oh it's terrible. I had six operations and I'm about to die and I flunked this." They just smell like spiritual b.o. every time we're around them. They just wreak and we hate to be with them.

And here's a poor guy, man his heart's breaking, he's falling apart at the seams but he's a guy who is spiritual. And even in the pressure and the stress of that he suffers in silence.

She could have said, "Please give me a child. I don't have any children! If God wants to do something special for me, I'd like to have a child before I die." She didn't do that.

She said, "I just live among my own people. Everything's alright." She's accepted the fact of her childlessness. And yet the prophet puts his finger on the thing that is that secret hidden desire of her heart.

One is reminded of Psalm 37, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He’ll give you the desires of your heart.” (ref. Psalm 37:4)

Even those secret hidden things that we don’t speak out to others that hurt, that inside thought. How precious the Lord is to be aware of that and meet that in a particular time that’ll bring real blessing to our life. And we recognize it’s from Him.

She says, “Oh no! Don’t lie to your maidservant. That’s just too wonderful to even comprehend if that could happen” when he says something like that.

Too excited to be real!

v. 17 And the woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her.

“And the woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her.”

We can be sure when God says something He’s going to carry it through.

Now what makes this woman so great? We can say this woman is great because of the THREE G’s:

1. she is GRACIOUS,
2. she is GENEROUS, and

3. she is GODLY.

And that makes her the kind of woman that she is.

Now she's had the fulfillment of having a child. And we wish the story just stopped here but we know better than that. Life doesn't go on like that.

The Bible records things as they really are so we can relate to them. We're not ever going to get it all together, finally where there's not going to be any more problems. As long as we live in the body we have we're going to have problems because God delights in making us more like the Lord Jesus. And the only instrument that He has is frustration, tribulation and suffering. And for heaven's sake, don't pray for patience because He'll give opportunity through pressure and trial and difficulty to learn it!

How are we going to endure anything if we don't have something to endure? We need to see it from the Lord's perspective when we pray. And everybody says, "Lord, make me patient right now!"

v. 18 When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers.

"When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers."

He's a little nipper yet. He's probably somewhere six to eight

years of age now.

v. 19 And he said to his father, “My head, my head.” And he said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.”

“And he said to his father, ‘My head, my head.’ And he said to his servant, ‘Carry him to his mother.’”

Isn’t that just like a father?

Now really what happened, and the only explanation for this, is evidently he cracked his head on the tractor or something. It’s the only medical explanation for this. Medically it’s a subdural hematoma.

This is about nine o’clock in the morning and evidently he fell and cracked his head and he says, “My head, my head.” The dad can’t see anything externally, other than maybe a bump, so he sends him with a servant to the house.

v. 20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then died.

“When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then he died.”

So somewhere between nine o’clock and noon this accident happened, they take him to the house, he sits there in his mother’s lap and just like that he died.

We're all probably thinking from her point of view. "Lord, wouldn't it have been a whole lot better if You'd have just left me childless? Rather than to give me the joy of a child and then take it away? Why did this happen to me? It's so inconsistent! Why my boy? That could have been somebody else's kid! My boy was a good boy!"

We raise countless thousands of questions. Why? Why? Why? And we never have the right to ask the question "why?" until all the facts are in.

Man has no right to an opinion until he has all the facts. And we "see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now we know in part, but then we're going to know even as we're known." (see 1 Corinthians 13:12)

So withhold judgment until we get to glory, okay? If it's something we can't understand, put it on the back burner and God will make it clear later. And we'll understand it.

If we want to see a spiritual woman act, if we want to know how to handle the next crisis in our life that hits us on the blindside and causes us to see stars and we're lying flat on our backs and we can't understand what's happened, look at how she handles it. This is fantastic.

v. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door behind him, and went out.

“And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door behind him, and went out.”

v. 22 Then she called to her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys that I may run to the man of God and return.

“Then she called to her husband and said, ‘Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and return.’”

Notice she doesn’t say, “Honey, the boy died.” But in her sweet, submissive spirit before the days of equal rights, she says, “Honey, send me with a servant to the man of God.”

v. 23 And he said, “Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” And she said, “It will be well.”

“And he said, ‘Why will you go to him today?’”

And she could have unloaded right here.

“It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.”

Underline that next phrase because that’s a key phrase:

“And she said, ‘It will be well.’”

Now that is a statement of faith. She’s saying, “You know

since it isn't well right now, in fact it's bad, but it will be well."

Immediate confidence that God has trusted her with a trial she doesn't understand and she's going to reserve judgment in it. She's looking beyond the present situation. She says, "Honey, it will be well. Don't worry about me."

She manifests an unshaken faith in this trial. God's still going to write another chapter. She's convinced of it. The last part of the story hasn't been written.

v. 24 Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, "Drive and go forward; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you."

"Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, 'Drive and go forward; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you.'"

It's a time for flashing lights and sirens and the whole bit. "Move out! You know if I can't stand the pace that we're going on this donkey, I'll tell you to slow down!"

Now she has a twenty-mile trip from Shunam to Carmel and she's leaving right after lunch. And here she goes and she gets there before dark so we know that she's moved on.

v. 25 So she went and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel. And it came about when the man of God saw her at a distance, that he said to Gehazi his

servant, “Behold, yonder is the Shunammite.

“So she went and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. And it came about when the man of God saw her at a distance that he said to Gehazi his servant, ‘Behold, yonder is the Shunammite.’”

v. 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.”

“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,”—underline the next statement—“It is well.””

What has happened in a twenty mile trip, from speaking to her husband to speaking to the prophet, is that everything’s okay. She has been ministered unto by the Lord in that twenty mile trip and she can express confidence. “Man, it’s okay. It is well.”

Ever sung that great old hymn in church, “It is Well with My Soul”? Know how that was written? It was written by a guy whose wife and three daughters went over to Europe on a sailing trip and he was going to later join them after he got through his legal practice that involved a case that he was involved in at that particular time. And there was an accident, a sailing accident. And through a freak accident the mother was saved on a floating piece of wreckage. And she sent some

weeks later a telegram that said, “Saved alone” because all three of the girls had drowned.

And as he sailed to meet her, as he came over the spot where the wreck took place, he wrote this hymn “It is Well with My Soul”:

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
(source unknown)

This woman’s fantastic. She can express faith with “It is well.”

v. 27 When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, “Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has hid it from me and has not told me.”

“When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away;”—man just like him—“but the man of God said to her, ‘Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has hid it from me and has not told me.’”

v. 28 Then she said, “Did I ask for a son from my lord? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me?’”

“Then she said, ‘Did I ask for a son from my lord?’”

And his answer to that question is “No.”

“Did I not say, “Do not deceive me”? ”

And the answer to that question is “Yes.”

v. 29 Then he said to Gehazi, “Gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand, and go your way; if you meet any man, do not salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him; and lay my staff on the lad’s face.”

“Then he said to Gehazi, ‘Gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand, and go your way; if you meet any man, do not salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him; and lay my staff on the lad’s face.’”

“Gehazi, get on with it.”

v. 30 And the mother of the lad said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” And he arose and followed her.

“And the mother of the lad said, ‘As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’ And he arose and followed her.”

v. 31 Then Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff on the lad’s face, but there was neither sound

nor response. So he returned to meet him and told him, “The lad has not awakened.”

“Then Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff on the lad’s face, but there was neither sound nor response. So he returned to meet him and told him, ‘The lad has not awakened.’”

Now we look at that and we wonder why something didn’t happen. We’re going to learn in our next study that Gehazi is so filled with selfish greed that he really is playing around with spiritual things.

And it shows us the powerlessness of a man who moves in as though it’s a ritual. And in the face of death he puts the staff down, nothing happens, so he loses it. He says, “Nothing happened!” Instead of walking in there, praying and saying, “God I’m your servant. I’m dependent upon you in this crisis situation to give life as I follow the instructions of the prophet. Answer the prayer and restore life.”

He just runs back, “Nothing happened.” After he gets done with that it says:

v. 32 When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed.

“When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed.”

v. 33 So he entered and shut the door behind them both, and prayed to the Lord.

“So he entered and shut the door behind them both, and prayed to the Lord.”

There's the KEY PHRASE.

This is a critical time. Just like the Lord Jesus moved to the tomb of Lazarus and He said, “Father, I thank You that You hear Me but I’m saying so everybody else will know.” Then He says, “Lazarus, come forth.” We can be sure that Lazarus is going to come walking out of there. It’s just a good thing for Lazarus because if He’d said “come out” He’d have emptied the whole graveyard in that situation.

Because He has power over physical death!

“he entered and shut the door behind them both, and he prayed to the Lord.”

v. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm.

“And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm.”

v. 35 Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes.

“Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes.”

v. 36 And he called Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, “Take up your son.”

“And he called Gehazi and said, ‘Call this Shunammite.’ So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, ‘Take up your son.’”

v. 37 Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out.

“Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out.”

First, we saw her fall at his feet in GRIEF. She fell there with tears in her eyes, expressing in faith it is well. But now she falls at his feet in GRATITUDE.

In gratitude over what God has done. History kind of closes

the door but wouldn't it be fun to walk down the hall past her chamber and hear the sobs of gratitude? As she surrenders her life more fully to the Lord and she gives the child more fully to the Lord again and say, "Lord, he is Yours. And I thank You for the fact that You've heard our prayers." And in broken words of supplication and thanksgiving, she's giving grateful praise to the Father for hearing the prayer of the prophet and restoring her son.

Now there's a great principle in that. A lot of times the Lord will put His finger on the provision that He has made for us in our life just to see whether or not that provision has become more important than our relationship with the Lord.

He did that with Abraham. Put His hand on Isaac to see whether or not Isaac was more important than his relationship to the Lord.

And maybe He did that with some of the women. Bring Prince Charming into their life and then all of a sudden, He reaches out and puts His hand on that and the relationship is strained and we're scared to death and we get bitter toward God.

That provision of that young man who's come into our life is more important than our relationship with God. We better get our priorities straight.

A lot of times the Lord does that. He brings stress into relationships. He brings stress into circumstances just to see who's first in our lives. And where we're going to turn and how

we're going to respond. And how we're going to react to that situation.

v. 38 When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”

“When Elisha returned to Gilgal,”—this is the headquarters for the seminaries—“there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, ‘Put on the large pot and boil some stew for the sons of the prophets.’”

They have to have something to eat here.

v. 39 Then one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know what they were.

“Then one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know what they were.”

Now this guy is one of the prophets. He says, “Man we’ve got to get something to put in a stew. Lord, it’s a time of famine,

we really need something to add to the pot. Lord, I just really pray that You'll show me exactly where there's something." And he goes out and he finds these wild gourds.

And he says, "Man, what an answer to my prayer!" He fills a great big old sack full of these wild gourds and he comes back and he's just putting everything in the pot, getting ready for the prophets to really eat up a storm.

After gathering them, because he didn't know what they were, verse 40 says:

v. 40 So they poured it out for the men to eat. And it came about as they were eating of the stew, that they cried out and said, "O man of God, there is death in the pot." And they were unable to eat.

"So they poured it out for the men to eat. And it came about as they were eating of the stew, that they cried out and said, 'O man of God, there is death in the pot.' And they were unable to eat."

We always find in a time of spiritual famine, Satan will have a lot of wild gourds for us to eat that look like the real thing, but they'll eventually poison us.

We are living in the United States and one of the most destitute poverty-stricken times spiritually. We have poverty over really having a deep hunger for the Word of God. And there are a lot of imitations running around that'll poison us if

we don't watch out.

And there's plenty of poison stew. And he says, "there is death in the pot."

v. 41 But he said, "Now bring meal." And he threw it into the pot, and he said, "Pour it out for the people that they may eat." Then there was no harm in the pot.

"But he said, 'Now bring meal.' And he threw it into the pot, and he said, 'Pour it out for the people that they may eat.' Then there was no harm there in the pot."

v. 42 Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat."

"Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and he brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack."

The famine is over and the first fruits have been brought.

There are only twenty loaves of bread and some corn on the cob.

To the prophets:

“And he said, ‘Give them to the people that they may eat.’”

Now old Gehazi comes to the surface again. Look at him—verse 43—Mr. Negative.

v. 43 And his attendant said, “What, shall I set this before a hundred men?” But he said, “Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, “They shall eat and have some left over.””

“And his attendant said, ‘What, shall I set this before a hundred men?’ But he said, ‘Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, “They shall eat and have some left over.””

What does that remind us of? Remember Jesus in John 6? He turns to Philip, who’s in charge of food service, and he says, “Where are we going to get bread that these people can eat?” The Lord already knows what He’s going to do.

Philip says, “Oh man, that’s a year’s salary for each to have one bite and that wouldn’t be enough.” Then he takes out a slide rule and his menu planning book and he’s calculating and he says, “Unheard of! Call a catering service. We can’t handle it.”

And then his nutty-buddy, just as though he is timed perfectly, comes walking in. He would have made a perfect Young Life leader, by the way. This high school guy’s got his

lunch, he's got five loaves and a couple of fish.

And if he'd have had a Twinkie and a bag of Fritos and a Diet Pepsi he could have sat out there and had a great lunch by himself, but Andrew's in charge of public relations. Been out there playing a little one-on-one and the guy says, "Hey! You want to join me for lunch?" And Andrew overhears this conversation between Philip and the Lord and he walks in and he says, "Hey, we have five loaves and a couple of fish."

Philip falls out. He's phlegmatic and loves laughter anyway. And they're just laughing over how ridiculous this sounds. This little lunch and this great big mob of people!

And then the leader gets serious and says, "Tell them to sit down." Ever been around something like that when everyone is making a lot of fun and somebody gets serious?

When they sat down, after everybody had eaten, we can almost hear them saying, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing." He gives all twelve of the guys a basket and He says, "Now go collect the fragments."

And as they're picking up the fragments, they have an exceeding abundance that's left over. And that's exactly what happens here.

The chapter begins with abundance and it ends with abundance. Isn't that something?

That ought to tell us something. That tells us if we're running around in spiritual poverty something's wrong with us. Not with the Lord. He's waiting to satisfy us abundantly—exceedingly above all we can ask or think.

Gehazi, just watch it. He learns a real good lesson.

v. 44 So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.

“So as he set it before them, they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.”

Now there are a lot of verses but there are some really good lessons that come out of the passage.

Lesson #1: The Lord often multiplies what we have to make provision for us in the hour of our need. This is seen in the jar of oil in the first part of the chapter, and in the twenty barley loaves and the ears of grain in the last part of the chapter.

And as we analyze our situation, the provision that the Lord might be making in our life is going to be multiplying what we have to meet our needs.

Lesson #2: The Lord's provision is always exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think because every vessel was filled.

Lesson #3: The Shunammite woman is seen as being great

because of her spirituality, her sensitivity, and her submission.

She's a woman of spirituality, sensitivity, submission and she has a servant's heart.

Lesson #4: The Shunammite woman is also another version of the principle recorded in Psalm 37: "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

Lesson #5: Many times the Lord puts His hand upon the provision that He has made previously to test us to see whether or not that gift has become more important than our relationship with Him.

And then there's also something else that comes with the test, and that is sometimes the Lord tests us to draw us more closely to Him.

The Psalmist said that. "Before I was afflicted I wanted a spirit that's good for me that I'd been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." (ref. Psalm 119:71)

Lesson #6: The Lord often tests our faith through the trials that we pass.

That is a common principle of the scripture.

Lesson #7: The Shunammite woman never loses her confidence in God through the entire trial. And as a result, is

rewarded for her faith and trust in God's ability to work all things together in this situation.

She really believes Romans 8:28 that God is working all things together with the emphasis on the together.

She might not understand it but she does not lack the ability to trust God's ability to put this thing together for His glory. She never loses her confidence in the Lord through the whole trial.

Lesson #8: It is necessary for Elisha to have personal contact with the dead child, even as Elijah did in 1 Kings 17. The great principle here, according to J. Vernon McGee, is: "That when we are dead in trespasses and sins, personal contact with Jesus Christ brings life. In Him we have life: He is life."

This teaches us that we must have personal contact with Jesus Christ before we have life.

Ephesians 2:1 says, "You are dead in your trespasses and sin until you come to the Lord Jesus Christ to save you."

Coming to Him by faith through personal contact is to have life. And we know whether or not that experience has taken place in our life.

Elisha must have personal contact with the child before life is given.

Lesson #9: Elisha first ministers to the spiritual needs of the prophets at Gilgal, and then to their physical needs.

Lesson #10: The Lord's provision of the barley loaves and the ears of grain was totally adequate for the situation, although it did not seem so from a human point of view.

Father, we entrust the Holy Spirit to take the Word of God and to prosper it where You've sent it. We thank You that we have not come together for meaningless chatter or for the waste of time, but we've come together to scrutinize Your plan and purpose in the Word of God. We pray right now in the stillness of this moment that You'll impress upon each one of us what You're trying to say. Whether it is "come to Me, I have the gift of life," deal with the problem of sin, repent and acknowledge it, or open our life by faith and allow Christ to come in. Perhaps right now it's some lesson that comes out the principles of the study of the day. May You now take Your Word and prosper it in the lives of those who have come to study it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

What You Need to Know About ELISHA:

**“Heir of the Spirit:
‘What wish shall I grant you
before I am taken away’ (2 Kings 2:9)”**

Study Number Three – 2 Kings 4:1-44

Notes

v. 1 Now a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.”

v. 2 And 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 except a jar of oil.”

v. 3 Then he said, “Go, borrow vessels at large for yourself from all your neighbors, even empty vessels; do not get a few.

v. 4 And you shall go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all these vessels; and you shall set aside what is full.”

v. 5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons; they were bringing the vessels to her and she poured.

v. 6 And it came about when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, “Bring me another vessel.” And he said to her, “There is not one vessel more.” And the oil stopped.

v. 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 can live on the rest.”

v. 8 Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food.

v. 9 And she said to her husband, “Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually.

Notes

v. 10 Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there.”

v. 11 One day he came there and turned in to the upper chamber and rested.

v. 12 Then he said to Gehazi his servant, “Call this Shunammite.” And when he had called her, she stood before him.

v. 13 And he said to him, “Say now to her, ‘Behold, you have been careful for us with all this care; what can I do for you? Would you be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the army? And she answered, “I live among my own people.”

v. 14 So he said, “What then is to be done for her?” And Gehazi answered, “Truly she has no son and her husband is old.”

v. 15 And he said, “Call her.” When he had called her, she stood in the doorway.

v. 16 Then he said, “At this season next year you shall embrace a son.” And she said, “No, my lord, O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant.”

v. 17 And the woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her.

v. 18 When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers.

v. 19 And he said to his father, “My head, my head.” And he said to his servant, “Carry him to his mother.”

v. 20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then died.

v. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door behind him, and went out.

v. 22 Then she called to her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and return.

v. 23 And he said, “Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.” And she said, “It will be well.”

v. 24 Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, “Drive and go forward; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you.”

v. 25 So she went and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel. And it came about when the man of God saw her at a distance, that he said to Gehazi his servant, “Behold, yonder is the Shunammite.

Notes

v. 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.”

v. 27 When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, “Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has hid it from me and has not told me.”

v. 28 Then she said, “Did I ask for a son from my lord? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me?’”

v. 29 Then he said to Gehazi, “Gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand, and go your way; if you meet any man, do not salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him; and lay my staff on the lad’s face.”

v. 30 And the mother of the lad said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” And he arose and followed her.

v. 31 Then Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff on the lad’s face, but there was neither sound nor response. So he returned to meet him and told him, “The lad has not awakened.”

v. 32 When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed.

v. 33 So he entered and shut the door behind them both, and prayed to the Lord.

v. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm.

v. 35 Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes.

v. 36 And he called Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, “Take up your son.”

v. 37 Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out.

v. 38 When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”

v. 39 Then one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know what they were.

Notes

v. 40 So they poured it out for the men to eat. And it came about as they were eating of the stew, that they cried out and said, “O man of God, there is death in the pot.” And they were unable to eat.

v. 41 But he said, “Now bring meal.” And he threw it into the pot, and he said, “Pour it out for the people that they may eat.” Then there was no harm in the pot.

v. 42 Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, “Give them to the people that they may eat.”

v. 43 And his attendant said, “What, shall I set this before a hundred men?” But he said, “Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, ‘They shall eat and have some left over.’”

v. 44 So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Kings 4:1-44 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What happens in verse 1?

3. Describe the miracle in verses 3-7.

4. What provision does the Lord make for the prophet in verses 8-11?

5. What promise does the prophet make to the Shunammite woman in verse 16?

6. Describe the tragedy in verses 19-21.

7. What does Elisha do for the woman in verses 32-36?

8. What happens in verses 38-44?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The Lord often multiplies what we have to make provision for us in the hour of our need. This is seen in the jar of oil in the first part of the chapter, and in the twenty barley loaves and the ears of grain in the last part of the chapter.

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