

“The PROPHET-- a Pot of Oil, A Widow, and GOD!”

Read the text: II Kings. 4:1-7

What a marvelous picture of the grace of God; what a wonderful picture of *asking and receiving*; what a glorious picture of faith in action.

God used Elisha as a mighty prophet.

We could spend months just studying his life story. This story takes place among the *sons of the prophets* or Bible school students we would say today. One young man dies, a widow is left with debts, the creditors are pressing and she may well have to sell her sons into slavery. Here is a glorious picture of trusting God -- trusting His care, provisions, and love. Many times God will test us, try us, to see if we truly trust Him. Do we trust His will and His sovereign plan for our lives? Many a preacher, missionary, or servant has had to go through an apprenticeship of poverty. *This is good.* All of us need to be tested by God to see if we will truly trust the Lord in all things.

God OPENS the Way for His Own When in TROUBLE!

We could well imagine the grief this widow was experiencing. First she loses her husband who was a student in the school of the prophets and now because of debt she was threatened with the loss of her sons. Yes, they did have schools to prepare men for service back then. **The widow was frantic**, about to lose her sons to a pitiless creditor who would sell her sons into slavery. God knew all about her need with no means to pay the debt and about to face further disaster. (How precious these verses as they apply to our needs: Psa. 55:22; Psa. 50:15; I Pet. 5:7; Jer. 33:3; Jer. 32:17, 27.)

God has a way, a remedy for only God can meet the need. The prophet was approached by the widow as to what to do her in anguish of heart. It is important to note the prophet needed to seek for wisdom to tell her what to do. What if he was not a true man of God who would humbly seek for guidance? He had to seek the Lord!

Often God USES What We HAVE!

What did the woman already have? And when you are in need--what do you already have? What is in your hand or at hand that the Lord may possible use to meet that need? Our God is a master of circumstances; a God of miracles. He gave Elisha wisdom to know and do! And God wants us to **trust** Him to do the unlikely, the unexpected, the improbable. **What do you have that God can use?** What you have is enough for God. God can multiply the very thing you have. (Matt. 8:33; Phil. 4:19) Consider Elijah and the scenes of God's manifest power. (I Kgs. 17:1-6) What did the Lord do to feed the 5,000? Moses what is in your hand?

In this text God Wants EMPTY VESSELS. . . not a Few! This all seemed so illogical. Oh, how important was trust, faith, and obedience! I think there is an application here that we must be vessels that are emptied of self, yielded, and usable. This is often a test in our lives! **God uses empty vessels:** Here is a New Testament lesson: God only blesses and uses vessels that are clean, yielded-- fit for His use. (II Tim.

2:19-22; Gal. 2:20) But we so often are full of self; full of our wills, desires, goals, plans, and determinations and God cannot use us.

Here was another **test**: would she **believe** the man of God? Would she borrow the vessels? Would she get many of them while not having any idea of God's plan as given through the prophet? Do we believe God and follow His leadership when it seems illogical, or contrary to human thinking?

God Answers In SECRET!

“And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door, shalt pour out.... thou shalt set aside that which is full.” (II Kgs. 4:1-7) Often God does business in our hearts when we are alone -- humble before Him. (Matt. 6:6) This was true in Joshua's life. (Josh 1:1-9) This was true in Nehemiah's life. (Neh. 1:1-10) Take courage, if you are alone! Take courage if things seem dark or hard. . .take courage if things don't seem fitting or right. God is on the throne. Often Abraham was alone; humanly he had no support. . . but he knew God's power and ability. (Gen. 15:1; Gen. 17:1-9)

God ANSWERS Fully and Faithfully!

There was *“oil enough,”* to pay the debts and to *“live on the rest;”* oil to pay the bills, to meet the need. God was providing totally -- fully, *“for the oil stayed.”* Now she was to *go, sell, and live of the rest.* (Phil. 4:19) The destiny of that home depended upon the work of God (Psa. 127:1). Elisha and the woman had to trust. God's great faithfulness is wonderful.

Faith takes God at His Word!

“Faith borrows the vessels, gets them ready, and a faithful God fills them.” (Consider: Mk 9:23; Heb.11:1, 6; Lk. 5:4) She firmly believed God's divine goodness. Elisha so walked with God he could direct this needy woman. It took simple obedience as she borrowed many vessels by faith. Here God was only limited by Elisha's and the woman's faith. (Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38-39) It is so often our faith that fails, not God's promises. (See II Tim. 2:13)

God wants to give to us... that we might give to His work. (Luke 6:38) God often gives above what we ask, and had there been more vessels there would have been oil to fill all of them. She had to make room for God to work. . .as she trusted the **“man of God,”** *whom God had given.* Do we make plans based on His Word and leadership? Do we pray big prayers? Do we *“open our mouths wide that He might fill them?”* (Read Psalm 81:10.) What are we doing about the lessons God is seeking to teach you?

Memorize: II Corinthians 1:20

If you are a Dad, be an Elisha, walk with God, know how in simple faith to guide your home!