

"Elisha and the Shunammite Woman"

Part 2

2 Kings 4:8-37

Introduction: Two weeks ago, in our study of the life of Elisha we were introduced to a lady who had a heart for God's servants. The Bible attaches to her a very unique title and that title is the focus of our message.

Notice 2 Kings 4:8

Here in this verse we find the title attached to this Shunammite woman. The Bible tells us she was GREAT. This is not a word that is used very often about human individuals in the Bible. We read about our great God, and about the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and even about some great angel or another, and we read of great actions and great events. But here was a great woman. So, in our study of this passage we are looking at the secrets of true greatness as found in the life of this Shunammite woman.

I. **Great People Show Great Kindness**

Notice 2 Kings 4:8-10

II. **Great People Receive Great Blessings**

Notice 2 Kings 4:11-17

This Shunammite woman and her husband used what God had given to them and they invested for eternity. The result of this was the conception of a child which we could say was the "fruit of the womb". The picture here for our lives is that when we use what God has given to us and we invest it into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ we are then bearing fruit which glorifies our Lord.

John 15:5-8

⁵ *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

⁶ *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*

⁷ *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Before we move on I want to take this application a little further. Everyone of God's children have something to invest for the Kingdom and we all need to be reminded that one day we shall stand before Him to give an answer as to how we invested what we were given.

Matthew 25:14-19

¹⁴ *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

¹⁵ *And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.*

¹⁶ *Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.*

¹⁷ *And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

¹⁸ *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Jesus tells us here that each person receives something which has value and is to be invested.

Notice the words of Clarke on this thought;

"The talent which each man has suits his own state best; and it is only pride and insanity which lead him to desire and envy the graces and the talents of another. Five talents would be too much for some men: one talent would be too little for others."

God gives to each of us that which is best for our own person. We need to understand that whatever we have been given it is all of great value. If you have been given only one talent, please understand it is of no less value than the five which someone else has been given. In the eyes of God all that we have been given is of great value and is to be invested for eternity. There will be a day of reckoning.

Now let us move on to the third point.

III. Great People Experience Great Sorrow

Notice 2 Kings 4:18-21

The child that God had blessed the Shunammite woman and her husband with has died. This situation always raises many questions to which none of us have the answers. I will raise some of these questions in a moment but first we need to see the application here.

Application:

The church today needs to understand that all of God's people are going to experience great sorrow throughout their lives. We live in a world that is under the curse and so sorrow and pain are certain seasons that we will experience in our lives.

Genesis 3:16-19

¹⁶ *Unto the woman he said, **I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;** and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

¹⁷ *And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;***

¹⁸ *Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;*

¹⁹ *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Romans 8:20-23

²⁰ *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,*

²¹ *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

²² *For we know that **the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.***

²³ ***And not only they, but ourselves also,** which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*

The point we need to understand is that even those who are committed to serving God will experience sorrow in this world of sin. Not one person is exempt from sorrow and

suffering. The Shunammite woman did nothing wrong and she had even invested into eternity and she still experienced the greatest heartache a woman can ever feel.

Now when this deep sorrow comes there are questions which we have no answers for. With the Shunammite woman the one question which may have been in her mind was this:

Why did God give me a child and then allow him to die?

These heartbreaking situations are so difficult. On one hand you know that God loves us, and He wants the best for us. You know that He loves us with an everlasting love. But on the other hand, there is a deceased child or mom or dad. It is so difficult to bring the two together.

IV. **Great People Experience Great Peace**

Notice 2 Kings 4:22-27

Two times in this text the woman says, "It is well." Her heart was broken as we see in verse 27 but at the same time she had a peace in the midst of the storm. This woman knew her God, and she knew that He was aware, that He had a plan, that He was in control, that whatever happened, it would be all right because there is a God in heaven who is greater than any of the problems which we face. So, she could honestly say:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

It is well, with my soul,
It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blessed assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

It is well, with my soul,
It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Application:

This kind of peace is only known by those who are walking close to the Lord.

Isaiah 26:3

³ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

This is what we talked about on Sunday morning a few weeks back. David knew this peace when Absalom rebelled.

Psalm 3:1-5

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

² Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

³ But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

⁴ I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

⁵ I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

Psalm 61:1-4

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

² From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

³ For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

⁴ I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.

It is so important that we seek to develop a deeper walk with our Lord because we live a world that is under the curse and sorrow will come.

V. Great People Rely on Great Prayer

Notice 2 Kings 4:28-35

Now the focus turns to Elisha. He goes to his room and he prays then he lays upon the child and the child's flesh begins to warm. He then stands up and walks around his room and he does the same thing again. The child then sneezes seven times and then opens his eyes.

By Elisha stretching himself upon the child many believe he was pouring out his soul in prayer. He prayed when he entered the room and then he stretched himself out upon the child twice before he was resurrected.

Application:

Persistent prayer is truly the mark of great people. Too many of God's people are shallow in their prayers and it is rare that you find a person who pours their soul into praying for their needs or the needs of others. It is this kind of prayer that moves the hands of God. Let me show you how committed the apostles were to prayer.

Acts 6:1-4

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

² Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Let me show you what the Bible records concerning Daniel.

Daniel 6:9-10

⁹ Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

VI. **Great People have Great Hope**

Notice 2 Kings 4:36-37

The woman received her son back again. Now let me just remind you that our prayers are not always answered in this way. We pray for loved ones and family and they still die. Remember we live in a cursed world and death is natural. But as believers we do have great hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

*¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and **the dead in Christ shall rise first:***

*¹⁷ **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds,** to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Conclusion:

Great people rest in a Great God.