

The Shunammite Woman"

2 Kings 4:3-37

Introduction: Today for our Mother's Day message I want us to look at a very special lady found in 2 Kings 4. She is special and unique because she the Spirit of God takes a great deal of care to tell us about her. There is not one perfect mom and so I am not here to shame you ladies for your imperfections. I just was us to see why God would spend so many verses telling us about this woman and gather some lessons from her life.

➤ **Her Location**

Notice 2 Kings 4:8

We find in this verse that this woman lived in Shunem. At first this does not seem to be very significant but we must do a little searching to get a better picture.

Joshua 19:17-18

¹⁷ And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families.

*¹⁸ And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and **Shunem**,*

Here we see that the land of Shunem was given to the tribe of Issachar. Now let us notice the last words of Jacob to his sons in Genesis 49.

Genesis 49:1-2, 14-15

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

² Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

*¹⁴ **Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:***

*¹⁵ **And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.***

Here we see that the people of the tribe of Issachar would be hard working people who would dwell in a land that was pleasant. It would be from this tribe that many warriors

rose up. They would be willing to carry the burdens of others. They would be servants to others and this was an honoring statement.

Matthew 23:11-12

¹¹ But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

¹² And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

From all of this we can understand that the Shunammite woman was a hard worker who served others and she lived in a very pleasant land.

➤ **Her Greatness**

Notice 2 Kings 4:8

Elisha would often pass through this area and the woman became familiar with him and she encouraged him to stop and eat when he would pass through. She is called a GREAT woman for many reasons. One reason was because she was a wealthy woman who feared the Lord. But there were other reasons why she is called GREAT. She was a woman who used her wealth to invest in eternity. We see in this verse that she has a servant's heart for she reaches out to serve Elisha. She then uses her wealth to provide for his needs.

Notice 2 Kings 4:9-10

In verse 10 we see that this woman desired to use her wealth to build a room onto her house for Elisha to rest in when he would pass through.

✓ **Lesson #1**

- **She used her wealth to glorify God.**

When we look at this woman, we must keep in mind that she lived in a very pleasant land and she had material wealth. But neither of this would she allow to take her away from serving God. Let me make it very clear that it is no sin to be wealthy and no wealthy believer should be ashamed of their wealth. The problem comes in when people acquire wealth and they allow it to control them and to take them away from the Lord.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

¹⁷ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

¹⁸ That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

¹⁹ Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

The Bible instructs those who have wealth to invest in in eternity. It also warns those who desire to be wealthy.

1 Timothy 6:8-11

⁸ And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

⁹ But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

¹¹ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Getting back to the Shunamite woman, she was wealthy and she lived in a pleasant land but she did not allow these to pull her away from serving the Lord.

Now before we leave this thought I want to raise one more thought. Some people would say that they cannot glorify God with their wealth because they have very little.

Notice 2 Kings 4:1-7

Here is a woman who had nothing but a pot of oil. She then glorified God with her faith in her poverty. The point between these two accounts is that no matter what our circumstances we can always glorify the Lord with what we have.

✓ Lesson #2

- **She was rich in spiritual wisdom and insight.**

Notice 2 Kings 4:9

As this woman watched Elisha, she perceived that he was a Godly man. This is a breath of fresh air for her and her husband. Let us remember the spiritual climate at this time. This is still the northern kingdom and the leaders are corrupt. To find a man of God was very

rare, but she had the discernment to see that Elisha was different. The way that verse 9 is worded seems as though she had more discernment than her husband because she is the one who makes the statement.

Application:

If there was ever a day when moms needed spiritual discernment it is today. There is an increasing amount of deception all around us. Moms and dads both need to be well grounded in the Word of God to have the discernment to guide their children. Notice the warning Paul gave to Timothy.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

² Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

The writer of Hebrews rebuked his readers concerning their lack of spiritual growth which would affect their discernment.

Hebrews 5:12-14

¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

✓ **Lesson #3**

- **She honored the leadership of her husband.**

Notice 2 Kings 4:9-10

She had spiritual discernment that her husband did not have but she did not try to belittle him. She then suggested that they build a room for Elisha. She suggested it but she did not demand it. She knew the hierarchy that God had appointed for the family. She knew that her husband was the spiritual leader and she would do nothing to make seem inferior to her.

Application:

This is such an important characteristic in this woman and it should be found in every woman especially those who are believers. God has appointed the husband to be the spiritual leader and the wife is to recognize him as the leader of the family. In too many families the roles have been reversed for one of two reasons.

In some families the woman has become the spiritual leader because the husband will not step up and do his part. So, the mom has had to fill the position that the dad was supposed to fill. If that is your family then men you need to understand that one day you will be held accountable for the position that God entrusted to you.

Ephesians 5:22-25

²² *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

²³ **For the husband is the head of the wife**, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

²⁴ *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

The second reason that the roles have been reversed in the family is because the woman has become domineering. She desires to lead and this should never be the case.

Genesis 3:16

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.***

The desire of the woman is to rule over her husband and that is completely against the will of God.

✓ Lesson #4

- She was willing to serve.

Notice 2 Kings 4:11-12, 15

We need to notice that two times we are told that she STOOD before Elisha. This is the position of a person that is ready to serve. Remember what we learned about Elijah?

1 Kings 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Elijah stood before the Lord ready to serve. When the Shunamite woman stood before Elisha she stood ready to serve the Lord in whatever way she could be used.

Application:

This again emphasizes the fact that her wealth and her location in the pleasant land did not distract her. She was ready to do what the Lord would have her to do. This is a wonderful characteristic to be found in moms and dads. But too many times, there is no willingness to serve because there is a distraction. They have plans for the weekends so they cannot get involved. The kids have things going on and there is no time to serve. Little by little time gets away and the next thing you know the opportunities are gone. You could have served and set a wonderful example for your children to follow but life got in the way.

✓ Lesson #5

- She was content.

Notice 2 Kings 4:11-13

This is very revealing about this woman. Many times, people who are wealthy always have a desire for something more. The reason is because they do not have the Lord so they try to stuff all they can into their life in an attempt to fill the void. We see this in our world today as people with great wealth are not satisfied and they then reach for POWER and CONTROL. They are trying to fill a black hole that only Jesus Christ can fill.

Conclusion:

This is some of what made this woman great.

1. She used her wealth to glorify God.
2. She was rich in spiritual wisdom and insight.
3. She honored the leadership of her husband.
4. She was willing to serve.
5. She was content.