



No.06 - The Shunammite Woman - Death and restoration.

2 Kings 4:8-37.

This time we are looking at a woman that can teach us all a lesson or two. She was not given a name in the Bible, but she had a vital part to play in meeting the needs of the visiting man of God, Elisha. As she offers herself and all her possessions to God, He gives her creative ideas to bless His child and as a result of her giving and unselfish dedication; she has all her desires met and she sees miracles of resurrection from the dead and provision in famine and full restoration.

This amazingly blessed lady was married to a much older man, whom she loved dearly and whom she consulted when decisions had to be made. She worked for God in her own home and was wealthy, but did not allow this to make her lazy. She used her wealth to bless others. She didn't just give of her wealth but gave of her time and energy by providing a meal for Elisha each time he was in the area. After watching Elisha's behaviour over a period of time, and realising that he **really** was a man of God - his words matched his actions - she wanted to make some form of commitment to him. God gave her an idea in her creative thinking, how to make a more homely facility for Elisha. Her husband graciously agreed. She built a penthouse suite he could call his own, with his own private entrance, fully fitted with his own chosen pine furniture!

Elisha was so grateful he wanted to look for some way he could repay her, but she declared that she was very happy with her lot and there was not anything she needed (**2 Kings 4:13**). She certainly did not serve Elisha in order to receive anything in return but it was a natural outworking of her love for God and gratefulness for all the prosperity He had given her. Her wealth was not something to pamper herself with, but to bless all with whom she came into contact. Elisha's servant Gehazi was more discerning and pointed out to Elisha that the lady of the house's husband was old and there were no babies.

"No my lord, O man of God, please do not lie to your maidservant" 2 Kings 4:16

Immediately Elisha prayed for the blessing of a son for the kind lady but her immediate reaction was a negative one of disbelief and not daring to hope, for fear of disappointment. The birth of a son was obviously something she had resigned herself to not fulfilling a long time before, and she had channelled the love, kindness and caring of motherhood into having a positive influence in her neighbourhood (**2 Kings 4:8**). When asked if there was any blessing she wanted, it didn't rise up in her to ask for a son; she had buried the desire well. Despite her reaction God wanted to bless her for her love and service to Elisha, and grant the desire of her heart, that she didn't even acknowledge that she had. All our gifts, talents, wealth and possessions are to be available to God for His use where He wants.

- 1) Any disappointments in life can be overcome if we just recognise that they work for our good.
- 2) God's passionate desire is to bless all His children whether we believe it or not.
- 3) We are to take any opportunity that comes to us to bless men of God that visit or our vicar/pastor that we have with us all the time. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you creative ideas.

Hospitality is a vital part of walking with God (**Hebrews 13:2**)

- a) Open your home according to your family needs (**1 Peter 4:9**).
- b) Don't set too high a standard (**Romans 12:13**).
- c) Remember those you do not know well, and the outcasts (**Matthew 25:35; Hebrews 13:2**).
- d) Entertain those who can't pay you back, (**3 John 7-8**).
- e) Make Jesus central to talk, food and friendship. (**Deuteronomy 6:6-9**).
- f) Do not let competitiveness come in (**Romans 12:16**).
- g) Let peace pervade your home at all times (**Romans 12:18**)
- h) Do not waste any time. You can't make it up (**Psalms 89:47**).

She said "It will be all right"..... "It is well." (2 Kings 4:23-26)

The precious son, a gift from God, is born just as the man of God had predicted. When the son is probably about four years old he goes out to the fields with his father, but suffers a terrible headache and he is carried home to his mother (**2 Kings 4:19**) where she nurses him until he dies. How many times when the life of her son was fading before her very eyes must she have gone back over the arrival of the man of God and the fantastic promise of a son, with its fulfilment just as he had said? She knows now that the God of

Elisha who gave her this precious gift is the only hope in this situation when death is taking him from her, so she must see Elisha and she must believe. She maybe remembers when Elijah raised a child from the dead at Zarephath (**1 Kings 17:17-24**), and she knows that the blessing that was on him is now on Elisha. She places the child on Elisha's bed where he normally prays and meditates when he is staying there. She can't waste any time so she collects a donkey from her husband to go the 25 miles to Mount Carmel to get Elisha.

When she sees her husband she does not give a negative report, but expresses what she expects the outcome to be. He doesn't seem to express any interest or concern for the son but wonders why she is wanting to be religious on an ordinary day (**2 Kings 4:23**). She has such a lovely character that she does not become full of self-pity as she is determined to do all she can to help her son, so she keeps her attitude right and focused. She obviously knows that '**life and death is in the power of the tongue**', (**Proverbs 18:21**) so she only speaks faith words, creating the outcome out of her mouth. Even as she meets Gehazi she says "**It is well**". This is amazing self control and authority over her flesh. This woman who has learnt from her life experiences to be like her Creator God. In **Genesis 1:3** it says God saw darkness and spoke to it. 'Let there be light; and there was light.' God had an image inside Him and He expressed that in words. She did exactly the same and she received back her son from the dead.

When she sees Elisha all her emotions spill over from her breaking heart. She reminds him what he did for her at the beginning to bring about the boy's life; he now needs to do again to restore his life. This time she declares amazing faith in the living God and her life in Him, "**As the Lord lives and as my soul lives.**" (**2 Kings 4:30**) She was totally determined that Elisha would return with her, Gehazi was not satisfactory. Since she had totally dedicated herself to see to his needs she now expected him to return with her and pray for her son and receive a miracle from the Living God.

Elisha did just what Elijah had done before him, praying, lying on the small boy and God raised him from death. The mother received the son twice from God and her faith the second time was rewarded. Instead of a funeral wake she had a celebration party giving glory to God.

- 1)** Prepare in the good times to have faith in God. (**Mark 11:22; Romans 10:17**)
- 2)** Use all life's situations to grow in the knowledge of God. (**Ephesians 4:15**)
- 3)** Speak daily according to the Word and ONLY the Word. (**Colossians 4:6**)
- 4)** Always expect the best result and do not accept anything less. (**Jude 21**)

2 Kings 8:1-6

Some years later the Shunammite lady who had lost her elderly husband is warned by Elisha about a famine that is coming on the land for seven years. She takes his advice and moves her whole household away to the land of the Philistines, until the famine is over.

When she returns to the homeland she has lost her home and fields. She goes to see the King and God sets up another **divine appointment** for this special lady, who through trials has kept her heart right with Him and with others. She has expected great things from Him and He has responded to her faith, determination and humility. God makes sure Gehazi is with the King telling him all about the amazing things that Elisha has done including the raising of the dead boy, and in walks the mother and son. **What timing!** Immediately the King appoints an officer to see the **complete restoration** of all her property and the income that has come from it over the seven years.

God is no man's debtor. When we give everything to God, look at all we receive in return, a permanent place in heaven; all our sins washed away, and all the power we need to walk with Him on a daily basis in the Holy Spirit who lives in us. What joy!!

No.06 - The Shunammite Woman - Death and restoration - Challenge Questions.

1. What did you find most challenging last week from the study?
2. Read the notes about the Shunammite woman. What do you find a) most encouraging? b) most exciting?
3. Are you practising the gift of hospitality as often as you should? Look up the verses under the '**hospitality**' heading; are there any challenges for you there? What action are you required to take?
4. What do you think about the Shunammite woman's verbal response to the death of her son? When do you find it easy to control your tongue and when do you find it difficult. Check out **Proverbs 18:12** and ask God to show you how important your tongue is.

Read Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-25

5. Write down as many facts about Mary as you can just from these readings.
6. What strong emotion did Mary have when Gabriel appeared? (**Luke 1:29**) How do you think she felt after he left?
7. How was Jesus conceived? Do you think this is what happens in the spiritual realm when we are born again? How? What is the outcome?

Read Luke 1:39-56

8. What were Mary's thoughts about God and what did she think about herself?

Read Luke 2:16-19 and Luke 2:30-35

9. Suggest some of the things that 'Mary pondered in her heart'.

10. What in your opinion is Mary's strongest characteristic? (E.g. Her obedience; her love; her sacrifice etc.)

Read John 19:25-27

11. Do you think Mary had all the reactions of a natural mother at the death of her eldest son? What provision did Jesus make for her? What does this say to you?

12. What do you like most and find most challenging about Mary?

13. Learn "**For nothing is impossible with God**" **Luke 1:37** and apply it daily, speaking it out. What does it mean to you in your situation?

Or Learn "**I am the Lord's servant....May it be to me as You have said**" **Luke 1:38**
Meditate until the words become the attitude of your heart in every area of your life.