

## Sunday Morning Message

April 29, 2018 (text also preached on April 26, 2015 and July 29, 2012)

### How Can I Help You?

Text – 2 Kings 4:1 – 7 (Text Verse – 2 Kings 4:2)

Congregational Reading – 2 Kings 4:1 – 7

#### Introduction

In our text today, we will learn about a widow woman who had a tremendous need that was met by God through the prophet Elisha. We will see what God did through the prophet in the life of this widow, and we will glean some important, practical principles along the way.

Interestingly, two of the important underlying precepts that we will discuss this morning are not actually included in the passage; but I believe that they are understood to be there.

#### I The Woman Had a Problem (v. 1)

*"Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen." - (2 Kings 4:1)*

Notice that the widow had a prophet for a husband. This is important. This woman, no doubt had given up a lot because of her husband's service for the Lord. Most preachers along with their families sacrifice everything when they answer God's call. God would not be a debtor to this woman. God will take care of her.

Notice that the widow had a problem with debt. Please be careful about debt. The Bible is clear that the borrower is servant to the lender (Proverbs 22:7). Perhaps this woman, or possibly her husband went to the creditors instead of going to God. If you have a need, go to God, before you reach for the credit card.

Put in a plug for Financial Peace University

Notice also that the widow had a preacher, and was wise enough to go to him in order to get help with her problem. She went to the prophet. If you have a serious problem, as this woman did. Get help. Go to a man of God, or perhaps a woman of God, who will pray for you and give you some counsel.

#### II The Woman Had a Preacher (vs. 2 – 7)

The Lord was going to provide a solution through the prophet

Note - I bet that this woman later regretted that she didn't go a little further to find more vessels to fill with oil. Had she known what God was going to do, she would have worked harder.

#### III The Passage Has Some Hidden Principles (Not Specifically Mentioned – But Understood)

There are two parts of this short story that are undisclosed: they are not recorded. I am sure that they actually happened, even though God did not tell us about them in the text.

#### A The Worker's Prayer

I am sure that Elisha was acting as an agent of, and under the direction and authority of God. Whether it was an audible prayer, or perhaps a silent prayer, I am sure Elisha was in communication with God as he helped this woman.

Illustration regarding silent prayer – the Bible says that we are to pray without ceasing: When asked how much time he spent in prayer, George Muller's reply was, "Hours every day. But I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk and when I lie down and when I arise. And the answers are always coming." (Source Unknown)

A word of caution to those of us who are often called upon to help people with their problems: Make sure you pray. If possible, pray before you meet with them. Pray silently while you meet with them, and pray publically with them.

No doubt, the woman prayed herself also, but her prayer lead her to the man of God.

Have you prayed today? What problems are you facing in life that God could help you with if you simply asked Him?

*"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." - (James 4:2)*

*"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." - (Philippians 4:6)*

*"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." - (James 5:16)*

"Four things let us ever keep in mind: God hears prayer, God heeds prayer, God answers prayer, and God delivers by prayer." E. M. Bounds

"You can do more than pray after you have prayed; but you can never do more than pray until you have prayed." A.J. Gordon

"Prayer is weakness leaning on omnipotence." W. S. Bowd

"Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work." Oswald Chambers.

"What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use— men of prayer, men mighty in prayer" E.M. Bounds

God provided a great miracle for this family in our text, because their preacher prayed.

## **B The Widow's Praise**

The story ends abruptly. We don't read anymore about this woman and her sons, but I can almost guarantee that this woman praised the Lord for His miraculous provision.

Have you stopped to thank the Lord today for His provision?

Money in your pocket and a job to provide more

Food and water

Roof over your head  
Clothes on your back  
Possessions  
Church

God has been good to each and every one of us. We need to be thankful for His provision.

*"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." - (Psalm 100:4)*

*"And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." - (Psalm 107:22)*

*"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." - (Philippians 4:6)*

## Conclusion

What can we learn from this passage?

People Have Problems

For one thing, we have seen what can happen if we are not careful regarding debt; but financial problems are just one kind of problem that people will face in life.

People Need God's Provision

People Need A Preacher – God wants His people to humble themselves and go for help.

Elisha said, *"What shall I do for thee?"* His purpose was people.

God has ordained a process for getting help with our problems. If you have a problem, get help. Go to the preacher, or perhaps one of the agents of the preacher, for two reasons:

### 1 He can pray for you.

*"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." - (Acts 6:4)*

### 2 He can counsel you.

*"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." - (Proverbs 11:14)*

Sometimes people are too prideful to go to a preacher for help. God has ordained this process, and God works through it. It's not that the preacher is more spiritual than you are, or more wise than you are. It is simply the way God has set it up. It is a supernatural thing. God blesses when we follow His plan.

People Need To Praise – Appreciate

We need to appreciate what God has already done for us in the past; and we need to appreciate by faith what God will do for us in the future. When we have a problem, we need to praise God for the solution to that problem, even before He answers it.