


1  **God Doesn't Need My Faith**

2 Kings 4

2  **THE STORY**

3  **1) Hospitality**

- *One day Elisha went on to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to eat some food. So whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to eat food. And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I know that this is a holy man of God who is continually passing our way. Let us make a small room on the roof with walls and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there." (2Ki 4:8-10)*

4  **The room**

- This wealthy, godly woman from Shunem demonstrates hospitality to Elisha by first inviting him in to eat with her family, and later by building a room in which he can stay.
- In so doing, she is demonstrating the biblical gift and ministry of hospitality – especially to those who are involved in the Lord's service.

5  **The reward**

- *One day he came there, and he turned into the chamber and rested there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." When he had called her, she stood before him. And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'See, you have taken all this trouble for us; what is to be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'" She answered, "I dwell among my own people." (2Ki 4:11-13)*

6  **The reward**

- *And he said, "What then is to be done for her?" Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old." He said, "Call her." And when he had called her, she stood in the doorway. And he said, "At this season, about this time next year, you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God; do not lie to your servant." (2Ki 4:14-16)*

7  **The reward**

- Elisha wishes to reward this woman for her generosity and stewardship.
- The woman, however, is content with everything she has.
- Elisha, after consulting with his servant, decides to bless the woman with the miraculous conception and birth of a son.
- The woman pleads with Elisha not to raise her hopes up too high.

8  **The reward**

- Notice that the Shunamite woman's faith is not what eventually provides her with a son.
- God's actions, blessings, and grace are not always limited by our "faith" – that is, our belief in what we think God will do.
- What we do see is that God always honors faithfulness. Not always immediately – but he rewards faithful stewardship with greater opportunities for stewardship.

9  **2) Heartache**

- *But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Elisha had said to her. When the child had grown, he went out one*

day to his father among the reapers. And he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out. (2Ki 4:17-21)

10  **The source of the heartache**

- While working in the fields with his father, the boy becomes ill and dies.
- The Shunamite's immediate reaction is to keep it from her husband – going so far as to deceive him and tell him everything is fine – and go for help to Elisha.

11  **The source of the heartache**

- *And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of God said, "Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me." Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" (2Ki 4:27-28)*

12  **The source of the heartache**

- The woman's response to this tragedy is less than spiritual.
- She immediately blames Elisha for it, pointing out that she never asked for a son, and goes so far as to say that it would have been better if her son had never been born – at least then she would have been spared the pain she is feeling now.

13  **The source of the heartache**

- The woman's response during this time of pain is only natural, and Elisha does not chide her for her words or for her lack of faith.
- Instead, he is moved to action.
- Meeting practical needs should always take priority over sermonizing – doing so makes us credible messengers.

14  **3) Happiness**

- *When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. (2Ki 4:32-35)*

15  **Healing**

- First, Gehazi goes to the boy with Elisha's staff and tries to heal him (and fails).
- It is important to note that God *could* have raised the boy in this way just as easily as in any other way (later, God will use Elisha's bones to raise the dead).
- We do not know the reason it failed – but it is possible it had something to do with Gehazi's hidden sin.

16  **Healing**

- Elisha then comes to the boy:
 - Elisha stretches himself over the boy, in the same way that his former master (Elijah) had done.
 - The boy begins to be restored to life.
 - Elisha then paces before stretching himself over the boy once again.

– The boy then sneezes seven times and opens his eyes.

17  **Sneezed?**

- The Hebrew word used here for “sneeze” can also mean to diffuse or expel air rapidly.
- Whatever the case, this rapid, sudden exhaling signified the completeness of the boy’s resurrection.

18  **The family restored**

- *Then he summoned Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son." She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out. (2Ki 4:36-37)*

19  **Parallel stories**

- Both Elisha and his predecessor, Elisha, have similar stories:
 - Both forged close relationships with widows who showed them hospitalities
 - Both women’s sons were preserved or born through divine intervention
 - Both women’s sons die
 - Both women react in anger rather than in faith
 - Both women’s sons are restored to them

20  **Epilogue**

- But God is not yet done with the Shunnamite.
- In 2 Kings 8, we are given the rest of the story:
- *Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, "Arise, and depart with your household, and sojourn wherever you can, for the LORD has called for a famine, and it will come upon the land for seven years." So the woman arose and did according to the word of the man of God. She went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. (2Ki 8:1-2)*

21  **Epilogue**


- *And at the end of the seven years, when the woman returned from the land of the Philistines, she went to appeal to the king for her house and her land. Now the king was talking with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me all the great things that Elisha has done." And while he was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life appealed to the king for her house and her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, here is the woman, and here is her son whom Elisha restored to life." (2Ki 8:3-5)*

22  **Epilogue**


- *And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed an official for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, together with all the produce of the fields from the day that she left the land until now." (2Ki 8:6)*

23  **Faith & Faithfulness**


- God acts miraculously on this woman’s behalf multiple times, as a reward of her faithfulness, not her spirituality:
 - By sending her a son
 - By restoring her son to life
 - By sending her out of the country during a time of famine
 - By restoring her lands to her when she returned to Israel

24  **God doesn’t need your faith**

- God doesn't need your faith – *you* need your faith.
- Faith isn't something that we have that enables God to act in our lives.
- Faith enables obedience on our part to God's revealed will.
- The widow demonstrates this in her hospitality and in following Elisha's commands.

25  **God doesn't need your faith**

- *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.* (Heb 11:6)
- Faith is not believing that God is going to give me whatever I want – it is believing me that God has already given me everything I need.

26  **God doesn't need your faith**

- The Shunamite woman and the Widow of Zaraphath were not “super-saints.”
- They didn't “name it and claim it.”
- But they *did* obey God's commands and leave the results to Him.