

**START WITH A STORY:** A story or a joke.

**TEXT:** 2 Kings 4 – A PREACHERS WIDOW

**OPENING THOUGHT:** - I appreciate what Jason said pertaining to “Truth being valuable. Why go to all the effort to get it if you are not going to dwell on it and think on it through out the day.” That really challenged my spirit this past week and I’ve found the two lessons he taught to be most profitable.

**LESSON:**

Its interesting that, as the wife of a preacher, she had no one else to turn to BUT Elisha.

ONE OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS ???

## 2 Kings 2

3 And the **sons of the prophets** that were at **Bethel** came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

5 And the **sons of the prophets** that were at **Jericho** came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

15 And when the **sons of the prophets** which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

Her husband certainly was not a man of wealth, or she would have been cared for. Under the intense oppression of the *Reigning Powers that Be (Ahab/Jesabel and the years of fallout that followed after their demise)* Her husband would have likely been one of the 7k that did not bow a knee to baal, had he not been slain, and MAY HAVE even been among the 100 Obadiah hid in caves.

Her husband dead, having spent his life looking after the service of the Lord God Jehovah, she was left behind with two boys, some hard-hearted creditors, a lot of debt, and a cruise of oil.

I do not know if this debt was incurred by her late husband, or if, after his passing, she took it upon herself to now be the provider for the family. If there is one thing I can safely say of women, if they see immediate need, they address the immediate need.

She goes to Elisha, or rather, Elijah II.

## **LOOK AT HIS ADVICE:**

**1. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?** - Elisha had little earthly means, himself. He was not in a financial position to reach out and extend support. Foolish prophet! He couldn't preach for money, he didn't accept money, and apparently he had not even made it to any of the Ramsey Baby-Steps to help himself so he benevolently COULD help others while sitting comfortably with his own needs well in hand.

**2. WHAT DO YOU HAVE?** - I honestly believe that if she had listed the catalog of the house, he would likely have told her what you or I would have told her. Go sell what you have and settle with the creditors. Except, she had nothing but a pot of oil. And the fact that she had to borrow pots to fill seems to indicate that she may have already sold off whatever she had to satisfy her creditors.

Interestingly enough, this oil, likely extracted from olives, in and of itself is not an edible product, but rather, a staple INGREDIENT of, for example, making unleaven bread, or anointing, or burning.

**3. HE DID NOT SAY, “BE WARMED AND FILLED”,** but rather, seemed to know that God, Himself, would be a Husband to the widow, and a Father to the fatherless. God, rather than build a miracle from scratch and out of the blue, instead, CHOSES TO USE WHAT HE HAD ALREADY PROVIDED.

*(BOY! If you missed that in last Sunday's sermon on the 5 Loafs and 2 Fishes, you missed a tremendously challenging truth! MacGyver may be guilty of perverting the use of everyday items, but God can take what He has already provided and manage quite nicely with it.)*

I think what happens is that we, by our nature, expect BIG THINGS to come out of a Big God. The bigger the foot, the bigger the footprint, and the more displacement of the water when its stepped on, right? But the same God of the hurricane and the tornado and the fire... is the same God of the still small voice from the cave.

Instead of a “meal for a day,” or an on-the-spot impromptu love offering, she is set up in small business. God, true to His expressed Word and Character, provides and does so with a miracle.

The oil could only be sold, and thus satisfy the creditors as well as provide for her family.

**NOTICE CAREFULLY SHE WAS INSTRUCTED TO ENTER HER HOUSE WITH HER BOYS AND CLOSE THE DOOR...** no one must know of this miracle. With one boy bringing the empty jars and the other taking away the full ones, no one could see the source of the miracle, but rather simply the continuous flow of the olive extract.

Unlike the similar miracle **ELIJAH** did for another widow with the meal and oil, this oil was not given to be kept, but rather given to be given back out. The miracle of a gift from God only multiplies when it is given back out to others.

**ILL** – Like the wicked servant who buried his talent, rather than invest it for profit like his wiser contemporaries, talents were never meant to enrich ourselves, but rather, to invest that God may get returns on His glory.

**NOTE:** –

It has only recently dawned on me that very very VERY few, if any, miracles God has chosen to do were for the sake of pure show, but rather nearly every one of them served a distinct purpose and practical function.

From the flood of Noah to the food of the foothills, God's miracles always seem to me to be very purposeful and practical.

- - Coin in fishes mouth > pay taxes
- - Fish and loves > feed the needful multitudes
- - Saul knocked off his horse and blinded > get Saul's attention
- - 10 Lepers > restored to society and family
- - The axe head floats > graciously resolves a potentially nasty besmirch
- - Three Hebrew Heroes in the Fiery Furnace > Refocus the leadership
- - Judah is surrounded by 3 kings in a desert place > God has them dig holes to hold the rain.
- - Even the wedding at Cana – Provided where there was shortage. (*By the way, Just because Jesus meets a simple need, have you noticed how, like the Big Media gets the story completely distorted, Jesus inadvertently condoned alcoholism, prognosticated Mary worship, prematurely started His ministry, and initiated a whole host of false doctrines!!! God's Words are PURE... its when mankind starts tinkering with them that all of these fallacies begin to start flying around.*)
- on and on...

**Q: ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS?**

**MOUNT CARMEL -**

The closest 'miracle' I can think of that revolves around great **showmanship** of any amount might be the fire from heaven in front of the prophets of baal. BUT WE MUST FIRST ASK, Was the showmanship *of God* or was it *of man*? Elijah had the idea to soak the sacrifice, filling a trench with water. I believe he had every confidence in God, and zealously laid it on thick, willing to put this question to rest once and for all in the hearts of the people.

**PLAUSES OF EGYPT -**

Even the miracles of the plagues for the Egyptians, while we like to ascribe an element of showmanship, (*Lest Charlton Heston's performance fade in vain*) seems to be rather matter-of-fact and entirely purposeful in accordance to the different false gods the Egyptians worshiped!

The contention of adolitary and false gods needed to be addressed before BOTH parties involved as well as the obvious matter of God delivering His chosen people out of Egypt.

## **Exodus 8**

26 And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?

Moses insisted that the people go into the wilderness to sacrifice unto God that thing which is an abomination unto the Egyptian people, and Pharaoh, at one point, was willing to ascend to let them do this, provided they remembered to come back... I mean, there's STILL work to be done. Pyramids need building and there's a huge monstrous forerunner to Mount Rushmore that only has one sphinx mostly finished... *it* still needs a nose! If the Egyptians have to take up building where the Hebrews left off, there's no telling how long THAT nose would last.

## **RAISING LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD -**

Surely raising Lazarus from the dead should count, right?

Didn't He go a little on the showmanship side for the sake of those around Him?.. I was surprised to find in **John 11:42**, this is not quite the case. Jesus **PRAYS OUT LOUD** for the benefit of those around Him.

And lest you are lost to this final detail, note that Lazarus obeyed, albeit, do you know how hard it is to walk whilst wrapped in grave wrappings?!!? For Scripture records that he was bound hand and foot.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Q: What is the fundamental difference between a miracle and a prophecy?!?

- BOTH are supernatural acts of God, right?
- Both are in accordance to the Sovereign Will of God.
- Both are in complete harmony with His expressed Character.
- Both bring honor and glory to God.
- Both bring God pleasure

## **Isaiah 46**

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 **Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done**, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Q: Could it be that the difference is the viewpoint by which we observe God's Hand at work?  
Miracles are observed in the present. Prophecy is most often realized far after the fact.

**We** beseech God for miracles, as we envision our needs are to be met.

**Christ** beseeched that God's Will be done.

Is it possible to have faith that God will do the right thing?