

A Great Woman

Text: II Kings 4:8-37

Intro:

Prayer: We thank you Father God, for godly women who, like Mary of old, have responded to your will by saying, ***“Let it be done to me as you have said.”*** We are grateful for the strength and stability Christian mothers have brought to our community, our church, and to our nation. Here at PCN on this day of recognition of Mothers, may the mothers who are here experience a special blessing of grace, joy and peace. We thank you for every mother who taught us to be faithful stewards of life. May we sense today from this message the overwhelming power of Your Holy Spirit as He challenges us to live lives that are influenced in a right and positive way. Amen

It was April 1976 in Harper’s Magazine that Michael Novak wrote these words:

We live in curious times. Choosing to have a family used to be routine. But so many, so varied and so aggressive are anti-family sentiments in our society today that choosing to have a family has become an act of courage. To love family life ... is to be marked today as heretic.” Curious times indeed! Did you think you would live to see the day when two lesbians would be permitted to adopt a child? Extremist

leaders in the feminist movement have made mothers feel they have missed life. In many homes a child is regarded as an intrusion instead of an inspiration. The lifestyle that prompted the words of an old hymn, “If I could hear my mother pray again,” is nearly an endangered species.

Unfortunately, too many mothers find it easier to play golf than to pray with their children. For some it is more exciting to hold a crystal cocktail glass than cuddle a child. The words of Proverbs 31 are being fulfilled: *“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.”*

In these curious times an inspiring example is needed for every mother

- an example of courage and commitment
- A pattern with which today’s mothers might cut a new lifestyle from the fabric of life.

The Shunammite woman, whose story is told in II Kings 4 is such an example:

I want to share with you three points in today’s sermon that will help mothers see what the Bible refers to as a Great Woman and how she still serves as a role model.

Let me begin with:

I. Focused Priorities

What we have as our priorities shows who we are.

Jesus said, ***“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:21***

This Shunammite woman focused on priorities that made her great in the writer of the O.T.

Here are three major things that made her Great:

A. First, she had a Spiritual perception

The Shunammite woman said this about Elisha, ***“9 She said to her husband, “I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God.”***

1) She recognized Elisha as a man of God.

In order for someone to recognize a man of God, that person must first know God themselves and this woman was.

I see her as a woman who was involved in the things of God.

Follow me with what she did next:

2) She urged her husband to add a room for Elisha.

It tells us in verse 8b ***“a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat.”***

How many of you like home cooking? I would imagine today there will be quite a few of you who will opt for home cooking over going out to a restaurant.

The closest restaurant I have found to home cooking is the Cracker Barrel. My wife Dru and I look for a Cracker Barrel whenever we are traveling. We'll drive for miles to the next one just to eat there.

So this was one of Elisha favorite place to stop when passing through.

This woman of the house recognized Elisha to be a man of God and someone she felt deserved special attention, so she went to her husband and asked him to turn her home into a bed and breakfast for whenever Elisha came by.

You know a room with a bed, a table and chair with a lampstand beside it, all the comforts of home, being away from home.

Application:

You know one thing I sense here is this woman's concern for her own spiritual life was evidenced by her hospitality for the prophet of God.

Some of you have the Spiritual Gift of hospitality. You are just good at this. I've been in your homes and you've shown me this.

5

And don't anyone get the wrong idea here this morning.

I'm not asked for anybody to build me a room in their home. I'm perfectly happy in my own home and sleeping in my own bed.

3) The third thing I want you to notice is Her Service to people.

The Shunammite woman was willing to get involved in the lives of others.

It was Jesus who stressed this importance when He said, ***"Whoever will be great among you, let him be your servant first."*** *Matt. 20:26-27*

One of my visions for this church is for us to continue to be involved in community helps and actions.

I'm so proud of our youth and adults who volunteer to give themselves to helping in community projects.

Again last week, our Major Butcher remarked how impressed he was of the involvement of this church in almost every community project.

Folks, we can't allow social and service clubs to outdo the church in these areas.

6

Too often the approach is to write a check. Money is always needed, but it can be a cold substitute for compassionate personal involvement.

So this Shunammite woman got personally involved.

B. Second I want you to notice with me in verse 13, She was satisfied with her Position in life.

Elisha said to her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?' "

She replied, "I have a home among my own people."

Elisha asked her what he could do for her, and she said, I'm okay with what I have.

She was not complacent about life, but she was contented.

Don't we have so many earthly possessions in our day?

And yet there is a world we live in that needs so much, so many people right now as I am speaking who are going hungry, children starving without food and dying.

7

I was listening to the news the other day and they were talking about using corn and soy beans to make fuel for the vehicles in our nation.

And there was a great concern voiced about this process of developing fuel from grain we raise and it was involving the hungry and starving people around the world that depends on our grain to feed them and here we are taking that grain that feeds the hungry and opting to use it for fuel causing greater hunger and starvation around the world. Folks, we have a world that is in need.

We have a world that is lost without the Savior and they will never be reached unless we reach the place where we can say with Esau, ***"I have enough, my brother."***

That's why we exist as a Church.

That's why we stress giving Faith Promise to World Evangelism.

That's why we have missions in 156 different world areas and close to 800 missionaries that are reaching people with the gospel of Jesus.

The Second thing I want you to see is:

II. Family Partnership

8

The Shunammite woman's greatness is also seen in the way she coped with her family relationship.

A. She had a positive attitude

This passage tells such a wonderful story. This is one my favorite passages in the Old Testament.

For years this woman suffered barrenness.

She couldn't have children.

It's very possible that other women considered her inferior because of her barrenness.

It's possible that some thought that she was guilty of some sin in her life.

But it doesn't show or tell us that she became bitter or turn inwardly in utter discouragement.

Look at verse 14 thru 17 with me, ***14 "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked. Gehazi said, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old." 15 Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. 16 "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms." "No, my lord," she objected. "Don't mislead your servant, O man of God!" 17 But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.***

She was barren and when Elisha found out he called her to the room and said, ***“About this time next year you will hold a son in your arms.”***

Now remember, she was probably too old to have children and her husband was really old – do you know what I mean?

It was probably like Abraham and Sarah – old and gave birth to Isaac.

Just a gift from God! Do you believe that God still does this kind of thing?

God honored this woman in her contentment.
She didn't complain.
God gave her the desires of her heart.

Illustration:

I recall in one of my pastorates that a couple came to me.

They wanted to have a baby so badly.

And so, I just said, “Well, let's just stop right now and pray that God will do a miracle and you'll have a baby.”

So I prayed a prayer in the faith that God gave me and it wasn't too long until this couple came to me and said, “We're expecting!”

What rejoicing.

It all started with this Shunammite woman going to her husband and saying,

“Let us make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, and a chair and a lamp for him.”

Providing for the man of God – taking care of the man of God.

And God prophesized through Elisha that this husband and this wife was going to have a child.

B. I want to see that she was awarded a son.

She was given a son in her old age.

Spiritual Application:

Some day all believers will be rewarded for their works here on this earth.

Our rewards are in two parts:

- 1) First, here on this earth the Bible tells us that there will be persecution for Christians.**

I personally believe that Christians who endeavor to live close to Jesus will be attacked by our enemy the devil.

- 2) but you and I will rewarded something this world cannot give us. PEACE**

But the truth is there are other ways we can be rewarded.

In Philippians 4:19 it says, ***“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”***

You and I might never become rich, but God will see that all of our needs are met when we obey Him and follow Him in all of His commandments.

He promises us that we will never be alone. In Hebrews 13:5 ***“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”***

Don't miss this part – Some day when we stand before Him as Christian believers we will be rewarded.

Paul said, ***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it was good or bad.”***

Our Spiritual Goal ought to be to hear Jesus say, ***“Well Done – Well Done, thou good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in a few things I will make you ruler over many things.”***

There seemed to be a real problem if you will look with me to verse 18 – 19

“The child grew, and one day he went out to his father who was with the reapers. My head! My head! He said to his father. His father told a servant, ‘Carry him to his mother.’”

Now – I have a real problem here with this father.

Maybe it's just me – but if one of my children came to me and it looked like he needed some physical attention, I would be doing everything I could to take him a doctor or to the emergency room.

I wouldn't send my boy or my girl off with a servant.

Spiritual Application:

Could there have been a problem with the father's attitude that he felt his responsibility was in the field while the child was his wife's responsibility?

Some families may have a man in the house, but not much of a father.

The Bible tells us men that it is our responsibility to raise our children in the fear and admonition of God.

Let me read to you from Ephesians 6:4 ***“Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”***

American homes today are in trouble!

13

Very few homes today have the luxury of the mother staying at home to raise the children. Almost all of the homes today in America demand that both parents work and it leaves the children to be raised by day cares.

That's why both the father and the mother must share the responsibility of raising the children together.

Fathers, it can't be left up to the mothers alone.

When their child died, the mother instantly had the boy carried up to the prophets bed and she went off to find Elisha.

It's hard for me to understand the husbands question in verse 23 *"Why go to him today? He asked, it's not the New moon or the Sabbath."*

I mean think about this – does this show again the shallowness about the things of God?

Can you hear that husband question his wife and say, "Why do feel you have to go to church on Wednesday evening?"

Listen mother, you might have to carry the spiritual load in your home at first until God gets a hold of your husband.

14

As I read this and understand it – this woman didn't have a true spiritual husband – she responded by saying, ***"It's all right."***

In other words – she wasn't about to argue with her husband about what she felt she must do.

So it says, ***"She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, Lead on; don't slow down for me unless I tell you..."***

The husband didn't even have enough consideration to saddle the donkey or have the servant do it for her, so she did it.

That is why the Bible calls her a Great Woman.

I come to my last point

III. I want you to see how persuaded she was in her faith.

When Elisha saw her and greeted her he asked her, *"Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?"*

And she said, "Everything is all right."

In the KJV it translates her saying, ***"It is Well!"***

Now we get to the part that I want to dwell on.

If you want to be well – we’ve got to keep the faith.

How could this mother say – **“Everything is all right”** when her only child was dead?

But how do we keep on track when our faith is shaken in our life?

Let me share with you three things we must do to keep a strong faith:

1) First, we must be well with ourselves and to do that we must have a proper relationship with Jesus.

If you’ve never been saved then it doesn’t matter how good you are or how many times you go to church.

It doesn’t matter who your parents are or if your best friends with the greatest Christian.

For it to well with you, you have to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

If you have accepted Christ, how is your relationship with Him right now?

Is there unforgiven sin in your life hindering your relationship with Him?

You see – for it to be well with you – you have to have that relationship with Him.

Some of the most miserable people I know are not the lost who are sinning, that is what the lost do, sin.

The most miserable people I know are those who have accepted Christ and have unforgiven sin in their life creating a separation between themselves and Him.

In Order for it to be Well with us, we must be well with Him.

2) Secondly, we must be well with our spouse.

Is it well with you and your spouse?

Do you remember what I preached about last Sunday when I mentioned you and your spouse spating?

Do you have a spat going on right now?

Listen, wife and husband, you can’t be pulling different ways in your relationship with each other.

It doesn’t work that way.

I could never be a pastor without the support of my wife.

And it is such a pleasure to be able to serve the Lord with my wife.

Let me give you some hints to help you in your relationship with each other.

Pray with one another.
Do devotions together.

Men, you need to put on the pants in your family and be the spiritual leader that Jesus wants you to be.

And wives, you need to submit to your husbands, not as an inferior person, but out love and submission to Christ.

When you both are linked together this way, you are powerfully strong.

If you want to be well, you have to be well with your spouse.

3) Thirdly, is it well with you and your family?

If you want to be well, I mean totally well; you need to be well with your family too.

The Bible tells us that in the Last Days children will be disrespectful of their parents, husbands and wives will forsake each other.

So how do we deal with this?

How do we make our families well?

This is another sermon in itself.

But let me sum it up in a few words: **Love Them! How can we love them?**

If you are a parent here this morning you can love your children by establishing some rules and boundaries and stick by them.

Your child needs discipline to know and understand they are truly loved by you.

There are too many gray areas today in parenting and not enough black and white.

It might not be very popular with your child, but believe me it will build character in them.

Proverbs 22:6 reads, ***“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”***

How can we do this: PRAY FOR THEM.

Live the Christian life in front of them and don't lose faith.

So How is it with you?

Is it well?

Do you have a right relationship with Christ?

Do you have a right relationship with your spouse – your children – your family?

I want you to listen to me carefully.

It is never right for two Christian believers to ever consider divorce.

This is the Word of God.

The only correct approach for you and your spouse is to work out your marriage in the right way.

A mother's faith is rewarded.

God answered the prayers of this Great Mother.

How many children have accepted Jesus because of a Mother's prayers throughout the ages?

How many children have recovered from sickness because of a mother's prayers?

How many men and women are in the ministry today because of a mother's prayers?

I really do believe I'm in full time ministry today because of the prayers of my mother.

Before I close – let me challenge each woman here this morning to be a Great Woman in the eyes of God.

Never stop trusting God.

Never stop praying for your family.

Your prayers do make a difference.

The Shunammite woman was called a Great Woman.

I've shared with you the reasons why.

My prayer is that all of us can have the faith of Elisha and this Shunammite woman and we can say, "It is Well." "Everything is All Right."

Invitation: