

July 8, 2018

- 2 Kings 4:1-7 -

"God Will Make a Way"

Cautions, Counsels and Consequences lessons learned from Old Testament passages.

Introduction: 3 C's of OT

God works in mysterious ways. When someone says that God works in mysterious ways, they often mean that God does something completely opposite of our expectations. There are many places in the Bible that tell stories of God's direction in someone's life that leads that person down a road they never thought they would tread. The Bible is full of stories of God astonishing His people when they realize how He had devised situations in their lives. Sometimes God tells His people to do things that seem strange or even meaningless, but end up being a redemptive or victorious part of their story much like our story today from II Kings. 4. I have my own stories of God working in mysterious ways...

God can make a way where there does not seem to be a way. Have you ever been in a situation where you thought it was pretty hopeless? The problem is what we see is not necessarily all that there is. We often have tunnel vision. God is at work in our lives even in the worst of times.

I God Provides a Way.

Are you're trying to make sense out of your life today? There is trouble at work and you don't know how to get out of the mess you find yourself in. Folks, "God already has a plan." God loves you and God was working in your life long before you began working for Him.

Php. 2"[13] For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

1. Let's look at this passage...Elisha was a man of God. He was used by God to do miracles in the lives of others. When people needed a touch or a miracle from God, they would seek after Elisha for prayer.

2. So she went and found Elisha and told him in (2 Kings 4), "Elisha, you knew my husband and how he served the Lord. He's dead now. Before her husband died, he borrowed a good sum of money and the man he borrowed it from wants it back. He's threatened to come and take away my boys and sell them as slaves. What in the world am I going to do? **Exodus 21:2** Mosaic Law allowed him to enslave the debtor and his children as far as the Year of Jubilee in order to work off a debt."

3. This man died in debt. We don't know why. It could have been many reasons including his imprudence. However God is a merciful God. He is a sovereign God and He can help us even when we make mistakes if we are willing seek forgiveness and yield to His will. Elisha looked at her and said, "How can I help you? Tell me, what have you in your house."

II God Expects you to do your Part.

1. The first thing Elisha does, he tells this lady to look at her own resources. He was not about to give her the six winning numbers in the super-lotto. Elisha did not say, let me see how much money I have in my bank account, or let me see what the other prophets may be willing to donate in your husband's memory. Instead he said, "tell me what do you have in your house?" Do you know one of the reasons we miss God's remedy for our situation is we do not trust God with our lives as we should. --- Proverbs 3:5, 6

2) Now she could have gotten upset with Elisha. Here she was seeking his guidance and some help, and he was asking her what she has available in her home. ---Stop selling yourself short, and recognize there is far more potential within you and right around you than you think possible with God. God loves you and will make a difference. Little is a lot if God is in it! ... Remember, the five loaves and the three fishes.

This doesn't mean that all our circumstances will forever be good in the Christian life. But it does mean that even the most difficult of circumstances when entrusted to God can make a difference. If we can't serve Christ where we are today, God's not impressed with our promises to serve Him if we ever get out of the mess we are in.

3) This widow had faith that God had a plan. She did what she was commanded to do: she did it in faith; and the results were amazing. God takes care to deliver his servants in ways that exercise their faith. (Hebrews 11:6) She claimed the promises of God. God keeps every promise. Folks, you must be willing to exercise faith. She had a word from the Lord and she was going to see it through to the end. She didn't have the privilege of knowing Jesus would one day say, "even a very small amount of faith which is rooted in him, can move mountains out of a person's life." **Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, [and] there is nothing too hard for thee. – Jerm. 32:17**

3. She remembered for a moment, and then said, "Oh yeah, I do have a little oil left that's used for cooking and lighting the house." She was no doubt thinking, surely Elisha would see how bad off she was and give her something. She was hoping for some money, but instead he gave her some instructions on what she would have to do.

Application:

We can make excuses for our lack of obedience: "I'm just not ready yet" or "I'll do it later!" or "I don't think it will make a difference" or "I can't afford to!" We rationalize, we procrastinate; yet, in God's eyes, rationalization and procrastination are nothing more than disobedience. At times we deceive ourselves into thinking that good intentions equal obedient actions. They do not. A good intention without corresponding activity is disobedience.

When we encounter God and He gives us a direction, it is not enough to write down the date in our spiritual journal, or even to tell our friends and church of our "decision." God's call is not to "make a decision" but to obey! Deciding to obey is not equal to obeying (Matt. 21:28-31)! Loudly affirming the necessity of obedience is not the same as obeying (Luke 6:46).

Making commitments, even publicly, is not the same as obeying our Lord. Substituting our own good works is not the same as obeying.

Elisha said, "don't ask for a few." In other words, get as many jars as you can get." The third reason we would reject God's plan is the belief we don't think God fully understood our situation. We would have said, "Elisha, do you have a hearing problem. I said, I only had a little oil. If I had enough oil to fill up a bunch of empty jars, I would not have needed to come to you in the first place."

ISA 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. [9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

4. As she did this the oil miraculously kept pouring from the original vessel. Finally she said, bring another. They told her, "Mom there are no more jars." Immediately, once the jar was filled, the miracle was over. The oil no longer continued to multiply.

She went and told Elisha what had happened. Elisha said, "Now go sell the oil and pay off your debts. You and your sons can live on what's left." Now they had to work with God for this miracle to take place. But I also want you to notice, the size of her blessing was determined by how obedient and hard-working she was in getting the jars.

She did not know, God not only wanted to get her debts paid off, He wanted to bless her and her young boys to keep them from getting in the predicament again. Now suppose, all she had tried to do was to just get enough jars to get by. Her creditors would have been paid, but she would not have had much left for herself.

5. If you love God with all of your heart, you will give all of your circumstances to Him. God can bring good out of bad circumstances. He can bring joy out of heartache. He can bring contentment out of resentment. He can bring gladness out of sadness, Happiness out of pain and suffering. He can give life when we face death. He can give us rewards beyond all of our expectations. "Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you." I Pet. 5:7

Conclusion:

God has a plan for every life here today. If we are not saved, that plan begins with coming into a right relationship with God by receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior. The person who isn't saved is uncertain about life: Faith in Christ trades uncertainty for assurance.

I John 5:13 These things are written that ye might know that you have eternal life.

No matter how difficult life may seem, or how sometimes life hits us between the eyes, God gives us the assurance that He is able to take care of our lives. A constant characteristic of God's nature is how He turns situations and problems upside down to work for the good of His people. A seventeenth-century French monk named Brother Lawrence wrote, "If we knew how much [God] loves us, we would always be ready to receive equally . . . from His hand the sweet and the bitter." This is difficult! What Brother Lawrence is talking about lies in God's character. The psalmist said of God, Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

“(Psalm 119:68).