

Title: Empty Vessels Filled

Text: 2 Kings 4: 1-7

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Place: SGBC, New Jersey

When a sinner is filled by the Spirit of Christ so as to be persuaded that because God the Father has delivered up his only begotten Son in his place then that believer will serve the Lord knowing that the Lord shall provide all for him as he serves him.

(Read 2 Kings 4:1-7.)

This man leaves his wife and two children in debt so that the creditor is coming to take the two boys for bondmen. It would be easy to jump to the conclusion that this widow's husband was a man of bad character. He left his wife and two sons in debt. But this man had not incurred debt by frivolous living or mis-management.

Notice what is said about this man He was a son of the prophets—meaning a disciple, a believer. His wife held him in high regard, she says to Elisha *“Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD”*—twice she refers to her husband as a servant. Some think her husband was Obadiah.

1 Kings 18: 3:...(Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: 4: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

In serving the Lord, this man had left his wife unsearchable riches for he had obviously taught her the gospel and she too feared the Lord. She knew to go to Elisha for help. Elisha was a prophet but he stands as a great type of Christ Jesus the Prophet. In this chapter Elisha works several other miracles, wherein we see him as type of Christ.

- Through Elisha a son is given to the Shunammite woman.
- The child dies and Elisha raises the child again.
- At Gilgal he healed the poison in the pot.
- He feeds an hundred men with twenty loaves of barley and ears of corn.

She said...*the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.* Those given to Christ of the Father had a debt we could not pay. The wages of sin is death. We were the lawful bondmen of Satan and sin; we sold ourselves for nought; we were unable to redeem ourselves from bondage of guilt and the power of sin. But God himself paid it all by his Son. He has paid all the debt his children owed. Believing God, her husband served God knowing that he gave his own Son to be his Surety, would provide his every need in this world.

True character is not to be judged by a man's possessions or status in life--*thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD.* Her husband's character was great because he feared and served the Lord, though he lived poor and died poor. This man lived on God's promise:

Jeremiah 49: 11: Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve *them* alive; and let thy widows trust in me.

Proposition: This is a case where God in his providence shows us how he provides for those who put all their trust in him, serving him with every means he has given them.

I. THE LORD USES EMPTY VESSELS

1 Kings 4: 2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. 3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

This woman had nothing, but a pot of oil.

Perhaps she had sold it all but was not any better like the woman with the issue of blood. But the Lord had given her a pot of oil! When his child is anointed of the Spirit of God with the oil of gladness, he is able to make little plenty or plenty little according to what is best for his child.

She was to borrow vessels from her neighbor

This would require her to confess her importunity and require her to humble herself in obeying the word delivered her. Remember Naaman? The way up with God is down! Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time.

The vessels she should borrow were to be empty vessels!

Paul said, "But my God shall supply ALL your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4: 19). If God shall supply ALL our need, then we have to come to Christ Jesus the Lord empty: empty of merit, empty of goodness, empty of power. God does not give seeing men sight—only blind sinners. He does not clothe those who have clothed themselves—only those who are naked. God does not make rich them that are increased with goods and have need of nothing—but those who are bankrupt. And believer's *continue* in Christ trusting him to provide ALL our need in this life as we serve him. Paul said, "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (2 Corinthians 6: 10).

The number of vessels to be brought were 'not a few,' but many!

Faith expects the Lord to do great things. The Lord said Sara would have a child and she laughed, 'Is anything too hard for the Lord?' (Gen. 18:12-14). Remember how the Lord proved his disciple at the feeding of the multitude? (John 6: 5-7). Like he was about to do with this one pot of oil, our Lord turned the world upside down with just a few disciple. Our Lord commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, for he is able to save to the uttermost ALL who come to God by him. And our Lord shall provide all things necessary as he does it—who was it that gave her neighbors a heart to just give her these empty vessels—the Lord did!

II. THE LORD SHALL RECEIVE ALL THE GLORY FOR HIS WORK OF GRACE.

1 Kings 4: 4: And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

Shut the door

She and her sons must shut the door for this reason: none of the creditors would be able say they had anything to do with this provision; none of the neighbors were to be able to take credit for this provision. This bride and her children would behold that the LORD alone had provided all.

2 Corinthian 4: 7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

III. SHE WAS TO USE WHAT GOD HAD GIVEN HER BELIEVING HE WOULD PROVIDE

She was to pour out that which the Lord had given her.

Elisha merely gave her the word. It must be obeyed by her—willingly. She was the one who had to pour it out, not Elisha nor any other only by her—willingly. In other words, she had to believe God and use what God had given her—that is faith.

Matthew Henry: We are never straitened in God, in his power and bounty, and the riches of his grace; all our straitness is in ourselves. It is our faith that fails, not his promise.

The oil would be multiplied as she poured out

It was promised her that the oil would be provided as she poured out what the Lord had given her. What do you have that you did not receive freely of the Lord? The riches of God's grace--spiritual and temporal—are given to be put to use for his glory. He promises His grace will never cease (Luke 12: 15-34). If that which God has given us is not put to use it will be a witness against us.

James 5: 3: Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

IV. THE LORD ALWAYS BRINGS TO PASS HIS PROMISES TO THEM THAT BELIEVE HIM.

1 Kings 4: 5: So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured out. 6: And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.*

The vessels were completely filled full.

She did what she did as evidence that she was filled full by the grace of God. When an empty sinner by faith receives Christ, he receives all that God requires, commands, and gives of eternal life. Nothing needs to be or can be added to what Christ is and had done and is doing.

Colossians 1: 12: Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

From complete ruin to eternal glory our sufficiency is Christ. From absolute emptiness to the fullness of God, all that we need is met in Jesus Christ

Colossians 2: 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Not a vessel more

The oil did not stop until it was said, *There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.* As long as God has one more chosen, redeemed, empty sinner the grace of God flows full and free. As long as his vessels of mercy have need of his grace in this earth—the sufficiency of his grace flows freely.

Plenty to live on

Not only is his grace sufficient to pay all our debts *but* there is full sufficiency for Christ's bride and his children to live upon until the day of grace ends.

2 Kings 7: Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

'Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood

Shall never lost its power,
'Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.'

AMEN!