

Elisha

The Prophet of God

Lesson 3 – Pots Full of Oil
2Kings 4:1-7
Date: 1 July 2020 – Elisha20

1. A Tremendous Debt (v.1)

- a. The main character in this miracle was a woman. Being burdened, she cried unto Elisha for help. She did not just speak to him; she *cried* or called out in urgency.
- b. She was the wife of one of the sons of the prophets.
 - 1) The *sons of the prophets* were men in training to become prophets of the Lord.
 - 2) Remember that prophets of the LORD were not popular or truly safe with relatives of Ahab on the throne.
- c. She was a widow with no one to care for her except her two sons.
 - 1) Her husband, a man who *feared the Lord*, had recently died. He had been a sincere follower of Jehovah.
 - 2) He left the poor widow with an *unpaid debt*. God does not tell us why he had such a debt. However, it is a reminder to us to live carefully within our income and not to buy on credit. We recall that God ordered the people to care for the priests and Levites, but no provision was made for prophets. They had to work or depend on generosity.
 - 3) The *creditor* now came to take her two sons as slaves to pay for the debt that she could not pay. This was common in that day. Unless she could pay the debt, she would lose her sons. Arthur Pink notes, *“The Lord is pleased to bring some to the end of their own resources that His delivering hand may be more plainly seen acting on their behalf.”*

2. A Pot of Oil (v.2)

- a. Elisha asked her, *“What shall I do for you?”* He had no means to help her with her need.
- b. He then asked her what she had in her house. She had nothing of value except a pot of oil. *“Her ‘not anything, save a pot of oil’ reminds of Andrew’s ‘but what are they among so many’ (Joh 6:9).”* (Pink)
 - 1) Olive oil was a staple in Bible days. She had oil but nothing else. That is true poverty!
 - 2) She was extremely poor, yet God would use the little that she had.

3. An Illogical Request (v.3-4)

- a. Notice Elisha’s request of her (v.3). She was to go. She was to visit ALL her neighbours. She was to borrow (beg for) empty vessels. She was to borrow not a few (as many as she could get).
- b. Elisha told her to enter her house and shut the door. Only her and her sons were to be present. Her neighbours were not permitted to witness the miracle God was about to do.
- c. She was then to pour oil from her jar into all the vessels she had borrowed. Similar to the way God multiplied the meal and oil for the widow up at Zarephath, God would multiply her oil.
 - 1) To obey this illogical request would take great faith in God’s ability.
 - 2) It would be like you taking a jug of milk and pouring from it to fill hundreds of jars. Though totally against the laws of nature, God is sovereign over the earthly laws He created. (Jeremiah 32:17) *“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.”*

4. A Private Miracle (v.5-6)

- a. The widow walked away from Elisha and did exactly as he told her to do.
 - 1) Her barren house was now full of empty jars.
 - 2) She and her sons went in and closed the door.
 - 3) Her sons brought her one vessel after another until every one was full to the brim.
- b. God tells us that the oil stayed. The word *“stayed”* means to stand or remain. It could mean that the oil pouring stopped, but more likely, it means that the oil in all the jars remained. It was not vapour. God had multiplied the oil and it remained as oil.
 - 1) When God does a miracle, He fixes the problem.
 - 2) E.g., In Jesus’ miracles, lepers were restored, blind could see, lame walked, dead came to life, multiplied food satisfied, the sea calmed. When God does something, He always does it right.

5. A Divine Provision (v.7)

- a. Elisha told the woman to sell the oil, pay the debt and live on the rest.
- b. God provided her living as well as paying her debt. God is so good!
- c. In Ps 147:3-5, we see God’s ability to care for a hurting widow and His ability to count the stars and call them by name. Ponder the significance of Ps 147:5. May God use this to build our faith in Him!