

MAY 21, 2017

Sunday Word

WORD FOR THE WORLD



2 Kings 4:8-13 - "8 One day Elisha went to Shunem. And 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. 9 She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. 10 Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us." 11 One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. 12 He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. 13 Elisha said to him, "Tell 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." (NIV)

She is A Great Woman of God because...

She Practiced Hospitality

"Well-to-do Woman" - Literally, "A Great Woman." The word "GREAT" is sometimes used to refer to wealth, influence or character. The Shunammite woman practiced true hospitality as opposed to merely entertaining her guests. Here's the difference between the hospitality and entertaining: In entertaining, the focus is upon the hosts and their home, the furnishings, décor, etc. which are all designed to impress the guests. In hospitality, the focus is on the comfort, pleasure, and refreshment of the guest. The design is to bless the guest.

Whenever people build houses, the focus is on what they want. But...how many people ever think about adding a room to their plans so that it can be used for ministry and hospitality? Who among you are willing to open your house for ministry and hospitality? Here's a point to ponder: Desire to have a house not only for your personal purposes but also for God's purposes. Who among you want to have a house of your own? There's nothing wrong with that. Just make sure that your ambition serves God's vision

She was Interested in Promoting the Work of God

The Shunammite woman did what she did for Elisha because she perceived he was a man of God, that is, a prophet teaching the Word and doing the work of God. As you help God's servant who are doing God's work, you are basically promoting and doing God's work. The Shunammite woman took God seriously and got involved with God's work according to her abilities and the opportunities God gave her. Maybe, some of you are asking, how can that be? How can supporting God's workers support God's work? Promote God's work and God will promote your life.

She was A Discerning and Sensitive Woman

This really flows out of hospitality and discernment. She was not satisfied in providing a place for Elisha to stay. She knew Elisha needed a table, a chair, and a lamp. She was concerned for the details of Elisha's needs.

It is unfortunate that people are often insensitive to the needs of others. Why? We're usually self-centered. We don't even try hard to determine what other people need. Let me encourage you not to focus on gaining wealth for yourself. We don't need a big land. We only need 2 1/2 feet wide by 8 feet long land when we die. We can accumulate lots of money. But we cannot bring them to the grave. We can buy several sets of branded clothes. But we'll only wear one set when we die.

She was Contented

One time when Elisha stopped as he sat in his room pondering all that this couple had done for him, he was filled with gratitude so he wanted to bless them in return. So he sends his servant to find out what he could do for them and even offers a few suggestions. Elisha could use his influence to introduce them to the king and to mingle with the nobles of the land. Here was her opportunity to have her ministry to the prophet recognized in the leading circles of the country. "I have a home among my own people." She was contented with what God had provided her and with her place of service and ministry in the community. She was contented with her home, her position, her friends, and her ministry. What a rare attitude!

She had learned to be content even though that ache was there. What a lesson for us to learn. the Shunammite woman taught us is: One can live a life of contentment even though there are hidden aches. If you don't have contentment in life, what are you declaring to the world about God? People who don't have contentment are always jealous and envious. Jealousy and envy can cause bitterness in a person's heart. Thus, a person who don't have contentment are negative, slanderer, and gossip. The Shunammite woman's secret for contented life: God's presence. God's presence and power within us can pull out aches and pains of the soul. This is why Paul said in Philippians 1:21, "to live is Christ, to die is gain (NIV)."

If you help other people with what you are able, God can provide you the impossible. If you help other people with what you are able, God can change your life's unchangeable. What's difficult in our eyes is easy in His eyes.

Nothing's hard in the hands of God because He can do all things. Right now, I wonder how many different kinds of unchangeable situations are represented here in our hearts this morning. It does not matter how many there are for there is nothing – no category, no case too extreme that is outside God's ability to work.

She Was A Woman of Great Faith

The Shunammite woman now has a son. But a number of years later, he becomes sick while visiting his father in the field. We are not told what the cause of the headache was, but it led to his death in the arms of his mother. It is here where we see she was a lady of great faith as she takes off for Mt. Carmel and Elisha.

We don't know all that she was thinking. Did she actually believe God through Elisha would raise her son from the dead? We don't know. Most likely she had heard Elisha tell of God raising the widow of Zarephath's son back to life through Elijah's prayer. I suspect she dared to believe that this did not have to be the end of the matter even though from a human perspective it was. She had a realization that this was an impossible, unchangeable situation and she must get to God through Elisha. Friends, when we face impossible and unchangeable situation, we must go to God. If there is to be an answer, a solution to my situation, I must get to God. I must take it to God and lay it at his feet which is exactly what we see her doing.

2 Kings 4:26-27 - "26 Run to meet her and ask her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?'" "Everything is all right," she said. 27 When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me why (NIV)."" Don't you love the sensitiveness of Elisha to the Shunammite's grief. Gehazi wanted to push her away but Elisha sees the brokenhearted person and receives her. This is a vivid picture of our God. Church, People will disappoint you, turn away from you, and push you away. But God will always draw you near to Him. God even sent a Messiah for us. Isaiah 61:1b - "...to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." (NIV)



1. How do you value yourself/ How valuable are women to you?
2. What are the significance of a woman?
- 3.) How do you see yourself as a woman of God/ See women as women of God?