

A Mother's Amazing Faith

2 Kings 4:8-37

Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem , where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. 9 And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. 10 Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

11 And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there. 12 Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him. 13 And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'"

She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

14 So he said, "What then is to be done for her?"

And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old."

15 So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. 16 Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son."

And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!"

17 But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

18 And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers. 19 And he said to his father, "My head, my head!"

So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out. 22 Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back."

23 So he said, "Why are you going to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath."

And she said, "It is well." 24 Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." 25 And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman! 26 Please run now to meet her, and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?'"

And she answered, "It is well." 27 Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me."

28 So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'"

29 Then he said to Gehazi, "Get yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but lay my staff on the face of the child."

30 And the mother of the child said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. 31 Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but there was neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, "The child has not awakened."

32 When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. 33 He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. 35 He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 36 And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Pick up your son." 37 So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out. NKJV

This past Friday at the Bible Study at the THCC we used a study by Leigh Anderson on the Top Ten Mothers in the Bible. But I have to say that this woman didn't even make the top ten. Many of us would read this passage and go right by the faith of this woman, turned mother.

The text tells us that she was barren having had no children with little prospect of ever having any. But to repay her kindness to Elisha, he intercedes on her behalf to God, who makes it possible for her to have a long desired child. All goes well for the Shunammite woman and her family for several years. Until one day when she is faced with a parent's greatest fear. Her child becomes sick and dies. Now what will she do? That day will forever define her life.

But we are kind of getting ahead of ourselves. The story of what took place the day her child died began years before. Crisis often defines a person. But most usually the crisis only displays to others what they have been for years.

- I. She was concerned about the work of God. V-8-10
 - A. As Elisha does his ministry for God he evidently traveled past this woman's home.
 - B. She would prepare him food and drink and constrain him to take it.
 1. This became a regular pattern of hospitality.
 2. We have no idea how long this continued but it seems she was determined to meet the prophet's needs indefinitely.
- II. She was a woman of compassion.
 - A. She then came up with the idea to build a prophet's chamber on the side of their house.
 1. She asked her husband and he agreed.
 2. So they build a room, nothing fancy.
 3. But it had a bed, table and chair and a lamp in it.

- B. It was compassion that a previous prophet Elijah counted on as he escaped the territory of king Ahab. 1 Kings 17
 - 1. There he confronts the widow who is about to fix her last cake for herself and her son and then they would starve to death.
 - 2. But Elijah asked her to prepare him a little cake first.
 - 3. He promised her that the flour would not run out for many days if she would just make him a cake first.
 - 4. And disregarding her own welfare she did just that.
 - 5. God blessed her as he had promised.
 - 6. It is striking that they only people that were raised from the dead in the Old Testament were by these prophets for two mothers of their sons.

- III. She had a great faith. V-20-21
 - A. Her son was dead
 - 1. She had no doubt never saw anyone raised from the dead.
 - 2. She had never heard of anyone ever being raised from the dead.
 - 3. But she knew the power of God and she knew that Elisha was God's man.
 - B. So we will not hesitate to go to him.
 - 1. Even in the face of hopelessness.
 - 2. Not unlike Mary and Martha when their brother died.
 - 3. In most instances of a resuscitation from the dead, it is not sought, probably because they thought it impossible.
 - 4. But this woman is not hindered by what she knows to be the facts of life.
 - C. She goes to ask the impossible.
 - 1. That is what God excels in.
 - 2. As matter of fact God often set up impossible situations just to show Himself might to save.

- IV. She had a great love for her son. V-24-25
 - A. Now this is a journey of about 15 to 25 miles.
 - 1. Back then that was a full days travel.
 - 2. But she tells the servant to ride hard and she would let him know if he was going too fast.

3. She was willing to endure whatever it took for her son.
- V. She is a woman of persistence. V-30
- A. Not only had she made this long journey in great haste.
 - B. But she will not leave Elisha until he comes himself to raise the child.
 - C. This is another thing that God loves in His children.
 1. Now we parents and grandparents often are annoyed by persistence but God delights to see us so.
 2. Jesus told the story of the unjust judge who did not fear nor regard anyone. But one day a woman brought her case to him and as usual he put her off. But the next day she was back and day after day she persisted until finally the unjust judge who no fear or regard for anyone gave in to her request.
 3. So persistence with God is regarded with favor not annoyance.
- VI. She is a thankful woman v-37
- A. We would think that after her son was raised from death that her first response would have been to take the child in her arms.
 - B. But not this great woman.
 1. Instead she comes to Elisha and bows down to him in gratitude and out of reverence to Elisha's God who had given her back her son.
 2. Often I see people pray for a great miracle or some blessing and then when God answers they forget all about God.
 - C. Great mothers will be thankful to God.
 1. Thankful for the blessings.
 2. Thankful for the deliverances God has brought their way.
 3. Thankfulness is a type of worship for without it there can be no worship.
- VII. She was a rewarded mother.
- A. I feel sorry for those women who have bought into the world's lie that true fulfillment is found in a career.
 - B. It seems amazing that the same world who criticizes a father who spends too much time at work, getting ahead in this world, and furthering his career, praises a woman who abandons the idea of having a family to do the same thing.
 - C. That son would be to her a continuing reward until the day of her death.
 - D. Mothering is never easy, but for those who do it well, it will be rewarding, both here and now and for eternity.