

Life Lesson 85
Elisha and the Shunamite Woman
Text: II Kings 3-4

The Story

Elisha traveled all over the country preaching and teaching God's people. He didn't have a place of his own to stay. One day a woman who lived in Shunem saw Elisha passing by. She recognized him as the great man of God.

"Come in and have dinner with us," she begged him. Elisha saw that she really did want him to stop and eat with them, so he did.

After that, he stopped in to see them whenever he went that way.

"Elisha is a holy man of God, and he comes by here a lot," the woman told her husband. "I have an idea. Why don't we make a little room for him? We can get a bed for him and a table and chair, and a candlestick. Whenever he comes this way, he will have a place to stay."

Her husband agreed, and they fixed a room up for Elisha.

The next time he came through the city, he was happy to have a room of his own to stay in. Elisha was pleased – and God was pleased. When we welcome others, especially people who love and serve God, it is like we are welcoming God. He wants us to show hospitality to his servants.

"You have taken a lot of trouble for me," Elisha told the woman. "What can I do for you? I know the king. Would you like me to introduce you?"

The king was the most famous and important person in the land. It would be like having someone ask you if you would like to stay at the White House and visit with the president.

"No thank you," the woman replied. "I like living around my own people."

Elisha asked his servant Gehazi about her.

"Can you think of a way I can thank her?"

Gehazi answered, “She doesn’t have any children and her husband is very old. Maybe she would like to have a child.”

Elisha called to the woman and she came to the door to talk to him.

“About this time next year you will have a little boy to love,” he said.

“You are a man of God. Don’t tell me things that aren’t true,” she said. It must have seemed too good to be true to think of having the little son she had wanted for so long.

But, it happened. The Lord gave her a son.

The Shunamite woman wasn’t thinking about getting a reward when she gladly gave the prophet a place to stay. God saw her heart and gave her the reward she wanted most.

We shouldn’t serve God to get things – but we can learn from this story that God sees when we sacrifice or go to trouble to help others. It makes Him pleased, and that should be reward enough for us!

There is another story about the Shunamite woman and her little boy. One day when he was older, he was out helping his father in the field.

“My head, my head!” the boy cried suddenly.

His father could see that his son was very sick. “Carry him to his mother,” he told his servants. The servants took him back to the house. He sat on his mother’s lap until noon, and then he died.

The Shunamite woman must have been sad, but she knew what she had to do. She carried her boy’s lifeless body to the room where Elisha stayed and put him on Elisha’s bed. She shut the door and went out.

“Send me one of the young men and a donkey,” she called to her husband. “I have to go see the man of God right away.”

“Why are you going now?” her husband asked.

She didn’t want to stop and talk. “It will be all right,” she answered. Then she got on her donkey.

“Ride as fast as you can,” she told the servant. “Don’t go slowly on my account. Don’t slow down until I tell you to.”

They went thundering down the road to Mt. Carmel where Elisha was staying. When she saw Elisha, she jumped off her donkey and fell down at Elisha’s feet. She was so upset she couldn’t talk. She just held on to Elisha’s feet. Gehazi, the servant, tried to push her away. “Leave her alone,” Elisha said. “She is troubled and the Lord hasn’t told me what is wrong.”

Finally she was able to tell Elisha what had happened to her son.

Elisha gave Gehazi his staff. “Go and lay my staff on the child and he will live,” Elisha said.

But, the woman wasn’t going to trust her son to a servant. She insisted that Elisha come, too. When they reached the woman’s house, Gehazi came out to meet them. “The child hasn’t awakened,” he told them.

Then Elisha went up to the room. He put his mouth on the boy’s mouth and his eyes on the boy’s eyes. It didn’t happen at once, but finally the boy sneezed seven times and then opened his eyes.

“Come get your son,” Elisha told the woman.

Can you imagine how happy she must have been to see her boy alive again?

We can learn another lesson from the Shunamite woman. When she had sorrow and trouble, she went as fast as she could to the man of God. She knew that God could help her when no one else could.

The Life Lesson

God wants us to bring our troubles, big and small, to Him. He cares about you and is happy when you come to Him with your needs and sorrows. He can do something about those troubles, too!

Review Lesson

What idea did the Shunamite woman have?

She suggested they build a room for the prophet Elijah so he would have a place of his own to stay.

What did the woman say when Elisha offered to introduce her to the king?

"I like living around my own people."

What did the servant Gehazi suggest as a reward for the woman?

She wanted a child.

What did Elisha tell the woman?

"This time next year you will have a little boy."

Did God send the woman a child?

Yes.

What happened to the child when he was older?

He became sick and died.

What did the woman do when her son died?

She went to get Elisha.

What did Elisha do for the little boy?

He put his mouth on the boy's mouth and his eyes on the boy's eyes. He came back to life.

Where should we go when we have troubles?

To God.