

# The Return of Blessing

*2 Kings 4:8-37 + 2 Kings 8:1-6*

<sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. <sup>10</sup>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."

<sup>11</sup>And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there. <sup>12</sup>Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him. <sup>13</sup>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."

<sup>14</sup>So he said, "What then is to be done for her?"

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

<sup>15</sup>So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. <sup>16</sup>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!"

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

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

So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother."<sup>20</sup> When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.<sup>21</sup> And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out.<sup>22</sup> 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."

<sup>23</sup>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."<sup>24</sup> 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."<sup>25</sup> 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!"<sup>26</sup> 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."<sup>27</sup> 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."

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

<sup>29</sup>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."

<sup>30</sup>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.<sup>31</sup> 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."

<sup>32</sup>When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed.<sup>33</sup> He went in therefore, shut the door behind

*the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. <sup>34</sup>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. <sup>35</sup>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. <sup>36</sup>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.” <sup>37</sup>So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.*

—2 Kings 4:8–37

*<sup>1</sup>Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, “Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years.” <sup>2</sup>So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.*

*<sup>3</sup>It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. <sup>4</sup>Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, “Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done.” <sup>5</sup>Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, “My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life.” <sup>6</sup>And when the king asked the woman, she told him.*

*So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, “Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now.”*

—2 Kings 8:1–6

**Read 2 Kings 4:8–37 and 2 Kings 8:1–6**

**FOOD  
FOR THOUGHT**

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

—Hebrews 6:10

You can never outgive God! Jesus promised, *For, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Me, will by no means lose his reward* (Mark 9:41). God rewards service rendered in His name to His servants. This truth is echoed in Hebrews 6:10 when the author tells us that God does not forget our work or labor of love in His name and toward His saints. We see this same truth affirmed through our reading this week with the Shunammite woman. Her concern and care for the prophet Elisha is overly compensated by God with a blessing, a healing, sustainment, restoration, and a testimony!

It is the same for any of us. When we are mindful and endeavor to bless others because of Jesus, God works in our lives to bless, heal, sustain, and restore us. In this process, He also gives us a testimony that can be shared with others about how He works on behalf of those who are His own.

As you study this week, ask God to develop in you a heart that is mindful of others, as well as opportunities to bless others.

1. Use the following Scriptures to note and comment on the Shunammite woman's concern and hospitality.
  - a. 2 Kings 4:8
  - b. 2 Kings 4:9
  - c. 2 Kings 4:10
2. Summarize the interaction between Elisha and the Shunammite woman. 2 Kings 4:11–17

3. Use 2 Kings 4:18–37 to cite your observations concerning:

- a. The child
- b. The Shunammite woman
- c. Gehazi
- d. Elisha
- e. The outcome

1) What do you find most compelling about this account?

4. From 2 Kings 8:1–2, remark on:

- a. Elisha's warning
- b. Elisha's instruction
- c. The Shunammite woman's response

5. Use 2 Kings 8:3–6 to note and comment on:

- a. The timing

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The *timing* of God is often called the *providence* of God. “Our English word ‘providence’ comes from two Latin words, *pro* and *video*, which together mean ‘to see ahead, to see before.’ God not only knows what lies ahead; but He plans what is to happen in the future and executes His plan perfectly.”<sup>10</sup>

—Warren Wiersbe

**FOOD  
FOR THOUGHT**

Either someone had illegally occupied the woman's property during her absence, or it had fallen to the domain of the king by virtue of its abandonment.<sup>11</sup>

—NIV Study Bible

**FOOD  
FOR THOUGHT**

Elisha, to me, is a very interesting fellow because he is surprised when God didn't speak to him. I'm always surprised when God does speak to me!

—Chuck Smith

b. The testimony

c. The restoration

6. What is your greatest takeaway from the story of Elisha and the Shunammite woman?

**FOOD  
FOR THOUGHT**

She has no son, and her husband is old. A great disappointment because it meant that the family's name would cease and its land and possessions would pass on to others. It was also a great threat to this young wife's future in that she faced the likelihood of many years as a widow with no provider or protector—children were a widow's only social security in old age.<sup>12</sup>

—NIV Study Bible

**FOOD  
FOR THOUGHT**

How could a leper be serving in a king's court? Here are our thoughts: This incident possibly took place before Gehazi became leprous in 2 Kings 5 (the Bible is more interested in speaking thematically than chronologically). It is also possible that because Israel was so far removed from the Law and had grown progressively pagan, they may not have observed the laws about being around those who were leprous.