

GOD IS COMING TO TOWN

Turn with me to **2 Kings 4:8-37**

Elisha was a great man of God. He was a prophet to the Northern Kingdom and he travelled from town to town doing the Lords work. However, he lived by faith so the Lord would cause somebody to show him kindness and hospitality whenever necessary. This chapter begins with Elisha travelling to a small town called Shunem. Today, on Mother's Day, I want to talk about an extraordinary woman from that town. We can all learn a great deal from the way she handled the most traumatic and tragic situation any mother could face (the death of her son). What was it about this woman that caused her to have such awe-inspiring faith, and as a result, receive such astounding blessings from God? She wasn't anything special, in fact her name isn't even recorded, and yet she received a mighty touch from God. What was it about her life that caused God to intervene in such an incredible way? If God was able to empower the life of a nameless woman, living in a godless time, then surely He can touch our lives too.

There are four things I would like to pick up on today, things that we need to emulate if we are to encounter Gods power the way she did. I've called today's message, "**God is coming to town.**" And at the end, I am going to pose a few questions concerning how we would react to this statement if we really believed it to be true. Would we be ready for the Lord, or would we simply let Him pass us by? This woman believed that when God's chosen representative was in town, then God Himself was in town also! So she wanted to make the man of God welcome. For that reason, she made a room for him, and she received God's promise of a child. Finally, she held on to that promise even though it seemed to be dead. Let us now examine these four points:

1. She made God welcome.

From the start it is obvious that this woman had a hunger for God. Notice, she was on the lookout for God, and as a result, she was able to recognise God's man when he entered the town and immediately invite him into her house. In fact, she was desperate to be of service to Elisha. Consequently, she looked after him so well that every time he was in town he would stop by. Are you on the lookout for God to manifest Himself in your life? Do you really want to encounter God? Do you really want to be empowered by God's Spirit? Is God made to feel welcome in every area of your life - in the highways and byways of your daily existence? And if God were to come and manifest Himself, is He going to find your life somewhere worth coming back to? If this woman's house had been shabby and full of unbelief, the chances are, Elisha would never have wanted to return. Many people ask God for His power but expect Him to meet with them in filthy lives and unbelieving hearts. This woman made her home welcoming and fed the man of God well, and so he wanted to return again and again.

2. She made room for God.

When Elisha had visited her house regularly this woman approached her husband and proposed that they build him a room so that he could stay and not visit only. She expanded her house to ensure that the man of God could have a more permanent dwelling. She ensured that it was fitted out with everything that Elisha would need. I assume that her husband was also a godly man as he obviously agreed with these plans. The woman's desire to have the man of God resident in her house, not only blessed her but would also bless her entire household. When you make room for God to take up permanent residence in various aspects of your life, it won't just effect you, but everyone around you.

The family set about to build a nice room for the man of God. This would have taken time, money and effort. But the woman's desire to have the "power of God" dwelling in her house meant that it was worth it. If you want Gods power to be permanently dwelling in your life then you must count the cost. It doesn't come easy. It may mean you having to be stretched to the limit. If you want Gods power in your life then you need your faith extended sufficiently to accommodate the miracle you require. This can sometimes be a painful process. There are many people who desire Gods miraculous power in their lives, or in their churches, but the fact is, He has nowhere to take up residence. He is neither welcome or has anywhere to stay!

3. **She received from God.**

God blessed this Shunemmite woman with more than she had ever dreamed or hoped for. Why did God bless her so greatly? It was probably because she had a genuine desire to serve Elisha without expecting anything back. Her primary motive was to serve (to be a blessing). It was while the man of God was resting in his room that he was prompted to bless the woman back. Even when asked, she didn't desire to be given anything, she was content with what she had. That is, God's holy presence in her house.

How often do we forget that we are first called to serve the Master, before considering our own needs (Luke 17:7-8). If our primary motive when we come to God is to serve Him, then He will ensure that our needs are met. Just as it was here ... While Elisha was resting in the room that the woman had prepared for him, he sought to find out how he could be a blessing to her. In the same way, while we are seeking to serve God (with no hidden agendas), He will find ways to bless us in all matters of life. The key is to seek to serve Him first!

Elisha even offered this woman the option of him speaking to the rulers of the land on her behalf. When she refused, being content with what she had, he found out exactly what would bless her. Likewise, God will bless us in the same way if we seek to serve Him first. He will bless us with the best gift that we could ever imagine.

The woman sought to make the man of God welcome in her house, and in so doing, she unintentionally invited a miracle into the house. When we make the Holy Spirit welcome in our lives, and in our church, He also brings “resurrection power” to the house. If you want to experience the miraculous power of God, you have to stop coming to God asking what He can do for you, and start asking what you can do for Him. It is in the mist of us seeking to serve Him and make Him welcome that God will manifest His supernatural and miraculous deeds of power.

4. **She held on to the promise.**

The woman had gladly received the man of God. She had expanded her house to give him a place to rest, and because of that she had received a promise greater than she could ever have imagined. She had also started to see that promise grow. However, years later we find that the “promise” God had given to the woman had died. Her son whom she cherished, and never thought she could have in the first place, had died in her arms. She had been given more than she could hope for, but now it had all suddenly been taken away. She was in bitter distress and would have been completely heart broken. All her dreams have been shattered! So what did she do? She laid the child on the Elisha’s bed, she didn’t tell anybody else, and she ran straight to the man of God. The vessel God chose through which to make His promise.

Notice, it was only when Elisha returned to the very place she had prepared for him, where the woman had originally “received the promise,” that the promise was resurrected. Some of you might be in the same situation. You have been in the position where you have sought God and have “received your promise.” Thereafter, the promise grew for a while but it has suddenly died before your very eyes. You now feel helpless and are in a worse situation than before. If that’s you, I have good news for you today! God is faithful to His promises, and He is able to do the miraculous by raising up what appears to be hopelessly dead. You need to do exactly what the Shunemmite woman did. Don’t look to anything else. Don’t try doing anything in your own strength, you will merely end up with a propped up corpse.

Furthermore, don’t speak negativity by telling everyone it has died. Instead lay the problem down in the resting place of God’s infallible Word, and then go straight to Him. The woman grabbed Elisha and then refused to leave him. If your promise has died, grab hold of God and don’t let go until you have seen it restored or resurrected. People might try to brush you aside, as Elisha’s servant did, but God looks at your distress and wants to intervene as quickly as possible. So let Him do it His way (however strange), He can breathe life into any dead promise!

Just as Elisha visited that town, I believe God is ready to visit us. And I’m expecting God to visit in great power. I am talking about the kind of power that Elisha, Peter, Paul and even Christ Himself encountered. I believe that God is ready to pour out that kind of blessing upon this nation, but He is calling His church to prepare herself. **God is coming to town.** Are our hearts as ready as the Shunemmite woman’s house was? Will we be urging Him to come and visit, or just let Him pass us by. Are we willing to be stretched? Are we willing to serve Him first and not our own needs? Gods power is coming, so are we ready to receive it?