

Stephen Nemeth Lectures  
Lecture #22

***ELISHA, A MAN OF  
THE SPIRIT  
OR  
OIL, THE  
FORGOTTEN  
FACTOR***

**STUDIES 1 - 10**

**TEACHER MANUAL**

*Elisha, A Man Of The Spirit*  
*or*  
*Oil, The Forgotten Factor*

**Teacher Manual**  
**Studies 1 - 10**

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# ***CALLED AND EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE***

## **STUDY 1**

**Scripture Portions: 1 Kings 19:15-21; 2 Kings 2:9-13**

Elisha, Elijah's successor, had assisted him for nine years before God entrusted him with the full responsibility of the task He had committed to him.

In many ways these two men were much alike. Both wrought similar miracles, both lived in a time of apostasy and both were channels of blessing to very needy people.

But there are marked differences in their ministries. Elijah was a stern, lonely, rugged prophet of fire, whereas Elisha was a gentle, winsome prophet of vision.

We are told very little of Elijah's background and preparation for the great ministry to which God called him. But, Elisha is introduced in a very different way. The story of his call contains a special message for those servants of God whom He calls to special service.

**1 Kings 19:15-21** - *And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: 16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. 19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? 21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*

*Notice the following points - some of which we considered in our study of Elijah, Lecture #8.*

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ELISHA WAS AN UNLIKELY PERSON FOR GOD TO CALL TO SPECIAL SERVICE.

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**1 Kings 19:15-16** - *And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:*

*16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.*

tell us who he was and what he was doing when God's call came to him -

**1 Kings 19:19** - *So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.*

Elijah's successor was a ploughman. An unlikely successor? Look up -

Moses -

**Exodus 3:1** - *Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.*

Gideon -

**Judges 6:11** - *And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.*

David -

**Psalms 78:70** - *He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:*

Amos -

**Amos 7:14** - *Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:*

and compare with -

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29** - *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:*

*27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God*

*hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;  
28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea,  
and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:  
29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

The truth that God's call comes unexpectedly and to unlikely people is illustrated throughout the Bible and in the experience of God's people in every generation.

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## **2. ELISHA'S CALL, WHICH CAME TO HIM THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF ELIJAH, WAS CLEAR, DEFINITE AND UNMISTAKABLE.**

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God is the Director of all His work. He chooses and commissions men and women for His service, and He does this definitely and clearly.

Compare -

**Matthew 9:38** - *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

**Acts 13:1-4** - *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

*2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

*3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

*4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

where these men whom God wanted for missionary service were called by name so there could be no mistake about His plan and purpose for them. Often; however, the call comes indirectly, as in the case of Elisha who received his commission through Elijah.

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## **3. ELISHA RECEIVED HIS CALL WHILE HE WAS FAITHFULLY WORKING AT THE PLOUGH.**

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Was he unsettled in his work and longing to get into *full-time service*? We do not know, but we do know he was faithfully doing his present job when he was called.

This should be the attitude of all who are looking to the Lord to guide them into fuller service for Him. If you are praying to Him to lead you into missionary service or pastoral

work - let me ask you: Are you doing your present job as unto Him? Are you punctual, conscientious, respectful and co-operative?

You are in God's school, so make the most of this training time.

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#### **4. ELISHA DID NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER GOD'S SERVICE UNTIL GOD HAD CALLED HIM.**

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Only when he was absolutely sure of God's call, did he leave his plough and his family and follow Elijah in obedience to the Lord.

What constitutes the call of God to special service?

The NEED is not the Call.

The need for servants of the Lord is very great, but the need alone does not constitute the call.

The OPPORTUNITY is not the Call.

There is plenty of opportunity for serving the Lord, but this alone does not constitute the call.

The ABILITY is not the Call.

We may be qualified spiritually, mentally and physically, but this does not constitute the call.

*a. The INVITATION is not necessarily the Call.*

Some 'Elijah' may approach us, but we must be sure that, in his invitation, it is God's voice speaking to us.

*e. The DESIRE is not the Call.*

We may have a burning desire to serve the Lord, but let us beware lest we move before He has commanded us.

The **Call of God** is that deep, inward conviction, accompanied by peace in the heart and confirmed by the Word of God, that He would have us do a certain work in a certain place.

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#### **5. ELISHA WAS CALLED TO A MOST DIFFICULT JOB OF WORK.**

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God's call *always* is to a difficult task.

Compare -

**1 Kings 19:16-17** - *And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.*

*17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.*

Could it have been easy for Elisha to slay those who escaped from the sword of Jehu?

Could it have been easy to be Elijah's assistant for nine years? With this incident, read -

**Luke 9:61** - *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

and see how appropriate it is.

Once we respond to God's call, we become involved in a spiritual warfare and are special targets for the devil.

**Ephesians 6:12** - *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

We, therefore, need two special qualifications: stability and stickability.

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6. ELISHA NOT ONLY RECEIVED GOD'S CALL TO SERVICE BUT ALSO HIS SPECIAL EQUIPMENT FOR SERVICE.

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Elijah's mantle, cast upon Elisha, was the symbol of a holy anointing from the Lord.

Read -

**1 Kings 19:19** - *So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.*

and compare with -

**1 Kings 19:16** - *And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.*

When God calls to His service, He always equips.

Gideon -

**Judges 6:11-14** - *And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.*

*12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.*

*13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

*14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?*

Jeremiah -

**Jeremiah 1:3-10** - *It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.*

*4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,*

*5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

*6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.*

*7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.*

*8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

*9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*

*10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*

The Lord Jesus Christ -

**Matthew 3:16** - *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:*

The disciples -

**Luke 24:49** - *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

**Acts 2:4** - *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

and compare with -

**Acts 13:1-4** - *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

*2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

*3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

*4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

Notice the promise made to each one of us -

**Acts 1:8** - *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

All God's commands are God's enablings.

We see how conscious Elisha was of his need for spiritual enduement in order to accomplish God's purpose through his ministry.

**2 Kings 2:9-13** - *And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*

*10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.*

*11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

*12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.*

*13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;*

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## **7. ELISHA RESPONDED TO GOD'S CALL WITH A WHOLEHEARTED SURRENDER.**

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God's call to him was confirmed by the placing of Elijah's mantle upon him.

**1 Kings 19:20-21** - *And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray*

*thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?*

*21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*

These verses tell us how Elisha responded.

How should we respond to the call of God?

1. With a Holy Alacrity.

Compare the first nine words of **verse 20** with -

**Acts 8:29-30** - *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

**b. With a Holy Determination.**

Compare **verses 20-21** with -

**Luke 9:61** - *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

Do not confuse Elisha with the man to whom our Lord spoke. Elisha went home to say goodbye. He was quite prepared to leave his loved ones, his home and his all to do the Lord's will.

Every servant of the Lord must likewise be willing and ready for anything.

**1 Kings 19:21** - *And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*

We read here of his public farewell and the complete renunciation of the old life, even to the burning of some of his ploughs. This was symbolic of his wholehearted surrender to the Lord.

3. With a Holy Devotion.

Read the great words at the end of -

**1 Kings 19:21** - .....*Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.*

and compare with -

**Luke 5:10-11** - *And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

*11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.*

Closing thought -

**Isaiah 28:16** - *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.*

# ***THE CURSING OF THE YOUNG MEN***

## **STUDY 2**

**Scripture Portions: 2 Kings 2:11, 23-25**

**2 Kings 2:11** - *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

The verses in -

**2 Kings 2:23-25** - *And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.*

*24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.*

are certainly very hard to understand.

**2 Peter 3:16** - *As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

It is reasonable to expect difficulties when we read God's Word. Can the mind of finite man expect fully to understand records which are the product of the Infinite Mind? Would the Bible be a divine revelation if poor finite minds could fathom it?

To admit that there are problems in the Bible in no way lessens its value. We must remember that *facts* are never altered or discounted by failure on our part to understand them.

As we study this portion of scripture, let us see what lessons God has to teach us.

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## **1. CONSIDER WHO THESE "LITTLE CHILDREN" WERE.**

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Our Authorized Version says that those who mocked Elisha were "little children" which would suggest children of up to ten years old.

The Revised Version gives a marginal reference to read "young lads" which would suggest boys of, say, up to twenty years old. How old were they?

Genesis 44:20 - *And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.*

Benjamin is described as “a child of his (Jacob’s) old age, a little one”. But Benjamin was at least twenty at that time.

**b.** **1 Samuel 16:11** - *And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.*

David is called “the youngest of Jesse’s children”. The Hebrew words for “youngest” and “children” are the two words translated “little children” in -

**2 Kings 2:23** - *.....little children.....*

How old was David at this time? We are told in -

**1 Sam. 16:18** - *Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.*

which suggests he must have been twenty or thirty years of age.

3. **1 Kings 3:7** - *And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.*

Solomon says of himself “I am but a little child”. Again the same two Hebrew words are used, but Solomon was twenty years old!

It would, therefore, appear that the “little children” who mocked Elisha were between sixteen and thirty years of age. They were of a responsible age and old enough to know what they were doing. This attack on God’s prophet, then, was made by responsible men!

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## **2. NOTICE WHERE THESE OFFENDERS LIVED.**

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They lived in Bethel where there was a golden calf erected by Jeroboam -

**1 Kings 12:28-33** - *Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

*29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.*

*30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto*

*Dan.*

*31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.*

*32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.*

*33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.*

It was a stronghold of idolatry and a center of apostasy. They were representatives of a wicked movement that blasphemed the name of God. Their attack on Elisha was not, therefore, a sudden whim but the expression of a determined attitude.

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**NOW OBSERVE EXACTLY WHAT THESE OFFENDERS DID.**

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They mocked Elisha, saying -

**2 Kings 2:23** - .....*Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.....*

Elisha was God's prophet, whereas these young men were representatives of their false gods. Elisha was the representative of the true God - so the attack against Elisha was an attack against God, just as when Saul persecuted the early Christians, he was really persecuting the Lord Jesus -

**Acts 9:4** - *And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

But what is the significance of the mocking words?

Elisha had just passed through Bethel on his way to Jericho with Elijah, who was then translated. Now Elisha was returning to Bethel alone. Knowing Elisha to be God's newly-appointed prophet, the young men met him with the words -

**2 Kings 2:23** - .....*Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.*

In the East, "thou bald head" was an expression of abuse - a grave insult.

Why did they say, "Go up....."?

Was it because they knew Elijah had just gone up and, in effect, they were now saying to his successor, "You go up too, where you belong"? If so, surely they were speaking against Elisha in the same way that some ungodly people today speak against the Lord's

servants.

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#### **4. NOW CONSIDER ELISHA'S ACTION.**

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**2 Kings 2:24** - *And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.*

Was he wrong? Did he act hastily?

The proof that it was not wrong is the fact that God endorsed what he did by sending swift and terrible judgment upon these enemies of His Name. This judgment came at the beginning of Elisha's ministry.

Compare with -

**Acts 5:11** - *And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

which came at the beginning of the apostolic ministry.

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#### **4. SEE HOW GOD'S JUDGMENT FELL UPON THESE MOCKERS.**

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**2 Kings 2:24** - *.....And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.*

We are not told that forty-two were killed, though probably some were and many would carry a scar to the end of their days.

But was not this judgment very severe?

**2 Chronicles 36:16** - *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.*

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#### **6. IN CONCLUSION, NOTICE SOME LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THIS INCIDENT.**

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1. We must guard against having a distorted, one-sided view of God.

**Mark 16:16** - *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not*

*shall be damned.*

**Romans 6:23** - *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**Romans 11:22** - *Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

**b. God cannot be defied with impunity, whether by old or young.**

**Proverbs 29:1** - *He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

**Galatians 6:7-8** - *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

*8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

***“Instead of apologizing for this record as though we were ashamed of it, it is far better to accept it fully as one of the warnings of scripture that God will not be defied with impunity, and that the judgments in this life whereby He indicated that fact in Old Testament times are a warning to us in our days, when temporal judgments are rarer but eternal judgment remains.” (H. E. Guillebaud).***

3. It is very dangerous to persecute God's people.

**Psalms 105:15** - *Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*

**Zechariah 2:8** - *For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.*

*d. Parents must suffer if they neglect or poison their children. These “children” had been trained in idolatry, now they and their parents were suffering in consequence.*

5. Difficult as this subject is, let us remember that the Judge of all the earth always does that which is right.

**Genesis 18:25** - *That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

This is, indeed, a solemn incident, but before we leave it, let us go down on our knees in God’s presence and read -

**2 Thessalonians 1:6-10** - *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;*

*7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

*8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

*10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

How fearful will be the judgment that will fall upon our unbelieving world when the Lord of Glory comes again!

Closing thought -

**2 Peter 3:9-10** - *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

*10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

## ***OIL, OR HOW TO BECOME SPIRIT-FILLED***

**STUDY 3**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:1-7**

**2 Kings 4:1-7** - *Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.*

*2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.*

*3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.*

*4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.*

*5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.*

*6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.*

*7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.*

God's plan and provision for every one of His children is that they should be filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 5:18** - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

This should be the normal experience of every child of God. Compare -

**Acts 2:4** - *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

**Acts 4:8** - *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,*

**Acts 6:3** - *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

**Acts 9:17** - *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

**Acts 11:23-24** - *Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*

*15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*

**Acts 13:9** - *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,*

**Acts 13:52** - *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.*

The incident recorded in **2 Kings 4:1-7** is both history and parable. It concerns a poor widow whose husband had been a servant of the Lord. She was now destitute and her children were in danger.

In her extremity, she appealed to Elisha and, miraculously, her little reserve of oil was multiplied and made sufficient for all her needs.

This, then, is a story about empty vessels that were filled with oil. And oil in the Bible is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. This incident shows us, therefore, how empty hearts may become Spirit-filled.

How may we become Spirit-filled?

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## **1. WE MUST ADMIT OUR GREAT NEED.**

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How great was the need of this poor woman! She possessed nothing except for one little pot of oil. Then her creditors came and demanded payment and threatened to take away her sons. So, pocketing her pride, she admitted her emptiness and poverty to Elisha.

That was her first step into blessing!

Every believer is in debt in a threefold sense. We can only discharge that debt when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

We owe obedience to God.

**Luke 17:10** - *So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

**b. We owe love to our brethren.**

**1 John 3:16** - *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

3. We owe the gospel to the lost.

**Romans 1:14** - *I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise,*

*and to the unwise.*

There is only one way to meet our liability and that is by the infilling and the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

In our own strength, we can never obey God, love our fellow-Christians and discharge our obligation to lost souls around us. We can only do it as we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Do we admit our need?

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## **2. WE MUST RECOGNIZE WHAT WE HAVE.**

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When this widow confessed her need, Elisha said -

**2 Kings 4:2** - .....*what hast thou in the house?*

She replied -

**2 Kings 4:2** - .....*Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.*

If you are a Christian, you can say the same, for the Holy Spirit is resident within you, *as He is resident within every child of God.* The moment you believed, He entered your heart.

**John 14:16-17** - *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

*17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

**1 Corinthians 6:19** - *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

This is not a matter of feeling but of resting upon what the Lord says. We must, therefore, recognize what we have. We possess the "oil". Note the last eight words of -

**Romans 5:5** - .....*the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

and compare with -

**John 7:37-39** - *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*

*38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

**Romans 8:9-11** - *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

**1 Thessalonians 4:8** - *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

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#### WE MUST PROVIDE VESSELS THAT ARE EMPTY.

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**2 Kings 4:3** - *Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.*

The Holy Spirit cannot fill our fulness. He waits to fill our emptiness. In other words, before He can fill us, we must make room for Him. Maybe we are full already - full of self, of our own ability, or full of sin.

The Holy Spirit can only fill empty, clean vessels. How can the *loving* Spirit fill an unloving heart? How can the *gracious* Spirit fill a proud heart? How can a *tender* Spirit fill a selfish heart? How can the *truthful* Spirit fill a deceitful heart? How can the *Holy* Spirit fill an unholy heart?

Are we willing to act on -

**2 Corinthians 7:1** - *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

If we will make a full confession to the Lord, we will experience -

**1 John 1:7** - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

**1 John 1:9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

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## 4. WE MUST EMPLOY THE SHUT DOOR.

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**2 Kings 4:4** -*And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons,.....*

The woman shut the door on the outside world and got alone with the Lord.

Here is the secret of a Spirit-filled, Spirit-anointed and Spirit-empowered life. The enduement of power always comes as the result of the shut door.

**Luke 3:21** - *Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,*

Notice that Jesus was praying at the time of His anointing with the Holy Spirit.

Compare -

**Acts 2:1-4** - *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

*2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

*3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

*4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

**Acts 4:31** - *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*

**Acts 9:11** - *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*

**Acts 9:17** - *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.*

These verses show us that the infilling of the Holy Spirit comes in answer to prayer and in the place of prayer.

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5. WE MUST BE ABSOLUTELY OBEDIENT.

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**2 Kings 4:5** - *So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons who*

*brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.*

The woman obeyed Elisha's instructions implicitly. Compare the significant statement in -

**Acts 5:32** - *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

God can only fill to the measure of our obedience. Are we consciously disobeying the Lord?

**Psalm 139:23-24** - *And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Compare -

**John 2:5** - *His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*

It is only as we fully open up the channel of obedience that God can give the Holy Spirit's fulness.

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## 6. WE MUST TAKE THE STEP OF FAITH.

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We may admit our need, recognize what we have, provide empty vessels, employ the shut door and be absolutely obedient, but only then are we ready to take the next step - the appropriation of faith.

We must take God at His word and trust Him to do what He wants and waits to do for us.

**Ephesians 5:18** - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*

According to -

**1 John 5:14-15** - *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

*15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

God will hear and answer our prayer if it is in accordance with His will.

Is it His will for us to be filled? Yes! He commands it!

**Ephesians 5:18** - *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

Therefore, we may pray in faith, "Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit" - and know that our prayer is answered!

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## **7. WE MUST USE WHAT GOD GIVES.**

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**2 Kings 4:7** - *Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.*

The woman did exactly that.

The Holy Spirit's fulness is not for our selfish enjoyment but for daily living and effective, God-glorifying service. Happy is the child of God who knows what it is to come daily before the Lord and to plead for and appropriate his fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit's grace and power!

Closing thought -

**Luke 11:13** - *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

# ***A PEN-PICTURE OF A MAN OF GOD***

## **STUDY 4**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:8-17**

The story of the “great woman” of Shunem is one of the most touching episodes in scripture. We first read of her in -

**2 Kings 4:8** - *And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.*

where we learn that, as Elisha went about his Master’s business, he visited her home. She at once recognized that he was -

**2 Kings 4:9** - *And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.*

not just “a man of God” but “a *holy* man of God”.

Do these words describe us? They should, if we are Christians, for God requires, and has made it possible, that we should live holy lives.

**1 Thessalonians 4:7** - *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

The late Canon Guy King suggests that there are three distinctive characteristics of a man or a woman whom God calls “holy”. A holy man is -

One who *believes* in God.

b. One who *belongs* to God.

3. One who *behaves* like God.

Do we believe and trust in Him, live and act as those who belong to Him, and behave like Him?

We are told several things in -

**2 Kings 4:9** - *And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.*

that will be true of us if we are living holy lives.

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**A HOLY MAN NEVER NEEDS TO WORRY ABOUT THE PROVISION OF HIS DAILY NEEDS.**

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Many of the Lord's people are very anxious about the matter of their provision. But, if we are seeking to live a holy life, we need not be anxious; for, just as God used the woman of Shunem to feed Elisha, He will use someone to feed and to provide for us.

He fed and cared for Elijah at Cherith -

**1 Kings 17:2-7** - *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,*

*3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.*

*4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.*

*5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.*

*6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.*

*7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.*

and at Zarephath -

**1 Kings 17:8-16** - *And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,*

*9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.*

*10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.*

*11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.*

*12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.*

*13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.*

*14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.*

*15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.*

*16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.*

He will do similarly for every one of His children in time of need.

**Psalm 34:10** - *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

**Matthew 6:31-34** - *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What*

*shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

*32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

*33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

*34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

**Philippians 4:19** - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

then read -

**Psalm 37:25** - *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

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### A HOLY MAN IS ALWAYS VERY QUICKLY NOTICED.

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As Elisha passed by, this woman soon recognized the characteristics of a holy man in him. She sensed that there was something *different* about him. Perhaps he gave thanks before a meal. His conversation was different. He was polite, considerate and helpful.

Perhaps she asked herself, “What has he got that I haven’t?”

Do our loved ones “perceive” that we are “a holy man of God”, or is ours an empty kind of profession?

**2 Timothy 3:5** - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

*O, to reflect His grace, Causing the world to see  
Love that shall flow, Till others may know  
Jesus revealed in me!*

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### 3. A HOLY MAN SOON BECOMES THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION.

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When the woman recognized that Elisha was a holy man, she told her husband of him. Other people heard about him as well.

We are all the subject of someone's conversation. But, what do they say about us?

Do they say -

1. "If that's his religion, I don't want it....."?
- b. "He calls himself a Christian, but he's not honest....."?
3. "She's a church goer, but she's thoroughly selfish....."?
- d. "They say they are Christians, but I can't tell the difference....."?
5. "They're just wonderful! You can tell they're real Christians."

**Romans 14:7** - *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

We are constantly under the scrutiny of other people. Do they see Christ in us?

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6. A HOLY MAN GETS HIS BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY AND IS NEEDED MOST IN THE EVERYDAY SPHERES OF LIFE.

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Elisha was exercising a mighty ministry, not in the pulpit, but in the home. He was not preaching. He was living a holy life each moment of the day. That, most of all, is what is needed.

If a few thousand more Christians really lived holy lives in their business, school, factory or home, revival would soon come to our land.

Compare the following -

**Ezekiel 36:23** - *And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.*

**John 20:25** - *The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*

The great need today is for Christians to be like the One Whose name they bear; for Christian doctors, bankers, workers in industry, housewives.....*simply to live the Christian life!*

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7. A HOLY MAN WILL ALWAYS SEE RESULTS FROM HIS CONSISTENT

HOLY LIVING.

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Elisha did! He was invited to stay in the home at Shunem. He was used to bring a wonderful blessing into the life of this childless woman as the result of his presence and prophecy in the name of the Lord. What fruit resulted!

**2 Kings 4:11-17** - *And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.*

*12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.*

*13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.*

*14 And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.*

*15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.*

*16 And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.*

*17 And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.*

Older Christians are often very concerned because they do not know of many, or any, who have come to Christ as the result of their labors, but, if we are faithful in serving the Lord, especially in consistent and Christlike living, we need have no fear about the results. Therefore -

**Galatians 6:9** - *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

In “that day” -

**2 Timothy 1:12** - *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

many who have seen few results from their service will get a great surprise as they hear their Lord say -

**Matthew 25:21** - *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

*I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.  
I'd rather one should walk with me than merely tell the way.*

*The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear.  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.*

*The best of preachers are the ones who demonstrate their creeds,  
For to see good put into action is what everybody needs.*

*One good man teaches many, men believe what they behold.  
One deed of kindness noticed is worth forty that we are told.*

*Who stands with men of honor learns to hold his honor dear,  
For right living sparks a language which to everyone is clear.*

*Though an able speaker charms me with eloquence, I say,  
I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.*

If we are faithful in our believing, our belonging and our behaving, our lives also will be fruitful to the glory of God. Read what is written in -

**1 Corinthians 15:58** - *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Closing thought -

**1 Peter 1:14-16** - *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:*

*15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;  
16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

# ***A PROPHET'S FURNITURE***

## **STUDY 5**

**Scripture Portions: 2 Kings 4:8-10; Luke 10:38-42**

**2 Kings 4:8-10** - *And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.*

*9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.*

*10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.*

**Luke 10:38-42** - *Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.*

*39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.*

*40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.*

*41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:*

*42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

This study is based upon -

**2 Kings 4:10** - *Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.*

It might well be entitled, "The well-furnished Christian life".

Some lives are badly and sparsely furnished, just as some houses are, but God's plan is that we should be "furnished throughout"-

**2 Timothy 3:17** - *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

There are four essential pieces of furniture that we all need - a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. These were all necessary for the prophet's comfort. Unless we possess what these articles typify, we cannot possibly be well-furnished, successful workers for the Lord.

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THE FIRST ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A BED, THE

SYMBOL OF REST.

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**Matthew 11:28-29** - *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

We read here of two kinds of rest: a rest that is a *gift*, and a rest that is a *discovery*.

What kind of rest do we all need?

Rest from the heavy burden of sin.

The only place where we can get this is at the cross of Calvary, where “the blood of Jesus whispers peace within” -

**Colossians 1:20** - *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

Do you possess this rest - or is your heart like the troubled sea?

**Isaiah 57:20** - *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

Rest from a condemning conscience.

This rest comes when all is well in our relationship with God and with man.

**Acts 24:16** - *And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

How great to know that, as the Lord looks at us, He is well pleased!

**1 John 3:22** - *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

**c. Rest amid the unrest of the world.**

On every hand, men’s hearts are filled with fear, anxiety and doubt, but the child of God may have rest and release from these.

Compare -

**Psalm 119:165** - *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*

**Isaiah 26:3** - *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*

**Philippians 4:6-7** - *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

*7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

As you hear of all the terrible things happening in the world, you may experience rest in the midst of the storm.

**Mark 6:50** - *For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*

4. Rest from the subtle strivings of self.

The self-life within us is our deadly enemy, but we may have complete deliverance.

**Romans 7:24-25** - *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

*25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

This deliverance comes by the reckoning and the rest of faith.

**Romans 6:11** - *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*e. Rest from the responsibility of service.*

There is a difference between *working for God* and *letting Him work through us*. To work for Him involves fatigue and strain, but to let Him work through us means joy and fruitfulness.

The servant of God experiences rest when he realizes that God Himself is the Worker and that his responsibility in the matter is only to *respond* by quiet trust and obedience to His *ability*.

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THE SECOND ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A TABLE, THE SYMBOL OF COMMUNION.

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**Daniel 11:32** - *And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.*

beautifully expresses God's will for each one of us.

One of the first pictures we get in the book of **Genesis** is that of perfect, unspoiled fellowship.

**Genesis 3:8** - *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

But that fellowship was broken by sin. Only in a few cases was it restored and enjoyed. We are told about one such case in -

**Genesis 5:24** - *And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*

**Hebrews 11:5** - *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*

This holy, happy fellowship with the Lord is His plan for very one of His children. It is an essential element in a well-furnished life.

If a boy says of his father, "I don't have much to do with him if I can help it!", surely that boy is out of fellowship with his father.

Is it like that with us and our heavenly Father? Are we so busy or preoccupied that we spend little time with Him?

What our Lord wants most of all of each one of us is not our *service* but *ourselves*.

**Revelation 3:20** - *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

The picture here is of the Saviour and the sinner supping together in holy, happy fellowship and intimate communion.

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### **3. THE THIRD ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A STOOL, THE SYMBOL OF INSTRUCTION.**

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We can never become the men and women God would have us be unless we know what

it is regularly to sit at His feet and receive His instruction.

**Deuteronomy 33:3** - *Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.*

**Luke 10:39** - *And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.*

One of the most significant names given to our Lord's followers is that of "disciples".

What is a disciple?

A disciple is a disciplined Christian - one who has come to the Lord Jesus, has found rest, has taken His yoke upon him, and his passion in life is to learn of Him and do His will.

**Matthew 11:28-30** - *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

*30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

All this involves stern discipline. Some Christians are not disciplined. They are not really "disciples", for they are careless, self-willed and untaught. Others are well-furnished. They are disciplined and controlled, and they are all the happier for it. Children are much happier when they are kindly disciplined.

Do we really know what it is to sit at Jesus' feet and to learn of Him?

**Luke 10:39** - *And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.*

to meditate upon His Word?

**Psalms 1:2** - *But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

to study His Word?

**2 Timothy 2:15** - *Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

to obey His Word?

**2 Corinthians 10:5** - *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the*

*obedience of Christ.*

to submit to His control?

**Romans 6:13** - *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

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8. THE FOURTH ESSENTIAL FOR A WELL-FURNISHED LIFE IS A CANDLESTICK, THE SYMBOL OF TESTIMONY.

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A candlestick speaks of a life that shines forth. The Lord Jesus made two very important, related statements:

1. John 8:12 - *.....I am the light of the world:.....*
2. Matthew 5:14 - *Ye are the light of the world.....*

The Lord wants to shine through us.

**Matthew 5:14-16** - *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

*15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

*16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

These verses tell us that He wants us to shine in the home, in business, and in the world.

Our whole duty, so far as our testimony is concerned, is just to let the Lord Jesus Himself shine out through us in our actions and in our words.

When, because of our surrender to Him, He is able to do this, He makes us as lights shining in dark places.

**Philippians 2:14-16** - *Do all things without murmurings and disputings:*

*15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

*16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.*

*In conclusion, notice that these four essential for a well-furnished life, have to do with our relationship with the Lord Himself.*

(1) **REST** is found **IN** Christ.

(2) **COMMUNION** is enjoyed **WITH** Christ.

(3) **INSTRUCTION** is received **FROM** Christ.

(4) **TESTIMONY** is given **FOR** Christ.

Notice also that, not only are these the four essentials of a well-furnished life, but their order is significant: *rest* must come first, followed by *communion*, *instruction* and *testimony*!

# ***THE RAISING OF THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON***

## **STUDY 6**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:18-37**

This study will be of particular interest to parents and to all who have the responsibility of children. It is based upon the incident recorded in **2 Kings 4:18-37**.

The key words around which the whole story revolves are in -

**2 Kings 4:26** - *.....is it well with the child?.....*

The child has the central place in the story.

Compare this with -

**Matthew 18:2** - *And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*

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### **THE CONDITION OF THE CHILD.**

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What is the spiritual condition of every boy and girl?

It is important that we should be clear about this. The answer is emphatically stated in -

**2 Kings 4:20** - *And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.*

**2 Kings 4:32** - *And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.*

In **2 Kings 4:31** - *He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.*

Gehazi speaks as though the child might just be sleeping. But the scriptures declare that the child was dead. And that is the spiritual condition of every boy and girl who is not a Christian.

This does not mean that our children are, of necessity, morally bad. It means that they are spiritually dead.

Compare -

**Romans 5:12** - *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

**1 John 5:11-12** - *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

*12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

We are *all* born in sin -

**Psalms 51:5** - *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

We are *all* dead in sin -

**Ephesians 2:1** - *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*

until we receive new life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**John 3:36** - *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

In **Matthew 18:1-11**, our Lord, in speaking of children -

**Matthew 18:5** - *And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.*

whom He describes as “little ones” -

**Matthew 18:6** - *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

goes on to say that they are “lost” -

**Matthew 18:11** - *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

How would you feel if you knew your child was lost or dead in a physical sense?

Notice how this mother of Shunem felt.

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## **2. THE CONCERN OF THE MOTHER.**

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Quite naturally, when this tragedy fell upon her, this mother was moved to action -

**2 Kings 4:19-24** - *And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.*

*20 And 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, and shut the door upon him, and went out.*

22 *And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.*

23 *And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.*

24 *Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.*

This raises the question: What should be our first concern for our children? Should it be for their physical welfare, their education, their career.....or should our first concern be for their spiritual welfare?

This mother knew her child was dead. She was filled with a deep concern that he should be raised to newness of life.

That, surely, should be our attitude towards our boys and girls. It is here that the Sunday School teacher has a special ministry, because many parents do not have any concern for the spiritual welfare of their children.

What a glorious opportunity this gives to the teachers to become spiritual foster parents of such children by leading the little ones to the Lord Jesus Who can give them life and salvation and Who waits to be their Friend! This is the greatest work in all the world.

It is great to win an adult to the Saviour, but far greater to win a child. Think of the potentialities of one child. That boy may prove to be a Billy Graham. That girl may become an Amy Charmichael. That rather clumsy lad may be a Moody or a Carey!

Have you a real concern for the salvation of the boys and girls in your care?

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### 3. THE FAILURE OF THE SERVANT.

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Gehazi was sent by Elisha to lay the prophet's staff upon the child. When he did this, nothing happened.

**2 Kings 4:29-31** - *Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.*

30 *And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.*

31 *And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.*

What is the lesson here?

It is a warning against becoming formal and professional in our service for God. It would seem that Gehazi went to work without praying or making any special preparation.

It is a great temptation for Sunday School teachers to go to their classes quite unprepared for the important task of teaching the word of truth to the children.

It would seem that Gehazi had no prayer, no preparation, no persistence and no faith. Therefore, nothing happened.

**2 Timothy 3:5** - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

His service was a formal matter. But see how different was Elisha's approach to the whole problem.

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## **4. THE TRIUMPH OF THE PROPHET.**

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He began on his knees.

Compare -

**2 Kings 4:32-33** - *And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.*

*33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.*

**Matthew 6:6** - *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

The man of God must be alone with God before he can communicate the life of God. Before we can minister life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, we must be in touch with God ourselves.

How glorious if we can say what Hannah said -

**1 Samuel 1:27** - *For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him.*

Are you praying regularly for the salvation of your children or for someone else's children?

***b. There was personal contact.***

**2 Kings 4:34** - *And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.*

What intimate contact there was of eye, mouth and hands. This suggests that, if we are going to win the children to Christ, we must -

- (1) be able to see things from the child's standpoint.
- (2) be able to speak in the child's language.
- (3) be able to enter into the child's interests.

Each of these is essential if we would establish real contact with those we are seeking to win for the Lord.

3. There was intense desire and effort.

We are told that the prophet -

**2 Kings 4:34** - *And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.*

It is true that "with strong great wrestlings souls are won". This applies to work among children just as much as it does to work among adults. It is always hard work, demanding the sacrifice of time and energy.

It often proves disappointing, but is gloriously worthwhile work and brings great reward to the worker.

***d. There was patience and perseverance.***

**2 Kings 4:35** - *Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.*

This miracle did not happen all at once. Elisha had to hold onto God and had to work on in faith.

Maybe we fail because we get impatient and give up just when we should be pressing on believingly and trusting God to give the victory.

*In conclusion, notice the three signs of life for which we are to look as we bring the gospel to the boys and girls in our care.*

(a) **2 Kings 4:34** - .....*and the flesh of the child waxed warm.*

There is the sign of *warmth*, and if there is warmth there must be life.

(b) **2 Kings 4:35** - .....*and the child sneezed seven times,.....*

There is the sign of *sneezing*, and this, surely indicates more life still.

(c) **2 Kings 4:35** - .....*and the child opened his eyes.*

there is the sign of *vision*, for we are told that the child “opened his eyes”.

Closing thought -

**Proverbs 22:6** - *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

# ***PHILIPPIANS 4:19 ILLUSTRATED***

## **STUDY 7**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 4:38-44**

**Philippians 4:19** - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

In Gilgal there was a theological college of which the principal was Elisha, described as “the man of God” in -

**2 Kings 4:42** - *And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.*

There were one hundred students described as “the sons of the prophets”, in -

**2 Kings 4:38** - *And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.*

They were all in danger of starving for **verse 38** tells us “there was a dearth in the land”. Then, quite unexpectedly, a wonderful thing happened.

A man arrived on the scene with a gift of food for Elisha, but, at the Lord’s bidding, Elisha gave instructions for it to be given to the students -

**2 Kings 4:42** - *And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.*

When all were fed, there was still some left over.

**2 Kings 4:43** - *.....They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.*

Here is an Old Testament anticipation of our Lord’s miracles of the feeding of the 5000

**Matthew 14:15-21** - *And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.*

*16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

*17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.*

*18 He said, Bring them hither to me.*

*19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves,*

*and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.*

*20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.*

*21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.*

and of the 4000 -

**Matthew 15:32-38** - *Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

*33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?*

*34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.*

*35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.*

*36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.*

*37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.*

*38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.*

It is a glorious illustration of the way in which God provides for the needs of His people.

**Philippians 4:19** - *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

How does He meet their needs?

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#### GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WORD.

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Notice the words, “thus saith the Lord” and “according to the word of the Lord” -

**2 Kings 4:43-44** - *And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.*

*44 So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD.*

Frequently in the Bible, God promises to provide for His children. Not one promise has ever failed or will ever fail.

David testified to God’s promise of provision when he said -

**Psalms 23:1** - *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

**Psalm 34:10** - *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.*

**Psalm 37:25** - *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

Isaiah gave the same assurance to every believer -

**Isaiah 33:16** - *He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*

Our Lord said the same thing in -

**Matthew 6:25-34** - *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

26 *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

27 *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*

28 *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

29 *And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

30 *Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

31 *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

32 *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

34 *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Paul added his testimony -

**Romans 8:32** - *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

**2 Corinthians 9:8** - *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*

These are all God's promises to us assuring us that He always provides for His children according to His word.

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## **2. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.**

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Elisha and the college students prayed to God in their extremity, and, because Elisha had prayed, he was able to say -

**2 Kings. 4:43** - .....*thus saith the LORD*,.....

So, let us notice that, although God promises to supply our needs, He waits for us to pray that He will do so.

Why is this?

One reason is that it is to keep us dependent upon Him. Prayer does not make Him more willing to give, but it provides the channel through which He can give. If we find our supplies running short, it is so that we may feel our need of Him and be cast upon Him.

God always gives to us in answer to prayer - either our own or that of someone else.

This is very much illustrated in the lives of Elijah and Elisha.

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## **3. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.**

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Often He allows us to come to the end of our resources before He sends His special provision.

This is wonderfully illustrated in the experience of George Muller and the daily provision that He made for Muller's hundreds of orphans in Bristol - all in answer to prayer. This provision always came just at the right moment - as it did for Elisha and his students!

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## **4. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN A SUITABLE WAY.**

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The students needed food, so the Lord sent food.

George Muller needed food, fuel and clothing for his children, so the Lord supplied these necessities.

What are you needing?

**Luke 11:11-12** - *If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him*

*a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?  
12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?*

Trust Him, for He will never fail!

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## 5. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER.

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**2 Kings 4:42** - *And there came a man from Baalshalisha,.....*

We are told nothing about him, which reminds us that God does not always provide for us in the way we expect. We are tempted to say, “So-and-so could help”. But the help comes from - “Baal-shalisha”!

Elijah was fed by ravens -

**1 Kings 17:4** - *And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.*

Sustained by a widow -

**1 Kings 17:9** - *Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.*

which reminds us that God’s resources never run dry. He is never at a loss to know how to supply our need, which is often quite different from what we expect.

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## 6. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE USUALLY THROUGH A HUMAN CHANNEL.

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The need of the college was supplied through the man from Baal-shalisa. God’s gifts of food and other necessities do not drop from the skies. If we are in need, He sends them through a human channel, through one of His stewards who feels burdened to supply our need in the name of the Lord.

The same is true with regard to spiritual gifts. These are usually dispensed through the preaching of the Word or through the living, consecrated testimony of one of God’s children.

The Lord Jesus fed five thousand, but He did it *through* the disciples.

On the Day of Pentecost, the Lord saved three thousand souls *through* the preaching of Peter and others.

Paul's needs were constantly met *through* the sacrificial giving of the Christians in the early church.

Do we feel the responsibility placed upon us to be ready to be channels through whom God can give to meet the needs of others?

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## 6. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE ON AN ADEQUATE SCALE.

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He always gives abundantly.

**2 Kings 4:43** - .....*They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.*

**2 Kings 4:44** - .....*and they did eat, and left thereof.....*

is an illustration of this. There was plenty left over! It was a miracle and He will, if necessary, work a miracle for you.

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## 8. GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE FOR AN UNSELFISH PURPOSE.

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The "man from Baal-shalisha" gave food to Elisha, but Elisha shared it with his students.

All God's giving to us should issue in our sharing with others. Notice the words in -

**2 Kings 4:42** - .....*Give unto the people .....*

and compare them with -

**Matthew 14:16** - *But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

**1 John 3:17** - *But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*

We are to share with others the gifts that God bestows upon us. This is especially true in relation to spiritual gifts.

For instance: He has saved us - but are we seeking the salvation of others?

He comforts us in our sorrows. Why?

**2 Corinthians 1:4** - *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

He lifts our burden, but He says -

**Galatians 6:2** - *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

God is no man's debtor, and, as we give to others, so He goes on giving to us.

Compare -

**Proverbs 11:24** - *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

**Luke 6:38** - *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

The more we give, the more He gives, and the more He gives, the more He would have us give. What a great Giver He is!

Closing thought -

**Psalms 23:1** - *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

# ***THE CLEANSING OF NAAMAN***

## **STUDY 8**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 5:1-15**

Of all the incidents connected with Elisha's ministry, the story of the cleansing of Naaman is probably the best known. In fifteen verses we read of his discovery that he was a leper, then a ray of hope, and finally his miraculous healing.

The story appeals to us because it finds a parallel in our own experience. As we read of Naaman, we put ourselves into the picture. Instead of Naaman, it is our name. In the place of leprosy, it is sin. Instead of the River Jordan, we stand in awe at -

**Luke 23:33** - *.....the place, which is called Calvary,.....*

where -

**1 John 1:7** - *.....the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

The story divides naturally into five chapters.

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## **NAAMAN WAS A GREAT MAN.**

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Some people live and die without achieving anything of importance, whereas others rise to fame and make a name for themselves. Such was Naaman -

**2 Kings 5:1** - *Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.*

Wherever he went, he was acclaimed. He was "a captain.....a great man.....honorable...." By him the Lord had accomplished much. He was "a mighty man in valour".

A great man indeed, courageous, popular, dependable! But -

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## **2. NAAMAN HAD A GRIEVOUS MALADY.**

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The last five words in -

**2 Kings 5:1** - *.....but he was a leper.*

tell us that, beneath his splendid uniform was the loathsome disease of leprosy. Do you

know anyone like that? Success? Yes, but beneath it, tragedy and sorrow.

“A great man.....but he was a leper.” Is that your story? Only God and you know the leprosy, the sin in your heart. It is hidden from others, but God sees it.

**1 Samuel 16:7** - *But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

This is a picture of tens of thousands of our fellowmen - decent, moral, kind, but they have sinful hearts. They are unbelievers and are, therefore, spiritually diseased. They never go to worship God.

What chance have they of entering into the kingdom of God?

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### 3. NAAMAN HAD A GENTLE MAID IN HIS HOUSEHOLD.

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**2 Kings 5:2-4** - *And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.*

*3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.*

*4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*

This little girl had been captured and carried away from her home and loved ones. In that home, she had learned to trust in the living God. Now, she was not only a believer but a witnessing believer.

When she discovered her master was a leper, she was filled with compassion for him. She felt she must witness to God's power, ability and willingness to cure Captain Naaman.

The Naamans had entertained an angel unawares -

**Hebrews 13:2** - *.....some have entertained angels unawares.*

The wonderful thing is that Naaman was not too proud to listen to the testimony of the little girl!

**2 Kings 5:5** - *And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.*

The king of Syria arranged for Naaman to go to the land of Israel to get the cure he so

much needed.

If only the sin-sick souls would just *try* the Great Physician!

Naaman did this, but notice that -

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#### **4. NAAMAN MADE THREE GRAVE MISTAKES.**

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He was wise in listening to the little girl, but foolish in not following her advice. What were his mistakes?

*First*, he thought he could *Buy* the cure.

**2 Kings 5:5** - *.....and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.*

He took with him a very great deal of money. One talent of silver equals 410 pounds sterling. In addition to this, he took 6,000 pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment! What a gift!

But, all the money in the world cannot cure a man of spiritual leprosy.....sin..... -

**1 Peter 1:18-19** - *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*

*19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:*

Many people think they can earn their salvation. But God's Word clearly states that salvation is a gift that has to be received. We can do nothing to procure it.

**Romans 3:20** - *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

**Titus 3:5** - *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

#### **b. *Second*, he went to the *Wrong Place* to be cured.**

He went to the king instead of to Elisha.

**2 Kings 5:6** - *And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.*

Many today are knocking at the wrong door for salvation, for example, at the door of

confession to a priest -

**1 Timothy 2:5** - *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

at the door of spiritism or some other false cult; at the door of respectability or of church affiliation. There is only one door -

**John 10:9** - *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

There is only one place where the leprosy of sin can be dealt with, and that is, at the feet of Jesus -

**Luke 7:37-38** - *And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*

**Luke 7:48-50** - *And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

3. Third, he want to be cured *IN HIS OWN WAY* and not in God's way.

God's way is outlined in -

**2 Kings 5:10** - *And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.*

Naaman's reaction when he learned of God's method of cleansing is told in -

**2 Kings 5:11-12** - *But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.*

*12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.*

Many people want *their* way and not God's. How different their way is from God's way-

**Isaiah 55:8-9** - *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

*9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

But look at -

**2 Kings 5:13** - *And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?*

God's way is simple and effective. For example -

we are saved by *looking* -

**Isaiah 45:22** - *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

by *calling* -

**Romans 10:13** - *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

by *coming* -

**Matthew 11:28** - *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

by *welcoming* -

**Revelation 3:20** - *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

by *entering* -

**John 10:9** - *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

by *touching* -

**Matthew 14:36** - *And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*

by *receiving* -

**John 1:12** - *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*

If you have never done so, will you try it?

Read again -

**2 Kings 5:13** - *And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?*

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5. NAAMAN WAS CURED BY A GLORIOUS MIRACLE.

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Notice several things that need emphasizing in -

**2 Kings 5:14** - *Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.*

4. There was a GREAT HUMBLING.

We read that Naaman “went down”. His pride had to go - and in front of all his officers and servants this mighty man had to go down, down, down.....

Whenever men and women are determined to be saved, they will do anything rather than miss the blessing.

***b. There was PERFECT OBEDIENCE.***

The prophet said -

**2 Kings 5:10** - *.....Go and wash in Jordan seven times.....*

thus, seven times Naaman dipped himself beneath the water. Can you hear the watchers counting, “One.....two.....three.....” as he goes down?

After six dippings Naaman was still a leper. Only when he perfected his obedience by dipping the seventh time did the miracle take place.

When anyone takes God at His word, He always performs the miracle for them.

**Romans 10:9-10** - *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

3. There was a COMPLETE CURE.

We are told of this in the last part of -

**2 Kings 5:14** - *.....his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.*

Compare with -

**2 Corinthians 5:17** - *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

There is still one very beautiful thing to notice in this story which is more wonderful and more to be desired than physical healing, even than being cleansed from our sin. Read -

**2 Kings. 5:15** - *And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.*

Naaman was now absolutely convinced that there was a God in heaven, From now on, he was determined to make this God *his* God, to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him and to make Him known to others!

Closing thought -

**Isaiah 1:18** - *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

**Luke 5:31** - *And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.*

# ***THE RECOVERY OF THE LOST AXE HEAD***

## **STUDY 9**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 6:1-7**

The story of the raising of the lost axe head, recorded in -

**2 Kings 6:1-7** - *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.*

*2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.*

*3 And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.*

*4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.*

*5 But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.*

*6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.*

*7 Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.*

is the story of a miracle of recovery and restoration. Thank God, He is still able to perform such miracles in human lives!

In this incident, *Elisha* typifies the Lord Jesus -

**2 Kings 6:6** - *And the man of God said, Where fell it?.....*

the *sons of the prophets* typify Christian workers -

**2 Kings 6:1** - *And the sons of the prophets.....*

and the *axe head* speaks to us of the power, the anointing and the enabling of the Holy Spirit, without Whom all service must be ineffective -

**2 Kings 6:5-6** - *But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.*

*6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.*

Here, then, is a message for all who have known the power of God in their service but who have now become ineffective and are out of touch, backsliders -

**2 Timothy 3:5** - *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such*

turn away.

*There are three main sections in this story.*

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**A PATTERN TO BE APPROVED.**

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**2 Kings 6:1-4** - *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.*

*2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.*

*3 And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.*

*4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.*

Here is a pattern of wholehearted service, a picture of what Christian service and servants should be. Notice the following characteristics -

They were “sons of the prophets” and disciples of Elisha.

**2 Kings 6:1** - *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha.....*

The first qualification for all Christian service is relationship with the Master.

They dwelt with Elisha.

**2 Kings 6:1** - *.....where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.*

Here is the idea of fellowship and communion which is essential for effective service.

Compare -

**John 15:4** - *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*

**c. They were burdened about the need for service.**

**2 Kings 6:2** - *Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell.....*

They recognized the need and were anxious to get on with the work.

4. They were commissioned men.

The prophet said to them -

**2 Kings 6:2** - .....*Go ye.*

Compare with -

**Matthew 28:19** - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

*e. They realized their dependence upon their master.*

**2 Kings 6:3** - *And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.*

They were unprepared to undertake the task without him.

Compare with -

**John 15:5** - *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

6. They all took a share.

**2 Kings 6:2** - *Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell.....*

Every man joined in the task.

7. They were energetic, keen workers.

**2 Kings 6:4** - *So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.*

They were equipped with the right tools for falling trees and the work of building.

Here, then, is a pattern to be approved. How great it would be if all the Lord's workers had these sevenfold characteristics!

But, in the story we notice there is -

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## **2. A PERIL TO BE AVOIDED.**

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**2 Kings 6:5** - *But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.*

One worker lost his axe head, the sharp cutting edge of all his service, without which all effort was useless. He did not lose the handle. From a distance, it might have appeared as though his equipment was complete, but it was not complete.

**Zechariah 4:6** - .....*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*

How foolish it would have been for him to have gone on working! He was working well, but, gradually the axe head slipped down the helve of the axe - into the water!

It was a gradual process, as is all backsliding. He lost his power and effectiveness.

Notice -

**a. *He lost his power while he was working.***

**1 Kings 20:40** - *And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.....*

2. Perhaps he was working too energetically.

**1 Corinthians 2:4** - *And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*

**c. *What he lost was borrowed.***

**Psalms 62:11** - *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.*

3. He was conscious of his loss.

**Judges 16:20** - *And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.*

**e. *He was deeply distressed about his loss.***

**Job 23:3** - *Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!*

Have you lost the axe head? You used to know His power resting upon you, but now is your cry: "Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?" If so, this story assures you that you may be restored, reinstated and re-equipped for the service of God.

What must you do?

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3. A PROCEDURE TO BE ADOPTED.

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**2 Kings 6:5-7** - *But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.*

6 *And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.*

7 *Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.*

tells us about this. If God can make a piece of iron swim, then surely He can restore one of His own children who has wandered from Him!

*No one has gone too far for God to raise him.*

How can lost power, effectiveness and a lost experience of God be regained?

1. We must immediately stop working.

The man did that. It would have been foolish to try to work without the axe head! Jesus said, “Tarry.....until.....”

**Luke 24:49** - *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

2. We must make a full and frank confession to our Master.

Immediately he was conscious of his loss, the man cried out -

**2 Kings 6:5** - *.....Alas, master! for it was borrowed.*

If we have failed, we must make a full confession of our failure to the Lord Himself, then we may have the assurance of His forgiveness and cleansing.

**1 John 1:9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- c. ***We must show our Master the place where we lost our effectiveness and our experience of His presence and power.***

The first question Elisha asked was -

**2 Kings 6:6** - *.....Where fell it?.....*

He did not scold the young man. He asked him frankly to tell him what had happened.

Where did you fail the Lord and lose the conscious realization of His presence and power in your life?

Was it when you gave up your private devotions or your attendance at the house of God?

when you had a misunderstanding with someone?

when you made that unholy alliance?

when you committed that secret sin or entered into that dishonest transaction?

“Where did it fall?”

You will never recover your axe head until you tell your Lord just where you lost it.

4. Then we shall see the miracle performed!

**2 Kings 6:6** - ....*And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.*

Elisha performed the miracle by the use of a “stick”. The way back to God is by way of the cross.

**1 Peter 2:24** - *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

His blood can cleanse us and make us whole. Trust Him. Our ground assurance is -

**1 John 1:7** - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

*e. Finally, we must put out our hand and take it.*

Here is the step of faith.

**2 Kings 6:7** - *Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.*

All the way through our Christian life, it is necessary for us to appropriate, by faith, the provision that the Lord has made for our salvation and our victory through Christ.

To act in faith in this way was a humbling experience for the son of the prophet, for probably others were watching as he bent down very low, put out his hand and took back that which he had lost.

What a glorious thing it is when, having failed the Lord, we are prepared to take these steps back into fullness of blessing!

May God give us grace to do this.

Closing thought -

**Hosea 14:1-7** - *O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.*

*2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.*

*3 Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.*

*4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.*

*5 I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.*

*6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.*

*7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.*

# ***A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS***

## **STUDY 10**

**Scripture Portion: 2 Kings 7:1-15**

This study is based upon the story of the four leprous men who made an amazing discovery and then felt compelled to share it with as many people as possible.

In this incident, we find solemn teaching concerning the desperate need of the spiritually famished multitudes around us and of our responsibility to tell them of the wonderful provision that God has made for their salvation.

See the setting of the story in **2 Kings 7:1-11**.

Samaria was besieged by the Syrian army.

*Inside* the city terrible things were happening - **2 Kings 6:24-31**. The people were facing starvation, disease and death.

*Outside* the city were four lepers, also starving. If they remained outside, they would die. If they went to the Syrian camp, they would probably be killed.

What should they do?

They decided to go to the Syrian camp. As they drew near, they were amazed to find -

**2 Kings 7:5** - *.....behold, there was no man there.*

But they found plenty of food, clothes, silver and gold. So they satisfied their hunger to the full -

**2 Kings 7:8** - *And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.*

Then, they remembered the thousands who were dying inside the city while they had so much.

Now read -

**2 Kings 7:9-11** - *Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of*

*good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

*10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.*

*11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.*

This story is a great challenge to those of us who have discovered Christ as the Bread of Life and who are surrounded by millions of famished, dying souls who are in danger of the second death.

**Revelation 20:12-15** - *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

*13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

*14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

*15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Let us look at the words of the four lepers recorded in -

**2 Kings 7:9** - *Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

Notice -

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### THE PRIVILEGE WE ENJOY.

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**2 Kings 7:9** - *.....this day is a day of good tidings.....*

Every Christian can say the same. Every day for 1900+ years has been a day of good tidings, today included.

**Luke 2:10-11** - *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

**2 Corinthians 6:2** - *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

**Galatians 4:4** - *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*

**1 Timothy 1:15** - *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

We are living in the Day of Grace when sinners may be sure of a welcome if they will come to the Saviour -

**John 6:37** - *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

when He waits to be admitted into the hearts of men and women -

**Revelation 3:20** - *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

when -

**Revelation 22:17** - *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

In the mercy of God, we have heard the good tidings and are rejoicing in Christ. What a privilege it is when we remember that so many of the people we meet are starving, perishing -

**John 3:16** - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

They are *inside* the city, without God and without hope in the world, while we are saved and bound for the heavenly City. This is the privilege we enjoy.

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## **2. THE SIN WE COMMIT.**

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**2 Kings 7:9** - *.....We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace:.....*

This is true of multitudes of Christians who are committing the sin of silence, indeed, the *crime* of silence! How guilty the church has been down the years!

It is 1900+ years since Jesus came to Bethlehem and later died on Calvary, yet there are still five hundred million souls who have never heard of His love. Thousands of Christians go to church each Sunday and sing of God's great salvation, but, during the week they "hold their peace".

This, Christian, is the sin we commit. By our silence we sin against the Lord Who depends upon us to proclaim the word of reconciliation -

**2 Corinthians 5:18-19** - *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

We sin against the souls for whom Christ died and who need Him so desperately -

**1 John 2:2** - *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

We condemn ourselves for our sinful selfishness and expose ourselves to a dreadful danger, of which the four lepers remind us.

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### 3. THE DANGER WE FACE.

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**2 Kings 7:9** - .....*We do not well.....*

What is the result of our failure to evangelize?

When we “hold our peace”, it means fearful loss for the souls around us, for if we do not go to them, they will certainly die - spiritually -

**Romans 6:23** - *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Also, if we “hold our peace”, it means fearful loss and punishment for ourselves. Please read the solemn words in -

**Ezekiel 33:7-9** - *So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.*

*8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

*9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.*

David had this in mind when he prayed -

**Psalms 51:14-15** - *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

*15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.*

and referred to the guilt that rests upon the soul who keeps silent when he should speak out.

This danger was also referred to by the apostle Paul in -

**1 Corinthians 3:11-15** - *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

*12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

*13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

*14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

*15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

The sin of silence will result in the inevitable "loss" at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

How we have failed in the matter of personal evangelism! What can we do about it?

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#### 4. THE ACTION WE MUST TAKE.

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This is indicated in -

**2 Kings 7:9b-11** - *.....now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

*10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.*

*11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.*

There must be DETERMINED action.

Listen to the four men -

**2 Kings 7:9b** - *.....now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

If one Christian won ten souls for Christ this year, and those ten each won ten in the next year, these hundred then winning ten each in the third year, and so on, the result would be that, in the tenth year, ten thousand million souls would have been saved. Before the completion of the tenth year, the full population of the world would be gathered in!

There must be UNITED action.

“Let us.....”, said the lepers. They would do this thing together.

**2 King 7:9b** - .....*now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king’s household.*

It is wonderful what one dedicated man can do. But how much more can a whole church of dedicated witnesses do for the salvation of souls!

**Mark 2:1-5** - *And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.*

*2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.*

*3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.*

*4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.*

*5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

Particularly notice **verse 3**.

**c.      *There must be SACRIFICIAL action.***

Notice the word “go”, not “wait” in -

**2 Kings 7:9** - .....*go and tell.....*

**Matthew 28:19** - *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Such “going” involves sacrifice.

If, for example, Japanese are to hear, then fellows and girls must be prepared to leave the comforts of home, their good jobs, and “go”!

Who is prepared for this?

4.      There must be VOCAL action.

Notice the word “tell” in -

**2 Kings 7:9** - .....*go and tell.....*

This is something we can all do. Why do we find it so hard to tell of all that our dearest Friend has done for us? Will you today obey -

**Mark 5:19** - *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*

**e.     *There must be URGENT action.***

The lepers said, -

**2 Kings 7:9** - *.....if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us.*

The time is short. The lost are dying. The Lord is coming. The opportunity is going.

**John 9:4** - *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

See what happens when Christians are willing to “go and tell”. In -

**2 Kings 7:9-12** - *Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

*10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.*

*11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.*

*12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.*

we are told -

**(1) *The four lepers told one porter.***

**(2) *The one porter told the other porters.***

**(3) *Those porters told the king.***

*(4) The king told the people of the city.*

And thus the blessing spread!

Closing thought -

**Acts 5:40-42** - *And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.*

*41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

*42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*