

A Picture of Mature Christian Living

Reading: Second Kings 4:8-17

This delightful story has much to tell us about everyday living in Elisha's world. Despite the great moral and spiritual depravity of Israel in these days, there were the 7000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal, men and women whose hearts were open to the true God, and in their lives sought to live for Him. It is like that in our own day. The Shunammite woman was one of them.

The woman was replete in her society - she had no temporal needs. This tends to be the long term result of ongoing Godly living.

Charles Wesley used to say that conversion sowed the seeds of its own destruction. He saw that many came to Christ out of the wretchedness of their own sin. Conversion to Christ cleaned up their act as the Holy Spirit put his finger on sin, wantonness and wastefulness. The result was greater thrift and the blessing of a more orderly life style. Thus they became more self reliant and less inclined to trust in the Lord. This is always a danger to the believer. See: Deuteronomy 8:14-32:47, and learn the lesson!

The Christian life is not a cargo cult. We are not promised prosperity in this life. We are promised a place with the Lord in His kingdom. Many people find Christ but live in need all their life, and prosperity is not a test of valid faith for anyone. Read Deuteronomy 8:1&2.

However the Lord has promised to meet the needs of His children and we must learn to trust him in this also. See: Matthew 6:31; Psalm 34:8-10 & Philippians 4:19. But, remember Proverbs 30:8&9.

Can we expect God to meet our needs too? Yes, we can!

We then have an obligation to share these blessings with others as in Luke 15:17. God ordains it so.

The woman was obedient to her husband - she cleared her plans with him v10.

Paul says that Christian husbands and wives are to be subject to each other, just as they are to all other members of the church. Ephesians 5:21.

This submission deals with the "I wants" in us. It puts the needs and interests of the other before our own. It makes us the servant to our other. We sing, *Brother let me be your servant*, but do we mean it? Do we practise it when issues and questions arise? If we do not practise it at home as well as in the Church, our profession is a lie, a parody, a joke. Be real!

The husband is to love his wife, sacrificially, just as Christ loved the Church, placing her whole need before his own. She is to offer him obedience Ephesians 5:21-33. The difference is that of roles, not equality. The husband is not the boss, nor his wife mother superior. God has made the husband head of the home. He is responsible to God for his family.

The wife is to offer him her submission as unto Christ. It is her gift to give, not her husband's to demand. If the relationship is not one of harmonious cooperation it is like a leg or an arm out of joint. It does not honour God. The wife of a non Christian husband is to do what she can without compromising her faith (This is a topic too large to expand here).

The woman was always busy - Elisha called twice for her attention v12&v15, She did not put her nose into Elisha's affairs, but stood by his door when summonsed. Look up Second Thessalonians 3:11, First Timothy 5:13 & First Peter 4:15. We have more important things to do as we are called to be disciples of the Lord Jesus.

The woman was spiritually aware - she recognised holiness in others when she saw it v9. If we live close to the Lord, others will come to see Christ in us, because we grow more and more into the image of our Lord. It ought to be obvious

We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. Second Corinthians 3:18.

Will others take note that we too have been with Jesus Acts 4:13?

The woman gave from a full heart - she gave freely of what she had. We cannot give what we do not have. The principle is for believers to lay aside for the Lord's work and people as He has blessed Deut 16:17, First Corinthians 16:2.

The woman gave not expecting to receive - there was no evidence of selfish strategy in her actions. We are told in Galatians 6:2 to 'bear one-another's burdens, and thereby fulfil the

law of Christ.' This word 'bear' is from a word meaning to *pick up* and 'burden' in this verse means a *physical load* as in Matthew 20:12. It is something pressing on someone's resources.

She gave of her largesse to relieve Elisha from his weariness passing by in his many travels. This is an excellent example of Galatians 6:2.

The woman had burdens of her own, for Gehazi observed that she was childless. In her culture this was an embarrassment, for the couple had no heir. She made no mention of it to Elisha, no request, not even a hint. It illustrates Galatians 6:5, "Each one will bear (imperative) his own load." 'Load' or 'burden' in v5 is not the same word as v2, it means in the NT an obligation.

As Christians we are to be witnesses to Christ in this world. It is an obligation. We cannot fudge it off onto someone else. It is something we must take up ourselves and play our part. To do this God has given us the gift of pastors and teachers. They assist us with teaching, organising, facilitating, encouraging and the like, but cannot do it for us. The work of ministering the gospel to a dying world is the obligation of every believer. Elisha was the gift of God to the woman in her obligation.

Not the End - This study will be continued in No. 6.

This study is based in the wording of the NASB

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church
 Lower Road, Eltham North
 Sundays 10.30 am

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