

Pure Religion

2 Kings 4:1-7

I. A Widow Faced Disaster

A. A widow came to Elisha with in fear and helplessness. 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 KINGS 4:1) *Josephus and the rabbis argue that this was the wife of Obadiah who hid the prophets from Ahab.*

B. God made promises to the righteous who trust in God which must be kept. For *as the heaven is high* above the earth, *so great is his mercy toward them that fear him*. (PSALM 103:11) *along with* But *the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting* upon them that fear him, and *his righteousness unto children's children*; (PSALM 103:17)

C. The people of God form a sharing community with an institutional memory. Then *they that feared the LORD spake often one to another*: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and *a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD*, and that thought upon his name. (MALACHI 3:16) *along with* Hearken, my beloved brethren, *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?* (JAMES 2:5)

D. The church had an obligation in the matter which the widow brought to Elisha's attention. And *if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant*. But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, *he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile*: (LEVITICUS 25:39-40) *along with* *After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him*: (LEVITICUS 25:48)

II. Elisha Responded in Faith

A. it is hard to imagine a more appropriate way to accredit a minister than what God did through Elisha in this case. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* (JAMES 1:27)

B. Elisha investigated. 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*. (2 KINGS 4:2)

C. The widow was looking for something other than worldly wealth. As *sorrowful*, yet always *rejoicing*; as *poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things*. (2 CORINTHIANS 6:10)

D. Elisha told the woman to use the resources at her command. Then he said, Go, *borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours*, even empty vessels; borrow *not a few*. 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*. (2 KINGS 4:3-4) *along with* *Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim*. (JOHN 2:7)

E. Believers have reason to expect good things from God. *I am the LORD thy God,* which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: *open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* (PSALM 81:10 AV) *along with* Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: *ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* (JOHN 16:24)

III. God Remembers

A. In the VALLEY OF VISION, the stars are brighter and the soul closes with God. Therefore I *take pleasure in infirmities*, in reproaches, *in necessities*, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: *for when I am weak, then am I strong.* (2 CORINTHIANS 12:10) *along with* **Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ** Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (EPHESIANS 3:20-21)

B. The widow obeyed in faith and God blessed her. 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. 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.*** (2 KINGS 4:5-6)

C. God met the petition of the humble, faithful woman. 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. (2 KINGS 4:7)

D. Meditate on God's gracious PROVIDENCE. Finally, brethren, *whatsoever things are true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* (PHILIPPIANS 4:8) *along with* **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.** (ROMANS 8:28)

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