

A RACE FOR A BOY'S LIFE

BIBLE TEXT : II Kings 4:1-44.

LESSON 310 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). .

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Kings 4:1-44

¹ 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.

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.

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Widow in Trouble

By the miracles he had worked through faith in God, Elisha had proved to the world that he was a man of God. When people were in trouble they knew where to go for help.

A widow was in trouble. Her husband, one of the prophets in the school of the prophets of which Elisha was the head, had died and left her penniless. When her sons were about to be sold for the debts, she cried to Elisha for help. Elisha had no money. His life was spent in service for others, and he did not have time to lay up treasures on earth. But that did not mean that he could not help her. Elisha had something of much greater value than money. He had faith in God. And he was willing to use what he had to help the widow.

The Apostle James wrote: "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). Some people are very careful to keep themselves unspotted from the world, but they think they do not have time to visit the needy. Elisha had that "pure religion." The widow had come to the right person for help.

The Oil Increased

All that the widow had in her home was a pot of oil. It was not much; and if she sold it, it would not bring her much money. But God was going to increase that oil to show His power, just as He had increased the oil of the widow who had fed Elijah when all the land was starving.

The sons of the widow were sent to borrow all the empty pots and pans and pails they could get from the neighbours. Perhaps the widow wondered what Elisha could do with all those empty vessels. But she obeyed the man of God, and she soon saw what a blessing her obedience would bring to her. Alone with her two sons, the widow did what Elisha had told her to do. She began to pour the oil from her own little cruse into an empty pot. When one big vessel was full, she looked into her cruse, and it was as full as it had been before. Where did all the oil come from? She poured into another pot, and soon it was full; and then another, and another. Still there was as much oil as there had been before she began.

Surely this was a miracle of God. The oil kept flowing until every vessel in the house was full. Then the flow of oil stopped. They hurried quickly to tell Elisha what had happened. He was not surprised. He knew what God would do. Elisha had faith; the woman was obedient; and God gave the increase. Elisha sent the widow to sell the oil she now had; and with the money she could pay all her debts, and have enough money left for herself and her sons to live on.

The Oil of the Spirit

We, too, can bring empty vessels to the Lord to be filled. We can give ourselves as empty vessels, and feel the Oil of the Holy Spirit flow into our lives. But the vessels must be empty, emptied of our own desires and will. Perhaps one's vessel might be full of

stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

¹¹ 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.

¹⁸ And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

¹⁹ 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

pride, or of a desire for the things of the world or for money. The Spirit of God will not mix with such things.

We must be emptied of self, cleansed by the Blood of Jesus in sanctification, and then we are prepared for the Oil of the Spirit to flow into our lives. It will flow in abundance if we are entirely yielded to the Lord.

Welcome for the Man of God

Along the route where Elisha walked as he went about his duties for the Lord, lived a godly family who were happy to entertain him in their home. It was considered courtesy for the people to invite in anyone who might be passing their home if it were evening and he needed a place to stay. But when the wife realized that Elisha was a man of God, she prepared a little room with a bed and table and candle so that he would feel at home any time he came their way. She wanted to do this little service as unto the Lord.

Is your heart open so that you can bid the Saviour in to stay with you? Do you have a place for Him so that He is always welcome? Jesus will not force Himself upon anyone; but how happy He is to find a heart that is prepared for Him, where he is always welcome, where one is never too busy to ask Him in. The Lord always gives a blessing when he comes to abide.

The Woman's Reward

Elisha appreciated the welcome he received in this little home, and he wanted to do something for the people who were being so kind to him. He asked the lady if she would like to have him take a message to the king for her, or give his influence toward gaining some favours for her. But she was contented where she was, living among her own people, and had no favour to ask. Still Elisha wanted to help her. Gehazi may have mixed with the family more than Elisha, for he knew that they had a deep longing for a son; so Elisha called the woman and told her that she was going to become a mother. She did not think he was serious, and the longing in her heart was so great that she did not consider it a matter to make light of. She answered him, "Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid." But Elisha was telling the truth, and in due time she had a son. Just think how happy Elisha made the people whom he met in his journeys! Everywhere he went someone benefited from his visit.

The Child's Death

Years later, when the child was grown, he went into the field where his father was working with the reapers. Suddenly he suffered sharp pains in his head and was carried back to the house. And he died. What a shock it was to his mother who had had such great joy in her son through the years! Her son was dead -- but her faith was not.

The sorrowing mother hurried to Elisha for help. He saw her coming and sent his servant to meet her. He could see that she was in trouble, but God had not revealed it to him. The woman, however, was not satisfied with talking with the servant. She had come to see the man of God, and she did not stop until she got to him. As she knelt at Elisha's feet, it seemed her grief was too much for her. She had feared that her great joy might end in disappointment. She was suffering more now than if she had never had a son. Elisha gave Gehazi his staff and sent him to the dead boy, but the mother would not leave Elisha. She knew the power of God was upon Elisha, but she was not sure about Gehazi.

Elisha consented to go home with her. On their way they met Gehazi returning, and he said that the child was indeed dead. But God was yet to perform a miracle. In the little room which the

bid thee.

²⁵ So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is that Shunammite*:

²⁶ Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.*

²⁷ And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is vexed within her*: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

²⁸ Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

²⁹ 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.

³² 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.

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.

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.

³⁶ And he called Gehazi, and said, Call

woman had prepared for Elisha, lay the child upon Elisha's bed. Elisha began to pray. Elijah had once raised a dead boy to life, and had not Elisha received a double portion of the power that had been upon Elijah? Surely God was going to perform another miracle through His faithful servant. As Elisha stretched himself upon the child, he felt the body grow warm. Life had come again to the dead boy. What a happy day it was in this home when God proved His power!

The Poisoned Gourds

In Elisha's tours he came again to the school of the prophets at Gilgal. The students were having hard times because of a drought in the land. In order to get food, some of the young men had gone into the field to gather herbs, and had picked poison gourds. When the men began to eat, they realized they were being poisoned. Again Elisha was near to help. Was it not fortunate that Elisha was always around when he was needed? The Lord is always near to help us when we need Him, too, if we live to please Him and ask Him to abide in us. Elisha told the young prophets to put some meal into the pot and everything would be all right. They did, and finished their dinner without any ill effects.

The Loaves Increased

God was making provision for His prophets during the time of poor crops. A man came to bring Elisha 20 loaves of bread and some corn. The loaves were small, and perhaps Elisha could have eaten them all himself, but he was willing to share with the hungry young men. He had the spirit that loves to share. Jesus said: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38).

Gehazi thought this was a very small amount to set before 100 people, but Elisha told him to go ahead and obey because God had promised that there would be enough, and there would even be some left over. When the loaves were passed, they multiplied just as the five loaves and two fishes were with which Jesus fed the 5000. All those 100 men had enough to eat. Yes, and there was some left over, as God had promised.

Elisha seemed never to doubt God's word. If God said it, it would surely come to pass. God would do much more for us if we could believe in Him with the same faith that Elisha had. God has given us a great many promises; and if we take our stand upon them, give ourselves wholly to Him, and then believe, we, too, shall enjoy the blessings of God.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the widow's trouble?
2. To whom did she go for help?
3. What did the widow have in her home? and how was it used to help her?
4. Of what is oil a type in the Bible?
5. How do we get that Oil into our lives?
6. What reward was given the woman who prepared a room for Elisha?
7. How did Elisha help her in later years?
8. Describe the incident of the poisoned gourds.
9. What did Elisha do with the loaves of bread and corn that were brought to him?
10. Why could Elisha do miracles for God?

this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

³⁷ Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

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.

³⁹ And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not.

⁴⁰ So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O *thou* man of God, *there is* death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*.

⁴¹ But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

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.

⁴³ 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.