

Kings and Prophets 14-02-02b

We pick up our study now in 2nd Kings chapter 4. We've got to pick up the pace just a little bit. So buckle up Grab, whatever's next to you and hang on Beginning in verse 8 now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunim where there was a notable woman and she Persuaded him to eat some food so it was as often as he passed by he would turn in there to eat some food and She said to her husband look now I know that this is a holy man of God who passes by us regularly Please let us make a small upper room on the wall and let us put a bed for him there and a table and a chair And a lampstand so it will be whenever he comes to us. He can turn in there This is where the expression turn in comes from.

Well, I'm gonna turn in that's that's where it comes from And It happened one day that he came there and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there Then he said to get Hazi his servant call this Shunammite woman when he had called her She stood before him and he said to him say now to her look you've been concerned for us with all this care What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army? She answered I dwell among my own people Interesting answer did she answer his question directly? That would be sort of a yes-or-no type of question right but she gives sort of a unique answer So he said what then is to be done for her? Ghazi answered actually She has no son and her husband is old So he said call her When he had called her she stood in the doorway Then he said about this time next year You shall embrace a son and she said no my lord man of God do not lie to your maidservant But the woman conceived and bore a son when the appointed time had come of which Elisha had told her and the child grew Now it happened one day that he went out to his father to the Reapers and he said to his father my head my head So he said to a servant carry him to his mother when he had taken him and brought him to his mother He sat on her knees till noon and then died she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door upon him and Went out then she called to her husband and said please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys that I may run To the man of God and come back So he said why are you going to him today? It is neither the new moon nor the Sabbath. She said it is well Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant drive and go forward do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you So she departed and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel So it was when the man of God saw her afar off that he said to his servant Gehazi look the Shunammite woman Please run now to meet her and say to her. Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child? She answered it is well Interesting answer this woman has a way of answering questions engine Now when she came to the man of God at the hill She caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away But the man of God said let her alone For her soul is in deep distress and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me So she said did I ask a son of my Lord? Did I not say do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi get yourself ready Take my staff in your hand and be on your way If you meet anyone do not greet him if anyone greets you do not answer him But lay my staff on the face of the child The mother of the child said as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, I will not leave you So he arose and followed her Now guys, he went on ahead of them and laid the staff

on the face of the child, but there was neither voice nor hearing Therefore he went back to meet him and told him saying the child has not awakened When Elisha came into the house, there was a child lying dead on his bed.

I cannot think of a More sorrowful sight in all the world Than a young child that has passed away That's What is present? When Elisha came into the house, there was the child lying dead on his bed He went in therefore shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the Lord and He went up and lay on the child and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on His hands and he stretched himself out on the child and the flesh of the child became warm He returned and walked back and forth in the house and again went up and stretched himself out on him Then the child sneezed seven times And the child opened his eyes And he called Gehazi and said call this Shunammite woman So he called her and when she came to into him he said pick up your son So she went in fell at his feet and bowed to the ground Then she picked up her son and went out That's our 27 verse Story Actually, it's about closer to 30 verses in it So we've got Another woman That Comes into the periphery of Elisha, but the situation is far different Let's just quickly notice Some of the things that are different. What is the economic situation of the first woman? She's beyond destitute Well into debt To the point of the slavery of her sons, this is a notable woman. This is a woman that has got ample Provision she's got more than enough in her household For herself and her husband.

She's able to provide on repeated occasions for Elisha the Prophet and even to build on to the house And to make a separate quarters Upstairs this talking about the wall and so on this is this is an upstairs Situation What is her family situation Well initially one of the first things we find out about this first woman is She has lost her husband and she has two sons But she is about to lose them to slavery and this actually is the crisis What's the situation the second woman Well, we don't Know about her offspring situation initially, but we do know she has a husband Right. It doesn't come out till later that this husband is old and that they have no children But initially she's a married woman because she immediately Talks to her husband in verse 9 The Dead husband of the first lady is a man that has gone into great debt The living husband of the second woman is a guy that is apparently quite well off Maybe because he doesn't have kids. He's much much more prosperous What is the Situation that brings the first woman into contact with Elisha She Has this severe crisis and she cries out to him out of necessity Out of need, right? It's a she's in dire straits and she cries out to the Prophet Your servant my husband is dead Creditors are on the way.

I have been bereaved and Even that which I have is about to be taken from me, right? What's the occasion for the contact between the second woman and Elisha She also Initiates the contact doesn't she is it out of necessity? Is it out of need? This is the opposite this is generosity She sees this guy Recognizes an opportunity to be generous What is the direction of flow in the first case? Elisha, please do something for me in the second case Elisha. Please. Let me do something for you Totally opposite, right? The Initial contact in the second case is Is Sort of Background there's not a problem that is resolved.

This woman sees the man of God passing by and She persuaded him to eat some food and So as often as he passed by he would turn in there to eat some food. So initially she provides him a meal and Sends him on his way. It's a It's a visit of maybe a few hours at most remember when the The three visitors come to Abraham and he says let me Prepare you some food and they sit in the shade of the tree while he has a calf slaughtered and has a food prepared It's you know It takes a few hours you start from scratch you start with a living animal and end up with steak on a plate takes a little time and This woman has ample provisions But she doesn't just hand him a couple of figs and say nice talking to you that this He turns aside and eats this food and and this begins to be habitual why this tells us something about the habits of Elisha he is a Prophet who travels on a regular basis He doesn't sit holding court under a shade tree someplace On the slopes of Carmel waiting for people to come to him He is sort of a you can imagine it being like a circuit riding preacher But he's active.

He is out trying to find some empty vessels into which he can pour the oil of God He is out he's This is a regular thing that it becomes almost a frequent thing that he will turn aside and he doesn't live there He's passing through, but he stops there and gets these meals so at so it was as often as he passed by and Evidently he passes by often. He turns aside and eats some food in the first case The woman doesn't have anything to buy food and Elisha makes it possible in this case. He's the guy That apparently could use some food and the woman provides it for him But She's not content with that She says I want to do more.

This guy is a man of God and You get the idea as you come to think about all the details. This lady doesn't have children to dote on So what does she do? Here's somebody I can you you wonder you know, is this sort of a Redirected maternal instinct. Here's somebody I can take care of if I don't have children of my own to care for And to feed and to nurture and to give a safe place to sleep at night Here's a guy that could obviously use these things.

Let me do it for him, but her fundamental motivation I'm sure there were other people in the community. She could have started a homeless shelter But why does she do this for Elisha? What does she tell her husband in verse 9? She said to her husband look now I Know this is a holy man of God who passes by us regularly She doesn't do this out of necessity she recognizes opportunity this is Above and beyond she doesn't have to do this Elisha wouldn't hold it against her Nobody would think twice that she has He's passing by and she calls him in and says look sit here till I feed you and she does this repeatedly to well Here's okay. She says now look next time you come through telling you be sure and come see me I want to give you a meal and so he agrees, but she is appealing to him to let her give him something just really flip from the first case and She could say well, you know I'm I'm doing a wonderful thing here.

It's not enough She wants to do more and what does she do she thinks about that opportunity and she thinks remember the first lady Where can I get empty vessels can I where can where else could I get an empty vessel where else could I get a Something to put into the house this lady is thinking what else could I do for this? Holy man of God that passes by me regularly. What else can I do? And she thinks about that it she's not satisfied to just give him the

occasional meal Well, wouldn't it be great if he could rest on his journey and be refreshed have a secure place have a comfortable place So she goes to her house. She doesn't ask the man of God Hey, you know, would you like to have a she does this on her own initiative and it's not the husband doing this The husband is an old guy and one of the reasons that they're a notable family is he's got business interests He's got harvests and servants and crops as we find out later He's a man of business and he you know, yeah Jane you stay there, you know sweep up I'll be back tonight when the Sun goes down and you know, you keep feeding this man of God Maybe it'll be something on my plate too, but he's off elsewhere.

He doesn't He's not concerned and he doesn't initiate or think about any of this both of these situations. It's the woman Look now. I know this is a holy man of God who passes by us regularly, please Oh husband now Notice she doesn't just do this on her own behest She goes to her husband who is the authority who has earned the money and this is an expenditure of his funds, right? She does this exactly the right way she goes to her husband and says look, please Let us make a small upper room on the wall.

Let us She doesn't say let me she doesn't let us because it's his it's his money his servants He's the guy that's gonna have to say, okay I'll design the thing he's got to find a you know Piece of clay to scratch out the design and detail his servants to build this thing go out and buy some furniture or whatever Construct it. Let us put a bed for him there and a table and a chair and a lampstand Table and a chair and a lampstand. I kind of wonder about this whole table and chair thing because you keep Hearing about how well the disciples in the upper room at the Last Supper and you know They reclined and there were couches and the the table was low and I think it doesn't say put in a couch It says put in a table and put in a chair so Apparently he doesn't go up there and you know recline he's he is seated at a chair and he's got a table Why do you need a table and chair? Why not just a chair? What's the table for he could eat off of this table if he wants to eat by himself Maybe he's got some manuscripts.

Maybe he's writing his memoirs. I You can set a lamp on the table if he wants to stay up in prayer or whatever You can set a lamp on a table, but there's such a thing as a lampstand, right? This is a table so but she's thinking what could he ever possibly need or use? He might want to sit down instead of lie down So in addition to the bed, we'll put in a chair. He might want to read he might want to write he might want to You know relays his sandals or do something whatever.

I'll put a table in there She's consciously trying to think what's the most I could do for this guy And she's thought it out ahead of time before she goes to her husband She doesn't she doesn't say, you know, I just want to do something for him any ideas She's she's thought about this a lot. It's a well-formulated plan so it will be whenever he comes to us he can turn in there and Again, we're the next verse this has all happened So it happened one day that he came there and he turned into the upper room and lay down there It's an upper room privacy security Now this is where it really starts to get interesting And so we're we'll we'll return to this point in just a moment There's a couple of other points of background. We need to cover.

Where is this? Where does this take place? Shunam what do we know about Shunam? Shunam the name means You're gonna love this, you know, what's Shunam means? Double resting place Double resting place. That's what the word means It is in the territory assigned to the tribe of Issachar But this is actually not the first Shunamite woman that you have ever studied In fact, you know the name of the first Shunamite woman in the Bible Because the first Shunamite woman in the Bible is named Abishag Abishag David's Maid servant and caretaker in his old age was a Shunamite woman What's the status of this woman's husband That she takes care of he's an old dude Shunamite women seem to be really good at taking care of old guys. If you're an old guy Marry a Shunamite woman They really know how to faithfully diligently go above and beyond in the caretaking department for old guys We don't know how old Elisha is at this point But he's obviously a man who could use some care because he's not married and he's got a servant He's got Gehazi, but apparently the woman says you know, what this Gehazi guy is not really getting the job done I can do better and she does she sees a need and she wants to fulfill it.

She recognizes. He's a holy man of God Gehazi's apparently, you know the inept butler and Elisha's putting up with him But you know if Gehazi was getting it done the woman wouldn't have an opportunity would she? so Shunam now there is another Shunamite woman Who precedes this one? She's not strictly Shunamite, but she's associated with Shunam Also, in fact even before Abishag Many many years before Abishag. There was another woman from this area that figures prominently in the Bible Because in the latter days in fact the final days of King Saul The Philistines in camp against Israel and Saul goes to Mount Gilboa to face them and fight them with Jonathan and his other sons and on the eve of that battle as Saul Seeks to engage the enemy on the morrow at Mount Gilboa.

He is nervous about the outcome The Philistines on that occasion are encamped at Shunam that's where they are and Endor is just a few miles away, and so Saul goes to see the witch the woman at Endor Prior to the day that he and Jonathan and his other sons are slain on the slopes of that mountain But that history is also in this immediate locale in this immediate vicinity So Shunam is mentioned the location of the first widow the first woman is not Important we're not told where she lives this location is important. That's why it's mentioned Shunam double Resting place the first two kings of Israel have a connection to this locale King Saul has been up here King David's caretaker in his Dotage comes from here So With that as background You will have noticed as we read through this from verse 8 through verse 37 Some things that sort of pop out you notice That in the first story Elisha says when you have come in in verse 4 You shall shut the door behind you and your sons In the second story in the Resuscitation of the son Verse 21 She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door and went out When Elisha comes into the house in verse 32, there's the child lying on the bed He went in therefore shut the door behind the two of them. Why is this detail included? with the story flow just as well without Pointing out that the woman shut the door without pointing out that Elisha shut the door is When we'd be missing anything without it you think well, it just seems like a minor detail Well, it's a minor detail.

Why is it there? If it's minor we don't need it if it's there we need it this is my assumption First and foremost, however, look at verse 2. I had just circled something there. What did you circle in verse 2? What shall I do for you This is Elisha's question to the widow This is the Shunammite woman's question mentally when she sees Elisha passing by What can I do for you and she doesn't she doesn't even ask him she just doesn't she Coerces him to come in and eat food. She gets him to stop by in a regular basis She builds a place for him so that he will come and turn down a regular basis so that in verse 13 Look you have been concerned for us with all this care.

What can I do for you? Elisha to the woman same question What shall I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army why these two things as a suggestion By the way, this tells us some more about Elisha it's sort of a backhanded way Who's the king Joram Who does Elisha now after the episode in the preceding chapter now Who's he now on talking terms with? Jehoram Remember it was as much as Elijah's life was worth to have any contact with Ahab or Jezebel, but Elisha Especially after the deliverance and victory in the Moabite war Can now he's he can speak and ask for favors from the king for people. He's got influence He's got pull with the king apparently because he says would you like me to speak to the king on your behalf? It's not like Can you tell the king Elisha's here? Well call my swordsman, you know kill the guy Elisha can go in and he's he's received favorably and he can actually ask favors of the king So there's been a substantial shift in the royal attitude toward the prophet the presiding prophet in northern Israel, hasn't there? Joram is now very positive and receptive toward Elisha as Is the commander of the army? You remember there were some troops that went to see Elijah and Got toasted for their trouble And You wouldn't think that the commander of the army would be on that good of terms with Elijah Where's my hundred and two guys that went up in flames? But now he's also unfavorable terms the commander why great military victory has just happened back in chapter 3 So he asked these two things, but why does he ask these things of the woman? What is the king in the army got to do with this notable woman in Shunem What if She said yeah, that would be great And Elisha went to the king or went to the commander of the army and said something What would be the favor that was asked what benefit would be conferred? What do you think? What could the king do for somebody who's already prosperous what what could he do? What could the commander of the army do for them? What What is their realm of authority and their their power what what what can the king do for a subject? He could He could cancel their taxes the king He could grant them a royal contract. You're the exclusive provider for my household Your husband is going to be one of my advisors.

I'll put him in the cabinet. I'll promote him into the government Make him a notable person not just in the land or in business, but in the palace Move him down there and add him to the cabinet. What could the commander of the army do? Provide security for the business Again by his provisions for troops and soldiers from this guy who's obviously running a farm type of business Excuse me This would be power in the terrestrial plane right as Much as could be done in the human realm There's nobody higher than the king and the commander of the army that could confer further material benefit of some sort, right? influence business opportunity

prosperity in the material realm What is her reply? I Dwell among my own people my prosperity is in my Relationships not my material possessions.

This is why she's the kind of woman that she is This is why she looks at her door and sees somebody she can do something for at a personal level She is a Love one another person that's what defines her and When the Prophet says what can I do for you? She says I am already prosperous in what counts for me. I dwell among my people I Have a wonderful Set of relationships and that fulfills me. That's what this answer means You can't give me anything material that could come close to what I have in the immaterial realm her values and her Treasure and her possession in her mind is in her Relationships with the people around her.

It's an immaterial more aesthetic thing and her Notability her prosperity is really a means of furthering that goal and she's in good shape She says look what counts for me. I've already got I dwell among my people Now I've successfully run myself out of time for this morning. However, let me point out a couple of quick things before we Break until next time There is an area there where there is a lack but she doesn't mention it In the area of relationships and the things that would be most dear what is one of the most precious things on earth Children she hasn't got any So this would be a deduction that Elisha could possibly make but I want you to notice something It happened one day that he came there in verse 11 and he turned into the upper room and lay down there Then he said to the woman what can I do for you? Is that how it goes? Then he said to Gehazi his servant call this Shunammite woman When he Gehazi had called her she stood before him and he said to her What's the pronoun in verse 13? All of the conversation between Elisha and this woman that we have in quotes so to speak is through Gehazi He says to him he says to Gehazi Say now to her Look, you've been concerned if he's anxious to do something for this.

Why isn't he talking to her face to face? Lady you've been so generous. You know, what can I do for you? It's There's the I mean do you not find this kind of striking a Gehazi call the woman? He doesn't trouble himself to go down so to speak. I mean you could look at it that way You know, what's the matter with you you like broke you want to go find her go find her he sends Gehazi when she comes Apparently, this is not a face-to-face conversation She's somewhere else Because he Gehazi go maybe he's in the upper room and he sends her down It says ask her what we can do for her and Ghazi returns You know, do you this is the message? That that that is brokered back and forth through Ghazi Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king to the commander? She answered I dwell among my people Well, this answer is brought back to Elisha by Gehazi she does not tell him this face-to-face How do I know that look at verse 14? so Elisha says What then is to be done for her? He doesn't say what then is to be done for you Says what is to be done for her and Gehazi says? Actually, she has no son and her husband is old So he says call her because she's not present So Ghazi go back to her when he had called her.

She stood in the doorway. She still doesn't come in But she's in the doorway Then he says about this time next year. You shall embrace a son the first Face-to-face pronouncement that we have

from Elisha directly to the woman is this prediction in a year you will have a son She's a far-off, but she's in the doorway There's there's line of sight.

There's verbal contact for the first time in this conversation. It's not through Gehazi He says to her directly about this time next year. You will embrace a son and she says to him.

No my lord Man of God do not lie to your maidservant. Why would she say this? He has addressed something that she thought was very This is behind the closed doors of her own heart She's not mentioned this and it's it's such a hope that she's already convinced herself could never be fulfilled that when he says this she literally can't believe it and She says, you know, we have a casual way of saying you're kidding me That's how we would put it in the vernacular in the colloquial About this time next year. You'll have something you're kidding me Don't lie to me Don't pull my leg But the woman conceived and bore a son when the appointed time had come of which Elisha had told her So this Issue with communication through Ghazi continues in the rest of the story and before we come back next time If you want a little advanced preparation See if you can figure out What's going on with Ghazi? Why is Ghazi even in this story? He wasn't anywhere in the first one We don't he just appears out of the traffic in this one and but he is central everything happens Except at certain key points just notice you can even you know mark here's where Ghazi is the intermediary Here is where he is not and there is a big key in this story When Ghazi is there and when he's not and try to think if this is analogous What would it represent knowing what you know now about Elisha and about the church age About the Lord Jesus Christ But the difference between Elijah and Elisha because not only are we not finished comparing and contrasting these two stories We have to go back to first Kings chapter 17 because there's a comparison contrast with Elijah and a woman who also has a Provision issue that Elijah takes care of and a woman who loses her son that Elijah takes care of Then you've got the Elijah version and you've got the Elisha version in the Elijah version It's the same woman in the Elisha version.

It's two different women and This is one of those wonderful little parts of the Word of God where you could probably just Dwell under the shade of this tree for several weeks. We're gonna try to do it in just a couple of sessions but for extra credit go back and read chapter 17 in the preceding book and See if you can predict what's going to be in class Over the next week or two because you can figure this out. This is not Under a basket.

It just takes Observation and a little bit of key Insight into What's the difference between Elijah and Elisha you've got those keys and you can figure a lot of this out So I challenge you see if see if you can get ahead of me on this Shouldn't be too hard But see if you can figure out kind of where we're going because it'll make it that much easier for us to cover more ground but it's really interesting think about Shunem think about David think about Saul and We'll we'll try to synthesize and pull these things together, but I Leave you with this thought think about these two women and at first blush Which kind of woman would you want to be which kind of believer? Would you want to be? Do you want to be someone who appeals? To God and looks to the things of God when there's a dire crisis once that crisis is met. There's no further history Do

you want to be the kind of person who appeals to the man of God seeing an opportunity for generosity seeing an opportunity for Potential and this becomes a repeated thing. What do you think this woman got in return for the presence of the man of God? This is as close as you get to the presence of God that the you know this She's thinking how many people get the chance to have the prophet of God right here.

She values it Appreciates it and she is happy to do whatever she can for this man. She recognizes the value of his ministry She realizes how important it is to the nation. She's given this a lot of thought and It's all in the immaterial realm.

She's not calling to him out of need She is calling to him out of recognizing an opportunity to Invest in and be a part of the plan and purpose of God and she's excited at it And she thinks of ways to get more involved Which kind of believer do you want to be? Do you want to be the woman with the jar of oil and a wow look at this magic? Appearance of oil or do you want to be the woman who is providing these meals and? enjoying Being a part of God's ministry to the entire nation through this prophet And she's ultimately going to benefit in ways that she never even thought to ask Beyond what she could ask or think God is going to provide for her and when that provision is endangered It's going to be restored to her in an extraordinary way What kind of believer do we want to be it's our choice? It's our choice. Let's close here in a word of prayer. We'll pick up here next time father Thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for how it stimulates us and promotes our Motivation to understand and to be Useful as you invest these things in us and impart them to us that creates such a potential for us to move forward and to be useful and to be a place where your glory can be reflected be people who can live out in love and in service these truths That even angels long to look into we pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our hearts show us their applicability and their influence as we tackle the challenges of our Day and our lives we pray that in all things our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified. We ask it in his name. Amen