

OIL FOR A WIDOW. 2 KN. 4:1-7. 08/06/23. #06.

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A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves." <sup>2</sup>So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil." <sup>3</sup>Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. <sup>4</sup>And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones." <sup>5</sup>So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured *it* out. <sup>6</sup>Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "*There is not another vessel.*" So the oil ceased. <sup>7</sup>Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you *and* your sons live on the rest."  
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1. A widow in need

- a. Many widows were in dire need
- b. One widow was the wife of a deceased prophet
 - a1. A creditor was coming to take away her 2 sons as slaves to satisfy her debt
 - a2. Instead of debtor prison, debtors were enslaved in ancient times
 - a3. Even though Jews were not allowed to enslave other Jews, they often did so
- c. The widow cried out to Elisha for help

2. Oil from heaven

- a. During Elijah's day, a widow's oil lasted through the great drought
- b. Elisha asks what she had in her house
 - a1. God often uses what we already possess to be a blessing (gifts, materials, opportunities, talents...)
 - a2. The widow just had a jar of oil
- c. God directs her to borrow as many empty jars as she can gather from her neighbors

- a1. Notice that her sons gather the jars, for they would benefit the most from the miracle & sell of oil
- a2. The widow trusted that Elisha was leading properly
- d. When the jars were all filled, the oil stopped flowing
- e. Elisha tells the widow to sell the oil, pay off her creditor, & then she & her 2 sons could live on the rest of the money

3. Grace and providence

- a. Not every widow received divine help as this one did
 - a1. Not every leper or blind was healed during Jesus's ministry
 - a2. By grace, God had providentially appointed this widow to receive special grace
- b. Providentially, the widow was positioned correctly
 - a1. She was where Elisha was with a great need
 - a2. She was the wife of a devout deceased prophet of God
 - a3. Elisha was blessed to be used by God to perform miracles
 - a4. God was willing to spare the widow's sons from slavery
 - a5. The widow was willing to obey the prophet
- c. God's providence demonstrates his power & grace
 - a1. God asked nothing in return from the widow
 - b1. God's mercy was without condition
 - b2. She was a faithful woman, but we know nothing of her sons' faith
 - a2. God providentially intervenes in our lives through protection, sending help, giving opportunities to witness, granting the privilege to help others, & even testing
 - a3. Each of us is part of a great master plan that, if followed, will bless us & honor God
- d. This story is not connected to greater historical or biblical events, but merely shows God's grace
- e. Being ready to use whatever we have puts us in a position to be instruments in God's hand