

BOOK OF 2 KINGS
THE LORD RESCUES A WIDOW
2 KINGS 4:1-7

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Introduction

This passage tells us about a very poor, widow woman (a wife of one of the sons prophets no less) who was hurting in a gigantic way!

Her husband had died leaving her in pain emotionally!

Her husband had died leaving her in debt financially!

It's bad enough for her to lose her husband!

But on top of the emotional loss of her husband was this debt that was about to consume the only thing she had!

The creditors were after her to pay and she had no money to pay with!

So, the creditors were coming to take her two sons to be bondmen!

Can you imagine the great burden that she must have been feeling?

She was at the end of her resources...she was at her wit's end!

She needed help in a big way...what could she do?

In her pain and her poverty she did the only thing that she knew to do—
i.e. She turned to the LORD through the prophet Elisha!

When she did, the LORD came through for her in a very big way!

This passage teaches us the glorious truth that the LORD not only knows our problem, but he has a plan for our problem!

I want us to see tonight that **just as the LORD took care of this widow, He can take care of us!** This passage lets us know that **when we reach the end of our resources, there is HOPE IN THE LORD and there is HELP IN THE LORD!**

I. WE SEE THE NATURE OF HER PROBLEMS! (Vs. 1)

A. Understand That Despair Had Consumed Her!

The word "*cried*" means "*to moan; to weep uncontrollably; to shriek out of grief.*"

This word identifies the sound of a broken heart. This woman came to the man of God, Elisha, at the lowest moment of her life. She was in desperate straits!

B. Understand That Death Had Crushed Her!

She was married to one of the "*sons of the prophets*".

These were the men who were in training under Elisha to be the prophets and preachers in Israel.

Her husband, her lover, her friend, her provider, her protector, had been taken away from her in death and she was crushed!

C. Understand That Debt Had Chained Her!

Since her husband is dead she cannot pay her bills. As a result, her creditors are coming to take her sons away as slaves so they can work off this debt.

She has already been deprived of her husband, now she is about to be deprived of her sons as well. She is over her head in debt and there is no way for her to pay what she owes without the LORD!

D. Understand That Devotion Had Coached Her!

In spite of all her problems, she didn't abandon the LORD but still held firm to her faith! We do not see her turning to family or friends!

And she did not try to find someone to loan her more money! (You can't borrow your way out of debt!)

In her despair she turned to the man of God for help! Elisha was the LORD's representative on earth and she knew that the LORD was her best hope! By the way, He always is!

She reminded Elisha that her husband "*did fear the LORD.*" The reality is that **both she and her husband's lives had been devoted to the LORD** and in her trouble, she still trusted the LORD and so she turned to the LORD to supply her need!

In spite of her pain, her problems and her lack of possibilities, she still looked to the LORD for the help she needed!

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Even though she could not see a way out with her physical eyes or with her human reasoning, **she knew that she couldn't see everything!**

Even though she didn't understand everything she was facing, she still believed that the LORD still cared for her and that He could do something about her situation, so she cried out to Him in faith!

The odds are that each one of us will have to face one or more low times in this life in this world!

Job 14:1—"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble."

John 16:33—"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

There may come a day when we may "*reach the end of our rope*" so to speak. Some of you have already been there and can testify about it. Some may be going through it right now and are in need of some help. And for others, they may not be there yet, but it will come because pretty much all of us have our days of trouble and trial in this life!

When we reach that point, the world, the flesh and the devil are all going to tell us that the LORD doesn't see and that He doesn't care!

The truth of the matter is, the LORD does see!

Proverbs 15:3—"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

2 Chronicles 16:9—"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him..."

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Hebrews 4:13—"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

The LORD sees everything we that we face!

Not a single thing is hidden from His view! And, He does care!

Hebrews 4:15—"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

1 Peter 5:7—"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

The LORD cares more than we know about every one of us in the midst of every care that we might face!

These verses are designed to teach us that our problems, while they may appear to be insurmountable in our eyes, are really just the LORD's opportunities to showcase His grace!

Therefore, no matter what we face in this life, we need to learn to turn to the Lord first for the help we need.

He cares! He is able! He will work in our time of need!

WE SEE THE NATURE OF HER PROBLEMS!

II. WE SEE THE NATURE OF HER PERSUASION! (Vs. 2-5)

The LORD could have had Elisha say, "*You have suffered enough. The LORD is going to meet your need. Just go home and wait for Him to work.*" (**Now, let's admit that's what we hope for isn't it!**)

But, we see here that the LORD chose to involve this widow in her own miracle. First the LORD, through Elisha, erased her faith in her own resources by forcing her to admit what she didn't have.

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Then, the LORD, through Elisha, expanded her faith by teaching her trust, humility and obedience. He does the very same things in our life!

A. We See How The LORD Erased Her Faith In Herself!
(Vs 2a) (By Herself, I'm speaking of HER resources!)
The LORD erased the widow's faith through two questions asked by Elisha.

1) What do you need?

2) What do you have?

By those two questions, this woman was made to see the size of her need and the smallness of her own resources. She needed everything and she had very little. She needed much, but she could not possibly meet her own needs.

Often the LORD will use the trials, heartaches and burdens of life to bring us to the place where we can honestly see our need and our own inability to meet it.

Think about it, as long as we think we can handle things,
WHY SHOULD WE LOOK TO THE LORD and
WHY WOULD WE LOOK TO THE LORD?

If we have all the answers, why turn to Him with our questions?

But, when we stop and honestly answer those two questions, we are made to realize that we need more than we will ever be able to supply by ourselves!

The LORD does this to erase our faith in our resources! Now understand that **He isn't trying to erase our faith in Him!**
He wants to erase our faith in ourselves.

As long as we think we can, then He won't!

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This is clearly illustrated in Israel's battle over little Ai in Joshua 7. Israel had just come off a great victory at Jericho and they were feeling confident in their own abilities. They failed to look to the LORD for the help they needed and a little village that should have been an easy victory turned into a humiliating defeat. When Israel got their priorities in order and put the LORD first, then and only then were they allowed to enjoy the victory in Joshua 8!

B. We See How The LORD Expanded Her Faith In Him!
(Vs 2b-5)
After the LORD erased her faith in herself and her own resources, He began the process of expanding her faith in the power of the LORD to meet her need!

1. We See He Expanded Her Faith Personally *(Vs 2b)*
Elisha's second question: ***"What hast thou in the house?"*** was designed to teach this widow that it may not have looked like she had much, but in reality, she already had everything she needed to obtain what she needed.

She couldn't see it, but the LORD had already given her the very thing He would use to meet her need.

Sometimes we fail to realize that sometimes the LORD has already given us everything we need to get our need met through our faith in Him! And sometimes the LORD meets the need from just our resources found in HIM!

We look at our problems and they look so large. We look at our possessions and they seem so small. Yet, we always fail to factor God into the equation! So, He places us in situations where our faith in Him must be expanded!

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2. **We See He Expanded Her Faith Publically! (Vs 3)**
The widow was told to go to all her neighbors and borrow all the empty vessels that she can get her hands on. That was a strange command!

How do you suppose she explained this to her neighbors? We're not told! But I want you to consider what a witness it was when the LORD met her need through those borrowed vessels! God used her as a living, breathing sermon to her neighbors and to us!

Listen, when the LORD does something for you, it is an opportunity to give Him the glory and to use that as a witness to Him! Let your life be a billboard advertising the grace, blessing and power of God to a lost world and to other Believers!

1 Corinthians 10:31—"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

3. **We See He Expanded Her Faith Privately! (Vs 4-5)**
Faith moved in that widow's heart! Trust and obey! She obeyed the LORD and trusted the LORD to do for her what she could not do for herself!

When that day ended, there was a mother and some boys who had learned a valuable lesson. There in the privacy of that home, they learned that God was all-powerful and able to meet every need.

Ephesians 3:20-21—"20 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, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

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- III. **WE SEE THE NATURE OF HER PROVISION! (Vs. 5-7)**
- A. **The LORD's Provision Was Supernatural! (Vs. 5-6)**
Note that is was limited only by her ability to believe and receive!
- B. **The LORD's Provision Was Sufficient! (Vs. 7)**
1. It Was Enough To Settle Her Debts!
 2. It Was Enough To Supply Her Dependents!