

2 Kings 4:8-44

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[0 : 00] 2 Kings chapter 4, we'll pick up verse 8. There will be a number of verses that we read this evening because we'll read the remainder of that chapter. So that would be verses 8 through 44, 2 Kings chapter 4.

2 Kings chapter 4, verses 8 through 44. Hopefully as we read it and we make our way through it, you will understand why we're doing it the way we are.

We're not breaking up, we're kind of seeing it as a unit. Hopefully you'll get that. Let's go to the Lord in prayer and then we'll get right into our text. God, we thank you.

We thank you that you've given us this day and we thank you for the opportunity that is before us to open up the Word of God with one another. So Lord, we praise you for the great benefit and privilege it is of being able to fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

Lord, also being able to study the Word of God with one another. Lord, as we come to a greater understanding, Lord, seeking to grow in Christ's likeness and in our understanding and knowledge of Scripture so that we can apply it to our daily lives.

[1 : 11] Lord, we pray your leading as we open it up. We pray your blessing and leading with the children and the youth and all the activities that are going on throughout this place this evening.

We just ask that you be glorified. We ask that in all ways and all manner of things that Christ be lifted on high. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Again, we are in our focus, really primarily focusing on the northern kingdom of Israel still, but we have entered into the ministry of Elisha.

No longer in the ministry of Elijah. Elijah has passed off the scene, so we're in the ministry of Elisha. Now, Warren Wearsby tells us that Elijah seems to be a, not a foreigner, Elijah is one who kind of comes as a picture of one who would come after him, which would be John the Baptist.

John the Baptist comes in the spirit and power of Elijah. Christ himself says that. So if Elijah is a four type or a picture of the coming of John the Baptist, when we see Elisha, much of what we see in the ministry of Elisha points to Christ.

[2 : 28] You'll see that in our passage this evening, which will be, and I'll tell you that in the forefront. Wow, it got really loud on me. There we go. I'll tell you that in the forefront so that as we read the text, you will know why we're reading them together.

We don't want to press the issue. When we get into types and pictures and things like that in the Old Testament, you don't want to force the matter, but there are some matters where it seems to be that it's being very clear.

We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that John the Baptist came as the foretold one who was coming in the power of Elijah, but he was setting the scene, in a sense, for the ministry of Elisha.

In much the same way, John the Baptist was preparing the way of the Lord. So we want to kind of take it in that. So 2 Kings chapter 4, starting in verse 8.

Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food.

[3 : 31] She said to her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually. Please let us make a little walled upper chamber, and let us set a bed for him there, and a table, and a chair, and a lampstand.

And it shall be when he comes to us that he can turn in there. One day he came there and turned into the upper chamber and rested. Then he said to Gehazi, his servant, Call this Shunemite.

And when he had called her, she stood before him. He said to him, Say now to her, Behold, you have been careful for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Would you be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the army?

And she answered, I live among my own people. So he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Truly she has no son, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her.

When he had called her, she stood in the doorway, and then he said, At this season next year you will embrace a son. And she said, No, my lord, O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant.

[4 : 30] The woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her. When the child was grown, the day came that he went out with his father to the reapers.

And he said to his father, My head, my head. And he said to his servant, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door behind him, and went out.

Then she called to her husband and said, Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God in return. He said, Why will you go to him today? It is neither the new moon nor the Sabbath.

And she said, It will be well. Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, Drive and go forward, and do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you. So she went and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi, His servant, Behold, there is the Shunammite. Please run now to meet her and say to her, Is it well with you?

[5 : 34] Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away.

But the man of God said, Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her, and the Lord has hidden it from me, and has not told me. And the woman said, Did I ask for a son from my Lord?

Did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go your way. If you meet any man, do not salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him, and lay my staff on the lad's face.

The mother of the lad said, As the Lord lives, and as your servant live, and as yourself live, I will not leave you. And he arose and followed her. Then Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff on the lad's face, but there was no sound or response.

So he returned to meet him, and told him, The lad has not awakened. When Elisha came into the house, behold, the lad was dead, and laid on his bed. So he entered, and shut the door behind them both, and prayed to the Lord.

[6 : 38] 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 on him. And the flesh of the child became warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house, once back and forth, and went up, and stretched himself on him.

And the lad sneezed seven times, and the lad opened his eyes. He called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her, and when she came into him, he said, Take up your son.

Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son, and went out. When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.

Then one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, for they did not know what they were.

So they poured it out for the men to eat, and as they were eating of the stew, they cried out and said, O man of God, there is death in the pot. And they were unable to eat. But he said, Now bring meal.

[7 : 43] He threw it into the pot, and said, Pour it out for the people that they may eat. Then there was no harm in the pot. Now a man came from Bel, Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of grain in his sack.

And he said, Give them to the people that they may eat. His attendant said, What will I set this before a hundred men? But he said, Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus saith the Lord, they shall eat and have some left over.

And so he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord. A number of verses, but I want you to see this evening, as we just continue to make our way, what it looks like to make room for the presence of the Lord.

Making room for the presence of God. We're still focusing on the northern tribe, the tribe that is sought to replace the worship of the true Lord God with idol worship. The northern tribe, which is not walking in faithfulness, king after king after king, does that which is wicked in the sight of the Lord.

The northern tribe, in which a number of priests have already fled, if you remember when they established the golden calves in Dan and Bethel, the priests left that region and went towards, actually when the nation was divided, they went to the southern nation because it is there that the temple worship was continuing, it is there in Jerusalem that they could serve.

[9 : 07] So we're in a land that is kind of at least politically strong. It is weakened by the wickedness of their kings, but spiritually it's dark. We're in a land that has really no sense of true worship, but there are those in that region, there are those in that land that are making room, we meet them here in this passage, for the presence of the Lord God in their lives.

The first one we meet is the Shunammite woman, one who literally makes room so that the man of God can stay there. But won't you see a few things that take place to make room?

Number one, we see here in this passage before us the welcomed prophet as he is making our way through this region and he goes into Shunamm and he is there in that region that was a part of the cities that were divided among the tribes of Israel.

We meet it for the first time in the book of Joshua. We see it not playing a very prominent role until we get to this place and as he comes into that region there happens to be a particular woman.

Now it's a woman of means. It is a wealthy lady which is even striking because it says she is a prosperous woman. It is a woman that has at least some economic benefits from what is going on in this region.

[10 : 24] It is a lady who is not hurting in any means. It doesn't appear to be here. It's not like she's a woman in distress. The one who preceded this we find a widow who was in a season of distress.

One who had creditors coming and claiming they were going to take her children away. And Elisha meets the great need there. This lady is so much different. This is neither a widow nor one in want.

She is married to her husband. They don't have any children. She's not asking for children. But yet here is a woman that wants to make room and she welcomes him. She compels him it tells us to turn aside and to eat with her.

After a number of times when he passes through this region we see that she says to her husband behold now I perceive that this is a holy man of God. And it is that perception this reality that Elisha is a holy man of God that leads her to practice this biblical hospitality method of creating space so that he has somewhere to stay.

But even she goes beyond what is hospitable. She not only asked her husband to create an upper walled chamber but she does not only puts a bed in it but she goes further than that even for her time and her day she sets a table and a chair in there.

[11 : 41] It's almost like she was creating a place for him to kind of have a center of work out of there. She was creating an office space a living space it was so much more than just a place of rest.

But she welcomes him into her home and it says after a number of times doing this that Elisha is there and he is asking what can he do. Notice how he describes it.

He says behold you have been careful some translations say with fear or you have been careful with all this care. So the implication in the repetition of the words there is she has went above and beyond to welcome the presence of the Lord God into her home by perceiving that this is a holy man of God and she creates space.

Now we look at that and we say well sure you would do that. But again keep it in context. This is the northern kingdom. False worship has kind of ruled the land. Adels are rampant.

Baal has replaced the true Lord God. The priests are no longer in this region. Elijah in the same scene cried out and said I'm the only one. We know these not.

[12 : 45] There's a school of prophets there sure but this is not a very religious landscape. Yet here we have a wealthy woman during that time not hurting not economically depressed not in any means suffering but welcoming in the prophet of the Lord God because she perceives he is a holy man of God.

And life looks different because she goes to such great care to welcome him into her presence. And it is not forced there's no we read this in its simplicity she just happened to see him at one time and invited him to come eat.

There's no need there's no want we see this even when he asked the question what would you have me to do do you want me to speak to the king do you want me to speak to the commander army she says in her reply I live among my own people that's just a good way of saying I'm well taken care of I don't have any needs so we're struck by the reality we are used to at this point by now encountering people who are seeking the Lord in a time of great need or because of a great tragedy now we see one who just wants to welcome the presence of the Lord into her life she's not asking for anything she has no desire she says I'm well taken care of I don't need the king to know about me I don't need the commander of the army to know about me I am comfortable and all she was doing this for was a response based on the perception this is a holy man of God what we would say here is this is one who is welcoming in the presence of the

Lord God when so many in her society so many of that day were trying to replace the presence of God trying to distance themselves from the presence of God here we find one who is welcoming in the prophet who is the visible physical representation of the presence of God there are no priests in this region we'll get to that in just a minute we can really see that in our text as well so the closest thing she could do would be to welcome in the prophet it's astounding really because life looks different and throughout this whole passage and it's why we read it in its entirety life looks different because of the presence of the prophet because he's there which brings us to our second thing with this welcomed prophet there is a word of promise and the word of promise is this we don't know why he's speaking through his servant Gehazi we don't know maybe there's a language barrier or maybe in her humility she did not feel like she could talk directly to the prophet this holy man of God so he's letting

Gehazi be the kind of go between the liaison we know the chapter that comes up after this Gehazi is not perfect we know that because he's kind of got some ulterior motives with a lot of things we meet him when Naaman comes and he wants to cleanse himself of his leprosy we'll see that in the fifth chapter that follows up kind of have a little hinting to that later on in this passage when the lady comes and Gehazi tries to push her away trying to guard this prophet so he's speaking through her and she says I don't need anything I live among my own people I'm secure so here's the word of the Lord it just shows up on the scene Gehazi says well she has no son and her husband's getting old and so Elisha says surely by this time next year you will be holding a child a son in your arms now she's blown away and she says oh man of God please don't lie now it's not an accusation here what she's saying is I'm not even asking for this I'm not expecting this please don't give me a false sense of hope right but this is a word of promise and I love the simplicity of scripture because it said and it came about at that time next year she was holding a sign it just happened just as the word of God says and it all happened not because she was seeking it not because she even desired it we know that desire was probably there but she's probably already cast it aside it happened simply because she had welcomed in the prophet or the presence of the Lord she had created space in her life for God to be able to speak a truth into her she had created space so that the word of God had access right and this promise comes that she would hold a child now when we read further into the text so we have to kind of combine this we're looking at it from up above we're not really splitting every verse down but we're looking at especially when we get into the historical writings we kind of want to look at it from up here and see it as whole these other pieces all seem to fit together too because when he leaves there he goes to

[17 : 38] Gilgal he's in Gilgal this is sometime later because the son the little son is now a lad he's a young man old enough to go out into the field with the reapers and his father but yet now Elisha comes to Gilgal and it says that when he was there with the school of the prophets it was during a famine right so we have this promise of the word of God there is eat the stew it's okay we'll work out details in just a minute and then the promise at the end is there's enough bread for everyone each instance of the three here with the Shunammite son the pot of stew and the provided bread all don't lose this because we'll kind of hit them in just a minute are joined together with a word of God that's connected to it okay there's a word of promise that flows through the prophet through the visible physical representation of the

Lord's presence so we see this word of promise the third reality we see that when room is made for the presence of God is this wonderful position it is this wonderful position of those who are going through very non wonderful circumstances this lady never asked for the son yet she got the son he grows into a young lad he's old enough we read the account right he dies there's a day he dies but notice the repetition of this lady her son dies in her lap she takes him lays him in Elisha's room and puts him on Elisha's bed she asked her husband she never says anything about the death of and notice her statement it is well or it will be well is how the new American standard has it when Gehazi gets to her and says how are things with you how are things with your husband how are things with your son and she says it is well this is not a good time but the position of the lady knows that she has welcomed in the presence of the

Lord and the reality that God has access to her circumstances changes her position her son is dead but the word that she gives there is literally peace or shalom it is all that is peaceful and good towards you she is experiencing a wonderful position of knowing that it will be well simply because she knows who to go to right during a season when everything could have been terrible things could have been awful a season that she did not ask for or did not plan on the response that she gives it will be well and it is well and she clings to elijah never makes the declaration that her son is dead even though elisha figures that out really quick says oh there's something going on with her son but again she says as surely as the lord lives and as you live i will not leave your son because she has this reality that the presence of the lord has direct impact upon our circumstances now when we go to the other accounts we see the same thing the circumstances let's go back to this account when he's at gilgal during the time of the famine don't miss that elisha was at gilgal during the time of the famine and elisha's presence during the time of the famine when food is scarce they begin to make a pot of stew so this is during the time of the famine the sons of the prophets are there and they make a pot of stew food would have been very scarce and hard to come by someone picks something that they don't know what it is it's poisonous they put it in there right there's death in the pot so during the time of a famine and the only thing you got to eat will kill you is not a good time it's just not and then the word that comes out of it now eat this it's okay this was a famine the only food they had was food that would kill them but the presence of the

Lord made a big difference fast forward the next account you have a number of people there and someone brings in a meager rationing of loaves now it's maybe a little bit large in our eyes but we look loaves of bread but there are a hundred men there so twenty loaves for a hundred men the math doesn't add up but the presence of the Lord is there through Elisha what does God say set it before the men and it will be enough right even the servant looks at Elisha and he says I would not set this before a hundred men it's not going to make any difference it would be putting them out to the wolves it's not enough to feed them he says but the Lord has said set it before the men and they will eat and there will be some left over all of a sudden in your mind you should say wait a minute I've heard this account before the feeding of the multitudes in Christ right it is the word of the

Lord that continues to resonate right the circumstances aren't good the lady's son dies it's a famine the only food you have to eat will kill you and there's not enough bread for the amount of people here but the difference in the circumstance is the presence of the Lord that is there through Elisha and that makes it a wonderful position because God's presence in the midst!

[23 : 51] of the uncomfortable! the unfortunate and the undesirable changes everything and it puts you in a wonderful position the lady knew who she could go to Elisha comes and we don't need to do all the rehashing it's a number of things it is very clear Elisha does not do anything supernatural here he is praying he is praying he is praying the son comes back to life the pot of stew comes it's flour all of a sudden gets made better the bread is set out and there's sufficient amount and there's some left over what we see here is the difference is the presence of the Lord God in those circumstances and it is for those who made room for his presence during those days as even Christ would say as he was teaching there were many widows there were many people in need but only those who made room were those who were blessed those who were provided for those who were taken care of and here we see that surely during this famine there's a great amount of need but those who are with

Elijah have these matters taken care of why because the presence of God matters the last thing that we see and we'll see it very quickly are the works performed and the reason we pay attention to this is because these works seem to be so repetitive we read of sons being brought to life we read of food being multiplied we read of needs being met in the New Testament over and over again we see these things being repeated to us as a refrain and just as we said Elijah is a type of John the Baptist Elisha appears to be a type of Jesus Christ but he's just a type right he's not to fulfillment he's not to completion he's not to fullness what we see in Elisha through the works that he is performing here what we see in Elisha is the mighty work which God can do through a man

Elisha is a man just like us the book of James reminds us for all of his usefulness for all of his mighty deeds which he did that Elijah was a man with a nature just like us and if Elijah is a man with a nature just like ours surely Elisha is a man with a nature just like ours and we see the works that he's doing we see the raising of the son we see the cleansing of the food we see the multiplication of the bread and each one of these show us as a living testimony exactly what the Lord God can do through a man and we stand astounded because even during this dark season when judgment is imminent they will be led away by the Assyrians when the judgment of God is coming he has not given up on his people he still has a man present those who welcome him into their presence lives look starkly different than those around them and God is working supernaturally miraculously!

through Elisha and he's meeting these needs and he's testifying to the goodness and greatness of God but what's so astounding when we read passages like this and we see what God can do through a man we step back and say how much more when he becomes man because God became man and dwelt among us and we call him Emmanuel and we are awestruck by the reality that not only did he raise the sons and multiply the food he went so much further Elijah and Elisha and all the prophets that follow God uses them as a testimonial sign by meeting physical temporary needs that's what God's doing through men and women but when God became a man he met those needs but the greatest works he did were the works that met the great need of mankind and paid for our eternal salvation in the gospel of

John when you read the gospel of John John chapter 1 through 20 I know there's 21 chapters okay in those 20 chapters there are seven miraculous signs and read the gospel of John the eighth miracle would be the miraculous catch of fish when Jesus comes back and restores Peter in the last chapter of John John 21 but up to that point there are seven miracles recorded of Christ in the gospel seven is the number of completion in scripture right but John tells us in the 20th chapter why he recorded those seven miracles he says himself many other things Christ did when he dwelt among us things in which if they were written the world wouldn't even contain the books John says that if we were trying to write down everything that

[29 : 01] Christ did when he dwelt among us I suppose even the world couldn't contain the amount of books that it would take but then John says this but these have been written so that you may know that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that knowing you may have eternal life in him see we can read the stories of Elijah and Elisha and we can say man God did wonderful things through these people and met great need we can see the works they performed but these works are just foreshadows of the great work that's coming the these works are just foreshadows of the wondrous work that's coming these people who made room in their life for the presence of God their life was changed for a moment the Shunammite son died again the Shunammite died right I'm sure there were times during the famine where they were still hungry for a moment the presence of

God changed everything but the greatest testimonial work that has ever been done is when God became a man and dwelt among us reminded us that those who make room for the presence of God their lives are different and then redeems us that we may have eternal life he meets the everlasting need right he doesn't just meet the need of the moment he doesn't just meet it so that when it comes up later again we need he meets it on an ongoing and as Christ told the woman at the well it shall be a spring from within you bubbling up it is an ongoing refreshment from being in the presence of God through Christ and we see that these works that are performed astounding yes but they're just foreshadows of what's coming in Christ and they have been written in Christ so that we may believe and in believing have eternal life in him so that we would welcome him into our lives that we would make room for the presence of God that is found in relationship with

Jesus Christ we see the other reality we see the rest of the story as Paul Harvey would say Elisha does wonderful things but he passes off the scene these are just types foreshadows of the one we're looking for much like when we were looking at the kings you remember I'm closing in this when they introduced kings into the nation of Israel Saul was head and shoulders above everyone else he looked the part he had the blood lines right his grandfather was a man of valor his dad was a man of valor Saul should have been a man of valor really wasn't a man of valor the very first thing he did wasn't the king David comes he's the man after God's own heart doesn't really look the part kind of small he's ruddy he's handsome in appearance but he kills the giants here's our king David's not the king we're looking for he falls too so we have this kind of let down every time we see a king like this is the one this is the one wait!

we see the word they're proclaiming we see the works they're doing and we have a tendency to kind of be captivated by their works but we're not looking for the Elijah or the Elishas or the Ezekiel or Jeremiah or Isaiah we're looking for the one they're pointing to we're looking for the one who is the great fulfillment of them all and that is Christ that's what we're looking for and we see this over and over again as we make our way through the Old Testament 2nd Kings chapter 4 verses 8 through 44 thank you my brothers!

and to and see