

Elísha And The Shunammíte Woman

2 Kings 4:8-17

MEMORY VERSE

2 KINGS 4:9

“And she said to her husband, ‘Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.’”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A dry erase board and dry erase marker (or chalkboard and chalk) and small prizes (pencils, erasers, stickers, etc.).

A sheet of 8 1/2” x 11” paper (or you could substitute a 9” x 12” piece of colored construction paper), scissors, markers, or crayons.

Several items from home that can be used to demonstrate hospitality, such as dishes, silverware and/or cups.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Dry Erase Board Scrabble

Divide your class into two teams. Each team will pick a category for the game--characters in the New Testament, Old Testament events, foods, animals, Bible names, etc. For example, you could start with the word “Shunammite” from our today’s lesson. Write the word on the board.

The first team will write their word on the board in scrabble style (either vertically or horizontally). The second team will then come up with a word in the same category that fits into the scrabble pattern. Continue the game until one team cannot come up with a word to fit into the pattern. You may want to award points for the length of words as well as the number of words in their pattern.

LESSON TIME!

One of the spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament is hospitality—a willingness to open one’s home to others. As children of the Lord, we are required to be hospitable to others. Romans 12:13 tells us to be “distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.”

Has your family ever had company stay over? If so, your family has demonstrated hospitality. As a Christian, however, it is more than just inviting friends in; it is serving and ministering to their needs and demonstrating the love of God to them. Whether we offer a meal or a place to stay, it is a privilege that we can give of our abundance to others.

In our lesson today, a Shunammite woman will show “hospitality” to the prophet Elisha. Elisha will show thankfulness. **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

2 KINGS 4:8

Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, 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.

Shunem was a city that was between the cities of Samaria and Carmel, a road that Elisha often traveled. There, a wealthy woman persuaded Elisha to stop by her house, as often he passed by, to eat with her.

This woman desired to bless the prophet of God and would not take no for an answer—she was a great example of one who shows hospitality.

2 KINGS 4:9-10

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."

Elisha's character was a reflection of the God he served. It would seem the woman could clearly identify him as a holy man of God by both his actions and the words he spoke. What does our speech tell others about our character; or even more importantly, what does our speech tell others about God? How do others see us? Do they see us as smart, funny, not caring, or in love with Jesus? It's a good opportunity for a heart check: how do others see me? *or* do others see Jesus in me?

The Shunammite woman talked to her husband and asked his permission to build a little room for Elisha. Instead of taking matters into her own hands, she sought her husband's consent to do this and his help in carrying it out. In Ephesians 5:22-23 we are told, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is savior of the body."

2 KINGS 4:11-13

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 Gehazi 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 have 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."

With gratitude in his heart for this blessing, he in turn wanted to bless this gracious woman. He had Gehazi, his servant ask her what could be done for her in return for her kindness. He was even willing to speak to the king for her. (As a prophet, Elisha probably had a lot of influence with the king. Jehoram was king at this time and Elisha had been giving him direction and help.)

Elisha's example is one we should follow. God desires that we be thankful people. Remember thankfulness when you are shown hospitality or acts of kindness. We should let others know that we appreciate the ministry that they have done on our behalf. **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

The Shunammite woman responded to Elijah's kind offer, "I will dwell among mine own people." This woman was content with the place and position God had given to her, and did not desire any changes or improvement.

2 KINGS 4:14-17

So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi 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.

Elisha could not seek out a favor for her in the court of King Jehoram, but he could seek out a favor for her in the royal court of heaven. She and her husband would join with Abraham, Isaac, Manoah and Elkanah in the special blessing of a son they thought they would never have. Matthew 10:41 states: “He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.” This woman, having received a prophet in the name of a prophet, was well rewarded by the Lord. The Lord is good! He desires to bless those who love Him and follow Him. He loves to give us the desires of our hearts.

Children Are A Gift!

The Shunammite woman received a special gift from the Lord. She received a child—a blessing she thought would never happen to her. That child was a special gift. As children, each one of you is a special gift from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5).

In this craft you will be making a paper family. You will need a sheet of 8 1/2” x 11” paper (or you could substitute a 9” x 12” piece of colored construction paper). Fold the sheet in half, then in half again, again and one more time for a total of 4 times (thus folding the paper into eighths. Look for the edges. Start to draw the head on the fold, leave about 1/2” for arms and feet to hold one another. It is important to line up the center part of the body on the fold of the paper. The hands and feet will go on the edge that has the “ends” of the paper.

When you are finished with drawing, cut around the edges and then open up. This should make 4 figures that are attached at the arms and feet. Next, the children can decorate their family with markers or crayons. For younger children you will need to help them draw the outline and fold.

God was faithful to do all He had promised the Shunammite woman through the prophet Elisha. “God built up her house, in reward of her kindness in building the prophet a chamber” (Matthew Henry). We may well imagine what joy this brought to the family.

Let us learn from this woman’s example of hospitality. Do you remember Galatians 6:10 from last week? “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Ask God to open your heart to whomever He would have you serve and bless. You will be blessed! **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

Practice Your Hospitality

Bring to class some dishes, silverware, glasses or other items that might be used to display hospitality. Divide the class into two teams. One team will be the servants, and the other team will be the recipients. Have the servants serve the recipients and be hospitable towards them. They can act out what it might be like to have them over for dinner and what kinds of things they would do to show hospitality.

After a short time, switch roles. Ask the children which team they thought were the best servants. Perhaps you can award a small prize. Gather the children together and review the story. Help the children to apply the story to their own lives and discover ways that they can be hospitable and bless the body of Christ.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thankfulness for the kindness that the Lord and others have shown in their lives. Ask the Lord to help us be more hospitable and willing to serve. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.