

Introduction

Here we find Elisha traveling through *the village of Shunem*. Shunem is first mentioned in the Bible in the possession of the Tribe of Issachar. It was located near the Jezreel Valley, north of Mount Gilboa. Shunem is where the Philistines camped when they were about to fight against Saul and Israel. **Shunem was between Samaria and Carmel along a road that Elisha would have been accustomed to traveling.**

The Word of the LORD refers to this woman of Shunem as a *“great woman.”* **Now that’s not talking about her size!** The word *“great”* there is translated from a Hebrew word that means *“great in any way.”* And I think that as we go through the Scriptures and examine her life, we will see some *“great”* qualities that I believe this word refers to!

Whenever the LORD refers to someone as being “great,” we need to examine the Scriptures and see what we can learn about them and from them! We need to discover why they were great in the sight of the LORD. **Then we ought to glean from their lives some truths and principles that we can apply that our life and service might be pleasing to the LORD as well!**

I Want Us To See Here Tonight That This Woman Had A Desire To Serve And Be A Blessing To Others And The LORD Blessed Her!

I. WE SEE THAT SHE REACHED OUT TO BE A GREAT BLESSING TO ELISHA BEFORE SHE EVEN KNEW HIM TO BE A MAN OF GOD! (Vs 8)

Understand that this Shunamite woman had **no secret agenda** here! **At the time, she didn’t even know that he was a man of God!** She perceived that Elisha was a man of God later, after an unspecified number of trips of him stopping by for bread! (Vs 9)

She wasn’t doing what she was doing in order to gain something from him or the LORD!

Elisha just happened by (you believe that don’t you—there really are no such things as coincidences)!

No, this was the LORD laying on the heart of this great woman to take care of His servant! He passed by where this woman was and she saw an opportunity to be a blessing to someone and **was** a blessing to him!

“And it fell on a day...” I wonder, **what opportunities fall our way that we are missing out on to be a blessing to someone?**

Be alert to the opportunities the LORD allows to come your way! As Elisha would pass by her home on his travels, she urged him to stop and to eat with them. And get this, **the more she did this, the greater her awareness of his needs.**

II. WE SEE THAT WHEN SHE PERCEIVED THAT ELISHA WAS A MAN OF GOD, SHE WANTED TO DO MORE FOR HIM! (Vs 9-10)

Let me just say right here (and I want you to know that I am not being self-serving in any way by saying this), but **when you reach out to be a blessing to a man of God who is truly serving the LORD ...just to be a blessing...and with no hidden agenda, the LORD blesses that!**

1 Timothy 5:17—“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

Galatians 6:6—“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”

A. At First This Shunamite Woman Was Just Being A Blessing To Someone!

There is no doubt the LORD moved upon her heart to be hospitable to Elisha!

But, she could have said, *“No!”* to that tugging in her heart. If she had said no, the LORD would have put it on someone else’s heart and she would have missed out on a great blessing!

Hebrews 13:2—“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

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Strong's Concordance defines "*angel*" as "*a messenger; especially an "angel"; by implication a pastor*" and the Prophet Elijah was *a messenger of God!* So we could say that she was entertaining or showing hospitality to a stranger here!

In *Romans 12:13*, Paul said that Believers are to be "*...given to hospitality...*"

A good New Testament example of this is the life of Dorcas (a/ka Tabitha) in *Acts 9:36-41*.

B. Later This Shunammite Woman Realized That She Ought To Do More For Elisha!
Perceiving that Elisha was man of God, she realized she could do more and should do more!

How did she perceive Elisha was a holy man of God?

Did she find him at prayer? Did she see him immersed in the Word? Was it his conversation and conduct? Probably. She could certainly see God in the prophet somehow. Elisha was different than other men in this time of moral depravity!

When people look at us and observe our ways, can they observe and perceive that we are different as holy men/women of God?

Do our conversation and our conduct measure up to a testimony that glorifies the LORD in and through our lives?

The LORD had blessed this woman and her husband. Were they great in wealth? We are not told but just consider what we see here. She encouraged her husband to make a room for Elisha in their home:

1. So, They Could Afford To Make Elisha His Own Little Private Chamber On The Wall Of Their Residence!

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2. And, They Could Also Afford To Furnish That Chamber With A Bed, A Table, A Stool, And A Candlestick!

This way, the man of God would not only be fed, but he would have an opportunity to rest up every time he passed through rather than just stopping by for a meal!

Talk about hospitality! This woman (and her husband) practiced it! Let's not forget that she probably put the building of this chamber on her husband's honey-do list! (Yes, I know she said "*let us*", but I'm just saying it probably wound up on his list!)

The LORD was taking care of His servant Elisha! And His instrument was this Shunamite woman (and her husband)!

III. WE SEE THAT SHE SERVED ELISHA HUMBLY AND SACRIFICIALLY! (Vs 11-12)

They didn't ask anything of Elisha and he benefitted greatly from her service!

We could say that her service was genuine! There are some who serve only in order to receive something in return! That's not true service!

And that was NOT this woman!

IV. WE SEE THAT SHE WAS CONTENT! (Vs 13)

After Elisha had enjoyed this couple's hospitality for some time, he may have wondered if she was doing it for some particular reason.

Elisha had his servant ask if she was expecting something in return.

Why he asked his servant Gehazi to express his offer to the woman we are not told.

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Maybe this was to make the woman feel more inclined to ask for something than she would have if the prophet had addressed her directly.

God's grace to His faithful ones can be seen in Elisha's offer here! Elisha obviously enjoyed a position of some influence in the palace even though he opposed Jehoram's religious policies.

The woman's reply ("***I dwell among my own people***") expressed her contentment with her lot in life! She was at peace and felt no special needs! **Being content is a great thing!**

Philippians 4:11– "*Not that I speak in respect of want: **for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.***"

Hebrews 13:5– "***Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***"

1 Timothy 6:6 – "***But godliness with contentment is great gain.***"

V. WE SEE THAT GEHAZI, ELISHA'S SERVANT SUGGESTED A NEED! (Vs 14)

Elisha wanted to bless her in some way. And so he asked Gehazi, "***What then is to be done for her?***"

So, Gehazi pointed out that she was childless and that her husband was old.

VI. WE SEE THAT ELISHA CALLED HER AND TOLD HER SHE WAS GOING TO HAVE A SON! (Vs 15-16)

Her response was priceless here! (i.e. "*No! Now don't you be lying to me preacher after all I have done for you!*")

VII. WE SEE THAT THE WORD FROM ELISHA WAS FULFILLED! (Vs 17)

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The promised son was born. She had doubted the possibility of ever having a son, but now it had become a reality!

Conclusion

And that is where we will end our Bible study for this evening! I'm sure there was great joy at the birth of her son! (e.g. *The birth of our children and grandchildren!*)

Psalm 127:3– "*Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*" (The word "*heritage*" means "*inheritance.*")

Next week however, we're going to see that the story doesn't end there. The boy grows up and is grown helping his father reap their fields! And then their boy got ill all of a sudden and was brought to his mother! As his mother was holding him, he died!

Come back next week for the rest of the story!