

## Mothers Day 2025 - A Great Woman

Today, we are going to look at a wonderful woman and mother in Scripture, the great woman of Shunem in 2Ki 4. There is a wonderful message of motherhood that is played out in her life.

One of the great things about the Bible is the way we can see truth in life. The Bible is not merely a book of philosophy or abstract principles. Now, that does not mean that the Bible does not present a philosophy for life nor does it mean that it does not contain abstract principles. When it comes to motherhood, we often look to Prov 31 for a description of Godly femininity. The apostle Paul describes Godly womanhood in his epistles in the New Testament. But the Bible does not stop with the *principles* expressed in Proverbs or the epistles .

When we read the Bible, we *also* see truth in a different way. Not only do we see *synthetic* truth, or extracted principles which we can apply. For instance, from 1John 5:14 and 1John 3:22 we can extract a principle about prayer.

1John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

1John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

The extracted principle is, don't treat prayer as a blank check. Treat it as a faith-filled, obedient, surrendered conversation with God.

It's not just synthetic truth extracted, but *organic* truth that is lived out in real life in the Bible. When you describe something as *organic* you are referring to those things that come from living organisms. When you go shopping and buy food that is certified as organic, it means that you are getting food that was

fertilized *not* with chemicals distilled in a laboratory, but nutrients that were produced in *nature*. There are many other things that come in natural fertilizer that enrich our foods. Similarly, our spiritual diet is enriched when we see truth in life. How many times have we been disappointed by someone who spouts spiritual platitudes to tell us how to live, only to find them falling in failure.

When Bible stories like these were written, they didn't need to write out every detail for us so we can identify the great truths contained in them. In between the lines we find the spiritual nourishment that God has for us.

2Kgs 4:8-10 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where *was* a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

9And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

10Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

In vs. 4 she is called a great woman. This means that she was well to do, but not just with money or material wealth. She was also a very prominent woman. Many women have been a great blessing in ministry. There were women who were great supporters of the ministry of Christ, for example.

Luke 8:1-3 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him,  
2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called

Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,  
3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

This woman of Shunem, a city in the Galilee region which belonged to the tribe of Issacahar, was a great mother, but the things that made her great as a mother occurred long before she actually had a child.

This is the day we celebrate our mothers. We want to remember our mothers and give thanks for them, but at the same time I am sensitive to those who have not given birth or raised a child. A number of years ago we started celebrating all women, but not in the sense that we were just seeking to elevate women in recognition of a feminist notion that they are the same as men. Women are as equal to men as a clock is equal to a book. They are simply not the same. Each are valued in different ways. By honoring all women, we look to recognize that there are qualities given by God to women that are unique and equip them for nurturing. This is very handy for mothering. Greatness as a mother does not begin in the delivery room. It begins in the heart long before there is a cradle in the home.

1. She was a nurturer.

2Kgs 4:8 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where *was* a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

Because of the area we live in, we end up coming into contact with many different cultures. What I find so interesting is that each group says the same thing, "You know how Jewish mothers are." "You know how Filipino mothers are." "You know how black mothers are." "You know how Italian

mothers are." "You know how Polish mothers are." "You know how Hispanic mothers are." And if there is any other ethnicity I missed, you can insert them here. I am *very* sure that if I talk to any other group I will hear the same thing. There is something about mamas wanting to feed people.

It doesn't matter who the better cook is in the house. It doesn't even matter if you don't even like to cook. That quality that is so characteristic of mothers which manifests itself so often. They care for and about others.

This is so true when it comes to the Shunemite. She was a nurturer. As the man of God passed through the area, he often ate at the family table.

2. She was a spiritually sensitive and Godly woman.

The Shunammite woman was not only generous and hospitable—she was deeply spiritual and keenly discerning. However, this can be done just as a matter of good manners.

2Kgs 4:9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

That word "perceive" points us to a spiritual awareness that goes *beyond* politeness or observation. She didn't just recognize Elisha as a prophet by title. As a Godly woman she discerned his holiness. She could sense the presence of God upon him.

Now, it's one thing to show kindness to a man of God as a gesture of good manners, but this was more than etiquette. She was moved by something deeper. Spiritual sensitivity is a mark of a godly heart. It's the ability to detect where God is at work, to recognize the presence of His Spirit, and to respond appropriately—not with superstition, but with reverence.

In that day just as ours, there have been false prophets, mediocre prophets, and Godly prophets. It is appropriate to treat anyone who carries the mantle of a

prophet with respect, but not all are necessarily holy. The Shunammite didn't need a press release from Elijah's ministry—she had spiritual discernment that is most often cultivated through a walk with God.

Let me tell you, that kind of sensitivity is powerful. I've seen it firsthand. I remember being in a church conference once, with over a thousand people packed into the building. A man walked in, and my wife Nancy leaned over and whispered, "That's the pastor." We had never seen or met him before. I asked her how she knew, and she simply said, "I can tell." That's spiritual discernment. There was something about his presence, about the spiritual authority on him, that bore witness in her spirit.

Or another time, we were at a football game—a gift someone had given us. It was loud, exciting, and full of energy. I don't follow sports much, but it's easy to get caught up in the atmosphere. But Nancy, being Nancy, was sitting there praying for the players. That's the kind of woman she is. And wouldn't you know it—five rows in front of us, a man turned around, pointed directly at her, and shouted for everyone to hear, "That's my girl! She's praying! She's praying!" He could tell. There's something about the presence of the Spirit of God that is powerful—and recognizable.

The Shunammite woman had that same kind of sensitivity. She lived with an awareness of God's holiness. She carried a reverent awe for those who truly walked with Him. She could distinguish between the counterfeit and the consecrated.

In a world filled with noise, titles, and surface religion, we need more women—and more believers in general—who live like that. They walk with God so closely that they can recognize when His Spirit is moving. They don't mistake charisma for character or office for anointing. That kind of spiritual depth doesn't just make a woman a good mother—it makes her a blessing to *everyone* around her.

### 3. She influenced others for the good.

The Shunemite woman next provided what we call, today, a "prophet's chamber."

2Kgs 4:10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

There have been many such chambers set up. Sometimes I have gone to preach at churches that are a little far away. Sometimes preachers in these cases are put up in a home where someone has provided a room for visiting preachers. Sometimes Nancy and I have stayed in such a prophet's chamber. Now, we could just treat this as a further instance of this woman's nurturing nature, but I think we would miss an important point here. She addressed her husband and suggested that they should build this room for the man of God. She was not only a nurturer and a spiritually sensitive woman. She influenced others. In this case, she influenced her husband, for the good. It's been said, "Behind many a man who has climbed the ladder of success is a great woman who stood there and held the ladder steady, and behind many a man who falls off the ladder of success there was a woman who stood there and shook it." There have been many women who have made a tremendous spiritual difference in the lives of those around them.

### 4. She was a focused woman.

The next thing we see is Elisha wanting to be a special blessing in appreciation for the Shunemite woman.

2Kgs 4:11-13 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

12And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

13And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

Elisha offered her some kind of standing before the king or benefit of the military. Her response is so very significant. Instead of pursuing some aspiration of greatness, she merely replied that she was content in her role among her own people. This is one of the siren songs of our modern culture. It breeds dissatisfaction and says, you should be something more, you should have something more. It magnifies the idea that something is missing in your life. The world has sold women a bill of goods that suggests they can do it all...they can break the glass ceiling, they can juggle a computer and a baby on their lap, they can be lured by some perception that if they could only be treated like a man they would be happier (which should be no more desirable than a *man* being treated like a *woman*).

The Shunemite woman was focused on her situation. It takes something to do that, to keep reinvesting yourself in the work God has for you. There are wonderful jobs that women are doing that are outside of the household, but the home should never be looked at as something that is holding someone back and it should never take second place. If someone is led into a job because they have some idea that they will finally be fulfilled, they will find that there is something is always missing. The home is the great foundation of any society. If someone has a career it should be to secure the home.

One of the blessings Nancy and I have had in ministry is the contentment that is in this church. By reinvesting ourselves in *this* ministry, we find

ourselves folded back into the work and have been blessed abundantly. I thank God for Nancy because she has been beside me all the way, reinvesting herself also into *this* work. I have known of quite a few pastors' wives who led their husbands out of ministry in New Jersey because of their discontent. When it comes to the home, don't be discontent. Go back and go back and go back and reinvest yourself. Find new ways to make your home important.

Prov 14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

Prov 7:11 (She *is* loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

Prov 31:26-27 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.

27She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Prov 31:30-31 Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

31Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

It has been duly noted that the Proverbs start with the destruction that comes from an ungodly woman in chapter 5 and it ends in chapter 31 with the blessing of a godly woman.

## 5. She was a blessed woman.

The blessing of a child came late in the life of this woman and her husband.

2Kgs 4:14-17 And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

15And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood



in the door.

16And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, *thou* man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

17And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

Sometimes women have children and sometimes they do not. What made the Shunemite great was that she was a Godly woman, whether or not there was a child in her life. It would be a mistake to think every time a woman is barren it is because someone does not deserve a child. Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth are four examples of spiritual women who know the pain of barrenness before miraculously conceiving. Motherhood, whether it is of those you bear, or those who are entrusted to your care, or those who you just end up being around for mere minutes, is *blessed* motherhood for those who are nurturers, Godly, spiritually sensitive, and focused on the blessings of God. The issue is not whether we deserve a home, but that our homes require us, not deserve us, but require us.

For so many homes, God is missing to one degree or another. You have to remember that when you have become a child of God, all the strength of God is there to sanctify your home and family. If you are not saved then you need to take care of that. Don't think that material success for you or your children is the ultimate goal. When material success without Godliness is the goal, then that success only comes from a self-serving heart that can change whenever it is convenient. You must be a child of God to realize His perfect will for you.

If you are a child of God, your home, if you have children or not, can have the influence on others for God just like that Shunemite did. That same attitude can bless your work outside the home whether in an outside job or in your church. Let me invite you today to trust

God completely. The old hymn says "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey." Is there something you've been afraid to trust God for? Are you afraid to become a Christian, to be baptized, to contribute to church? Be content to give yourself like the Shunemite woman and God will bless you for it.

1John 5:14, 3:22, 2Kgs 4:8-10, Luke 8:1-3

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3. She influenced others for the good. 2Kgs 4:10
4. She was a focused woman. 2Kgs 4:11-13, Prov 14:1, Prov 7:11, 31:26-27, 31:30-31
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