

RESPONDING TO THE UNEXPECTED

(FROM THE SHUNAMITE WOMAN)



THE SHUNAMITE WOMAN:

- ◆ Goes Up
- ◆ Goes Down
- ◆ Goes Out

"And the father carried his son to his mother and the son died. And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out." (II Kings 4:19-21)

Bill Kirk

RESPONDING IN "PRAYER" TO THE UNEXPECTED

II Kings 4:8-37

Text: "And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out." (V. 21) "Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, it is well." (V. 26)

Questions: How do you respond to the unexpected?
How do you respond to disappointment?
How do you respond to bad news?

Truth: Someone has well said, "Life is 10% of what happens to us and 90% of how we respond to it."

INTRODUCTION:

1. Elisha travels through Shunem and befriends a wealthy woman there. (V. 8)
2. Elisha's character is noticed by this woman. (V. 9)
3. Elisha is given a guest room to stay in whenever he comes to her city. (V.10,11)
4. Elisha announces that the barren woman is going to have a son. (V.16)
5. The son is born as Elisha said. (V. 17)
6. The son becomes ill one day. (V. 19)
7. The son then dies in his mother's arms. (V. 20)

How the Shunamite Woman Responds

(God's way for us to respond as well)

I. She Goes Up

"And she went up." (V. 21)

Question: Why did she go up to Elisha's room?

Answer: Because the room where Elisha stayed:

- ◆ Represented the presence of God to the mother.
- ◆ Was the room where Elisha prayed and talked with God.
- ◆ Brought focus on God's provision not just the problem.

The Woman Didn't Say:

- ◆ "Why did God do this to me?"
- ◆ "I deserve better than this."
- ◆ "Is this my reward for helping the prophet?"
- ◆ "There is nothing good that can come out of this."

Application: How Do We Respond?

(Focus on Problems or Provisions?)

Fact: The woman looked up to God.

Fact: We must look up to God in prayer.

Prayer Really Works

1. It will calm our spirit.
2. It will build our faith.
3. It will give us God's perspective.
4. It will spare us from foolish activity.

God Will Remind Us That...

1. "All things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28)
2. "There shall no evil happen to the just." (Proverbs 12:21)
3. "My help cometh from the Lord." (Psalm 121:2)
4. "As for God, His way is perfect." (He makes no mistakes.) (Psalm 18:30)

II. She Goes Down

"And laid him (her son) on the bed of the man of God." (V. 21)

- ◆ She commits her need into the hands of God.
- ◆ She places her burden so God can work.
- ◆ She relinquishes responsibility over to God.
- ◆ She learns that God is bigger than she is.

Question: What keeps so many people from committing their "worries" to the Lord?

Question: Why does Satan delight in God's people losing sleep, living uptight, losing perspective and fretting over what is out of their control?

Question: How does "going down" in prayer deliver us from worry that would consume our days?

Prayer Working

1. "Cast all your cares upon the Lord, for He careth for you." (1 Peter 5:7)
2. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." (Psalm 37:5)
3. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)
4. "I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." (Psalm 16:8)

III. She Goes Out

"And shut the door and went out." (V. 21) Why?

- ◆ Because she could trust God to come through for her!

- ◆ Because she believed that God knew the need!
- ◆ Because she knew that worrying was useless!
- ◆ Because she had faith in the God of Elisha!
- ◆ Because she would go to the man of God!
- ◆ Because she must look for the solution, not just dwell on the problem!

Question: Why do we want to stay by the door?

Question: Why do we feel we must "hold on"?

Question: Why can't we pursue the provision in prayer instead of entertain the problem in our minds continually?

Fact: Praying in faith can shut the door!

Fact: Praying in faith can leave the matter in God's hands.

Fact: Praying in faith will release our burden to God.

What Happens In Prayer?

(V. 26)

"It is well with myself."

"It is well with my child."

"It is well with my husband."

"And she answered, it is well."

Question: Was it really "well" when she answered?

Question: What enabled the woman to say "it is well"?

Question: What gave confidence to this believing mother?

The Result of a Prayer Response

1. She goes full of faith, "It shall be well." (V. 23)
2. She goes with persistence, "I will not leave thee." (V. 30)
3. She goes in to receive the answer. (V. 36)
4. She goes out rejoicing with her son." (V.37)

Conclusion

(This Still Works Today)

So whatever causes you to...

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Lose sleep | 6. Be discouraged |
| 2. Live uptight | 7. Lose perspective |
| 3. Stew needlessly | 8. _____ |
| 4. Fret wastefully | 9. _____ |
| 5. Worry | 10. _____ |

Stop and Follow God's Instructions

1. **GO UP**...and get alone with God today, allowing Him to minister His grace (the desire and power to do His will) to your heart!

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." (Psalm 121:1)

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." (Isaiah 26:3)

2. **GO DOWN**...and place your burden, challenge, irritation, hurt, concern and future at the feet of Jesus!

"Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts (plans) shall be established (succeed)." (Proverbs 16:3)

3. **GO OUT**...and shut the door completely, believing that God will prove Himself to you!

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." (1 John 5:14, 15)

Lord Help Us To...

1. **GO UP**...and focus our attention on You.
2. **GO DOWN**...and place our concerns in Your care.
3. **GO OUT**...and stop worrying (which is accepting responsibility You never intended for us to carry).

Amen!
Bill Kirk