

Friday 3rd July 2020

The Widow's Oil

"The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, 'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.'

"Elisha replied to her, 'How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?'

"Your servant has nothing there at all,' she said, 'except a little oil.'

"Elisha said, 'Go round and ask all your neighbours for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.'

"She left him and afterwards shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, 'Bring me another one.'

"But he replied 'There is not a jar left.' Then the oil stopped flowing.

"She went and told the man of God, and he said, 'Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.'" 2Kings 4:1-7

Can you imagine the desperation of this widow? Her sons were about to be taken as slaves by her husband's creditor in payment for the debt that was owed. How could she possibly cope or manage alone? Why would the widow ask help from Elisha? The answer might be because her husband had also been a Prophet and she was well aware of God working through the Prophets and believed that Elisha might help her find a solution. While many of us may have experienced financial problems at some time in our lives it is hard to imagine the prospect of our children being taken from us in this way.

Elisha did not react to the situation in the way the widow expected. She needed money quickly and Elisha had instructed her to collect jars and fill them with the small amount of oil that she owned. It didn't make any sense to her. However, the widow was at her wits end and she decided to carry out Elisha's instructions. The way that the Lord was about to act was stretching her faith. God knew that she needed to look at Him with trust and belief rather than at her problems. Imagine the widow's surprise and delight when she began pouring that small amount of oil and it kept on flowing until all of the jars were filled and then it stopped. God's provision was as abundant as the widow's faith to obey. I am sure that she would turn to God praising and giving thanks. God is able and all sufficient to supply our every need.

By the selling of the oil which had great value the widow was able to pay off the debt that was owed and also have enough for her and her sons' daily needs. Her sons had been saved from enslavement. God had provided and saved them.

What lesson can we learn from this? Do we fix our eyes on the problems instead of turning to our strong Deliverer? How often when we have been ready to give up does our generous, compassionate God pour out more than we hoped or expected?

Loving Father we thank You for provision which You supply each day. Jesus our Lord showed Your loving kindness when He fed the 5,000. Thank You Lord for the many people who are donating and delivering food and other essentials to those in need. Bless and protect them as they faithfully follow in the Master's footsteps.

We offer these prayers of thanksgiving in the name of Jesus. Amen.