

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE / Sunday School- July 22, 2012

Unifying Topic: A KING ACTS ON A WIDOW'S BEHALF

Lesson Text

I. Elisha As God's Mouthpiece (2 Kings 8:1-2)

II. The Shunammite's Request (2 Kings 8:3-5)

III. The Restoration Of The Shunammite's Property (2 Kings 8:6)

The Main Thought: And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now. (II Kings 8:6, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People who are estranged from their families may long to return home. How is it possible to go home again? By acting in a benevolent manner, we can offer hope to those seeking justice and restoration.

Lesson Aim: To recognize God's sovereignty in today's story even though His hand is not directly recorded moving in it.

Life Aim: To teach about the mysterious workings of God, even if we do not recognize them until after the fact.

- 8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the Lord hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.
- 8:2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.
- 8:3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.
- 8:4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.
- 8:5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.
- 8:6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

HISTORY:

¹The study of 2 Kings, we observe the consequences of sin – CAPTIVITY - upon the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. Both kingdoms are taken into captivity in this Book. 2 Kings begins with the death of King Ahaziah, and chronicles the last 11 kings of Israel. Continuing the history of Jehoshaphat as king over Judah, 2 Kings covers the history of the last 16 Kings of Judah. In all, seven dynasties rule over Israel, and one dynasty of David rules over Judah. All eleven kings of Israel do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Kings 3:2, 10:31, 13:11, etc. - 17:2). Counting Jehoshaphat, seven of the last sixteen Kings Of Judah did what is right in the eyes of the Lord (2Kings 12:2, 14:3, 15:3, 15:34, 18:3, 22:2, - Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah).

The author of 2 Kings is unknown but writes about the events in both of these kingdoms. In 1 Kings, the author said a lot about the prophet called Elijah. In 2 Kings, he says a lot about another prophet called Elisha. The author of 2 Kings believes that the people should obey the laws in the Book of Deuteronomy.

2 Kings 6:24-33 Ben-Hadad, king of Syria decides to march on Samaria again and Syria besiege it. Israel is evidently weak because of a long and great famine. Food was expensive and very scarce. The conditions were so bad that the king learns that the people are killing and eating their children for survival. Jehoram, king of Israel blames Elisha for these conditions and vows to kill him. The king sends his messenger to Elisha and follows him. Elisha is aware of what is happening. Now the king accuses the Lord for their problems. ²Wicked men will blame anyone as the cause of their troubles, rather than themselves, and will not leave their sins. The king does not want to wait on the Lord any longer.

2 Kings 7 covers the Lord now rescuing Samaria. Elisha gives a prophecy of plenty. Elisha assures them the famine and siege will end about this time tomorrow a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of Samaria. But the king's officer did not believe it. He laughed at the prophecy. He insisted that even God could not carry out that prophecy. Elisha told him that he (the officer) would see it happen, but

¹ parkviewcoc.org/.../11%20Kings/2%20KINGS%20INTRODUCTION

² <http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?com=mhc&b=12&c=6>

<http://pitwm.net/pitwn-sundayschool.html>

he would not have any part of the food. ³Four men with leprosy decide to seek help from the Aramean camp and/or die there rather than die outside Samaria. They find the Aramean camp vacant because the Lord caused the Arameans to think that they were being attacked by the Hittite and Egyptian armies. It was the Lord's army that they heard. The Aramean camp was loaded with money and food. The four lepers after taking enough food and plunder for themselves went back and reported this to Samaria and the king. The king thinks this is a trap but decides to send out scouts to investigate. They return and report that the "rumor" is true. ⁴So Elisha's prophecy became true. People sold flour and barley cheaply. But the king's officer who laughed at God's promise was not among them. The crowd had rushed through the gates to get the goods. The officer could not manage to control the crowd. They trampled on the officer as they went in, and he died.

LESSON:

2 Kings 8:1-2 Elisha As God's Mouthpiece

8:1 Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the Lord hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years. ⁵This verse refers to the events in 2 Kings 4:8-37. This woman had helped Elisha by preparing a room for him. Afterwards, God helped the woman to have a son. The son died, but God made him alive again through Elisha. At some time after those events, God showed Elisha what would happen during the next 7 years. Almost everything that happened in the way of miracles with Elijah was doubled with Elisha. The famine in the days of Elijah was 3½ years while the famine prophesied by Elisha was 7 years. So Elisha began to speak and warn the woman that there would be a serious lack of food in Israel.

8:2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. She and her family went to live in the country called Philistia. They stayed there for 7 years. The Lord sent the famine on Israel because of her sin. The famine didn't include the land of the Philistines.

2 Kings 8:3-5 The Shunammite's Request

8:3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land. While the woman was abroad, the government or some neighbours had taken her land. So she went to see the king about it. The rights to land in Israel were very ancient. Originally, God gave land to each family in Israel. So there was a relationship between the land and God's promises to Israel. The land usually belonged to the male members of the family. This passage does not mention the woman's husband, so perhaps he was dead. But this woman had a son. And that son had the right to own his father's land on behalf of the family. So the woman brought her son with her. The kings of Israel did not serve God. So they did not respect the rights that God had given to the people (for example, 1 Kings 21:1-16). The woman could not be sure that the king would help her. But the kings acted as judges in Israel.

8:4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done. The king was sitting on his royal seat. But he was not issuing judgments at that time. Instead, he was listening to stories. God knows the perfect time to do his work. And this was God's time as the king listened.

8:5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life. Elisha's servant Gehazi was telling the king about Elisha's miracles. And they were great miracles. Even a dead person had become alive again. And at that moment, the woman arrived with her son. Gehazi recognized her. Talking about timing?

2 Kings 8:6 The Restoration Of The Shunammite's Property

8:6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now. The woman was introduced to the king. Of course, it was the right moment. The king was curious about her. He asked questions. She told the king how Elisha had brought her son back to life. And, of course, she had the opportunity to ask the king about her land. So the king was happy to give her land back to her. Also, people that had sold crops and profited from it; they had harvested from the woman's land, the king made sure that she got the money from their sale.

The woman made a request. At this point it was who you know. Even though the king had some authority, she knew

³ <http://greenleycommentary.wordpress.com/2010/10/13/20-elishas-miraculous-ministry-part-iii/>

⁴ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/2kings-lbw.htm>

⁵ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/2kings-lbw.htm>

<http://pitwm.net/pitwn-sundayschool.html>

the man of God, who knew the King of kings.

SUMMARY:

⁶Elisha had sent the Shunammite woman and her son away from Israel because of this famine. She was gone for seven years, living in the land of the Philistines. She returns and asks that her land be restored to her. Elisha's former servant confirms her story and the king [Jehoram] restores her land.

Restoration is the key word. In the instance of the woman (the Shunammite woman), upon coming back after the famine and even losing her property, she was given back all she had lost and more. And if you go back and look at the instance of the younger son (the Prodigal Son) after coming back from riotous living and being in a famine was brought back to right standing and more with God and the father; both restored by the hand of God's compassion.

APPLICATION:

This is a good example of how God can make things happen at the right time. It is also an example of how God can even use an evil king to carry out his purposes. Make right decisions by depending on God. He will always come through for your good.

⁶ <http://greenleycommentary.wordpress.com/2010/10/13/20-elishas-miraculous-ministry-part-iii/>
<http://pitwm.net/pitwn-sundayschool.html>