

RECEIVING YOUR MIRACLE

Text: II Kings 4:1-7

Key Word: Miracle

Key Thought: How Can We Receive a Miracle from God?

*** A story is told of Dr. Arnot who was visiting among his poor, sick people in Edinburgh. Before going into a certain house he stood back to see if the lady was home. He quickly knew she was because her little flower pots were still on her window sills and her blind was up.

Dr. Arnot was happy because he knew she was poor and someone had given him money that morning to give to the poor. He calculated what Betty's rent would be and put the money in his pocket to give to her. He climbed up the winding staircase and knocked softly on her door, but there was no answer. He then pulled the bell and even though it rang louder, there was no answer. At last he said to himself, *"Betty forgot to pull the blinds and she has gone out without taking her flower pots in. What a pity!"* He then went back downstairs.

The next morning he went back because he knew she needed help. He knocked at the door and Betty soon came and opened the door.

"Oh" she said, "it is you, Mr. Arnot? I am glad to see you! Come in!"

Dr. Arnot went in and sat down. After some conversation he offered prayer and the sweet face of Betty Gordon framed with her white hair, looked at him. There were tears in her eyes and a look of care that he'd never seen.

The kind preacher asked, *"Why are you crying?"* She began crying in earnest about this time. *"Oh, I'm so afraid of the landlord. I know he's going to come. He came yesterday, and I had no rent so I didn't open the door. I'm afraid he will return and he is such a hard man."*

"At what time did he come yesterday?"

"He came between eleven and twelve o'clock," she said. "I remember because I looked at the clock and it was twenty five minutes to twelve."

"Well," said Dr. Arnot, "it was not the landlord: it was me, and I brought to you this money to pay the rent. Take it and be thankful."

She looked at him and said, *"Do you mean to tell me that you came to bring me the money to pay my rent and I wouldn't let you in. You were sent by God and I wouldn't let you in!"* ***

How Can We Receive our Miracle from God?

I. THE WIDOW'S POVERTY (II Kings 4: 1)

II. THE WIDOW'S PROVISION (II Kings 4: 2)

III. THE WIDOW'S PARTICIPATION (II Kings 4: 3-7)

I. THE WIDOW'S POVERTY (II Kings 4: 1)

The widow in our text stood as a picture of hopelessness. She had exhausted her means of survival. Elisha appeared as a representative of God endowed with power to transform this desperate situation. According to Josephus, an ancient historian, the widow had once been surrounded by the luxuries of a palace. Being the wife of Obadiah, the high chamberlain of Ahab, king of Israel, she had once a life without want. Her husband hid 100 prophets in caves and fed them with bread and water during the time of a famine as well as a time of great persecution led by queen Jezebel. He understood that the penalty for helping them was death. **Yet his respect for God was greater than his fear of man.**

It appears that Obadiah died quickly without making provisions for his family. Possibly his deeds of mercy were uncovered and his life was taken as a result. Whatever the case, the tide quickly turned and his wife was now at the point of desperate need. The creditor (lit. - "*extortioner or exacter of usury*") was demanding payment. Her sons were the only means of support she had and the creditor was about to clutch his greedy hands upon them to make them work as slaves until the year of Jubilee arrived and all debts would be cancelled.

Some begin to question God about His administration of justice during these times. The widow simply made a humble request to God for help.

"Here am I, Lord, send me: send me to the ends of the earth; . . .
send me from all that is called comfort: send me to death itself, if it
be in Thy service and to promote Thy kingdom."

David Brainerd

"If Jesus be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great
for me to make for him."

C. T. Studd

Even in the midst of William Carey's deepest trials, almost broken hearted, he was able to write:

"Why is my soul disquieted within me? Things may turn out better
than I expect. Everything is known to God, and God cares."

"Though he slay me yet shall I trust him."

Job 13:15

The widow's poverty is believed to have resulted because of her faithfulness to God. God honoured her faithfulness and made a way for the discouraged widow.

II. THE WIDOW'S PROVISION (II Kings 4: 2)

Elisha wisely inquired into her situation before committing himself to help. He found out that her resources consisted of a pot of oil (lit. "*an ointment bottle*"). She stood as insufficient as the young boy with five loaves and two small fish because her need was so great. **Her point of helplessness gained her a position to receive her provision.**

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

Her attitude set the stage for God to take the leading part. **She brought forth the anointing oil and declared it to be her only source of survival.** She had been brought to a place where only the anointing would change the situation.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing."

Isaiah 10:27

Some people see the anointing oil as just a little thing that doesn't seem to offer us any help. We often look to our own resources to get us out of trouble.

We should instead seek out the anointing of God. We need to move into the place of its healing power. It can break the bondage that others try to place upon us. Don't let the "**pot of power**" lay idle. **USE IT!**

Many people live in their past. They allow their past ways and means to direct their future. Never underestimate the power that you have available through God's anointing for both your present and future needs.

*** Years ago workmen were building a bridge across a portion of the New York harbour. Seeking a base for one of the buttresses, they struck upon an old scow full of stone that had been sunk deeply into the sediment at the bottom of the bay.

Divers were sent down to place great chains under the flatboat so that it could be raised, but every device failed. At last a special engineer was called in to solve the problem. He ordered two barges brought to the spot and lines were attached to them and secured to the scow. (Contd.) ***

II. THE WIDOW'S PROVISION (II Kings 4: 2) (Contd.)

*** The work was done and the lines were attached to them when the waters were at low ebb. Then he ordered them just to wait for a few hours. As the incoming tide swept higher and higher, it raised the two barges by its mighty power and the submerged ship first shook, then shivered, and finally responded. It had been released by the power of the Atlantic ocean. ***

A power much greater than the Atlantic Ocean is at our disposal yet we often turn it away and say, "*hand me a rope.*" Our strength is no match for God's power.

III. THE WIDOW'S PARTICIPATION (II Kings 4: 3-7)

Elisha was very explicit in his commands:

1. GO - (lit - "*begin walking*") Get out of your present situation. It's important not to continue in a pattern of defeat. We need to leave our past behind and move ahead in full surrender to God.

2. BORROW/ASK - (lit - "*demand or request*"). This shows the determination that is needed to breakout of many situations. If God gave us everything we needed without an effort, we would become spiritual babes.

3. EMPTY VESSELS/JARS - (lit - "*something prepared*"). To receive a miracle from God we should prepare ourselves. These vessels were capable of holding 100-200 gallons of liquid or 100-200 times the amount of the "pot of oil." They had to be empty so no one would get the glory but God Himself.

4. BORROW NOT A FEW - Have we ever limited God's miraculous power because of unbelief or not being persistent? She must have wondered what the prophet had in mind. Why all the vessels?

5. SHUT THE DOOR - Much to the pattern of the miracles of Elisha he told her to get out of the spotlight. **This is where she could shut out the unbelieving world.** God often wants to work privately in our lives before we go out proclaiming His goodness to others.

She obeyed the prophet and began pouring out from her pot of oil. She must have been amazed to see the first vessel filled. Then 2, 3, 4 and so on until all the vessels were filled to the brim.

At the moment the last vessel was full, the oil in the ointment bottle was "*restrained or hindered.*" Perhaps the lack of faith on her part hindered a greater miracle from taking place. She had enough money to pay off her debts and provide for her family.

Have you been feeling like the widow? Have you been faithfully serving God yet the trials have brought you to a point of desperation? Do you realize you could very well be standing on the edge of your miracle? Call out to God and fully surrender your will to His. Search out your feeble resources and recognize that only the anointing of God will change your situation.

Don't limit God. Close out all distractions and enter His presence and see Him work a miracle in your life. Take courage and behold the glory of God.

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Date: Oct 2/16

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Arise, Shine for Thy Light Is Come - C

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