

2 Kings 4:8-37 “The Hospitable Wife”

The Shunammite Woman

2 Kings 4:8-37

- A **notable** woman **v.8**
- A **hospitable** woman **v.8, Heb. 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9**
- A **considerate** woman **v.10, 13; 1 Cor. 13:4**
- A **content** woman **v.13; Phil. 4:11; 1 Tim. 6:6-10**
- A **childless** woman **v.14** Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Elisabeth, Manoah’s wife
- A **doubtful** woman **v.16, Genesis 18:10-15**
- A **blessed** woman **v.17; Psalm 127**
- A **caring** mother **v.20; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8**

8 It happened one day that Elisha passed through to **Shunem** where there was **a wealthy woman**, and she urged him to eat bread; so it happened each time he passed through, he would stop there to eat.

- The meaning seems to be that she was a woman of substance, one well-to-do, perhaps one that had brought her husband the bulk of his wealth. ¹
 - **Hospitality:**
 - We are all called to hospitable
- 1 Peter 4:9** Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

¹ H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *2 Kings*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 65.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

○ **Hospitality** – a qualification to be an Elder

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then **must be** blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, **hospitable**, able to teach;

Titus 1:8 **but hospitable**, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled,

● **Your hospitality to godly people is especially rewarded**

Matthew 10:41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

The following differentiation between “hospitality” and “entertaining” was made by Karen Mains in *Open Heart, Open Home*

(Elgin, Ill.: Cook, 1976):

Entertaining says, “I want to impress you with my home, my clever decorating, my cooking.”

Hospitality, seeking to minister, says, “This home is a gift from my Master. I use it as He desires.” Hospitality aims to serve.

Entertaining puts things before people. “As soon as I get the house finished, the living room decorated, my housecleaning done—then I will start inviting people.

Hospitality puts people first. “No furniture—we’ll eat on the floor.” “The decorating may never get done—you come anyway.”

“The house is a mess—but you are friends—come home with us.”

Entertaining subtly declares, “This home is mine, an expression of my personality. Look, please, and admire.”

Hospitality whispers, “What is mine is yours.”²

9 She said to her husband, “**Please now**, I know that he is **a holy man of God** who is passing our way regularly;

² Michael P. Green, ed., *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 Sermon Illustrations Arranged by Topic and Indexed Exhaustively*, Revised edition of: The expositor's illustration file (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).

10 let us make a small enclosed room upstairs and put a bed, table, chair, and lampstand there for him, so that when he comes to us, he can turn and stay there.

Proverbs 31:10–12

10 Who can find a virtuous wife?
For her worth is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her;
So he will have no lack of gain.

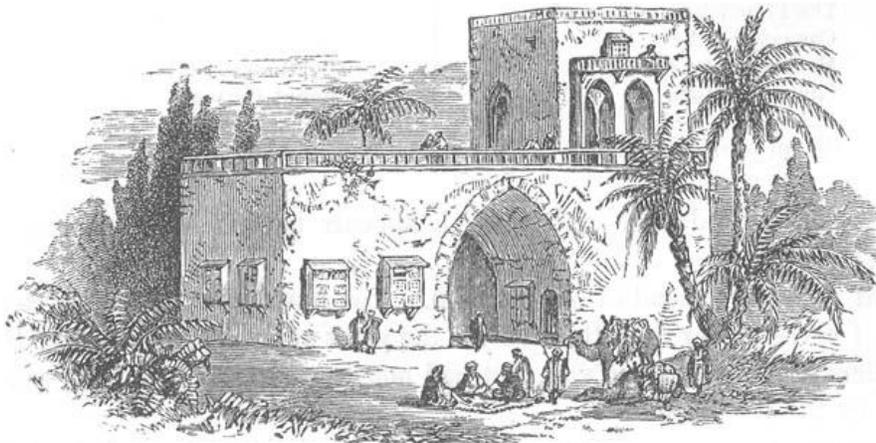
12 She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.

- **Build a room to be hospitable?**

- For some other man to come and stay at your house?
- A holy man of God
- A humble man that had to be urged to come to eat and stay.
- **How far would you go to start being hospitable with the home God gave you?**

- **Nothing fancy described here**

- “a bed, table, chair, and lampstand there for him”
 - Simple furniture
 - Cinder block bookstand? Simple, it works.
(College furniture)
- She’s thoughtful enough to know a Prophet would need a quiet place to contemplate his devotions to the Lord.



11 One day it happened that he came there and went to the upper room and lay down there.

12 He said to **Gehazi** his servant, “Call to this Shunammite woman,” so he called to her, and she stood before him.

- **גֵּחָזִי** [*Geychaziy, Gechaziy /gay·khah·zee/*] n pr m. Apparently from 1516 and 2372; GK 1634; 12 occurrences; AV translates as “Gehazi” 12 times.
1 the servant of Elisha.

Additional Information: **Gehazi = “valley of vision”** ³

13 Elisha said to **Gehazi**,

“Please say to her,

‘Look, you took all this trouble, showing care for us; what is there for me to do for you? To speak for you to the king or to the commander of the army?’ ”

She said, **“I am living among my people.”**

- “Would you like to meet the King, the Commanders of the Army?”
 - Any celebrities I can introduce you to?
 - Any big events I could get you an invitation to?
- **“I am content living among my people”**
 - I’m wealthy but I enjoy living among my own people here in this town.
 - I’m not interested in those that man says are celebrities, I’m interested in those GOD says are celebrities.

14 Then he asked Gehazi, “What may be done for her?”

Gehazi said, **“Well, she has no son, and her husband is old.”**

- People often think – “No one does anything for me!”
 - **Maybe because you’ve done little to nothing for anyone else.**
 - Hospitality means opening up your home/sanctuary for others to enjoy
 - **THEN** – they will want to open their home/sanctuary for you to enjoy.

15 And he said, “Call for her,” so he called for her and she stood in the doorway.

16 And he said, “At this time next spring, you will be embracing a son.”

She said, “No, my lord, O man of God! You must not tell a lie to your servant!”

- **Too astonishing to believe!**
 - No time to joke around
 - **Be careful what you prophesy to others!**

17 But the woman conceived, and she bore a son in the spring, which Elisha had promised to her.

³ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995).

18 The child (**5 years old**) grew older, and it happened one day that he went out to his father and to the reapers.

19 Then he said to his father, **“My head, my head!”**

So he said to the servant, “Carry him to his mother.”

20 So they carried him and brought him to his mother; he sat on her lap until noon and the boy died.

- **Heat Stroke?**
- **Dehydration?**
 - Both these ailments start with a headache.
- Must have still been a small child for them to carry him upstairs
 - Sit him on her lap – and he died.
- **Did God kill this child because she is a sinner?**
 - Unheard of in Scripture!
 - God has never killed a child because their parents were sinners.
 - **God killed HIS own child because you are sinners** – but not someone else’s child.

21 She went up, laid him on the bed of the man of God, closed the door, and went out behind it.

22 She called to her husband and said, “Please send one of the servants and one of the female donkeys for me, so that I can go quickly up to the man of God and return.”

23 And he said, “Why are you going to him today?

It is neither the new moon nor the Sabbath!”

And she said, “Peace.”

- This isn’t a special Sabbath or Holy Day – **why go to see Elisha?**
- **She didn’t tell him that the boy had died –**
 - Maybe she was afraid her husband would go home and bury her son that same afternoon?
 - Same day burial very common in Mid-eastern cultures

24 She saddled the female donkey, and she said to her servant,

“Drive along and go; you must not hold me back from riding, unless I tell you.”

25 So she went and came to the man of God by Mount Carmel.

It happened when the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, **“There is this Shunammite.**

26 Now, please run to meet her and ask her,

‘Is it peace for you?

Is it peace for your husband?

Is it peace for the boy?’ ”

She said, “Peace.”

- She said – “**I come in Peace**”
 - No anger at Elisha or God
 - No evil agenda
- **How does a mother compose herself when her only child has died?**

2 Thessalonians 3:16 **Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.** The Lord be with you all.

Colossians 3:15 **And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,** to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Philippians 4:6–7

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

7 **and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

27 So she came to the man of God at the mountain, and she caught hold of his feet.

Then Gehazi came near to push her away,

but the man of God said,

“Let her alone, for her soul is bitter,

and Yahweh has hidden it from me and has not told me.”

- There are so many reasons a man of God would not want to be touched by a woman.
- The Lord withheld information from Elisha – **he wasn’t used to that**

1 Corinthians 14:24–25

24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all.

25 **And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed;**

and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

28 Then she said, **“Did I ask for a son from my lord?**

Did I not say that you must not mislead me?”

29 Then he said to Gehazi, “Gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand and go.

If you meet anyone, you must not greet them;

if anyone greets you, you must not answer them.

You must put my staff on the face of the boy.”

30 Then the mother of the boy said,

“As Yahweh lives and as your soul lives, I will surely not leave you.”

So Elisha got up and went after her.

31 Gehazi crossed over before them, and he put the staff on the face of the boy; but there was no sound, and there was no sign of life, so he returned to meet him.

He told him, saying, “The boy did not wake up.”

32 When Elisha came to the house, **here was the boy dead**, lying on his bed.

- 25 miles for the Shunammite mother to reach Elisha
- 25 miles back to the house where the mother left her son.
 - 25 Miles is a full day’s journey
 - Child left dead for 48-72 hours!
- **Moment of Death:**
 - 1} The heart stops
 - 2} The skin gets tight and grey in color
 - 3} All the muscles relax
 - 4} The bladder and bowels empty
 - 5} The body’s temperature will typically drop 1.5 degrees F. per hour unless outside environment is a factor. The liver is the organ that stays warmest the longest, and this temperature is used to establish time of death if the body is found within that time frame.
- **After 30 minutes:**
 - 6} The skin gets purple and waxy
 - 7} The lips, finger- and toe nails fade to a pale color or turn white as the blood leaves.
 - 8} Blood pools at the lowest parts of the body leaving a dark purple-black stain called lividity
 - 9} The hands and feet turn blue
 - 10} The eyes start to sink into the skull
- **After 4 hours:**
 - 11} Rigor mortis starts to set in
 - 12} The purpling of the skin and pooling of blood continue
 - 13} Rigor Mortis begins to tighten the muscles for about another 24 hours, then will reverse and the body will return to a limp state.
- **After 12 hours:**
 - 14} The body is in full rigor mortis.
- **After 24 hours:**
 - 15} The body is now the temperature of the surrounding environment
 - 16} In males, the semen dies
 - 17} The head and neck are now a greenish-blue color
 - 18} The greenish-blue color continues to spread to the rest of the body

19} There is the strong smell of rotting meat

20} The face of the person is essentially no longer recognizable ⁴

33 He went
and shut the door behind the two of them,
and prayed to Yahweh.

Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

34 Then he went up and lay upon the child
and put his mouth on his mouth,
his eyes on his eyes,
and his palms on his palms.
As he bent down over him, the flesh of the boy became warm.



Few of us are looking for an old man to lay on top of our child and breathe into his mouth

- This is no ordinary old man!
- This has been commanded of the Prophet by Yahweh Himself!
- Unique way producing a unique result
 - Not a spiritual methodology
 - Not a formula for healing the dead or the living!

35 He returned and went to and fro in the house one time,

⁴ <http://www.anomalies-unlimited.com/Death/Stages.html>

then he went up and bent over him.

Then the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

36 Elisha called to Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.”

So he called her and she came to him;

then he said, **“Pick up your son.”**

37 She came and fell at his feet and bowed down to the ground;

then she picked up her son and went out.

- How could there be a better gift than life?
- Most Christians would prefer not to be raised from the dead.
 - **DNR – Do Not Resurrect!**
- Life after death is certain – to all human beings
 - Life in Heaven
 - Life in Hell
 - Choose today!

No hospitality – no miracle

No miracle – no life, God wants to lead you from miracle to miracle

Ebenezers