

Elísha And The Shunammíte Woman

2 Kings 4:8-17

## **MEMORY VERSE**

2 KINGS 4:9

“And she said to her husband, ‘Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.’”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A dry erase board and dry erase marker (or chalkboard and chalk) and small prizes (pencils, erasers, stickers, etc.).

A sheet of 8 1/2” x 11” paper (or you could substitute a 9” x 12” piece of colored construction paper), scissors, markers or crayons.

Several items from home that can be used to demonstrate hospitality, such as dishes, silverware and/or cups.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Dry Erase Board Scrabble**

Divide your class into two teams. Pick a category for the game. For example, you might use this story and start with the word Shunammite. Or use characters in the New Testament, Old Testament events, foods, animals, Bible names, etc. Start by writing a word on the board.

The first team will write their word on the board in scrabble style (either vertically or horizontally). The second team will then come up with a word that fits into the scrabble pattern, but it has to be in the same category. Continue the game until a team can't think of a word. Award points for length of words and give out a small prize to the winning team.

For younger children you could write all their names on the board and use those words to draw from in forming your scrabble board.

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## LESSON TIME!

In this portion of the life of Elisha from our lesson today we see the kindness of a Shunammite woman towards him, and the gratitude that Elisha has for her kindness. We see a beautiful lesson of hospitality and thankfulness for that hospitality. We are also reminded that God sees all that we do, and is blessed when we bless others. We can never out-give our wondrous Creator. **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

### 2 KINGS 4:8

Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food.

Shunem was a city that was between the cities of Samaria and Carmel, a road that Elisha often traveled. There was a wealthy woman who wanted him to come and eat at her house. We see that she persuaded him to stop by each time that he would come by her house.

She would not take no for an answer. She desired to show hospitality to the Lord's prophet. She was really a wonderful example to us of godly character. She was great in the area of hospitality, one of the spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament. She knew that Elisha was "a man of God" and she wanted to bless him.

She took initiative, not waiting for Elisha to ask her for anything. As children of the Lord, we are required to be hospitable to others. Romans 12:13 tells us, "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." It is a privilege that we can give of our abundance to others. Elisha appreciated what she did and responded by stopping in every time he went that direction.

Hospitality means that we are willing to open up our home to others. We should be willing to help with food or allow others to stay in our home as a ministry to the Lord. Has your family ever had company stay over? That is what hospitality is, but in the Lord's kingdom it is more than just having friends over. It is ministering to one another in love and demonstrating Jesus' love towards others. **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

## 2 KINGS 4:9-10

And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.

"Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

Here we see her gift of discernment. She perceived that Elisha was a holy man of God. 1 Corinthians 2:15 tells us, "He that is spiritual discerns all things." What does this say to us about Elisha? She doesn't say that he was a "great guy" or that he was such an intelligent man, but she saw that he was a holy man of God.

Elisha's character spoke of and showed the Lord. Perhaps all that came out of his mouth were things that pointed to God. What does our speech tell others about our character? Or tell others about our God? How do others see us? Do they see us as smart, funny,

not caring, or in love with Jesus? It's a good opportunity for a heart check; how do others see me? Or another question; do others see Jesus in me?

With meekness, she also talked to her husband and asked his permission to build a little room for Elisha. In Ephesians 5:22-23 we are told, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is savior of the body." Instead of taking matters into her own hands, this "great woman" sought her husband's consent to do this and his help in carrying it out.

## 2 KINGS 4:11-12

And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there.

Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him.

Elisha made good use of this little room, with a grateful heart. He did not take it for granted or feel that he should be taken care of by another person. Why? Because he knew that it was the Lord who would always take care of all of his needs. How did he know this? It was because he knew the living God. As we know God more intimately we realize how much He loves us, and desires to take care of us. **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

## 2 KINGS 4:13

And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?' "She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

With gratitude in his heart for this blessing, he in turn wanted to bless this gracious woman. He had Gehazi, his servant ask her what could be done for her in return for her kindness. He was even willing to speak to the king for her.

As a prophet, Elisha probably had a lot of influence with the king. Jehoram was king at this time and Elisha had been giving him direction and help. Though Elisha didn't want to ask anything for himself, he was willing to show his gratitude to his hostess by going to the king on her behalf if she had a request.

Her response was, "I will dwell among mine own people." Here is woman who is content with the place and position God had given to her, and did not desire any changes or improvement.

This is an example of thankfulness on Elisha's part. We need to be thankful to those who do show us hospitality. We should let others know that we appreciate the ministry that they have done on our behalf. She was being obedient to the Lord and serving Elisha and Elisha was being obedient to the Lord by being thankful. **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

**2 KINGS 4:14-17**

**So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old."**

**So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway.**

**Then he said, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!"**

But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

## Children Are A Gift!

The Shunammite woman received a special gift from the Lord. She received a child which she never thought she could have. That child was a special gift. As children, each one of you is a special gift from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5).

In this craft you will be making a paper family. You will need a sheet of 8 1/2" x 11" paper (or you could substitute a 9" x 12" piece of colored construction paper). Fold the sheet in half, then in half again, again and one more time for a total of 4 times (thus folding the paper into eighths. Look for the edges. Start to draw the head on the fold, leave about 1/2" for arms and feet to hold one another. It is important to line up the center part of the body on the fold of the paper. The hands and feet will go on the edge that has the "ends" of the paper.

When you are finished with drawing, cut around the edges and then open up. This should make 4 figures that are attached at the arms and feet. Next, the children can decorate their family with markers or crayons. For younger children you will need to help them with drawing the outline and with folding.

Elisha then consults with his servant, Gehazi, about what could be done for this "great woman." Here we see that Elisha has no problem conferring with his servant, for Elisha is a humble man. We must remember that we are all one in the Lord, no one is greater than another.

Elisha could not seek out a favor for her in the court of King Jehoram, but now he could seek out a favor for her in the royal court of heaven. She and her husband would join with Abraham, Isaac, Manoah and Elkanah in the special blessing of a son they thought they would never have.

Elisha would go to the Lord and ask Him to bless her. The Lord does bless her with children. The Lord is so good. He desires to bless those who love Him and desire to follow Him. He loves to give us the desires of our hearts.

Whether her response was that of unbelief or just amazement is not mentioned. But according to Matt. 10:41 “He that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward.” She having received a prophet in the name of a prophet, she received a prophet’s reward.

God was faithful to do all He had promised her. Matthew Henry says, “God built up her house, in reward of her kindness in building the prophet a chamber. We may well imagine what joy this brought to the family.”

Let us learn from this woman’s hospitality, how we can bless another in the name of the Lord. Ask God to open your heart to whomever He would have you serve. You will be blessed! **God loves hospitality and thankfulness.**

## **Practice Your Hospitality**

Bring to class some dishes, silverware, glasses or other items that might be used to display hospitality. Divide the class into two teams. One team will be the servants and the other team will be the recipients. Have the servants serve the recipients and be hospitable towards them. They can act out what it might be like to have them over for dinner and what kinds of things they would do to show hospitality.

After a short time switch roles. Ask the children which team they thought were the best servants. Award a small prize if you would like to. Gather the children together and review the story and help the children to apply the story to their own lives and discover ways that they can be more hospitable and be a blessing to the body of Christ.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of thankfulness for the kindness that the Lord and others have shown in their lives. Ask the Lord to help us be more hospitable and willing to be a servant. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.