



Fear Is Not Our Future

Lessons From Elijah And Elisha

Growth Group Curriculum

February 19, 2023 – 2 Kings 4:8-13; Psalm 16:5-6; 2 Kings 8:1-6;
Prov 3:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3-7; Matt 6:19-21; Eph 3:20-21
“Restoration”

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

The story of the Shunammite woman, that we read about in 2 Kings 8, actually begins back in 2 Kings 4:8-30 where we see her remarkable acts of hospitality. Though the woman is content and feels at “home” (v.13), she does not have a son. It is hard for us in today’s world to fully grasp the significance of this. Rights of inheritance typically followed the male line, and the male lineage perpetuated the family name in Israel.

Elisha wants to help with her situation and lets her know that God will bless her with a son within the year. Her son is born and all is well, but then he unexpectedly dies, and Elisha goes to their house and revives the young boy. We don’t hear anything more about her until 2 Kings 8, when Elisha tells her that she and her family need to leave Shunem because there will be famine in the land for seven years.

This story is similar to Naomi and Elimelech, in the book of Ruth, who also had to leave their homeland and seek out a place where they could live more securely. After seven years the Shunammite woman returns home with her son, but her husband is no longer with them. She seeks restoration of her home and land. It is not exactly clear why she had lost her land and home.

The king and Gehazi are talking about the miracle Elisha had performed, in raising a child from the dead, as the boy’s mom enters the room. God’s timing is always perfect! The king restores the land and home. The woman’s faithfulness, in following the counsel of Elisha, is seen. As we are obedient, God will provide. It does not always happen the way we hope or expect, but the result of obedience to God is God’s provision.

The theme of trust is important in this text. Trusting that God has a plan when circumstances don’t look great and there is famine in the land. 1 and 2 Kings were written when Israel was exiled in Babylonian captivity. This story, in particular, served to remind them that though they were no longer in the land they called “home,” God would one day bring them back. The God who had redeemed his people and provided them with a great inheritance would not lose them or forget about them.

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Exploring the Text

2 Kings 4:8-13

⁸ One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. ⁹ She said to her husband, “I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. ¹⁰ Let’s make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us.” ¹¹ One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. ¹² He said to his servant Gehazi, “Call the Shunammite.” So he called her, and she stood before him. ¹³ Elisha said to him, “Tell her, ‘You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?’” She replied, “I have a home among my own people.”

Psalm 16:5-6

⁵ LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

2 Kings 8:1-6

¹ Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, “Go away with your family and stay for a while wherever you can, because the LORD has decreed a famine in the land that will last seven years.” ² The woman proceeded to do as the man of God said. She and her family went away and stayed in the land of the Philistines seven years. ³ At the end of the seven years she came back from the land of the Philistines and went to appeal to the king for her house and land. ⁴ The king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, and had said, “Tell me about all the great things Elisha has done.” ⁵ Just as Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, the woman whose son Elisha had brought back to life came to appeal to the king for her house and land. Gehazi said, “This is the woman, my lord the king, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life.” ⁶ The king asked the woman about it, and she told him. Then he assigned an official to her case and said to him, “Give back everything that belonged to her, including all the income from her land from the day she left the country until now.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

1 Peter 1:3-7

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.



Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

1. The title of this week's sermon is "Restoration." How do you define "restoration?" Why is this such a powerful concept for us as Christians?
2. In 2 Kings, we read about the Shunammite woman whose son was restored to life by Elisha, and how the king restored her home to her, following the seven year famine. What other stories of restoration can you find in the Bible?
3. In Psalm 16:5-6, King David says: "Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup..." What does it mean when we say that God is our portion? What would our lives look like if we lived as if God was truly our portion?
4. In 1 Peter 1:3-7, we read about a "living hope." What exactly does Peter mean when he speaks of "a living hope"?
5. Pastor Paul quoted Martin Luther King as saying: "We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope." What does that quote mean to you?
6. How do the concepts of a "living hope" and "infinite hope" bring us back to the idea of restoration?
7. In Matthew 6:19-21, we are told to "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven," and Pastor Paul talked about "investing in Jesus." What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven or to invest in Jesus? How do we do this?
8. In this sermon series of "Fear is Not Our Future," we have heard the stories of Elijah and Elisha with themes of God's provision, obedience, hospitality, trust, listening for God's call, God's wrath, and restoration. Which of these themes has spoken the most directly to your heart?

