

A POT OF OIL

2 KINGS 4

Text:

Introduction:

No doubt every one of us are all too familiar with the blessed old hymns, "Be not dismayed, what're betide, God will take care of you."

And, though we sing it, preach it, and hear it, there are times when we really wonder if God is aware of our dismal situation.

Some of you may be familiar with the life of George Muller, who at Ashley Down, England, built several orphanages.

Muller, without a personal salary, relied totally upon God to supply the money and food he needed to support the hundreds of homeless girls he befriended in the name of Christ.

Muller, a man of radiant faith, kept a motto on his desk for many years that brought comfort and strength to his heart. It read, "It matters to Him about you!" Muller believed that those words captured the meaning of I Peter 5:7.

1 Peter 5:7

⁷ Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

He testified at the end of his life that the Lord had never failed to supply all of his needs.

In this story we certainly see the truth that God will take care of us but also in this story, we see a portrait of what is involved in once again having revival.

The central focus of this story is oil. It is oil, which is needed, and it is oil which is lacking.

Throughout the Word of God, oil serves as a picture of a very interesting truth, that being, the presence of the Holy Spirit.

As we consider the true picture of this story, we see how it deals with the matter of revival.

Consider the woman in this story, and what she does and how it relates to us and revival.

1. SHE FACED A GREAT DILEMMA

- This is a woman who was facing a great, and a severe dilemma.

A. The Death in Her Family

1. Here is a woman who is dealing with great grief as a result of the death of her husband.
2. We're told that she 'cried.' The word speaks of "moaning, or weeping uncontrollably." She was facing great despair.
3. Her husband was a good and godly man. She described him by saying, "and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord."
4. Her dilemma was partly due to The Death in her Family!

B. The Debt of Her Family

1. Not only was her dilemma due to the death in her family, but also to the debt of her family.

2. Her sons have been taken as collateral for a debt that was unpaid. They had become 'bondmen,' or slaves.

3. In those days it allowed for debtors to work off their debts.

Leviticus 25:39

³⁹ And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant:

Here was a woman facing the death of her husband and a debt that affected her family. She faced a great dilemma.

2. SHE FORMED A GREAT DESIRE

- Though this woman faced a great dilemma, she, in spite of that, formed a great desire.
- It is here that we gain a glimpse at the secret for revival. In fact, it is seen in:

A. A Call for the Man of God

1. Notice for whom it was that this lady called.

2. She knows exactly where to turn for help; she calls for God's man.

3. I submit unto you that the secret of revival does not lie in the educational institutions of our country.

4. The secret of revival is not found in Congress, the State House, or the White House. The secret of revival is found in God's House.

5. It's when God's people see the desperation of their need, and call upon the God able to meet that need.

6. Duncan Campbell said it well, when he said, "A sense of need, and the spirit of repentance is a vessel into which God wills to pour Himself in recovering grace.

7. To the hungry soul, God will satisfy. To the thirsty heart, God will satisfy. To the longing being, God will satisfy. It is only found in Him.

B. The Condition of the Man of God

1. Her desire expressed in her call for the man of God, but also it was evidenced in the condition of the man of God.
2. Elisha now puts this woman to the test. He now examines how bad she wants God to do something for her.
3. The condition he gave her rests in two questions.
 - a. He asks her, first, what do you need? (vs.2)

Illustration:

A man stood at a crossroads, and threw a stick into the air three times letting it fall to the ground each time.

A man passing by asked, "Why are you doing that?" The guy replied, "Because I want to know what the right road for me to take. I will go whichever way the stick points."

The man then asked, "So why throw the stick up three times, to which the guy said, "Because, not until the third time did it point in the direction that I want to go!"

In much the same way is how we deal with God in spiritual things. We try to manipulate Him into what we want, and then we seek to call it revival.

b. The prophet's condition rests within another question. He not only asked her 'what do you need,' but also what do you have? (vs. 2)

- The condition for this miracle not only rests in what was needed, but in what was already possessed.
- All that the woman had was one single pot of oil.
- Her husband possibly used this oil before his death, but since he had died, it had been sitting idle on the shelf.
- It is in this oil that the miracle takes place. It is something that she needed, but it was something that she had.
- The prophet saw in that one pot of oil something that he could work with. It was something through which the miracle was going to happen. It began with what she already had.

- God is not interested in what your neighbor has, or another church in the area has to ignite revival. He is only interested in what you have.
- What you already possess is enough. It is something that God can work with, and reveal the power of Himself.

Paul spoke of this:

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

- Though we may only have one pot of oil, it is enough for God to take and use to ignite the flames of revival.
- The problem does not lie in what we possess, but in what we perceive. It does not lie in what we experience, but it what we expect.
- The very reason we do not see anything happen in these days is because we do not expect it to happen.
- We know God can, and we know God wants to, but we really don't believe that God will.

3. SHE FOUND A GREAT DELIGHT

This woman's dilemma, and desire, turned into great delight notice:

A. The Superiority of God's Provision (vs. 3)

- God is now going to do what only God can do. He is going to go above and beyond all of her comprehension. His provision will be superior.
- She begins to fill pots of oil out of the only pot of oil that she possessed, then another, and another, and another, and another, and another.
- Finally, it comes to the point that there isn't one more vessel that can be used.
- That is exactly what God desires to do in our midst.
- He desires to take the one pot that we do have, obey Him, trust Him, and follow Him; and, allow Him to create an endless supply out of it.

B. The Sufficiency of God's Provision (vs. 6)

Notice the last phrase of verse 6. "And the oil stayed." His provision was not only supreme, but it was also sufficient.

- However, that's not all. Notice verse 7. "Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay the debt, and live thou and thy children off the rest."
- It was not only supreme, but it was sufficient. It was all that this woman needed.
- The same is true today, when God moves He will do what the evangelist can't do. He will do what the singers, and choir can't do.
- When true revival comes it will be from God, and it will be exactly what we need.

Illustration:

The Ulster revival in the 1920's, it is said that shipyard workers brought back so many stolen tools that new sheds had to be built to house the recovered property! Repentance resulted in restitution.

When a true move of God begins to form, it will not be a counterfeit, it will be genuine.

Close:

In 1932 about forty Christians were meeting in a town in North China for prayer four times a day beginning at 5:00 a.m.

Believers were convicted of sin. Two men repented of hating each other. Love was strong and deep. Joy abounded.

When revival came more people were born again than in any previous year in North China. One missionary estimated that 3,000 people came to Christ in his town.

Pastors, missionaries, men and women experienced a deeper Christian life than they had ever known before. A spirit of prayer was poured out on the church.

People loved to pray. Many times prayer meetings lasted two or three hours. The prayers were short, fervent, and sometimes tearful.

When revival comes, it will be sufficient. Hearts will be cleansed, sin will be confessed, and lives will be changed.

