

The Shunammite, the Deadly Stew and the Feeding of the 100

2 Kings 4: 8-44

One day Elisha went on to Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to eat some food. So whenever he passed that way, he would turn in there to eat food.⁹ And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I know that this is a holy man of God who is continually passing our way.¹⁰ Let us make a small room on the roof with walls and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there."

¹¹ One day he came there, and he turned into the chamber and rested there.¹² And he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." When he had called her, she stood before him.¹³ And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'See, you have taken all this trouble for us; what is to be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?'" She answered, "I dwell among my own people."¹⁴ And he said, "What then is to be done for her?" Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old."¹⁵ He said, "Call her." And when he had called her, she stood in the doorway.¹⁶ And he said, "At this season, about this time next year, you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God; do not lie to your servant."¹⁷ But the woman conceived, and she bore a son about that time the following spring, as Elisha had said to her.

¹⁸ When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers.¹⁹ And he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother."²⁰ And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died.²¹ And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out.²² Then she called to her husband and said, "Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again."²³ And he said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath." She said, "All is well."²⁴ Then she saddled the donkey, and she said to her servant, "Urge the animal on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you."²⁵ So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, "Look, there is the Shunammite."²⁶ Run at once to meet her and say to her, 'Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?'" And she answered, "All is well."²⁷ And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of God said, "Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me."²⁸ Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'"²⁹ He said to Gehazi, "Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone

greet you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child.”³⁰ Then the mother of the child said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he arose and followed her.³¹ Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him and told him, “The child has not awakened.”

³² When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. ³³ So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the Lord. ³⁴ Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵ Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. ³⁶ Then he summoned Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, “Pick up your son.” ³⁷ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

1 Kings 17:19-22 – Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath

¹⁹ And he said to her, “Give me your son.” And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. ²⁰ And he cried to the Lord, “O Lord my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?” ²¹ Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the Lord, “O Lord my God, let this child's life come into him again.” ²² And the Lord listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived.

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Elisha Purifies the Deadly Stew

³⁸ And Elisha came again to Gilgal when there was a famine in the land. And as the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, he said to his servant, "Set on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets." ³⁹ One of them went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine and gathered from it his lap full of wild gourds, and came and cut them up into the pot of stew, not knowing what they were. ⁴⁰ And they poured out some for the men to eat. But while they were eating of the stew, they cried out, "O man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it. ⁴¹ He said, "Then bring flour." And he threw it into the pot and said, "Pour some out for the men, that they may eat." And there was no harm in the pot.

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⁴² A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, "Give to the men, that they may eat." ⁴³ But his servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred men?" So he repeated, "Give them to the men, that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left.'" ⁴⁴ So he set it before them. And they ate and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

