

2 Kings

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[0 : 00] A word that I can adventure with this evening you'll find in the chapter that we have read a part of, the second book of Kings, the fourth chapter, reading the thirteenth verse.

Second book of Kings, chapter four, reading verse thirteen. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care.

What is to be done for thee? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?

And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. As Elisha instructed Gehazi, his servant, to speak in this way to the Shunammite woman, so I can only hope that I shall prove this evening to be a servant of the living God.

And therefore, I must venture to speak in the way that God's word speaks.

[1 : 46] And he said unto him, Say now, this very evening, say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care.

What is to be done for thee? What is to be done for thee? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?

And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. First of all, I venture to notice how the Lord had so laid it in the heart of this godly woman to care for his servant.

I've been thinking a little at least, and how we do need the Lord to bring things home upon our hearts.

I feel so that we may consider them graciously and rightly in the light of God's countenance.

[3 : 29] And then I believe we shall see the Lord's hand. The Lord may use his dear people, but it's the Lord's hand.

And as I look back over the years that I have personally ventured forth in the Lord's name, how many dear godly women have fulfilled even what is written in this book.

But we do need to remember in all that is done graciously and rightly is done in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It is only when we do things in his name and for his sake that we shall receive blessing.

And I would notice, I have felt that I must notice, first of all, for a moment or two, what had taken place and hope that we may find teaching for our souls in this.

[5 : 07] How sovereignly we find God working in the life of Elisha.

And it fell on a day, the Hebrew rendering, there was a day. That Elisha passed a shunan. There was a great woman.

Oh, I believe it could rightly be said of the shunan mine, that she was a humble woman, a God-fearing woman.

And her greatness was due to the fact of what the Lord had done for her and in her.

And I'm not attempting or even thinking this evening to speak in a personal way. I'm trying to speak as the Lord will help me of what I trust the Lord has revealed to me to speak this evening.

[6 : 16] And I hope that you, dear friends, will lose sight of the speaker. And at the same time, God's servants are directed by him.

And surely we could say together, even in that that concerns us.

And even as we might think and as one does think of the first day that we came to Uppington.

I believe the Lord was in it. Because I remember the circumstances and the exercise and the travel and the fears that I had in those days of journeying from my home.

It might seem strange to some of you, but it was one of the things that caused me great fear. Even in the days, the years, as I contemplated, venturing forth in the Lord's name, there was that within me that really feared in the thought of taking germs.

[7 : 40] And it fell on a day. And as we might think of all God's servants, those that you love, those who have served you here in the Gospel, and I'm sure that you have known from time to time, and you have felt and believed that the Lord has directed them here.

And they have come for the first time on the right day. Engagements have been made.

Mortals have been engaged in seeking to make engagements. But you have seen God's hand from time to time in engagements made.

10 words, You have sometimes been favored to really know in your souls that the Right Minister has come on the right day with the Right Word.

and you've known the effect of this. There's been a message from heaven from time to time and you've known where it has come from because there has been a measure at least of unction and power attending the preached word.

[9 : 12] And you've known what it is to feel your hearts warmed to God's servants. For Jesus' sake. And you have heard God's voice through them.

And you have known that. There is a sense in which I tremble even to speak of this. As Elisha came and this godly woman, we read of her and the Lord was in it.

We know sometimes deep exercise of soul in matters. We've had cause to go upon our knees and to plead with God that he would help us, that he would be with us and sometimes especially.

So it was the Lord who was in all this. And she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was.

There was an outcome to this. This was not something that happened just once. But it was something that happened many times. And it is evident that Elisha must pass that way from time to time.

[10 : 49] So it was that as often as he passed by, he turned in litter to eat bread.

And then I would proceed a little. And she said unto her husband, Behold, now I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually.

I can assure you, my dear friends, that I feel in myself to be the complete opposite to this. That I am unholy needs no proof.

For I sorely feel the fall. But where gracious discernment is granted and God's servants are humbled in the dust, if you recognize that they are holy men of God, it is because of what the Lord has made them.

It is because the Lord speaks through them. But I am sure of this, that God's dear servants in their right minds feel to be, and they are, but poor sinners.

[12 : 19] They're empty vessels in themselves. Leaky vessels. Sinful, wretched vessels. Sinful. Sinful.

So, I feel we would have cause to say, even together at this time, and from our own, and in our own case, if we have ever been made anything at all, in a gracious sense, that I am, it is simply and alone in this, by the grace of God, I am what I am.

and I have also had thoughts like these, the gracious exercise that there was in this dear godly woman.

and I have proved this, dear friends, the Lord has often been pleased in the church of God, and in that sovereign way that he himself has purposed to use godly women in different ways, as he is pleased to use godly men in different ways.

We do know this, that it was a little godly band of women that followed and ministered to Jesus. and ministered to him for their substance.

[14 : 06] They gave their all for him. And I believe in a gracious sense, this is how the Lord's dear people do what they do.

They do it for him. They recognize that his servants, and who can begin to enter into such a thought as this, that they belong to him, as his dear people belong to him.

And whilst Jesus in mercy is still in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, so I believe his dear servants are in his own gracious hand, there's no hope for them apart from this.

They're left to their own devices, just in one service they'd fall. They'd be of no use. Now the Lord help me then to speak of this.

How the Lord so exercises his dear people, and I must speak, there's two sides to this word, I think.

[15 : 35] There is that side that concerns the people of God and God's servants naturally that that is to do with their poor bodies, about there was and there is spiritual blessings that flow out of these things.

And who can tell what the Lord may yet do, even for you here?

So the Lord help you then to continue. And she said unto her husband, Behold, now I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually.

Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall. Let us set for him there a bed and a table and a stool and a candlestick and it shall be when he cometh to us that he shall turn in thither.

So that there were still appointed days for him to come. And I do hope for you here that you will yet prove that there are those appointed days to come.

[17 : 10] But what exercise there was in all this. What concern, what love. it was done as unto the Lord and not to men.

It was done for Jesus' sake. Now I've had thoughts like this and I have perceived it that those who have sought to do what they could for God's servants, for the Lord's dear people, for his house, they are honoured.

I've seen it. I've witnessed it. I can speak of it. They're honoured. They're blessed.

Not for anything in themselves but for Jesus' sake. The Lord blesses them. The Lord favours them.

So, it is then that as we do what we can, think of what the Lord says concerning that great day when his dear people shall hear that sentence come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.

[18 : 55] What is the testimony of scripture concerning such? Well, it's recorded like this. The Lord help us to think of it in as much as ye have done it unto the one of the least of these my servants, my people.

Ye have done it unto me. And think of how God's word speaks of this. A cup of cold water.

Nothing even greater than that. yet how much more we've received. Even a cup of cold water given at the right time to the right end and it speaks volumes.

you see, gracious exercise for the Lord's servants is one of his gifts.

Oh, I do feel thankful for those whom the Lord graciously exercises for me and for his servants.

[20 : 17] how thankful I believe I have been made for those whom the Lord exercises. Not only those older in years, and often it has been so in my case, dear, godly, gracious people, often advanced in years, there have been those dear people in the midst of life, and there have also been those young in years that have sometimes come to me.

I shall never forget last year when in such distress in a certain way a young woman came to me and said, I do hope the Lord will be with you and help you and bless you.

and the Lord did. And this exercise is not only that which concerns this life, but gracious exercise in the church, gracious concern.

This is God's gift. It is a mercy to be found among praying people. It is a mercy to be found among those who need spiritual food, who need that the Lord should bless their soul.

It is a mercy to be among those that come to the house of God with their picture upon their shoulder, brought to God's house by the Lord himself, and then to be favoured to meet with them, to be given that from God's word to bring forth that is for them.

[22 : 14] Those treasures from his word, that word in season, the word of life, the word which the Lord uses. blesses. So the Lord blesses his dear people.

And the more real concern we have for the cause of God and truth and his house, the more I believe we shall be blessed.

I know this is God's gift. gift. I think of that word, and this I feel will, I hope, emphasise this truth.

You know when the Lord said to Abraham, he appeared the second time on that mountain and he said this, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply by thee.

Do we long that the Lord would multiply and bless Zion, the city of our God? But how did the Lord grant this blessing to Abraham?

[23 : 38] Well, I can tell you it was as he offered up his only son upon the sacrifice, the altar of sacrifice.

There's teaching in that. He was made willing to offer up what God had given him, to offer up in a sense his all.

Friends, there's teaching in him. There's teaching in this. He's made willing to offer up our all upon the altar of sacrifice.

Yet in offering up, the Lord gave him a sight, I believe, of Christ as the mediator, as that one who stands between garments dyed in blood.

He was given a sight of Christ. glory. He was given a sight, I believe, of glory. But it was as he offered up all that he had, really, in the sense that I know.

[24 : 57] And he waited so long for his Isaac. But it was as the Lord helped him to offer up his only son, that the Lord gave him back to him.

blessed him, and told him that in blessing I will bless thee. And the words of the hymn come to mind.

These are the souls whom Christ has blessed, who hunger for his righteousness, who thirsts for fresh supplies of grace.

Well, the Lord in his dealings with his people, he does make them willing. Oh, how we need to be made willing to suffer all things for his name's sake.

So the Lord mercifully blessed, and as Elisha came on this blessed day, and it fell on a day, that he came thither, this was to be a special day, he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

[26 : 35] And he said to Gehazi, his servant called this Shunamite, and when he had called her, she stood before him. What an experience.

What an experience. Now it is a mercy. I hope that this will be known tonight, that you will feel that the Lord has called you, even in this service, to stand before him.

Feel this is your blessing tonight. You've been called to stand before him, your God, your Father, and your friend, your Savior, your Redeemer.

And as he has been made from time to time by the Holy Spirit to your soul, you'll bury all and in all, and to be called before him tonight.

And then there was this question, say now unto her, behold, thou hast been careful for us. With all this care, what is to be done for thee?

[27 : 59] Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? Now as I thought, and it was not very long before I came to chapel, that I had these thoughts, and I thought like this, these questions that were put to her, were to do with earthly advancement, earthly prosperity and blessing.

Wouldst thou, what greater honor in a natural sense could there have been? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, king, or to the captain of the host?

Such was the exercise of the Shunammite woman at this time, that she wanted none of these things. She wanted none of these material things, these earthly favors, earthly honor, fame, or power.

I believe this is where the Lord brings his people. And I think of those lines now, if they will come correctly.

Hear my never-ceasing cry, give me Christ, or else I die. Is that your prayer tonight?

[29 : 47] Earthly honor I disdain, earthly comforts, I believe that's how it goes, Lord of vain. They might never cease in cry, give me Christ, or else I die.

And you've been taught that. without him you can do nothing. Without him you're in a solemn state and you know this is true.

And yet I can do all things and can bear all suffering when the Lord is there. You prove that?

I believe that everything to do with her poor self went into the background. Isn't this what we need?

Everything to do with our poor self and all that's to do with self is so wretched, so wretched, so miserable.

[30 : 58] what poor things we are. We're naught but sin and shame. We've nothing to bring, we've nothing of our own.

We're so helpless. And especially when it comes to eternal things that the Lord makes his people to feel helpless in providential things, in everyday things.

the Lord does bring them here. They feel to be just helpless. The thought comes to my mind, have you ever known what it is to sit down and try and write a letter in you?

You've sat there and you've sat there and then you've come to this, Lord, if I'm going to write this letter, help me to do it. And when we are brought low and when we are brought down, I remember when I had been asked by the church at Eastbourne if I would undertake the correspondence, when the time came I sat down at a desk and I can honestly say I felt just in such a case that I knew not how to begin and how I had to pray, Lord, help me to write these letters, and that evening I had to preach at Grove Road concerning the talents that God has given and the Lord was pleased to use that service to bring one of his dear people to a place where they were willing to go on in doing what they were doing for Jesus sake.

they'd been brought so low that they felt they must give up. And even those near and dear to them had spoken of what they felt they should give up.

[33 : 04] The Lord spoke and they had to go on a little longer for Jesus sake. so now I would come to the word itself and that which I hope the Lord has revealed to my spirit to speak.

so her answer which came from her very heart was I dwell among mine own people.

I dwell among mine own people. And in dwelling among our own people it does not mean that things will be easy it does not mean that we shall be without distress and trouble perplexities and being brought to feeling the same neither know we what to do.

But it does mean this that we have a dwelling place and as I mentioned last evening we have a spiritual home now it is only as Christ is preached and as Christ is made precious to our souls that we shall be held together as nothing else will hold us together but Christ in you the hope of glory and the Lord's favour made known through his word when is it dear friends that you can face one another and speak to one another as a brother a sister in Christ and feel love flowing from heart to heart is it not when the Lord has come and he has spoken to your poor soul you have heard his voice and that has helped you and you felt then that love welling up in your heart to a brother a sister in the

Lord and you said then hear my best friends my kindred dwell hear God my saviour reign there's nothing else that will keep you together and unite you and bring blessing we need help to pray with a hymn writer every stumbling bark removed stumbling block to be a stumbling block in any way and we need grace to continually be on our watch tower in this matter lest we should become a stumbling block to another we need grace to continually pray over these matters every stumbling block removed each to each unite end ear come and spread thy banner ear and that hymn speaks of who

[36 : 52] Christ's people really are as the purchase of thy blood may we see each other's good ever bearing this in mind we are to each other joined the troubles that assail us and come between us belong to self they belong to ourselves it's a mercy when as troubles come and come they will Satan is ever seeking to get in his cloven foot among brethren it is a mercy I feel this in my own soul to be brought to this Lord is it I Lord is it

I I had not thought to speak like this but it has come it's a sad thing when troubles come and we look round upon everyone else and say thou to blame that's a sad thing even though we may feel that we perhaps are not guilty but we still need grace to search our hearts to see whether we are sometimes things you know they come back on us even after many years so how careful we need to be and then I would come to what I hope the Lord has revealed to me whilst this dear woman could say from her heart and I believe there are those here tonight who can speak like this amidst all you pass through all that has been your experience

I dwell among mine own people now it's a mercy when we can feel this there's no people like our own people I know that in its widest sense this embraces the whole election of race are in another sense what a mercy to dwell among our own people we love them for Christ's sake when grace is given we overlook one another's faults we recognise our own we feel that our own are far worse than everyone else's and where each is brought to consider matters like this but now the Lord was going to favour this dear woman and he was going to favour her with a son he was going to favour her with a blessing that she had not sought but a blessing that God was going to give so I just read the verse or two that speaks of this and he said what then is to be done for her and Gehazi answered verily she hath no child and her husband is old and he said called her when he had called her she stood in the door and he said about this season according to the time of life thou shalt embrace a son love

I hope the Lord has brought this exercise upon my spirit and I feel that it is right to say that this is how I believe the Lord does bless his people and does bless them those whom he graciously exercises those that have gracious concern in Zion and for Zion they are concerned about its future welfare they are concerned that the Lord would yet bless we know not what the Lord's will is but what a mercy when there is exercise and when the Lord favors his dear people with a son a daughter in the faith when there are granted spiritual children

I realize that I have spoken like this before here but what a favor and I have had cause to realize that the Lord's own hand has been even in such a word as this in my own case dear godly woman who had been exercised about my soul from when I was a child a motherless child and this dear woman the Lord in his mercy laid me in her heart she carried me before God travelled for my soul and yet lived to see the day I hope and trust and believe the Lord did quicken my soul into life and then when his time came brought me before the church to speak of what the Lord had done for my soul the Lord granted you a son a daughter in the faith could you feel you could say in this connection for this child

[43 : 43] I pray and the Lord hath given me the petition that I asked of him and that child was to be a servant of God in Samuel's case and I believe that it is these precious souls in Zion whom the Lord does favour whom the Lord does burden he does give them sacred gracious exercise this dear woman that I have mentioned in my own case the day came and through the ministry of God's word through one of his servants in Crowborough Chapel in June 1954 and the text then was let down the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find and the

Lord used what was spoken that day to lay something further in that dear woman's heart concerning me and she has told me that until that day she had had no thought that I would be a servant of God but that day the exercise was laid there for the ministry of God's word and eight years after that day eight years after that time the Lord gave her this promise I hope that he might speak it to someone here tonight about this season according to the time of life thou shalt embrace a son who can tell that the Lord may be gracious so the Lord grants in Zion precious souls but friends it comes about through travel

God given travel God given exercise it is that that's carried it's something that continues because it's of God the Lord causes the exercise to bubble up to be renewed and it's often I believe through his own word through the ministry of his word that the exercise is catalyzed or encouraged and so it goes on and it goes on until the day comes when souls are brought forth souls are brought forth precious souls whom the Lord has appointed to you dear friends to my beloved friends the deacons here tonight to view this exercise we know full well the day will come when we shall be taken every one of us but are we concerned that the

Lord would raise up others the Lord would grant us spiritual children you dear godly women here too those of you that have carried those of you whom the Lord has made a mother in Israel even though you may not feel you are but you are because the Lord has burdened your soul and you have lived to see some things brought to pass you have lived to prove that what the Lord told you and revealed to you has thus far been fulfilled but do you feel there is something yet for the Lord mercifully add his blessing amen amen amen