

There was neither voice, or hearing (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[0 : 00] This evening with a word that you will find in the second book of Kings, chapter 4, reading a clause in verse 31.

The second book of Kings, chapter 4, reading a clause in verse 31.

But there was neither voice nor hearing. The margin renders the word hearing in the Hebrew attention.

But there was neither voice nor attention. These very words were brought into my thoughts early this morning.

And it was in this way that I trust one was led to the word this morning, which those of you that were here will remember that it was to do with the prophet Elijah.

[1 : 20] Elijah, who, as God had so favoured him and helped him and blessed not only himself, but the widow woman and her son.

And yet her child died. And so the word this morning, and the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.

So then the subject this morning was indeed to do with a widow woman and her son.

And how the Lord gave life to that son. And it was in this way that the widow knew that Elijah was indeed a servant of God.

Now the word then this evening, but there was neither voice nor hearing. In this very striking account that we have read, we know that this record here concerned Elisha.

[2 : 54] How remarkable it is that we have the record of Elijah concerning the widow's son.

And now we have the record concerning Elisha and the child born to the Shonamite.

The Lord help us then in our meditation. And we must seek, of course, to speak of what had taken place before we can come to these words themselves.

We have this record, and it is spoken of in verse 8, And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shonam, where there was a great woman.

Now in the subject this morning, it was to do with a widow woman. And in the subject this evening, it is to do with a woman who very evidently was a person of some distinction, a person who would have been a rich woman, and in a position of considerable responsibility in her life.

[4 : 32] So how different then is that that we were seeking to speak of this morning, the widow woman, a poor woman, and now this evening, a woman whom God had very evidently blessed in the things of this life.

But there was one great blessing which had been withheld from her. We must ever remember, when we read the word of God, especially in the Old Testament, that ever since, or as God gave the promise to Eve and to Adam, when he declared this, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

And from that day on, women, and I feel especially godly women, were very concerned that they might be blessed with a son.

And there was this continual hope throughout the generations that as they knew that the promise had been given concerning the Messiah.

Now thinking then of this, a godly woman, it's very evident that she was. She had been made such.

[6 : 16] And the evidence of this was to be seen in her very life. And how we have read, again in verse 9, She said unto her husband, Behold, now I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

She could not have perceived this only as she had been given understanding. And I'm sure that with this understanding, she was given a longing desire to help God's servant, to do all that she could for his benefit.

And so in speaking to her husband, there was this that was said, Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, and 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. Now I want just to notice this. The Lord was in this.

This kindness that was shown to Elisha. The Lord was in this. The Lord intended that this dear woman should be blessed with a son.

[7 : 57] And therefore, the Lord brought it to pass. And how often it is that the Lord, in bringing to pass his purposes, will bring people together.

Have we known something of this in our life? The Lord brings people together. And when the Lord has a sovereign purpose to fulfill, he will bring people together.

And he will bring people in his own sovereign way and manner to live and to be where they are to be.

and that for a divine purpose of grace and to fulfill his will. I believe I mentioned this on the past Wednesday evening, but I just mention it again.

You see, the Lord brings people to live where they are to live. The Lord brings people to worship where they are to worship.

[9 : 09] His sovereignty is to be seen in this. His guiding mercy. And he will have people be where he intends them to be.

And when this is brought to pass, there is a purpose in it. Have we known something of this in our life? I think of what the apostle Paul had to say as he was found in Athens and saw the inscription to the unknown God.

And he could say this to the Athenians, whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. And among other things, he said this, the bounds of our habitation of things.

And that is how living souls desire it to be. They feel their great need of being led by the Lord.

Have you had evidence of this in your life? Great mercy if we have. And then you see the Lord honoured her kindness.

[10 : 26] It is, I feel, indeed worthy of notice that when the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon this earth, there was a little band of godly women who ministered to him.

And here we have a godly woman who is seeking to help God's servant to do all she could for him. Now, just once more then, there was all that was bound up in this.

And it was to fulfil the will of God. And I just add this thought. Dear friends, we shall never lose anything by seeking to do all we can for one another and for the Lord's dear people.

We shall never lose anything. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. Now, the Lord then brought blessing out of this because it was the Lord's will that after all that had taken place in this woman's life that she was going to have a son.

Now, how did this come to pass? I just mention it because it is bound up with the subject. And so, we've read together and it fell on a day that he came there and said to Gehazi his servant, call this Shunammite.

[12 : 22] And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said to Gehazi his servant, call this Shunammite.

And when he had called her, she stood before him 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.

It is very evident that she had no desire for great things to be granted to her in her life.

She had no wish to be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the host. Now she could say this, can we say this from our heart this evening?

[13 : 27] I dwell among mine own people. Has the Lord given your people to dwell among? Has the Lord made room for you in the land?

We just think of what took place in the life of Isaac when there was strife among the herdmen.

There had been strife in the days of Abraham. There was strife in the days of Isaac. And there's been strife ever since amongst men.

And that because of sin. But do you remember that the time came in Isaac's life when another well was dead.

There had been wells that had been dug before. And they had been named names such as hatred and other names.

[14 : 33] And yet you see the day came the time came with Isaac when he could name that well Rehoboth.

And what does it mean? Because the Lord hath made room for us. Well have we known something of this in our life?

Has the Lord made room for us? What a wondrous thing it is when the Lord does do this for his people. When they are brought together in Christ as we have been seeking to speak of recently when one stick is joined to another stick and they become one in the Lord's hand and when they feel this to be so and when they have the witness of the spirit in their heart that the Lord has made room for them and when they are brought into union with the Lord's dear people can you say tonight with Ruth thy people shall be my people and thy God my God have you felt this in your heart let me just remind you of another word is recorded in the first epistle of

John and it's this we know do we know we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren now that is the work of the spirit do we know what it is to love the brethren do we know what it is to feel to be the least that is a good place to be found it is the place of safety it is the place in which we shall know something of Mary's portion she sat at Jesus feet and heard his words well only the Lord can do this and only the Lord can maintain this and now the Lord was going to bless her and again then we read and he said call her but before this this is recorded 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 call her and when he had called her she stood in the door now to my own heart this is a very sacred declaration and he and when he had called her she stood in the door oh that the Lord might call one and another this evening as you are found here that you might be feeling me brought to stand before God and that we might be favored to hear the Lord's voice speaking to us even this evening oh if the Lord has brought any of you here with a burdened heart and exercise in your soul and you have this within you I seek and hope to find a portion for my soul and now the promise then was given well has the

[18 : 21] Lord given your promise the Lord may take one or another back in their life this evening to some particular time he may take you back over the years to a time of this special or particular exercise as before the Lord now then the promise was given and he said about this season according to the time of life thou shalt embrace a son and she said nay my Lord thou man of God do not lie unto thine hand may this thing was so great it was a great thing to her why the very thought that she was going to be favoured with a son and one would look beyond this we would look at it this evening in a natural sense to those of you that have been blessed with children the

Lord knows all that has concerned you in it and I feel sure of this there are those here that if they should speak about a child or children they would have things to tell out they would have the exercise of their soul concerning the birth of a child and that that went before and after friends the Lord has often blessed the birth of children he has used it as a means of grace as a means of blessing some of us can testify to this we can look back and thank God for what he was pleased to do for us when one or another of our children were born she couldn't take this in it was so great and therefore she said nay my

Lord thou man of God do not lie unto thine handmaid but friends this is the point we would come to the Lord had spoken the Lord had spoken and therefore it must be fulfilled whatever might be upon any of your hearts tonight the Lord help me to tell you this once more has the Lord spoken to you are you carrying a burden are you carrying his word have you a word in your heart that you are carrying that you are praying over that you are waiting for the Lord to fulfill again this might go back over many years it may be in more recent times but the great point surely is this has the Lord spoken I think of the hymn that speaks like this what

Christ has said must be fulfilled on this firm rock believers build his word shall stand his truth prevail and not one jot or tittle fail so then she was given her son and the woman conceived and bear a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her according to the time of life well when the Lord does favour his people in this and they do carry an exercise before him and they may be given a name it's not perhaps often the case but in some instances the Lord has given to a mother or father or perhaps both but the Lord sometimes gives parents a name for a child before that child is born

I know I've mentioned this before but I think of one's late dear friends Mr.

[22 : 48] and Mrs. Beavis at Swanwick Shore and the Lord gave them a son and they gave him a name they gave them the Lord gave them a name for that child and his name was to be John and how often it is when the Lord favours people in perhaps a particular way concern divine purpose in it and this John grew up and at the age of nine he commenced to go to the prayer meetings he commenced to go to the services in the week as well as on the Lord's day nine years old but you see the Lord was in it and I believe he was when he was at the age of 19 it doesn't really matter but the

Lord took him home to heaven and to the and in that sense as men view it the Lord took that young man home in what men speak of as an accident it was to do his death was brought about as the Lord brought it to pass in his life and it was to do with a motorcycle as I remember it you see there was something in this and the parents lived to see it and they knew that when their son was taken the Lord had taken him you see sometimes the Lord does take dear young people in early life what a mercy and what a favour it is when there's the witness that the

Lord has prepared them I think of my own brother who was taken at the age of ninety and yet I believe indeed I feel that it is true to say because my own dear father had this word put on his gravestone it is well and I know that he would never have had it put there if he hadn't felt it in his heart this may be a word for someone here tonight in some particular way the Lord alone knowing what the future holds now we come then to the subject itself and what is the subject the subject is this there was to be the trial of faith it was so in the subject this morning the widow's son died and the dear woman said hast thou come to call my sin to remembrance in slaying my son and yet you see the

Lord was in this that son was to live there's going to be life and so here this boy died and he said unto his father my head my head and he said to a lad carry him to his mother and when he had taken him and brought him to his mother he sat on her knees till noon and then died that wasn't the end of it that wasn't the end of it and if any of you here tonight are under some particular trial a time of solemn testing a time when it seems perhaps that what the Lord has spoken to you has come to nothing why the word that came to me this morning was this but there was neither voice nor hearing there was nothing but death before we come to that particular part of the subject we must seek to bring this before you what did she do when her son died she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of

God and shut the door upon him and went out oh what must have been her feeling when she took this boy up but where did she lay him she laid him on the bed of the man of God it's very evident that she had hope in her heart she certainly had faith in her heart because we have the record of this and we would just notice and she called unto her husband and said send me I pray thee one of the young men and one of the asses that I may run to the man of God and come again and he said wherefore wilt thou go to him today it is neither new moon nor sabbath and she said it shall be well now this is the precious language of faith this child was dead but she could say before her

[28 : 45] God it shall be well has the Lord favoured any of us to be able to say this even as perhaps there are things in our life as we view them today there is neither voice nor hearing because to my own heart that speaks like this but there was neither voice nor hearing and I feel compelled to look at it like this here is a son that was dead but there was neither voice nor hearing and one thinks of it like this as we think of souls that are dead they do not speak about the things of God or the ways of God there is no hearing there is no attention they take no notice of what is said to them

I'm speaking now after the manner of men why how many parents have sought to warn their children to speak to their children and to tell them that that they feel they must tell them concerning their souls and the way that they live and yet it may well be that they take no notice they will not listen and that is something that is very hard to bear and yet at the same time we have to say this who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious we do not know what the Lord may do because the sinner sleeping in his grave shall at my voice awake and when I once begin to save that work

I'll ne'er forsake you may have those upon your heart tonight and as you view them and as you understand them you have to say this concerning them Lord they're dead there's no life in them but there was neither voice nor hearing and yet if we think of this in connection with our own life we shall look back to a time when we said this the substance of it we will not have this man to reign over us and dear children and dear young people as you are here tonight I feel I must say this to you that if you speak like that to your parents then you are speaking like that as before God because God has said children obey your parents in the

Lord for this is right honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth but there was neither voice nor hearing but we must seek to speak of what had gone before to Mount Carmel and it came to pass when the man of God saw her afar off that he said to Gehazi his servant behold yonder is that shunamite run now I pray thee to meet her and say unto her now I pause here oh that the Holy Spirit might make every one of us to listen to the word of God this evening to see how we can answer this as before almighty

God run run now I pray thee to meet her and say unto her is it well with thee now this is the first thing this is the vital thing this is the most vital thing that concern us here tonight concerning our never dying souls could we say as before God this evening that it is well have we hope concerning our end and eternity oh that the Lord might speak these words of holy writ into each of our hearts that you might go home with this is it well with thee when we come to die we shall certainly need a real religion dear friends nothing but a real religion is going to stand in the storms of life and in the storm of death how will you answer then this question tonight personally is it well with thee have you humble hope that it is well and then the question was further put to her is it well with thy husband for the

[34 : 37] Lord alone knows how this may affect our hearts is it well with thy husband have you evidence in your heart this evening that it is well with your husband and if you feel that it is not well then are you concerned about him are you praying for him and then this question also had to be put is it well with the child is it well with the child oh the Lord knows how any of us are going to feel about this question is it well with the child what questions these are is it well with thee is it well with thy husband is it well with the child and she answered now this was the answer of faith she very evidently had as it were this sacred persuasion within that it was well and that it would be well and she could say it is well and yet her child was dead and he was laid upon the prophet's bed now the

Lord helping me then just to bring this before you what happened what was needed to bring this to pass but there was neither voice nor hearing now this may be a description of a son or daughter or children or others to our souls this evening but there was neither voice nor hearing now we have before us the way in which the Lord granted life to this child and it's just the same as it was in our meditation this morning what did Elisha do with this boy and when Elisha was come into the house behold the child was dead and laid upon his bed what did he do what can we do as help is given and he went up and lay upon the child but first of all we read this he went in therefore and shut the door upon them twain he didn't allow the child's mother to go in not as

I understand it he went in therefore and shut the door upon them twain and prayed unto the Lord and he went up and lay upon the child and put his mouth upon his mouth and his eyes upon his eyes and laid his hands upon his hands and he stretched himself upon the child and the flesh of the child waxed warm friends if the Lord gives to us such exercise as this we shall know something of it to my own heart there's so much in this walk to walk to walk to and to walk to and our hearts have been up unto the

Lord for this these souls or soul that the Lord has laid upon us I was only speaking yesterday to a friend who who was speaking of his mother and this godly mother kept writing to this son and the day came the day came when she wrote to him in her feelings for the last time and what a letter it was she said something like this in her letter my boy

I can pray for you no more you see that was as it were in her feelings I can pray for you no more to prayer. And friends, I feel if one might put it like this, it was more than prayer. It was travail. And I'm sure of this, that when the Lord does give such travail and such exercise for a soul or souls, there's hope for us.

[41 : 55] There's hope. Amen. May we be helped to conclude our service this evening by singing hymn number 412.

What cheering words are these? Their sweetness who can tell? In time and two eternal days, tis with the righteous well. Hymn number 412.

pawn Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[45 : 36] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.