

## 2 Kings 4:8-37

Sunday 5/10/2009

I'm not much of a special day guy. I pretty much just hold the course throughout the year. I don't believe in... I know Easter is something we always celebrate, but you know me, I believe that setting one day aside out of the year to celebrate Christ's resurrection is a mockery of celebrating it every day that He resurrected. But that's the mindset of Christianity.

But Mother's Day, I thought about it this week. In fact, I was looking at something else in my Bible and I came across some notes that I had written down out of a story in the Bible many, many, many years ago. And I thought, you know, that would be very fitting for the mothers that are here today and the moms that are here today. It's certainly more appropriate than what we were planning on doing today, and that is to tear the lungs out of the Calvinists, but we'll do that next week. We'll call a ceasefire today and talk about this.

I thought I'd give you this outline I had today. I don't even remember where I got it. There are so many things that as I was studying something else in the Bible, God would show me this and I would write down an outline very quickly and put it in my Bible and then forget about it. Then God would resurrect it when I needed it and show me where it's at. But in light of this special day, I want to lay this out for all of you moms here today.

Our church is unique in one aspect, and that's why I think we need to do especially this. I told somebody this morning, we're going to whack the mothers today on Mother's Day, and then when Father's Day comes around, we'll kind of let loose our steam and just move on and we won't have to beat up the father. But our church is unique in the aspect that we have so many young mothers, and we have so many of you young ladies and your husbands who are really trying to do what you need to do. Even though to me, of all of the days that we probably should recognize, I would think that Mother's Day is probably at the top of the list. I think that if I can help you today be a better mother for those of you who are trying to do that, or even some of you today who maybe aren't married yet or you're married but you don't have any children, that someday you will. Maybe you can put this outline in your Bible and it'll be there for you when you need it. So I want to talk about that.

### I. The Importance of Role Models

Role models in the Bible are very important. I think one of the tragedies that we have today is the fact that there are role models that we have in the world. Talk about baseball players and all of the different areas that people form role models. Most of us grew up having role models in our lives. My role model growing up was a young man that probably most of you never heard of. He was a young man by the name of Audie Murphy. I read his story as a young man, how that when he was 16 years old, he's from Texas, he enlisted in the Army. He tried to go into the paratroopers and they wouldn't take him. He tried to go into the Marine Corps and they wouldn't take him. The Navy wouldn't take him. Finally, he wound up in the Army. He was a little scrawny kid. In fact, if you see pictures of him, he just looked like he was about 15 years old, just a little bit of a guy. But the thing I always liked about him and the role model that he set for my life, he set a

great principle. It's a principle that's in the Bible, and the principle of his life was, "It's never the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog." Audie Murphy, that little 16-year-old guy, got through battlefield promotions, got all the way up to First Lieutenant, and won every decoration that his country could give him, including the Medal of Honor. Audie Murphy was called, has been hailed, the most decorated soldier of World War II.

I grew up in a different era than most of you. Some of you older gentlemen, we grew up in the same era. But for most of you young guys, I grew up in a different era than you. And back then there were still what I would consider some good role models, good role models that we could pattern our life after. He was a young man that I, in my life, I studied a lot of things I could study about and learned a lot from his life. Role models are important. But the role models that are most important are the role models in the Bible.

When you get married, a husband and wife, there's a role that the wife has to play in the Bible. There's a role the husband has to play in the Bible. I think the reason why marriage has failed today and relationships disintegrate is simply because of the fact that people try to have a marriage without having the right role. As a husband, there are some absolute things you have to have in your life to be the role model, to make the role of the husband work. For a wife, it's the same thing. There are things that a wife has to do to make the marriage aspect of it work. If neither one of them do it, then you've got a disaster. If one of them will do it, it usually winds up being problematic and it may be many times a disaster too.

But it doesn't end there. Once you get married and you fulfill that role, her, the role of the wife, and you, the role of the husband, then when those little bambinos come along down the line, you get another whole role you've got to play into. Now you not only have the role of a husband, but now you've got to learn in the Bible what the role of a father is. The mother not only has to have the role of the wife, but now she has to understand the great aspect that she plays as the role of the mother. Mothers in the Bible play a very important part, as they do in life. The Bible obviously has some great lessons about that.

Years and years and years ago, I was just a young guy when I heard somebody say this. It was one of those old Philadelphian preachers that really came out of the old days. He said, "There's probably more wayward children of life in heaven because of praying mothers than any other reason." I thought about that over the years. I think there probably was a time that that is true. I think that there were many, many, many situations down through life where a mother prayed her son or her wayward daughter into heaven. I really believe that. I believe I think you see the examples of that in the Bible. But we've come so far from that today. I'm not really sure that's true anymore today. I don't know if it's not true today that there are as many moms sending their kids to hell as they do trying to send them to heaven. I'll tell you, I have never seen a time when parents have made just about every mistake that they could ever hope to make. It's a burden that's always on my heart when I have to deal with them and deal with them with their children. But certainly in the Bible, mothers have a very crucial role in our lives. And I want to talk about that today.

## II. Beyond Proverbs 31: Biblical Examples of Motherhood

Normally on Mother's Day, this is how most pastors work. This is how we work in the world of ministry. Your people don't have a very good attention span. So normally your standard Mother's Day message is Proverbs chapter 31. You go in there to the virtuous woman, and that's a great passage. I'm not saying it's not a great passage. So they give you the standard Mother's Day message. Most pastors have standard messages for everything that they do. Mother's Day only comes once a year, and they know that by the time next year comes around, they can preach the same message because you won't remember what they preached last year. So Proverbs 31 is the standard message that most pastors preach, and how her children rise up and call her a blessing and all those things.

But I'd rather take you to a story in the Old Testament and show you some incredible things about the role of a mother. I want to talk to you about the two components, the two character qualities that a mother needs to have in her life. If she has these things, then she brings something special into the family. There are some great examples in the Bible and many role models in the Bible, like I said, of mothers. Many great examples. I believe that each one is unique unto itself, and it's very important that you get them all. I think they all paint a composite picture.

In the early part of Samuel, probably 1 Samuel chapter 2, you have the story about Hannah. Hannah didn't have a boy and she wanted to have a boy. So in time she has Samuel. I think that everything about her life is an incredible story to show us, or show mothers, exactly all of the things that they need to have in their life. But I believe each one brings to the table a specific aspect. I think the greatest line, which probably gives you as a mother more insight and more understanding and everything about a perspective of your child, is summed up in the whole story in one verse. It's where this verse says this, talking about her son: "The loan, which is lent to the Lord." Now if you're a mother here this morning and you don't understand what that statement means, I'm telling you that is one of the greatest statements about the children that God gives you that puts them into perspective for you. "The loan, which is lent to the Lord." Samuel and Hannah are a tremendous study.

Then you have the woman in Matthew chapter 15. Here's a woman whose daughter is grievously vexed with the devil. She's got a real problem. In that particular story as you read it, you find out another great quality of a mother: her consistency of prayer and patience and long-suffering in what she's going through. It's an incredible story.

How could we forget young Timothy, the man that Paul takes in and really mentors to be his replacement? The man in the Bible who stands for you and for me, who inspired to be in the ministry as the model pastor. Can anyone miss the influence that the two women had in his life? In Acts chapter 16, I've always thought this was very interesting, the way that the Bible introduces his mother, Timothy's mother, and his father. It's almost a picture of the fact that Timothy's mother was a saved woman, but his father probably was not. You don't know that for sure, but the way that it states it certainly leads you to that conclusion. And yet in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 5, we find that his grandmother was also on board with the mother. In fact, the Bible says there when Paul's writing to Timothy, he makes mention of the impact, the influence, not only his mother, but his grandmother, but he never mentions his father. The key that you

bring from Timothy's mother and his grandmother is the concept of unfeigned faith of a mother. It's incredible, many examples.

But the one I want to look at today, I think as far as where we're at today, is probably the best example. It takes you inside a mother's character and shows us what makes a mother a good biblical mother. It shows you the foundations in her life that everything is built on, including her children. Our story today is going to be found in 2 Kings chapter 4. It's quite a lengthy passage, verses 1 through 37. I'm going to read that whole passage for you, but I think it really will help you put some things into perspective and take your way today with a real handle and better help for you. That's really my goal today.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, today we thank You for in our own church and for the visitors that we have here today. They're a great host of moms who I know in my own heart because I work with them every day and I know them and I know their character and I know the kind of people they are. Lord, for the most part, they want to do what's right. They want to build other things into their family that they need to. Lord, it's stories like this. It's moments like this. It's times like this when somebody imparts a great story with great principles in their lives that they can become even better than they already are. Lord, we ask You to take this time today, Holy Spirit of God, work in each mother's heart today, as in the fathers and as in everybody. Lord, we know that the Spirit of God is not just limited to mothers today. That the Spirit of God will deal in anybody. Lord, there may be somebody here today that is contemplating in their own heart what it means to be saved. There may be somebody here today, Lord, that does not have that assurance in their life that they could stand up today and say, "I know for sure if I die, I go to heaven." Lord, through Your Holy Spirit, I pray that You'll even touch the lives of those folks. And that Lord will give You this day. And we'll look, Lord, at this passage and we'll see it from God's standpoint. And we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

### III. The Shunammite Woman: A Model of Faith

Now it starts, I'm going to begin reading here. I said verse 1, but I'm going to save us a little time here. I'm going to start reading in verse 8.

*2 Kings 4:8-37*

*8 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.*

*9 And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.*

*10 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.*

*11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.*

12 *And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.*

13 *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.*

14 *And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.*

15 *And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.*

16 *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 handmaid.*

17 *And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.*

18 *And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.*

19 *And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.*

20 *And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.*

21 *And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.*

22 *Then 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.*

23 *And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well.*

24 *Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee.*

25 *So she went and came unto the man of God 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 Shunammite:*

26 *Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well.*

27 *And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away.*

28 *And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?*

*29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.*

*30 And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.*

*31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.*

*32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.*

*33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD.*

*34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.*

*35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.*

*36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.*

*37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.*

#### IV. The Gospel in 2 Kings 4: Winning Souls to Christ

That's probably one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. Long before I ever saw all of the aspects of a godly mother in this passage, this passage is one of the standards in the Bible of how do you win people to Christ. I don't know if you picked it up as I was coming through there or not. This boy, he dies, and this is not our message, I don't want you to miss this. This is a two-for-one sale today. The boy dies. We know that in the Bible, unsaved people are likened to dead people. They're dead in the trespasses of sin. She wants this boy to become alive again. So she sends for the man of God. The man of God comes, and when the man of God comes, he does three things. There are strange things in the Bible when you consider it.

The first thing that he does, he lays, he stretches himself on that dead child, and he puts his mouth to his mouth. He puts his eyes to his eyes, and his hands to his hands. Then the Bible says when he does that, the child becomes alive. That is one of the greatest pictures in the Bible of how you and I are to win people to Christ. Because those three things that he does really show us, basically, why we don't win people to Christ and what we fail in doing.

When you look at this, the Bible says that he put his mouth to his mouth. For you to really be effective in winning people to Christ, mouth to mouth, you need to understand why people, unsaved people, say the things they say. We as God's people sometimes are so judgmental toward

unsaved people, and we have a message for them, but we don't want to hear what they say. We don't want to hear, we don't want to talk to them. We don't want to take the time to listen to them and to understand why unsaved people say the things that they say.

The second aspect of this is eyes to eyes. Another thing we fail in is the fact of understanding to take the time to understand why unsaved people see the things in this life the way they see it. We think they should see it like we see it, because we're Christians. Part of the problem we have is why we don't win people to Christ, because we're not willing to take the time, not only to understand why unsaved people say the things that they say, but also take the time to understand why unsaved people see things the way they do.

And then hands to hands. What a great picture that is of taking the time to understand why unsaved people do the things that they do. There lies one of the greatest examples of that. I say that because going back to what we talked about with reaching, this church has to be about reaching people. This church has to be about us reaching out to lost people. This church has to be about us being effective in winning people to Christ. The only way we're going to do that is for you and I to put those things into place in our lives. Understand why unsaved people say the things that they do. Understand why unsaved people see things the way they see it. And then understand why they do the things that they do and accept them within that realm, become their friend and in time win them to Christ.

Did you notice something else about this story? When this boy is dead and she sends for Elisha, did you notice Elisha doesn't go the first time? Elisha sends Gehazi back there and takes his staff and goes there and he sends Gehazi over there to take care of the boy. You know that Gehazi can't bring that boy back to life? You ever notice that he comes back and says, "I couldn't do it," and Elisha himself has to go? You know what the great story is of that? You and I can't send somebody else to do what God has called us to do. You'll have an opportunity coming up in a couple of weeks when we start our athletic program. You gals, you want somebody to minister to, you want to win some unsaved people to the Lord, you want to have an impact in their life, there will be plenty of unsaved people coming on those teams that you can practice that thing right there. This church needs to pull together in these events that we try to do and reach out and everybody get involved in one form or the other.

Now that's not my message today, but I would have felt criminal giving you what else I have without giving you that little bit right there. In fact, I'm thinking about it, I have to forget what I have now and just go back to tearing your lungs out on this one. It's a great story and it's a picture of how we win people to Christ as a church, but inspirationally it's a picture of what a mother does for her family. It's a picture, and this story right here is a picture of what a mother brings into her family or should.

## V. The Shunammite Woman: A Model of Motherhood

In Proverbs chapter 31, it talks about a lot of great things that a mother does. Many times we read those and we say, "I wonder what that means when it says that she makes clothes for her children. Does that mean I've got to be a seamstress before I'm really godly? What does it mean

when it says that she holds a spindle and a staff in her hands or she works with her hands or she provides food for her children in the time of winter?" I mean, what does all that really mean? Obviously it can't be just a literal thing, and it's not. Those things are explained in this passage that we're going to look at today, and this is why I want to focus on it, because this shows you what a mother brings into her family. This shows you the role biblically of what a mother should be and the things that she brings into the family.

Now the reason I like this story and I want to use it today is because I think better than any other story in the Bible, it shows the two working components that it takes to be a godly mother.

- 1.) She is called a great woman.
- 2.) She is not named.

## VI. Outward Qualities of a Godly Mother

Now in 2 Kings chapter 4, I want to kind of reverse the process. I want to look at the outward first. We're going to move through these because I want you to have plenty of time to eat with your mom today and spend the time with her, and so we'll move through these quickly. But in 2 Kings chapter 4, let's look at the outward things first. Let me preface what I'm about to say by this, moms. The number one thing when we come down through here, I want to keep this in the back of the mind. The number one thing that this woman did was she provided some things for her house, and everything we're about to look at, both outward and inward, she is providing something for her house. Let's look at what she provided, and then we're going to keep these in the back of our mind.

The first thing that she provided in her house was a place of comfort. The next thing she provided in her house was a place of rest. The next thing that she brought into this house was a place of stability. The thing that she brought into this house was a place of refuge from the things that were in the world. This is what she, as a mother, wants your children to have in their lives, and ladies, this is what you as a mother, a godly mother, following the principles that we're going to lay out today, will bring into your family.

Now let's look at the outward first, and I think this is why I want to do the outward first.

- 1.) She gives bread to strangers.
- 2.) She has perception.
- 3.) She is generous.
- 4.) She has control over emotions.
- 5.) She is a thankful woman.

## VII. Inward Qualities of a Godly Mother

Now, those are the outward qualities. Those are the characteristics of a godly mother who the Bible says is a great woman. Now, let's quickly see what produced this character. I want to show you five things that were inward here now that produced what we just saw that was outward. She provided five things for the man of God. Through her perception and her discernment, it showed her how important these five things were. And it's true of your family too. I want you to see this. These five things were in her, this is really important, these five things were in her life with a man of God who was a type of Christ before she ever had a child. You know what she did? She did what each mother has the ability to do here today. She set a moral compass in her child's life. She set her child through a moral compass that would always bear true to what really needed to be. That's what a mother does. A mother has, in most cases, I know moms work today and it's not like it maybe used to be, but in most cases it still is. That is that the mother in the early years has more of an impact on that child's life and you have the ability to put a moral compass in that child's life. If the child gets older and maybe you find yourself in a scenario where you didn't do it, you can still put it in. It's not always as easy, but you can still do it. You just know how to do it right. I've told you this before. There's a set of principles for every circumstance you find yourself in out there to be able to fix the thing. Setting a moral compass in your child's life.

Now in verse 9 and 10, she provides five things for the man of God. Her perception showed these five things brought a stability to her home. It's the key because your home should not be a place of chaos. Your home should not be a place of confusion. Your home should not be a place where your children can't wait to get out from under whatever you provide for them. Your home should not be a place of anger. Your home should not be a place of strife. It should be a place of refuge for a kid. It should be the place that your child never wants to leave. It should be a place that you can come back to anytime you want to, need to. It should be a place that they feel the security and all the stability that they should have. It's a place, like I said, they never want to leave. It's an anchor in their lives that they always build on. It's their security. It's their foundation. It's the foundational base of everything that's their stability. And it starts long before they were born. It's the moral compass that you set them on.

Here's the first thing. The first thing is in verse 10. Now these are very important. Now you're going to understand why I gave the outward first.

- > 1.) A little chamber.
- > 2.) A bed.
- > 3.) A table.
- > 4.) A stool.
- > 5.) A candlestick.