

The Shunammite woman

Imagine living "your best life" right now. You have the career you have always wanted, the husband, your community loves you, and you feel true peace and contentment every single day. Your life is without much need, and even if you do need, you would rather give to someone else. You're just that kind of woman (Proverbs 31 woman's long lost sister?!) Now imagine getting a beautiful gift, one in which you did not ask for. This gift is a blessing, but ends up pushing the boundaries of your faith. Enter in the Shunammite woman, her story is one not often told, but her story is one that teaches us about expecting the unexpected. A woman with everything, is given something she herself probably never thought she would receive, a son.

We know that this woman is not the first to be childless, Sarai, Hannah, and countless others prayed for a child, hoping to one day receive a blessing. The Shunammite woman however is quite different, as there is no mention of her praying or asking for anything. She was just a woman who decided to prepare a place for the prophet Elisha without expecting anything in return. I do not know about you, but I feel I am always without something, and asking because I see a need that should be fulfilled. The Shunammite woman's character reminds me that it is very possible to live knowing you have enough.

2 Kings 4:8, .."A prominent woman who lived there persuaded him to eat some food. So whenever he passed by he stopped there to eat." (CSB)

The Shunammite woman story is just another story mentioned in 2 Kings 4, it is only a few verses long and can easily be skipped over. Compared to the other women in the Bible, like Esther, Ruth, Sarai, Rahab, she has the smallest of impact and probably no lineage to Christ. However her story, her character was impactful enough that Elisha interacted with this woman in such a way that it changed her life, and possibly her faith. The most soul-changing lessons we learn from the Bible are those that remind us to expect the unexpected in our faith walk. To live life knowing that our God is bigger than our circumstance, our immediate feeling, and an apparent dead end. The Shunammite woman was written for us to read over and over again about a woman whose compassionate character leads to unexpected miracles in her life. Let's recap three lessons we can learn from the Shunammite woman.

Lesson 1 :

Compassion/Kindness

We know from this story that this is a wealthy women, who does not need to share her prominence with anyone. Yet she makes an extra room in her house for Elisha. She was a women who gave, and thought of the comforts of others, before she thought of herself. Colossians 3:12 remind us "...as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (NIV).

Lesson 2: She lived a

content life

We live in a materialistic world, and i am sure the Shunumite woman had the same temptations to acquire more as we do today. The material things may be different, but the mentality is the same. A content life is not one of depravity, rather it is the peace of knowing that we have all we need in a given day to live and survive.

Lesson 3: Relentless...She

put her faith in action

If anyone should lose hope, it would be this women. Her only son, a gift from God dies in her lap. It would be easy to turn to bitterness, instead we see her go immediately to the prophet Elisha, immediately to a holy mindset, convinced that her story would not end in such a way. When was the last time you chose relentlessness, rather than bitterness? For me personally, and maybe for you too, yielding to bitterness seems to be way easier then tenacious faith. Something important to note in this story, is the fact that when her son passes, this women does not tell her husband, neighbor or friends. She goes immediately to what she views as her help.

The book of Job taught us a valuable lesson, when difficulty arises, well meaning friends can only complicate our feelings, and add to our bitterness towards God. By going straight to God's anointed, the Shunammite women seeks help from a man with a direct connection to God, not someone who would distract or confuse her.

" So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel ." 2 kings 4:25 NIV

As women of faith, the Shunammite women reminds us how far our faith can carry us when difficulty arises. We do not get any detail about the mindset of this women, and she does not confide in anyone about her feelings. All we know is that she acted quickly, and was determined for life of peace to be restored. Hebrews 11:1, reminds us "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (NIV)." It is very difficult to look far enough into our futures, in the midst of sufferings, and know that peace will be restored. For me personally, i usually can not see past my nose when in a frustrating situation. But, the cross is a reminder that we do not have to live in a state of constant stress, panic, and bitterness. We have been given grace, and an overflow of peace that is available for all who want to use it.