

THE NECESSITY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Text: 2 Kings 4:1-7

In this bazaar story about a widow and her sons, there is a great and powerful spiritual truth that will help us if we take hold of it. The woman is between two generations. Her husband was the son of a prophet, and he left a testimony of fearing the LORD, but he is now dead and gone. She has two sons coming on (the next generation) but she owes a debt that she can't pay, and the creditor is coming to take her two sons into slavery because of it. If he takes her two sons away, she may very well starve to death and die. So, without the next generation being liberated, she's looking at her decline and possibly, her death.

This story reminds me of the church. From the very beginning and down through its history, God has raised up faithful and powerful servants that have been mighty in their generations. We have the record of the apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors in the making in the book of Acts. We know about the preachers of the two great awakenings both in the late 1600's and again in the 1800's that God used to shake this country to its foundation. Men like Jonathon Edwards, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Charles Finney, D. L. Moody, Mordecai Hamm, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham to name a few. All these men are the same as the widow's husband in the story...they are dead and gone. They had testimonies of fearing the LORD, they served their generations, but they are gone.

The woman is looking at the next generation (her two sons) and seeing that unless a miracle occurs, her sons will go into slavery. The church of Jesus Christ today is looking at a generation coming on that is nothing like the one they came from. The generation my parents came from had two parents in the home that were married to each other. Dads worked and Moms took care of the home. Most people attended church, family was important, the church had an influence on our culture and though society was far from perfect, most people believed in decency and a moral standard. In that generation, even unbelievers had some respect for God and the Bible. But we're looking at a generation now that the nuclear family is less common than usual. A generation of no fathers and worn out mothers. An unchurched

generation. They don't know who Adam and Eve were, what John 3:16 says, who Jesus Christ is, or what to expect after this life is over. It's a generation with trust issues because they've experienced abuse, neglect, and abandonment. It's a generation enslaved in sins like drug addiction, alcoholism, pornography addiction, full of anger and wrath, seduced by the occult and witchcraft, all kinds of sexual immorality and perversion, and trying to fill the void with either money or pleasure. Like the widow in the story, the church needs to be moved by desperation. She, with earnestness and fervency, goes to the man of God Elisha for help. She pleads with him that if he doesn't help her, she will watch the creditor take them off to slavery.

The Solution: It's interesting that he began with what she already had, that she didn't put a high value on...a pot of oil. He told her to go and borrow as many vessels as she could get and pour out the oil into the vessels. Her sons brought her as many vessels as they could get their hands on and brought them to her. They shut the door, and she poured out the oil into all the vessels till they were all filled. Then Elisha told her to go and sell the oil, pay off the debt and live off the rest. This act was what liberated her sons from certain slavery. There's an interesting spiritual application in this story. The oil is a type of the Holy Spirit, the vessels are a picture of believers, and the vessels being filled is a picture of believers being filled with the Holy Spirit. Do you know why 8,000 people were saved in the first three chapters of the book of Acts? Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. Do you know why Stephen was so powerful for the cause of Christ? Because he was full of the Holy Spirit and faith. The common denominator in all saints that were used by God to touch a generation was that they were full of the Holy Spirit! Instead of weeping that our spiritual warriors are dead, we need to plead with God to raise up new ones for our generation and present ourselves as living sacrifice.

How do we get vessels filled with oil?

- **The vessels had to be available** – When they went asking for vessels, they could only get vessels that were not being used for something else. When Isaiah was caught up to the throne room of God and saw the Lord upon his throne, the Lord asked "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then Isaiah replied "Here am I; send me". Isaiah was showing God his availability. Would you be available should God want to fill you and send you?

- **The vessels had to be empty** – The prophet said to borrow empty vessels. In other words, they were of no use if they were already full of something else. The main challenge to getting filled is to first get empty. We're full of our plans, dreams, ambitions, pleasures etc. The Holy Spirit can't fill us because we're already full of the things Jesus said in His parable of the sower **Mark 4:18-19** And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. Do you know what the apostles and brethren were doing for 10 days between Christ's ascension and the day of Pentecost? Emptying themselves out in the upper room with prayer and supplication.
- **The vessels were filled in private** – The prophet said when you get the vessels and you're ready to start pouring in the oil...shut the door first! This is important...she had to fill the vessels in the privacy of her home. What this teaches us is that no one gets filled by what they do in public, but by their private life. Jesus said when you enter your prayer closet to pray to your heavenly father, shut the door. When you fast, do that in secret and when you give alms, do it for God to see and no one else. Jesus said your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly. Do you have a private life with Jesus? That's the area of every Christian's life that the enemy will fight the hardest. It's not what's done in the street or on the job or even at church that will cause the Spirit to fill you...it's what you do with Christ when no one can see you. Before God fills anyone, He calls them to Himself alone.
- **The oil only stopped filling because there was not another vessel to receive it** - 2 Kings 4:6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. The same Holy Spirit that filled the apostles, prophets, and the great people of yesteryear is the same Holy Spirit that is looking for another vessel today. The power of God is available today, there's just fewer vessels willing to be available and empty to receive it. We're asking God for an awakening now and He's saying "Bring me another vessel". We need vessels filled with oil...the next generation depends on it.