

Guest Preacher - Mr Scott Macleod

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Preacher: Mr Scott Macleod

[0 : 00] If we can turn together to the passage we read in account of the Shunammite lady returning to her land. I will take us our text, the words of verse 2.

So the woman arose and did according to the word of the man of God. She went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

The woman arose and did according to the word of the man of God. So looking at this lady again, we returned to her this evening.

We looked at her in the morning. We looked at what she gave to Elisha in the provision of the house. We looked at what she had gained by the son that Elisha had promised to her.

And the grief that she experienced when she lost that son. But we know that that son was not lost ultimately. And the son was restored to her through the prayer of the man of God.

[1 : 18] And how we considered that the child was an image of salvation that is gifted to the believer. And how that salvation is kept and sustained as we fall at the feet of Jesus.

And he sustains us by his praying. As he did for the apostle Peter. So looking at the lady again, we looked in the morning at the Christian's perception of who the man of God was.

And this evening we look at the Christian perseverance. And as we do so, we look at this lady and what her actions teach us.

She doesn't actually say anything in the passage. There's no dialogue recorded for us. But she speaks to the king. But we don't know what she said. Which is a bit of a shame.

I would love to know what she had said to the king as she returned to her land. But we don't know. But like I said, we look at her actions.

[2 : 32] And it gives us an important evidence of a renewed character in this lady. And we can make it comparable to that of the Christian.

Because we can see that a lot has changed for this lady. Since we first met her in the morning. And she met with a man of God and understood who he was.

A lady who seemed to be proud of her wealth. She seemed to be comfortable in it. And she was confident in the company of people that she dwelt with.

She said she was happy with the people that she dwelt with. And so she was not conditional of any aid from anyone else.

Because we see that when she refused the favor of the king. When Elisha requested that he would seek to ask some favor to the king on her behalf.

[3 : 36] She refused it. It's almost as if she didn't need it. But now in contrast. She is a person who is ready to obey the word of the Lord.

Forsaking her own wealth. That maybe she relied on so much. And actually I suppose quite humbly. She is now brought to plead before the very king.

That she had once refused aid from. Or any favor of. And I wonder if many of us listening here. Can see the change that has happened in our life as we look back.

When we relied upon ourselves and what we possessed. We relied on our wealth. But all that's been changed. As our eyes are opened.

And our ears are opened. By the word of God speaking to us. It's a great change.

[4 : 46] As we come to rely on Christ. And his word. And his spirit. And you can say for sure that I am not what I was.

And I hope you can say that the Lord has proved himself to be faithful to you. Even though you may be one who has experienced great hardships.

And challenges. Whether it be outwardly or inwardly. Physically or spiritually. And maybe having an obedience to God's word.

At specific moments in your life. Recalls precious memories in your experience. Your obedience to that word.

Even when it didn't seem reasonable for you to obey it. Even when it seemed like obeying this word was illogical. Your obedience to it.

[5 : 52] Has proved itself to be for your good. And it's proved itself to be trustworthy. And it's possible that even you can look back.

And see the rewards of your obedience. Although maybe we are not to expect it in this life. For the rewards of the obedience. Will come for the Christian.

In due time. So there are many challenges. In our experiences. There are times where we have to be obedient. Beyond what we think.

And of course. There shall come the reward. So we look at the challenge. The obedience and the reward. That we see in this lady. As we look at her.

So we'll begin with the challenge. At the beginning of chapter 8. We are told of a serious situation unfolding. For told to this lady.

[6 : 54] Verse 1 says. Now Elisha had said to the woman. Whose son he had restored to life. Arise and depart with your household.

And sojourn wherever you can. For the Lord has called for a famine. So we are met with a great challenge here for this lady. And it is quite plainly saying.

There is going to be hard days ahead. But. There is good instruction here for you. He has instructed her that you must.

Arise and go. And we imagined in the morning. That the giving of the child. Was. As salvation and saving grace.

Gifted to the Christian. And it is not a perfect image. But. It is. The greatest gift.

[7 : 53] That you and I can receive. Like the child that was gifted to her. That seemed impossible. That she would ever get. That seemed beyond her reason.

Salvation. Gifted. To the new believer. Become so precious. And dear. And using that thought of the child.

In real life. They become so precious. And dear to us. In our experiences. In our experiences. But we know that it is not all just cuddles.

And peaceful sleeping. And in fact. It may be very little of the latter. As we come to know. And many may agree with me.

And I'm sure. We can all say. Yes. There are great joys. And there are great difficulties. And in fact.

[8 : 53] It can be very hard. At one stage or another. In bringing up children. And it is. Like.

The Christian's life. While being gifted. With this great gift. Of salvation. Through the works. Of Jesus Christ.

As we hold faithfully. To him. We are filled. With great joy. At the beginning. Of it. Like the newborn child.

It is a great joy. To receive. But it does come. With its difficulties. Whatever test. We may experience.

In our lives. We spoke. In the morning. Of the lady. In losing her son. Was as if she felt. Like she had lost.

[9 : 47] Her salvation. She had lost. Her assurance. But this is just. An example. Of the difficulties. That come to the Christian. In their life. For we face.

Many challenges. There are. Many different angles. That the devil. Will attack us from. And the difficulty.

Can be completely. Personal to you. That sometimes. We dare not. Interpret. How. We feel. As we mentioned. In the morning. As well. We're scared.

To tell others. Like the Shunammite lady. And we hide them away. The problems. That we have. Like she put the child. Into the room. And closed the door. The problem.

Was entirely. Known to her. Not even the husband. Knew of it. But she knew now. With this. With this situation.

[10 : 45] That was presented. Before her. With the famine. She knew. From her experience. That this was a time.

That she had to trust. She had to be faithful. To the word. That was being spoken. To her. She knew. From her experience.

As the child. Had been restored. To her. That she could rely on it. But you know what. It wasn't very comfortable. To hear. And this is often.

A challenge. For the Christian. The word. That he speaks. To us. Does the word of God. Challenge us. Do we have a trust.

In the word of God. Do we listen. To the word of God. Do we ignore. The word of God. When he's trying. To speak to us.

[11:46] When he's trying. To say something. To us. That we don't want. To hear. When we're hearing. Something that. We think. Won't. Be possible. To ever happen. Do we trust.

In the words. That are set before us. And the Christian. Is often. Challenged. In our understanding. Of. Who God is. Who Christ is. We're challenged. In our daily lives. Day to day.

Experiences. Of who we work with. Completely. Different. Lives. That we live. We're challenged. By understanding. His will. For our lives.

And. We admit. That it's so hard. At times. To know. What is right. And know. What is the best thing. To do. But we must.

[12:46] Come back. To the word of God. For guidance. For in our hearts. Of hearts. We know. That this. Is trustworthy. And you look back.

Over your experience. And can you say. Can you say. He's let you down. No. Has he let you down. Has his word.

Let you down. No. This. Is a word. We can trust. And we can rely on. But.

Right. When we're in the middle. Of these hard experiences. It can be tough. To say. That. You know. This may be good for me. I may learn.

From this. But on the flip side. In the midst. In the midst. Of our ease. You know. It may be.

[13:41] Quite hard. To acknowledge. That it's bad for us. To live in ease. As we come. Become complacent. With what we have. And we come to rely on ourselves.

And our wealth. And we do not. Have that reliance. Upon. The word. Of God. That we should be fully trusting. Not implying.

That we shouldn't enjoy. Our ease. But it's a point. Maybe worth. Considering. Has our ease. Made us less. Dependent.

On God. Christ's life. Had very little. Easy times. In it. Christ.

At Gethsemane. Before this. Great. Great. Difficulty. That was set. Before him. A difficulty. That we'll. Never.

[14:38] Truly. Understand. Asked. For that. Cup. To be taken. From him. But not. My will. But yours. Be done.

That. Enormous. Work. That he did. For us. And. It says. In Hebrews. That although. He was a son. He learned. Obedience. Through. What he suffered. Says that. In Hebrews. Five. Verse. Eight. Although. He was a son. He learned.

Obedience. Through. Through. What he suffered. He suffered. He suffered. Greatly. But he learned. To be obedient.

Through it. And while. Difficulties. For us. Are so personal. So similarly. In these hard times.

[15:39] There's just sweetness. To it. These challenging days. The word of God. Can reveal itself. To us.

And we can hardly. Explain. Just. How. He restores us. And helps us. Through these days. And guides us.

As he did the lady. The. But the preciousness. Of that gift. Is beyond. Explanation. The difficulties. Of bringing. Up. The child. But it's also. Got its rewards. And the rewards. That cannot. Be compared. With.

There is. Nothing. Like it. There are. Many. Many. Blessings. In the Christian. Life. Because you know. The Lord. Is in control. And over all.

[16:35] He is authority. Over all things. And works all things. For his good. And he will be with you. Through it. He will give you the guidance.

Through them days. If we are willing. To listen to it. Are we trusting. In this word. Today. Whatever challenges.

Are set before us. Are we ready. To be obedient. To the master's voice. Even though it be contrary. To our own desire. And though the conditions.

That are set before us. When he speaks. Are far from comfortable. Will we. Will you. Will I.

Be obedient. When he speaks. Will you see. In this. So we look now. At the obedience. That we see. In this lady.

[17 : 34] And that obedience. Is willingly seen. If we look at verse two. so the woman arose and did according to the word of the man of god she went with her household and sojourned in the land of the philistines for seven years we don't hear her cry why she doesn't respond as we heard her say in the morning i dwell among my own people i'm happy with what i have we don't detect even a moan of her having to leave behind the wealth and her at home she is not like the rich young ruler who was saddened to part with his possessions she is not like lord's wife turning back to look at what she was going to lose but she arose and did she went acting and trusting in the word that was given to her the night when if you were told that you had to leave your country because there was a famine coming what would you do and how would you respond would you willingly leave behind your home and your wealth and all that you have built up in your life well in reality i suppose it comes down to who's telling you and just to help us understand that supposing you had a postman or a joiner or someone just come to you and say that they had found a vaccination for covid 19 that would mean that is it done you will never get it no one else will ever have it if you take it i don't suppose you'd be too willing to take it if one of your work colleagues said i found it and i've got it and here will i will i try it on you and you're gonna go no no not a chance but if someone else who's at the forefront of viral infections and having previously proved his worth in doing these things approached you with the same claim you'd be far more trusting in that man's work than in the joiner or postman or work colleague or whoever it was and there's a vast difference in the significance of their words even though they may say exactly the same thing to you it all comes down to the man who speaks the voice who speaks it all comes down to who so when elisha comes to this shunammite woman having foretold as we see in the morning that she would bear a child and did and then restoring that child back to life when he came and prayed over him he comes now declaring that you must arise and it is the utmost of significance and i suppose our nation doesn't value the word of god so our nation doesn't listen to it our nation thinks this is a storybook largely and so do not live their lives by its direction and by its guidance but those who have come to trust and have experience of this god and this christ in their life

will say this is trustworthy this is true and so it's a great reminder for the christian when god speaks to listen we are so busy in our lives that we don't spend the time in reading prayer and meditation reading prayer and meditation that's what restores us when we feel like we are in difficult days i heard a story it was a joel beak i think he was recalling an account that he had experienced when a man came to him saying that he felt like he had lost his salvation he doubted his salvation in jesus christ and he felt like he couldn't do anything anymore and joel said that he was going away and he couldn't do anything for the man at the time and he said you know turn to the word of god turn to praying to christ turn to meditating upon what you read and he said he came back and the man was like a different man he had found his assurance again and when i heard that story reading prayer meditation i thought you know it's a good thing to have in our heads when we feel low and me being car orientated from a car background reading prayer meditation is rpm which is a rev counter which will be on your car you'll have the speedo not all cars have it and you'll have a rev counter sitting beside it and that'll tell you when the engine's running and it'll say it's one two three four five six and it'll say it's revolutions per minute rpm and here's the one thought you know if there's no reading there's no prayer and no meditation the engine's not running it's at zero and if the engine's not running it can't do anything it can't do anything for itself it needs to be pushed and we in our Christian lives the car is useless you know without being running and we in our Christian we need to be ready we need to be running the race we need to be walking the walk so we need to be our engines need to be running our souls need to be ready we need to be reading and prayer and meditation and like the engine of the car the more fuel that goes in the more power it can deliver so if we spend our time in reading prayer and meditation the Lord will restore us the Lord will prepare us for the work that we have to do and the Lord will equip us to be able to do it but we often leave listening to the voice of God until last maybe it's because it's going to change my life and maybe it's because it's words we don't want to hear so we blank it out maybe we don't want to do what he tells us to do or go where he tells us to go is today a day that he is saying to you arise the Shunammite lady knew that obeying this order regardless of what it was was for her good she could have doubted she could have complained she could have

even waited but we read that she went she arose and she went faithfully trusting the word that was spoken to may we be as faithful and obedient to our Lord for we acknowledge that he knows best when it doesn't make sense that we learn to trust in Christ because in every aspect he has proved himself to us to be trustworthy did the Shunammite lady know there was a famine due I don't believe so did she try to reason why she would leave all that she had I don't believe so I believe she trusted every word that was spoken to her and can you say that you have trusted in every word that the Lord has spoken to you beyond their understanding and that he would prove it to you as trustworthy because first Peter reminds us as obedient children not conforming yourselves to your former lusts as in your ignorance but he who has called you as holy you also be holy in all your conduct what makes a person holy obedience to God not conforming ourselves to the old self the passions and lusts we are either obedient or disobedient which one are you has this word been spoken to you but we are fearful to arise from where we are from the life that we live from the comforts we have have we been given an escape route from famine and have refused to follow the believer at times will be guilty of not trusting the word of

God in great challenges great days of challenge but the unbeliever who knows about salvation who knows about the works of Christ and has been taught about Christ Christ who provides an escape for them from death but does not arise and go according to his word you have been disobedient and we ask what's stopping you why would you not go with this man why would you not trust in this word can you not give up on everything that you have do you not think that Christ is trustworthy essentially that's what you're saying Christ is not trustworthy to me so I'll not trust in him

I love what I have what is stopping you those who are obedient to the Lord and give up what they know they shall be greatly rewarded so let us look briefly at the reward the Shunammite lady returns to our country in verse 3 after this time of famine it seems that she has endured her time and she is now in a poorly state coming now to cry before that king of who she rejected the favour of we do not know of the difficulties she experienced but we know that the word that she listened to did not fail her she has been brought through this famine and returns at the Lord's appointed time with great coincidence as it seems as Gehazi recalls the account of this

[30 : 05] Shunammite lady and the restoration of her son to the king he's just telling the story and she walks in at the right time and this I believe here in the passage is the Christian's hope that we see though even at days we may not perfectly obey the word we may not perfectly worship our Lord and we may moan and question the times that he speaks to us and sets difficult challenges before us and we experience days of difficulties in my soul we face difficult providences and God may guide me in paths that I don't understand at the end when we come to our end we can say that he has brought me through by his grace undeserving as I am of it through his instruction and the strength that I have gained from his word as he has led me through my life can we last the road can we endure this time will the famine be defeated not of ourselves we must rely on

Christ and his word and trust in Christ and his work as he works salvation in me and he sustains me through my life as he prays for me Christ is my assurance for the future he is my hope for tomorrow but when we look at this passage we see this poor lady coming to the king with nothing but the son she's given up on everything in order to obey the word that was said before her but she held on to her son when we met her in the morning she stands in a vastly different circumstance from her wealth all she has left now to cling to is this child that was graciously given a child that she thought she would never ever possess she never thought she would have a child of her own and we imagine this child as her salvation gifted to her in the morning she has not let it go this is all she has this is her future this is her hope and will this

Shunammite lady be you coming humbly into the presence of the king after the completion of her years on this earth holding the gifted salvation that we possess almost as if a reminder of the Christian certificate in pilgrim's progress he possessed it all the way and that was his acceptance into heaven and there may be the angels of heaven may be there speaking likewise of Gehazi here comes another of Christ's works my lord o king here is the woman she has come at her appointed time and here is her salvation founded in your son the one she hopes in the one that restored her life and gave her a future and a hope her hope was founded on Christ the man of God's work and her hope was founded upon Christ's work she she has not the lady did not forsake the son even though she gave up on everything else and it's a wonderful picture of the one holding to Christ and nothing else for that is all that we can bring we must leave everything behind and what is the reward a passage speaks of an abundance beyond her expectations she has restored to her

her house and all that she had left behind we can read there in verse 6 and when the king asked the woman she told him all that had happened to her so the king appointed an official for her saying restore all that was her together with all the produce of the fields of the day that she left the land until now the goodness of the land that she had missed out on was to be restored to her the graciously given the seven years worth of produce and that seven years the number seven that resembles a perfection in the bible this is what the

Christian shall give we will be just that of perfection rewarded to us welcomed as a good and faithful servant come and enjoy the fruits of his land for this will be your home this will be the heavenly home that has been provided for those who come trusting in the son that is gifted to them this heavenly provision is a perfect one and the years of longing to return home shall be fulfilled the difficulties of this life will have passed and the famine will be over mark 19 verse 29 says and everyone that has forsaken houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lambs for my sake shall receive an hundred fold and shall inherit eternal life perseverance of faith for the

[37 : 39] Christian has great rewards but what if she hadn't obeyed well we're not sure exactly but we are reminded that we must stand before the king the one that comes without Christ shall not enjoy abundance or perfection but will be left in the land of a dire famine there'll be no escape from that land there'll be no satisfaction no peace no good instruction no loving guidance but a cry of mercy out of your anguish forever when you realize that you sat under God's word you sat under this word of Christ that pleaded you to come that pleaded you to trust in it but you wouldn't and you relied on your own wealth it's a challenge to give up on what we trust and trust in this man that will give us great rewards can you face eternally that you doubted

Christ and his word the man who does not trust in him doubts that he is trustworthy can you face eternity with the reality that you doubted him for there you will know that you shouldn't have doubted him and you will know full well that you should have trusted him but you never and it will be the anguish of your soul so what is it for you tonight will it be anguish or will it be abundance may these thoughts be blessed to us let's say a short prayer our father in heaven we pray you set before us the reality of eternity and the great reward that is set before for the believer but Christ spoke full well himself of the realities of hell and what they shall be let us not be fooled let the devil not deceive us let the devil not give us false comforts or false hopes that we would trust in

Christ and him only and he will be one that we will not let go of nor he let go of you lord we ask that you remain with us for our days whatever that means in our lives trusting in your word and your power and your authority in his name amen we'll conclude our time of worship by singing to God's praise and sing psalm psalm 62 sing psalm psalm 62 we'll sing from verse mark 5 that's on page 80 in the blue books verse 5 down to verse mark 12 find rest my soul in God alone in whom my hope is ever sure my safety fort is sheltering rock in him alone

I am secure we'll sing down to the end of the psalm psalm 62 and sing psalms 5 to 12 stand to sing psalm i dress my soul in good alone in him my home is ever sure my safety fort shall be raw in him alone I am secure my honor and salvation rest upon

God my road and mighty poor though people trusted him always to him alone for out your heart the low poor man is by the breath the high poor man is by the high early t

[43 : 54] The world by force Our triumphant Their thought and gave And even whom Their blues increased Set not to harm The law of His vain My God has broken I have heard The new earth's throne And the only Lord He's born upon

We do praise me You will assure And we hear me more Closing prayer Father, we know that you will be the one who remains with us And so we ask and request That you shall be that guidance to your lives As we seek you in the word that you have revealed to us May we see the glory of your Son Daily And know the comfort of your Spirit And the guidance of your word The knowledge of the Father Being with us And being true and trustworthy As our only reliance That we can trust in So forgive us as our sins Be with us as we part And all this we ask in the name of our Saviour The Lord Jesus Christ Amen Amen Thank you.