

Sermons to the Eyes

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Slide2-4 Announce: this Sun - FPU. Parenting Seminar. Church Baptism & Fam Day.

II. Slide5 Intro: Sermons to the Eyes

A. Tonight we'll walk through 4/5 miracles in Elisha's life. Spurgeon said miracles were intended to **instruct** as well as to **impress**. They are, *Sermons to the Eyes*.

1. Sometimes we are called to be **alone with God**. **Depending on Him alone**. **In touch with the Source** of miracles. *Detached from outward things...attached inwardly to the Lord alone.*

B. *As we go through these 4/5 miracles...note*, many see **Elisha** as a type of **Christ** [ministered to individuals (healing/sick, raising/dead, providing for the needy) & he accepted hospitality] **Elijah** was more like **John the Bap**(alone/rugged/preacher to the nation)

1. God equips different people in very different ways.

III. Slide6 A POOR WIDOW'S OIL MULTIPLIED (1-7) *God cares for the poor*

A. How much we miss when we *don't* go to Him about our temporal wants. He is the God of the widow.

B. *A creditor was about to make her two sons slaves to satisfy a debt.*

1. Biblical law regulated the seizure of wives and children as **payment for debt** (Exod 21:7). Owners were to free slaves in **the Year of Jubilee** (Lev 25:39-42).

C. *How does this 1st miracle illustrate the working of faith?* [# of vessels = amount of faith]

D. *Do you think it was easy for the woman to do what Elisha asked her to do?* [a lil embarrassing?]

1. The oil went on pouring so long as there were vessels.
2. *Would God have kept pouring oil if there was 4 more vessels, or 40?*
3. *More vessels, more supply.*
 - a) Think about it...**Jesus** fills our empty vessels w/**the HS**.
 - b) We're encouraged to *refill* as often as we desire.
 - c) **No limit to number or size**...He will fill afresh.
 - d) He only *laments* when there are no more vessels to fill.

- e) God's only limitation is that which **we** impose by our **unbelief**.
- f) **His oil** will never cease, just keep bringing your vessel to Him.

E. What lesson is this for **you** in your own life?

1. *My God shall supply all your need.* Phil.4:19

IV. Slide7 **A WEALTHY WOMEN'S SON RAISED (8-37)** *God cares for the rich*

A. **HOSPITALITY** (8-17) *given a son*

B. Slide8 Shunem was about 7mi. from Carmel. It was a village on *Mount Moreh* overlooking the Jezreel Valley.

1. Elisha passed by the house often; he was finally invited in to break bread with this wealthy couple.

C. * In the NT, the village of Shunem was no longer inhabited. The population of the town had gathered around a new Village less than 2 miles away, called *Nain*.

1. Surely the people of Nain remembered how the prophet Elisha had come to "their" village *8 centuries before* and raised a young boy from the dead.¹
2. So when **Jesus** brought back to life the son of a widow in Nain the awestruck people explained, *a great prophet has appeared among us.* Lk.7:11-17

D. Slide9a (10) **Minimalist?** - There is a trend in our christian culture today (many books & challenges to be a minimalist) to strip down the complexities of life to the basics.

1. It's a reaction against the complexities & pressures of ownership & maintaining lots of stuff. *It saps our strength, & makes us feel slaves to our possessions.*
2. But John Piper said, *maybe its just a passing fad for the elite?*
3. *It's balancing the tightrope of life with our balance pole* with the parable of the tares on 1 side (caution of not being *choked by the cares & riches & pleasures of this world* Lk.8:14) **AND** not looking at all things we own as intrinsically evil (Eccl.3:13 *every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor - it is the gift of God*). [**Balance:** God's warning *with* God's Gifts]

¹ Shepherd's Notes, 2 Kings 4.

- E. (23) So sure was the mother in the life giving power of the prophet, she didn't feel the need to ***tell her husband their son died***...why grieve him when she knew the child would soon be in health. *Meyer*
- F. (31) How often we put the staff of doctrine and precept on the face of our beloved and unconverted children, without result. *Meyer*
1. Maybe instead what we need is found in vs.35...where we walk about our house in intercessory prayer for them.
 2. Parenting Seminar / Sticky Faith (5 week) starts this Sun during 11:30 service.
 - a) *If a parent takes 1 step into the world, his children will take 2* ;(
- G. This story touches the emotions of every family.
1. The sudden illness of a child (18-20).
 2. The focused desperation of his mother (21-25).
 3. The sensitive response of Elisha (26-35).
 4. The awesome release of emotions when the child was raised (36,37).
 - a) All of these serve not only to prepare the reader for ***the power of God*** in his/her own life, **but** also to confirm that ***God is concerned for people***.
- H. This woman from Shunem becomes ***a good example*** to us in _____ ? (hospitality)
- I. Slide9b HEARTACHE (18-28) *a son with sunstroke*
- J. (19) Possible ***sunstroke*** as it was a common cause of death.
- K. (26) How would you answer these 3 questions today? Today? (I'm fine. We're fine)
- L. **Why** do you think God allows her to go through such **suffering**? (to see His mighty hand?)
- M. Slide9c HAPPINESS (32-37) *a sneezing son*
- N. Why is the door always being shut? (5,21,33)
1. Whether it was the widow and her two sons **or** Elisha with the dead son...sometimes we are called to be ***alone with God***. Depending on Him alone. In touch with the Source of miracles. Detached from ***outward*** things...attached ***inwardly*** to the Lord alone.

2. Maybe because often **blessings** come **within closed doors** . (not always public. **My story** : gift of tongues)
3. Mt.6:6 **But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.**
4. When you go into an **airplane's bathroom** you latch the door, & when you do, the light comes on brighter. **Maybe it's the same when we enter our private space or secret place, it's there that He gives brighter illumination.**

- O. **Two miracles are recorded in this story** : God gave the woman a son when her husband was old, **and** God raised the boy back to life when he died.
- P. **What lessons do we draw from Gehazi's failure?** (He is **declining spiritually** , consequences appear later. He was **unkind** to the Shunammite woman, vs.27. He had **no power** to help her. **He went through the motions, but no life came**)
- Q. **What do we learn about Elisha's character here?** (**thankful** for his lil Dacha, a country house/cottage in Russia). **Caring. Sensitive to the Spirit (27). Prayerful (35). Empathetic (36).**

V. Slide10 **A POISONOUS POT HEALED (38-41)**

A. **POISONOUS FOOD**

- B. **Slide11 Wild gourds** - possibly *Citrullus colocynthis*, small yellow melon known to be fatal.

VI. Slide12 **MULTIPLICATION OF BARLEY LOAVES (42-44)**

A. **PLENTIFUL FOOD**

- B. This seems to be a gift for Elisha, & if there is still a scarcity of food...the gift would be even more precious. He shares it with all who were around.
- C. This last miracle has **a clear parallel** to Jesus's multiplication of the loaves and fishes.
 1. **But with 1 very notable difference...** While **Elisha** called on the power **of** God to perform the miracle (43) **Jesus** performed the miracle **as** God.
- D. We witnessed a **husband die** , **yet** God met the needs of the family.
We witnessed a **son die** , **yet** God raised him & restored the family.

We witnessed a **group of prophets almost die** because of poisoned stew, **yet** God removed the danger.

We witnessed a **group of believers almost die**, **yet** God multiplied the bread & sustained them.

1. **All of these miracles remind us to** give God what we have & let Him do what He wills.

E. **Slide13a MIRACLES** (1 Cor.12:10 *to another the working of miracles*)

F. **Miracle/Dunamis** – operations of works of power.

1. **Slide13b Other words used:** *signs* (indicates something else), *wonders* (causes people to be amazed), *powers/mighty work* (an act displaying great power).

G. **Miracle** is used very loosely today (birth of a child, etc).

1. **Slide13c Wayne Grudem, *A miracle is a less common kind of God's activity in which He arouses people's awe and wonder and bears witness to himself.***

a) Because if you say, *it's a direct intervention of God in the world*, that sounds like **deism**, that God only intervenes in it occasionally.

b) **eg.** Jesus turning the water into wine. Raising Lazarus from the dead.

(1) There can be no natural explanation for these events.

2. A Miracle can be referring to God using a **common** thing, **with** a miraculous **timing & or placement**.

a) **Timing example:** Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah.

(1) God could have created a **special** fish for this purpose? **Or**, made a submarine?

Or, simply worked **His perfect timing** of having one of His *huge plankton eater whales* to come along to swallow up Jonah by sucking in everything in its path?

b) **Placement example:** Peter finding fish w/coin in mouth.

(1) Whether God placed in it then, **or** the fish scooped it up when eating?

3. **O.T. Examples of Miracles:** **Samson** strength was not from his natural ability, **but** from his **supernatural strength** that God gave him.

4. N.T. Examples of Miracles: 5 people **raised** from the dead in NT.
Philip did miracles. Paul wrought unusual miracles. Peter did signs/wonders.
5. Some say miracles are not for today because they fit into 3 neat time periods in scripture (Moses. Elijah/Elisha. & Jesus)
 - a) *What about? Joshua & the Jericho walls? Gideon & his miraculous fleece? Samson's strength tearing the lion/carrying gates/& pushing pillars? Daniel with the Kitty Kats? Jonah & the Big Guppy? The miracles coming soon in Rev w/2 witnesses?*
6. We sure do not see them like we did in the book of Acts. [true that]
 - a) *Slide 13d 4 ways Wayne Grudem names in Scripture for miracles: To confirm the truthfulness of the gospel message. To bring help to those in need (2 blind men, have mercy on us). To remove hindrances to people's ministries. And to bring glory to God.*
 - b) *I believe God can use certain gifts, more than other gifts, during specific time periods, because He chooses the best Gifts.*