

Marks of a Great Mom

2 Kings 4:1-7

- What makes a great mom?
- There are hundreds of books, thousands of blogs, and even more conversations daily between women about what defines a great mom.
- I want to cautiously enter that discussion this morning.
- I'm not here to give you specifics on what method of discipline is best, how you should educate your children, how often you should force them to eat vegetables, and things like that.
- Instead, we are going to take a little bit of time to look at a mom in the Bible and draw out three marks that make her a great mom.
- Although this message is targeted at moms, it is not exclusively for them.
- This mom gives us a fantastic example to follow, whether you are young or old, married or single, a guy or girl, have kids or don't have kids.
- See, what makes this woman a great example is that she involves others in her walk with God.
- If you want to be a great mom, or a great dad, or a great woman or man, you need to involve others in your walk with God.

- As we will see this morning, she doesn't do it for show. She is in a desperate place, and she isn't trying to impress anyone.
- I am not talking about being showy with your obedience or doing things so that everyone will see how amazing you are.
- However, as she walks with the Lord, she brings her children along with her, it has a tremendous impact on their family.

- She models obedience and sets a great example for them, and together, they see God do great things.
- Let's look at the story. We are in **2 Kings 4:1-7**.
- Several months back, we looked at the life of a prophet named Elijah. Now, we are talking about his successor, named Elisha.
- Elisha took over a group of prophets that Elijah had led while he was alive.
- It is in the context of that group that our story begins.
- Read the passage with me...
- This unnamed mom did a great job in setting an example, not only for her children, but also for us.
- Let's look at three lessons she teaches us.
- **If you're going to be a great mom or a great person in any area, you must:**

1) Seek godly advice. (1-4)

- This woman was in an impossibly difficult position.
- Her husband was a godly man, and he had likely done what he could to provide for the family.
- However, along the way, the family took on debt.
- With her husband dead, she had no way of providing for her family.
- Eventually, the bills piled up and the creditors they had borrowed from were coming to take the only thing she had: her two sons.
- No mother should ever have to face the pain of losing her sons to slavery, and that pain would have been unimaginable.

- As if that weren't bad enough, her sons were the only hope she had of one day having any income. As they grew, they would have been able to work and take care of her.
- Not only was she losing her kids, she was losing her hope.
- We don't know what all she tried to do to keep this from happening, but we do know that at this point, she made the right choice: she came to Elisha for help and advice.
- We live in a world that is obsessed with self-help and improvement.
- As I mentioned in the beginning, there are thousands of books and blogs and podcasts and Facebook groups designed to help you be a better mom, live a happier life, succeed at work, and everything else.
- Although there is some truth you can gain from those, let me caution you: make sure that any advice you pay attention to lines up with what God says about that area.
- This book needs to be the first place you turn. You need to seek God's face through prayer and ask for him to give you wisdom.
- Why? Because advice that doesn't start with God doesn't end in the right place.
- Apart from Christ, we have the wrong set of glasses on, and it distorts everything we see.
- James describes it this way:

This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,

reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. (James 3:15-17, NASB95)

- Isn't that what you see so often? The motivation behind the advice you receive is selfishness and based off jealousy—"Here's how to look like her" "Here's how to have your portfolio outperform theirs" "Raise the smartest kids on the block"
- It's all feeding into our pride!
- Godly wisdom is completely different: it is morally pure, seeks peace, reacts with gentleness, easy to get along with, and bears great fruit.

- So then, mom, let me ask you: where are you getting your advice? You need to come to the right source.
- For the rest of us, the same question is true: where do you look first for your marching orders for the day? What is your process for making a decision?
- If you're going to be a great mom or a great man or whatever, in the eyes of God, then you start with seeking godly advice.

- **Advice is a great starting point, but having good advice means nothing without the second step:**

2) Obey what God says. (5-6)

- Look back at **verses 5-6**...
- She immediately did exactly what Elisha told her to do.
- Think of all the excuses she could have come up with:
 - "Well, what will my neighbors think?"
 - "What am I supposed to do with it all?" – Elisha didn't tell her that.
 - "It's impossible; it will never work."

- “When it doesn’t work, how am I going to explain this to my sons?”
- As you look through the stories of the Bible and see what God called people to do, you can’t help but draw a conclusion: you will always be able to find an excuse not to do what God is calling you to do.
- There is always going to be a reason you can come up with to bail on what God is calling you to do, and it may seem totally valid, like, “One jar of oil can’t fill up a bunch.”
- However, remember that this is the God of heaven and earth who is inviting you to see him work in this way!
- Years after this event, God told another prophet, named Jeremiah, to do something that Jeremiah thought was crazy.
- Here’s God’s response:
 - *“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?” (Jeremiah 32:27, NASB95)*
- I have heard others say it, and I think they are spot on: when you refuse to obey God for whatever excuse you come up with, you are saying more about what you believe about him than what you believe about your excuse.
- You are saying you don’t think God can do it.
- Thankfully, this unnamed widow, a single mom in a society that had nothing for her, was willing to obey, and God provided down to the very last drop of oil.
- You wonder sometimes if she kicked herself for not getting more jars, but the text tells us they had enough.
- When she was willing to step out in faith and obedience, she saw God meet that need in a way she could never have fathomed.
- Ladies and gentlemen, if you are going to be a great mom, dad, husband, wife, son, daughter, single adult, business

woman, grandmother, or anything else you want to put in that list, you have to be willing to go beyond where you are comfortable, stop making excuses, and obey.

- **As you do, though, follow the example of this godly mom and...**

3) Bring others with you. (5-6)

- Elisha's command was for her to bring her sons with her as she poured out the oil.
- As a godly mom, she involved her kids in her obedience.
- Parents, can I encourage you to do this this morning?
- I recognize that your kids don't need to know everything that happens financially, relationally, etc. in your life, but you need to bring them in when you can.
- They need to see that God is real and that he really does provide and he really does incredible things when we obey what he calls us to do.
- One way to do that is to involve them in praying for your neighbors. We have been talking about *Sharing Jesus without Freaking Out*, and in the last chapter, the author encourages you to develop a plan for sharing your faith on a regular basis.
- If you have kids at home, include them in that plan! If you are going to do something for your neighbor, find a way to have them go with you or help make it or help you do whatever you are doing.
- That way, you are fulfilling the command God gives us as parents:

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

"You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of

them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:5-9, NASB95)

- If you don't have kids, don't think you're off the hook.
- Listen to Paul's instruction to a young pastor named Titus:
Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; (Titus 2:2-6, NASB95)
- Older men are to model obedience for younger men, and older women are supposed to help younger women.
- Who are you bringing along? Paul gave this command to another young pastor named Timothy:
The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2, NASB95)
- Just like the widow involved her sons in her obedience, you can bring someone with you. It won't be every time, but why not ask God to give you the privilege of helping challenge someone else to grow in him.
- Don't you love how this part of the story wraps up? Look back at **verse 7**.

- We don't know how this story ended beyond this, other than God provided enough to pay the debt and they lived for some time off the rest of the proceeds.
- As we pull back from this story and look at the broader picture of God's story throughout the Bible, we can see that this very story points us to Christ.
- The Bible says that we all owe God a debt that we cannot pay:
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23, NASB95)
- Elsewhere in that same book, Paul talks about the fact that we are actually already enslaved to sin, but no amount of our work can ever pay back that debt.
- For the widow and her sons, God provided oil to pay their physical debt. For us, God has provided something even greater for our spiritual debt: the blood of Christ that was shed for us.
- As she poured the oil into those vessels, we are reminded that Jesus' blood was poured out for us.
but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7, NASB95)
- His blood cleanses us from all our sin, pays our debt, and sets us free so that no creditor can come enslave us again.
- So, Mom, as you are struggling under the mistakes you make and how short you have fallen, run to the cross, to the one who poured out his blood to save you and your kids.
- This message is for every man, woman, boy and girl in this room: run to Jesus. Seek godly advice on how to live, do it, and bring others with you.