

IT IS WELL

2 KINGS 4:25-26

“And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman!

Please run now to meet her, and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?' And she answered, "It is well."

“It is well.” How could it possibly be well with this woman? Her only son is dead *for crying out loud!*

Elisha and his servant, Gehazi, should've been ashamed for even asking such an insensitive question.

This mother's problems started the day her little boy went to work with his father. His dad was a farmer, and the two were out in the fields when the boy complained about a severe headache. It was harvest time which meant dad was extremely busy with all the hired hands, and temporary laborers. He was under the gun.

So when his son screamed out, **“My head, my head!”** this father did what any other concerned, conscientious dad would do... *he sent the boy to his mom.* A servant picked him up and carried him back to the house.

We're told in 4:20, **“When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.”** *What an ordeal for this mom!*

She sat there all morning, and watched her son's condition deteriorate. She was helpless to do anything for him! By high noon the boy had died on her knees.

Honestly, I cannot imagine any woman suffering a more terrible fate. At breakfast she'd fixed her son a bowl of cereal - now by lunch he's dead on her knees.

The break in your heart for this mother grows even wider when you learn the whole story...

The boy was this woman's only son.

She and her husband had tried for years to conceive a child, but to no avail. After all the fertility treatments, and long sessions of prayer, the miracle had happened when it was least expected... The baby was born shortly after the couple had befriended Elisha.

They noticed that when the prophet made his rounds he always walked right by their house. The couple had a spare bedroom, and one day the woman suggested to her husband they offer it to the Prophet Elisha.

The room wasn't much - just a bed, a table and chair, a lamp - but it was a place where Elisha could stopover either for the *night*, or for a *nap*. It was an act of kindness on their part - and certainly, a service to God.

And Elisha appreciated the gesture - so much so, he wanted to do a kind deed for the lady and her husband.

So in verse 13, the Prophet Elisha told his servant, Gehazi, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with

all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?’

She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

In other words, "thanks, but no thanks." The family had ample provision and protection. The last thing they wanted was a government *hand-out* or a military *look-out*. When it came to material stuff they were content.

Gehazi though, had been observing the couple's lifestyle. He noticed there were no toys or swing set in the yard - no baby blankets on the clothesline – no strollers or diaper bags in the garage. He even saw they drove a sporty, two-seater rather than a mini-van.

Gehazi concluded in verse 14, "She has no son, and her husband is old." *A-ha!* Here is a way Elisha can return the generosity and hospitality of this couple.

He can pray, and ask God to provide them a child.

Elisha was obviously confident that God approved of his intentions... The prophet made a bold prediction.

In verse 16 he tells the woman, "About this time next year you shall embrace a son." What a promise!

And can you imagine the joy and elation a year later when this baby boy was born? It was a miracle! A barren couple had been blessed with a miracle child!

Of course, after the baby's birth, I'm sure Elisha must've thought, "*What in the world have I done?*"

His nap-times were no longer as peaceful with a baby around... I'm sure there were nights when the baby's crying

kept him up... But the Prophet Elisha was delighted God had brought such joy to this house!

Everyone who knew their story viewed this little boy as God's miracle gift to this couple... Yet now that fact only added to this mother's grief and confusion...

I can hear this woman cry, "God, he was *my* miracle! *Your gift to me. To take him so young is cruel. He's a flower yet to bloom - a butterfly still in his cocoon. Why lay him in my arms, only to snatch him away?"*

Imagine, this woman convulsing tears, slumped over a small, lifeless corpse - the limp little head bobbing up and down on quivering knees. *What an awful picture...*

But after this woman gains her composure she performs an amazing act of resolve and faith.

With the little strength she has left she picks the boy up, and takes him to Elisha's room. She lays his corpse on the prophet's cot, and closes the door.

Next, she calls for a donkey... She's going to see the prophet. As she saddles him up she tosses the keys to her servant, and tells him in verse 24, "*Drive, and go forward...*" / *told you they had a two-seater vehicle.*

This woman was too upset to drive, but she says to her servant-chauffeur, "*Do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.*" In other words, *step on it, man!*

Before they leave, the servant wants to know why they're going to see Elisha. He asks the woman in verse 23, "*Why*

are you going to him today? It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath.”

It was like getting up on a weekday morning to go to church. *Why are we going to CC on a Monday? There're no Bible Studies, no worship services.* If you just want to see Elisha, he'll be by in a few days?

And it's weird how she responds. The remainder of verse 23 reads, “**And she said, "It is well."**”

It's as if she's answering another question... “*It is well*” is not a rational response to the query, “*Why are you going to him today?*” It's as if another issue is on her mind. As if she's answering a different question...

Which brings us to our text... When the grieving mom reaches Elisha, he sends out his personal assistant - a servant named Gehazi - to greet her.

And in verse 26 Gehazi asks her three questions: “**Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?**” *And as I read this story the answer to all three has to be “NO!” Of course, it's NOT well!...*

It's certainly not well with this mom.

Her heart has been ripped out. She's cried so much her tear ducts are dry. She's become dehydrated.

It's not well with this husband, either.

She now realizes she's married to an insensitive lug. Here she was embroiled in an all day vigil, overseeing her little boy's death - while her lamebrain, calloused husband

couldn't pry himself away from his work. He's still in the field when she leaves for Elisha.

And of course, it's not well with the child.

She left her son at home - his cold corpse is lying on a makeshift cot - it's being taken over by rigor-mortis.

If I'd been this mom, and Elisha's servant had asked me, "*Is it well?*"... I would've gone ballistic! Lost it! Blown a fuse. *Is it well... is it well... I'll show you if it's well...!* I would've bristled up and cold-cocked Gehazi.

But read this mother's amazing words in verse 26. The Shunammite woman answers Gehazi, "**It is well.**"

This morning, I want to ask all the mothers three questions... **Is it well with you?... Is it well with your husband?... Is it well with the child?...** And with the time we have left, I want us to work through these three questions before we reach our final answer...

*First, if you're a mother, "**Is it well with you?**"*

Thankfully, most of you have never had a child die on your knees... But Kathy and I came close.

Our daughter suffered from sleep apnea when she was an infant. Kath noticed at times Natalie would stop breathing. We were given a monitor that sounded an alarm at night when it no longer detected a breath.

The first night that alarm screeched 45 times. If you had asked us if all was well, we would've said "**No.**"

But even if you haven't walked a child through the valley of the shadow of death, being a mom has other taxing challenges! You may not have lost a child, but all moms at times feel like they were *losing their mind!*

I know you've lost your patience... maybe your sanity... definitely your energy... even your figure...

Here's a cute poem. It's called, "**A Mom's Prayer**"...

Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray my sanity to keep... For if some peace I do not find, I'm pretty sure I'll lose my mind... I pray I find a little quiet. Far from the daily family riot... May I relax, not have to think, about what they're stuffing down my sink..

Or who they're with, where they're at, and what they're doing to the cat... I pray for time all to myself (did something just fall off a shelf?)... To cuddle in my nice, soft bed (Oh no, another goldfish - dead!)...

A silent moment for goodness' sake (*Did I just hear a window break?*)... And that I need not cook or clean (why not, I've got the right to dream)... Yes, now I lay me down to sleep. I pray my wits about me keep... But as I look around I know - I must've lost them long ago!"

Here're a few entries in the "*Dictionary of Motherhood*"...

Grandparents - The people who think your children are wonderful even though they're sure you're not raising them right... **Impregnable** - A woman whose memory of labor is still vivid... **Prenatal** - when your life was still somewhat your own.

Sterilize - What you do to your first baby's pacifier by boiling it in water, and to your last baby's pacifier by blowing on it...

Temper tantrum - What you should keep to a minimum so you don't upset the children...

And I may get in trouble for this one... **Weaker Sex** - The kind you have after the kids have worn you out.

Did you hear about the mother of several preschoolers who sent out thank-you notes for the new gifts she got at her most recent baby shower?

One of the notes read, "Many thanks for the play pen. I use it daily. From 2:00 to 3:00 in the afternoon I get in it to read and the children can't get near me."

Have you ever notice when a gold minor strikes the main vein and hits the rock with the heaviest portion of precious medal, it's called **the mother load**? I'm just saying, *a mother's load can get awfully heavy at times.*

Is it well with you, mom?

Perhaps you would answer, "Not really. I'm tired and burned out. I love my kids, but I've about concluded I'm just not cut out for *the mommy gig*. I haven't lost a child to death, but I feel like I've lost them in other ways..."

I've lost my kids to a hurried lifestyle that gives us little time to talk, and pray, and be together... I've lost them to ungodly friends, and to worldly influences...

There have been nights when I've tucked my children in bed, and close the door, and I've wondered if I was losing them... or if they were losing me..."

If the question was posed to you, **“Is it well?”**

You would have to respond, **“No, I’m not well. I wear a smile, but I’m tired, and not sure I can carry on.”**

Mom, in a few moments I want to show you how the Shunammite was able to feel everything you’re feeling, *plus some*, yet still be able to respond, **“It is well!”**

But there’s another question our text requires me to ask you, **“Is it well with your husband?”**

Please now - please, muffle your laughter.

I know what you want to say, **“Are you kidding! Sure, it’s well with my husband. Why wouldn’t it be - he lives with his head in the sand. He doesn’t know what I’m going through. The kids are lost, I’m dying inside, and he’s still at the office harvesting a paycheck. Is it well with my husband? Of course it’s not! He needs to get his act together and care for us instead of just his job!”**

There’s another definition in the *Dictionary of Motherhood...* **“Bottle Feeding - An opportunity for Daddy to also get up at 2:00 in the morning.”**

Once a mother was out walking with her four year old daughter. The little girl picked an object up off the ground, and started to stick it in her mouth... Her Mom told her not to do that. The little girl wondered, **“Why?”**

Mom replied, **“It’s been laying outside. It’s dirty. It probably has germs.”** Her daughter was astonished, **“Wow mom, how to you know all this stuff?”**

This was a mother good at thinking on her feet. She answered her little girl, “It’s the mommy test. You have to know it, or they don’t let you be a mommy.”

As they continued down the path mom noticed her daughter had delved into some serious thought. After a few minutes the little girl blurted out, “I get it! Then if you flunk the mommy test, you have to be a daddy!”

My purpose today is not to trash and bash dads.

I’m an advocate for *two-parent families*. A child needs both a *mom* and a *dad*. A father shouldn’t just be a *figurehead* - a good dad is an *active dad*. All dads need to take the leadership in the training and discipline of their kids. I love dads. *Hey, I am a dad.*

I’m just pointing out that no matter how hard a dad tries - there will be times when his wife is still going to think he’s not doing enough. It’s just the way we are.

And mom, this is where you need to be careful...

Men are like yarn. Push a string of yarn, and it goes nowhere. To move a piece of yarn it has to be pulled.

And to cultivate a good man a wife has to learn to pull the right strings. Ladies, you’ll move your husband to be the man God wants, and you need, by pulling him along with your example and encouragement.

Men respond to coaxing and pulling, more than being pushed with harsh words, and angry tones, and constant badgering, and feminine manipulation.

Years ago, I had a friend of mine tell me, **the best thing I could do for my kids is to love their mom.**

And that's true! But the reverse is just as valid...

Mom, this might not be readily observable from where you're sitting at the moment, but it's true nonetheless. **One of the best things you can do for your kids is to love, and honor, and support their father.**

Realize, you can't put dad down in front of your kids, then expect those same kids to respect their father.

On rare occasions, Kathy and I will get upset with each other. We'll disagree on a decision, or argue over an action - and she'll say to me, or I'll say to her - **"Wait a minute! Let's remember we're on the same team!"**

You know the ole line about teamwork, "Teamwork is like a waterfall. It's a lot of drips working together."

Every mom needs the cooperation of her child's dad.

Ladies, that's why you should encourage him - not cut him off at the knees, and knock him down.

I brought with me this morning a recipe for you married moms. It appeared in Good Housekeeping magazine. It's a sure-fire recipe for a tasty husband...

"Husbands can be spoiled by improper cooking. Some women keep their husband in hot water, or let him freeze, or keep him in a stew, or pickle him. No husband will be tender and good when so managed.

Add a little sugar, a few kisses. A little spice improves him. Do not try him with something sharp to see if he's becoming tender. Stir him gently. A husband is really delicious and

digestible when prepared properly, and will keep as long as you want to have him.”

Hey, every mom does herself and her family a favor by trying her best to build up her children’s dad.

Ladies, **“Is it well with your husband?”**

I can’t say, but I know if he’s anything like Kathy’s husband, the answer is **“NO!”** He’s a pile of problems.

Just like the Shunammite’s husband, he gets too wrapped up in the harvest. There’re times when his wife needs him to help shoulder the burden, and he’s out in the field. At times, he’s downright insensitive.

But even if your husband is like Kathy’s, or the Shunammite’s, I’ll show you how you can say of him, **“It is well.”** There’s a reason she answered as she did... but before I disclose it, there’s one last question.

Mom, **“Is it well with the child?”** *Sometimes you wonder, don’t you? What’s going on in that head?*

It reminds me of the old comic strip, **“For Better Or For Worse.”** The series chronicled family life. And there was one strip where the first three frames showed a mom and dad lying in bed, worrying about their child...

They ask questions like, **“Are we too tough on Mike? Or not tough enough? Do we give in too often? Do we listen? Do we understand? Do we nag too much? Are we good parents? How do we know what to do?”**

The final frame pictures 10 year-old, Mike, lying in his bed, thinking, **“Trouble with parents is they think they know it all.”** So often we really don’t know...

At times kids are sweet, nice, respectful - at other times they act like they just came down out of a tree.

If you're married, and contemplating kids, a ride on a wild rollercoaster is good preparation for parenthood.

Once a mother was hurried, and hassled - she was preparing dinner for her husband's family. That night at dinner she asked her daughter to say grace. Her little girl was reluctant, "Mom, I don't know what to say?"

Mom should've left it alone, but she was so proud of the sweet prayers her daughter usually prayed.

Finally, the mother suggested, "Honey, sure you know what to say, just say the last prayer you heard mommy pray?" The little girl bowed her head, "O Lord, why did I invite all these people to dinner?" As a mom you never know what to expect from your children.

Here are a few more entries in the Dictionary of Motherhood... **Defense** - What you'd better have around de yard if you let de kids out...

Look out - What it's too late for your kid to do by the time you scream it... **Top bunk** - Where you never put a child wearing Superman jammies...

Two Minute Warning - When the baby's face turns red and he or she begins to make those familiar grunting noises...

Non-verbal - The ability to whine without words... And

Whoops! - An exclamation that translates roughly as "Get a sponge."

A mom knows if it's well with her child.

She knows her child's ups and downs. A mom understands her kid's moods and hormones. A mom can distinguish the difference between what's *a rite of passage*, and what's a *departure from the right path...*

If anyone knows the heart of a child, it's his or her mom. God gives a mom a sixth sense. A mom is to the soul of her child what a meteorologist is to the weather. *She reads the signs and knows their thoughts!*

When a mom slows down her busyness, and spends time with her brood... When she really watches, and listens, she'll answer this question... A mom always knows if it's well or if there's a problem, with her child...

But this Shunammite's son was dead for goodness sakes! You'd expect her to answer, **"No, it's not well!"**

Yet she does something about his deadness... And in a sense, what she does is what every mom can do...

She boards a donkey, and goes to the person with the power to help. This Shunammite mom journeyed to the man of God, Elisha. She was confident that God through Elisha could help her son... And now that she's done all that she can do - *now that she's laid the outcome in the hands of God* - she speaks in response to Gehazi's question, **"Is it well?"** She says, **"It is well!"**

This mom's answer was a statement of her faith!

And I believe three truths motivated this mother's confidence and faith in God... In fact, if you're a mom you

need to write these truths down, and consult them often, for they apply to you and your child, as well...

First, the child was **promised**.

Second, God was **powerful**.

Third, help was **present**.

First, **your child is just as much a miracle as this mother's son**. Every child is a miracle. The psalmist says, we're all "**fearfully and wonderfully made**" by God. None of us is an accident. We're all a promise.

God shaped each of us and fashioned us in our mother's womb. Mom, no matter how far they might've strayed, God has a plan for your son or daughter.

Second, **God is the one with the power to restore a lost child**. 2 Kings 4 goes on to describe exactly how Elisha returns with this woman and he works a miracle.

He enters the room where the boy's dead body lays. Then he robs the grim reaper. Elisha restores to life the Shunammite's son from the clutches of death. **And mom, God can deal with the deadness in your child**.

If He can resurrect a child from the dead – God can deliver your child from distraction, or dependence, or defiance, or deception. God has the power to restore.

And a third truth, **this woman believed that God's help was present**. That's why she saddled a donkey - and ordered the driver to push the pedal to the medal - then she made a beeline straight to the man of God.

And mom, I suggest you do the same. Don't delay.

This woman's servant was wrong, you don't have to wait for a New Moon, or a Sabbath, or even a Sunday morning to pay God a visit. He's ready to help you at your point-of-need. God hears a mother's prayers.

All moms, hear ye, hear ye...

Because your child is *promised* - and your God is *powerful* - and His help is every so *present*... *I suggest you not give up!* I exhort you to have faith today.

Place your child and situation in the hands of God.

God can help you - *even you* - who carry a mother's load. The God who delivered this Shunnamite mom from *her grief*, can deliver you from *your grind*. If you're a mom in need of help... *God can be your strength!*

And God can help your husband. *Yes, even your's.*

Ladies, when you're done *pushing*, and *picking*, and *pecking*, and *pestering* - why don't you try *praying* for the ole boy. The God who raised a boy's corpse off Elisha's bed, can raise your husband off the couch!

And God can help your child. *Yes, even your child.*

Your child may be a *wayward child*, but he's still a *promised child*... Perhaps, he or she is a *miracle marred*, but they're a *miracle nonetheless*...

The Shunammite mother didn't hesitate. She immediately went to God for *His help* with *her child*.

Mom, I encourage you to do the same!

If you read the rest of the chapter you'll learn how God used Elisha to raise this woman's son from the dead. *But never forget this woman's amazing faith!*

This was a mom who believed all along, even at the height of her crisis, that God could help her family.

That's why she answered, "It is well."

In her heart of hearts - a heart of faith - all was well.

She knew that God would work. Even though her son sat lifeless in her lap she knew that God had not abandoned her. Her son's illness was no surprise to God. It was a test of her faith. Would she trust God, or would she succumb to her feelings of despair?

Even if God chose not to heal her son, that meant He had a good purpose, and she would trust in Him.

Ladies, I want to encourage you today...

Hold on to God's **promise**... Rely on God's **power**... Rest in His ever **present** help in time of need...

In spite of how your situation appears... Believe in God... *His promises, power, and presence are sure!*

Rise up in faith, and utter with the Shunnamite her bold declaration of faith, "It is well with my child! It is well with my husband! It is well with this mom!"