

Elisha Raises a Dead Boy to Life

(2 Kings 4:8-37)

Introduction

Have you ever made a promise you knew you couldn't keep? ("If you buy me this, I'll never ask for another thing the rest of my life, I promise!") It's easy to make promises, and it's easy to break them. God gives you and me lots of promises in His Word, the Bible. Although some may seem impossible for Him to keep, God is faithful; He will always keep His promises.

One day a promise was made to a woman in the Bible that seemed totally impossible for God to keep. God's Word doesn't tell us her name – only that she lived in the town of Shunem.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for being a faithful God who never breaks His promises. I pray that you will inspire us with the desire to be faithful, too. Please Lord, teach us to be honest and thoughtful in everything that we do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Remember that the LORD your God is the only God and that he is faithful. (Deuteronomy 7:9a)

Lesson

We have been learning about the prophets of God. Last week we learned that God used Elisha to miraculously provide for a poor widow. This week we will learn that God uses Elisha to miraculously raise a rich woman's promised son back to life.

2 Kings 4:8

One day Elisha went to the town of Shunem. A wealthy woman lived there, and she urged him to come to her home for a meal. After that, whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for something to eat.

Elisha often visited a town called Shunem. A woman who lived there invited Elisha and his servant, Gehazi, to eat dinner with her and her husband whenever Elisha traveled through Shunem.

One day the woman shared an idea with her husband.

2 Kings 4:9-10

She said to her husband, "I am sure this man who stops in from time to time is a holy man of God. (10) Let's build a small room for him on the roof and furnish it with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. Then he will have a place to stay whenever he comes by."

This Shunammite woman was so fond of Elisha that she and her husband decided to build a guest room for him and furnish it with a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp. They wanted to show Elisha kindness and hospitality.

2 Kings 4:11-12

One day Elisha returned to Shunem, and he went up to this upper room to rest. (12) He said to his servant Gehazi, "Tell the woman from Shunem I want to speak to her." When she appeared,

The next time Elisha arrived, the lady showed him his new room. Elisha was so thankful for her kindness, he asked the lady what he could do for her.

2 Kings 4:13

Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tell her, 'We appreciate the kind concern you have shown us. What can we do for you? Can we put in a good word for you to the king or to the commander of the army?'" "No," she replied, "my family takes good care of me."

Elisha wanted to return kindness to the woman, but she told him that she was happy with what she had and didn't need anything else.

2 Kings 4:14

Later Elisha asked Gehazi, "What can we do for her?" Gehazi replied, "She doesn't have a son, and her husband is an old man."

Even though she told Elisha that she didn't need anything, he still wanted to do something for her.

When Gehazi told Elisha that the woman was childless, it gave him an idea of how to bless her.

2 Kings 4:15-16

“Call her back again,” Elisha told him. When the woman returned, Elisha said to her as she stood in the doorway, (16) “Next year at this time you will be holding a son in your arms!” “No, my lord!” she cried. “O man of God, don’t deceive me and get my hopes up like that.”

The prophet promised the birth of a son. The Shunammite woman and her husband were old; they had given up all hope of ever having children. This news was too good to be true! Children are a gift from God. She said to Elisha, *“Don’t be kidding me about this!”*

2 Kings 4:17

But sure enough, the woman soon became pregnant. And at that time the following year she had a son, just as Elisha had said.

Just as Elisha promised, the Lord gave her a son as a special gift. Can you imagine how very happy this made the woman? God had promised her a son and He was faithful to keep that promise.

But that’s not the end of the story. The baby grew into a boy. Then, one morning something terrible happened to this little boy.

2 Kings 4:18-19

One day when her child was older, he went out to help his father, who was working with the harvesters. (19) Suddenly he cried out, “My head hurts! My head hurts!” His father said to one of the servants, “Carry him home to his mother.”

Quickly a servant carried the boy back to the house.

2 Kings 4:20

So the servant took him home, and his mother held him on her lap. But around noontime he died.

The woman held her son on her lap. But about noontime, the boy died. How sad, her promised son was dead.

What went wrong? Had God broken His promise? When something bad happens that you don’t understand, is God still in control? [Teacher, discuss hard situations the children are facing at home, school, and so on.]

Even in these hard situations, God is faithful, He always keeps His promises. God has promised to love us with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3) and that He will never leave us (Hebrews 13:5).

God loves you and is always with you, no matter what happens. Hebrews 13:6 says, “The Lord is my helper.” He will help you through the hard times. He promises that “all things work together for good” (Romans 8:28). Somehow, some way, He will cause good to come out of the worst situation.

Do you think the Shunammite woman wondered what good would come out of this situation as she held her dead son in her arms? Did she lose hope?

2 Kings 4:21-22

She carried him up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and left him there. She sent a message to her husband: “Send one of the servants and a donkey so that I can hurry to the man of God and come right back.”

She carried the boy upstairs to Elisha’s room, laid him on the bed and decided to get on her fastest donkey and go find Elisha. She hadn’t lost hope; she trusted that God had a plan.

2 Kings 4:24

So she saddled the donkey and said to the servant, “Hurry! Don’t slow down unless I tell you to.”

She wanted to get there as fast as she could.

When the mother arrived, she told Elisha all that had happened, and about the cold little form that lay on his bed.

2 Kings 4:29

Then Elisha said to Gehazi, "Get ready to travel; take my staff and go! Don't talk to anyone along the way. Go quickly and lay the staff on the child's face."

Elisha told his servant to run as fast as he could to the dead boy and not to get distracted by anyone along the way. Then he tells him to do a strange thing: lay his staff across the boy's face.

2 Kings 4:31

Gehazi hurried on ahead and laid the staff on the child's face, but nothing happened. There was no sign of life. He returned to meet Elisha and told him, "The child is still dead."

As soon as Elisha got to the house he went upstairs. He entered his room, shut the door and prayed.

2 Kings 4:32-33

When Elisha arrived, the child was indeed dead, lying there on the prophet's bed. (33) He went in alone and shut the door behind him and prayed to the LORD.

He knew that only God had the power to bring this promised son back to life, and he believed that God would.

Hard things will happen in your life that you won't understand. But God is faithful—that means He will always do what He has promised. You can depend on Him no matter what. He is in control of every situation. Sometimes things don't always turn out the way you want or expect. But you can still thank God that He loves you and that He is with you and will help you. You can trust that He has the power to cause good to come out of bad situations.

As Elisha stood by the bedside of the dead little boy, he believed God's power could bring this boy back to life.

2 Kings 4:34

Then he lay down on the child's body, placing his mouth on the child's mouth, his eyes on the child's eyes, and his hands on the child's hands. And as he stretched out on him, the child's body began to grow warm again!

The body of the boy began to grow warm. But, there was still no sign of life.

2 Kings 4:35

Elisha got up, walked back and forth across the room once, and then stretched himself out again on the child. This time the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes!

Elisha stretched himself again upon the child. Suddenly the boy awoke, sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

2 Kings 4:36-37

Then Elisha summoned Gehazi. "Call the child's mother!" he said. And when she came in, Elisha said, "Here, take your son!" (37) She fell at his feet and bowed before him, overwhelmed with gratitude. Then she took her son in her arms and carried him downstairs.

Elisha, by God's power, brought this little boy back to life! Her promised son was alive! What other promised Son did God bring back to life? (Jesus!)

The Shunammite woman had trusted God even in this hard situation. When you are having a hard time at home or school, you can trust that God will cause good to come out of what seems like a bad situation. God is faithful.

The woman fell at Elisha's feet and bowed to the ground to show her gratefulness to God. Then she picked up her son. God had given him to her once and now He had given the son back to the mother a second time. God is a faithful God! He always keeps His promises.

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to thank You for always being there for us when we go through difficult situations. Teach us to trust that You can turn the bad things in our lives into blessings. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Toss for it

Students toss a beanbag to earn points for correctly answered review questions.

Place several rows of numbered cards face down with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern. (Make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too!) Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

For a correctly answered review question, a player tosses the beanbag onto a card, reveal the points he received for his team.

- Numbered cards = 50 points
- Face cards = 100 points
- Aces = 200 points
- Jokers = 0 points (or, 150, if you prefer!)

If the child answers incorrectly, give the other team a chance to answer that question. If neither team knows, give the answer and ask that question again later. Have student pick up the card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game.

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What was the name of the town where the woman lived that Elisha often visited? (Shunem.)
2. What did the woman and her husband do to show God's love to Elisha? (They built him and his servant a guest room and invited him to stay with them.)
3. What did Elisha do to show God's love to the Shunammite family? (He thanked them and asked God to give them a son.)

4. In what ways can we show God's love to each other? (Pray for each other. Help each other. Think about other's feelings. Do what someone else wants. Give up something you care about to help someone else. Be kind.)
5. What terrible thing happened to the little boy? (He died.)
6. Does God ever break a promise? (No!)
7. What are some of the promises of God? (He will love us with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3); He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5); that He'll be our helper (Hebrews 13:6); all things work together for good (Romans 8:28))
8. What did the woman do with the body of her son after he died? (She carried him up to Elisha's room and laid him on the bed.)
9. After she laid the boy on Elisha's bed, what did the woman do? (She saddled up her fastest donkey and went to find Elisha.)
10. What did Elisha tell his servant to do? (Run as fast as he could to the dead boy and lay his staff on the face of the child.)
11. What did Elisha do when he got to the house? (He entered the room, shut the door and prayed.)
12. After he prayed, what did Elisha do to bring warmth back to the boy's body? (He lay on the child and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. He stretched himself out on the child.)
13. What did the boy do just before he woke up? (He sneezed seven times.)
14. What is today's memory verse? (Remember that the LORD your God is the only God and that he is faithful. (Deuteronomy 7:9a))
15. What two gifts were given in today's lesson? (The Shunammite woman built a room for Elisha; God gave the woman a son.)

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