

Lesson 126

The Increase of the Widow's Oil

STORY ELEMENTS:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: 2 Kings 4:1-7 • Setting: circa 847 B.C. • Main Characters: God, Elisha, and a Hebrew widow • Plot: One of the sons of the prophets dies and leaves his family in danger of | <p style="text-align: right;">servitude.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key word(s): “ _____ ” • Climax: <i>2 Kings 4:5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.</i> |
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Debt

1. (v 1) The “sons of the prophets” was a society of men dedicated to prophetic ministry and to calling Israel back to the LORD. In our passage, one of these prophets died, which left his wife and children destitute, in debt, and in danger of predatory creditors.
 - (a) In ancient days, a person who had a debt that could not be paid was often forced into _____ to repay the debt. The Bible softened this practice, which was more severe in other nations.

Leviticus 25:39 And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: 40 But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubile: 41 And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

- (b) Without any way to pay the debt, the prophet's widow pleaded with _____ to rescue her children from impending slavery.

Deliverance

2. (vv 2-5) Elisha told the woman, “What shall I do for thee?”, meaning, “I don't know what to do?” Even a prophet could not erase debt. He could, however, miraculously provide a means to pay the debt.
 - (a) After learning the that the only thing of any value the woman owns is a cruse of oil, Elisha instructs her to _____ as many empty containers from her neighbors as possible.
 - (b) Then, with her and her children _____ in the house, the widow was to fill all the borrowed containers from her own cruse of oil.

(c) Why do you think she was instructed to fill the pots alone with her children in the house? _____

3. (vv 6-7) As the widow poured her small bit of oil out into the multitude of jars, the oil was miraculously _____, the jars were filled, and the woman was able to sell the oil and pay off the debt.

Application

4. Notice the widow was instructed to use what she had. The same is true of our talents and abilities – we are called to use them for God’s glory. This truth applies to many areas of life. Matthew Henry noted, “The way to increase what we have is to use it...It is not _____ the talents, but trading with them, that doubles them.”¹

5. The year of Jubilee is one of the most poignant Old Testament pictures of the Gospel and Christ's renewing all things.

(a) Without Christ, we are debtors and slaves to _____. (2 Pet. 2:19) With Christ, we are freed from sin. (Rom. 6:18)

(b) During the year of Jubilee, all land was returned to the families they were originally assigned to during the conquest of Canaan. So also will Christ “reset” creation; all things will be renewed, Satan will be stripped of his power over the world, and the Son of Man will regain the world that was lost to sin's _____. (Rom. 8:18-21)

6. The widow's increase of oil demonstrates the sufficiency of Christ. Jesus has fully provided not only for our freedom, but for life in Him. And as the widow lived off of the profit from the oil, so also we live by faith in the power of the _____. (cf Gal. 2:20)

Notes: _____

Answer Key: Key word(s): “bondmen” • 1. a) slavery; b) Elisha • 2. a) borrow; b) secluded; c) Possibly to prevent greedy people from harassing Elisha to do the same for them. • 3. increased • 4. hoarding • 5. a) sin; b) debt • 6. Holy Spirit

How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

¹ Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.