

Worship on October 18, 2020

Order of worship

We Gather

- Prelude (Paul T.)
- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination (or song)
- Scripture 2 King 4:1-7
- Sermon: The Secret of Blessing

We Respond

- Prayer for the people
- Offering (Offertory music – Paul T.)

We Serve

- Benediction
- Postlude (Paul T.)

Ponder Upon Questions

Announcements:

. Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us through this video today. This worship is for Sunday, October 18th, 2020. God is relational and he wants personal relationship with each of us. We can have intimate relationship with God. May God be with you all the time and speak to you in secret.

. To meet and talk to me for the pastor care or any prayer requests, please email me or phone me. revsoonghuh@hotmail.com / 647-208-5381.

. Thank you for your offerings. Let us seek his faithfulness together.

As we come into the presence of God, let us calm down our hearts and minds and focus on our Lord.

Call To Worship

Our call to worship is from Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Let us pray)

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Loving Father God, your presence is all around our lives. Your power sustains our lives. Your love surrounds our hearts and our relationships. Receive all the glory and our praise. We are grateful that YOU came to us to save us from heaven. You gave up all the glories in heaven to be one of us, you gave up everything to come in human form. How can we thank you all. The creator God came into a mere human. We praise this amazing mysterious grace. Thank you.

Holy God, we are grateful and glad to gather in your presence, to be embraced by your mysterious love and mercy. We claim to be your people, but we forget to love as you do. We claim to seek your guidance, but we often turn away from your ways. We ask for your forgiveness, but we fail to forgive as you forgive. We claim to listen for your Word, but we ignore your wisdom. Hear us O Lord, as we pray with honest and sincere hearts. Forgive us, God of love and grace. Guide us in your mercy. Change our hearts and restore your image and characteristics you put in us when you created us. We are yours. Be glorified.

This time, we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers, the good news never gets old. God knows us and loves us. It is as much and as simple as that. We are forgiven, we are loved, and we are set free to start again. Thanks be to God.

Before we read today's scripture, let us pray for the illumination of the Lord.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of Word and wisdom, as we turn to you and focus only on you with all our ears, speak to us. May we hear your voice calling us to deeper faith and to true devotion. We are yours. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture: 2 King 4:1-7

1 Now the wife of a member of the company of prophets cried to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead; and you know that your servant feared the Lord, but a creditor has come to take my two children as slaves."

2 Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" She answered, "Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil."

3 He said, "Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbors, empty vessels and not just a few."

4 Then go in, and shut the door behind you and your children, and start pouring into all these vessels; when each is full, set it aside."

5 So she left him and shut the door behind her and her children; they kept bringing vessels to her, and she kept pouring.

6 When the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." But he said to her, "There is no more." Then the oil stopped flowing.

7 She came and told the man of God, and he said, "Go sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your children can live on the rest."

This is the Word of the Lord / Thanks be to God.

Title: The Secret of Blessing

Today's title is "The Secret of Blessing."

There's the prophet Elisha. A widow comes to Elisha. Vs. 1 says that the wife of a member of the company of prophets cried out to Elisha. It is like the guild of prophets. Her husband was a member of the group of prophets which Elisha led. The Bible does not say anything about why she had

debt, but the creditor was trying to take her two sons away to make them slaves because of her debt.

She is desperate and asking for help to Elisha. Elisha decided to help her and asked.

“What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?”

She thought.. there is nothing much. There's no food, there's no value thing, and there is no money. So, she was about to say nothing, but she thought of the oil left over.

“Oh, there is nothing but I have a jar of oil.”

Elisha said to her, “Go out and borrow vessels. Not just some, but A LOT.”

So, the widow and two sons went around the neighbours. After few hours, at home, they had a lot of containers: jars, jugs, bowls, cups, big and small. They obeyed Elisha and got A LOT. Now, they closed the door.

I knew this story. I've heard it many times. But, when I read the story recently, I had a question why they closed the door?

Let us pause here to think about the reason why. Imagine these three, mom and two boys. They ran up and down the street all day long to get containers and finally they piled up jugs, jars, bowls, and cups in front of them.

In the Message Bible, this is Elisha's instruction, **“Go up and down the street and borrow jugs and bowls from all your neighbours. And not just a few – all you can get. Then come home and lock the door behind you, you and your sons. Pour oil into each container, when each is full, set it aside.”**

Close the door behind you. Lock the door. What do you think the reason is?

Piling up all kinds of containers itself would make people curious. They would want to watch what they are about to do. What if the people who lend them their jugs and jars see their own jugs and jars are filled up with oil with a magical way, what would they think? And how would they react? They would interrupt the widow and take away their containers with the oil.

Or what if the creditors saw what they are doing, what would happen? They would take away all the oils and containers.

That is why Elisha told them to close and lock the door. God can perform miracles. But this time, for the sake of the family, God performed the miracle in secret.

Two important words are here. For the sake of the family and miracle.

God is the God who knows our situations. Elisha, the prophet of God, wanted to help the family and gave detailed instruction, which the widow and the two little boys were able to follow them. They simply obeyed. They went around and asked neighbours. But, they needed courage because no one likes to borrow.

When do you borrow things? Only when you do not have it. If you do have it or if you have the ability to have it, you don't have to borrow it. By borrowing vessels, the family shows their desperation. They are humbling their hearts before God.

God asks us only the things we are able to do. What we need to do is to listen to him and obey what God says to us, just like the widow and the two boys. God is so caring, and for the sake of them, let them know specifically to close and lock the door.

If I am the widow, I would forget to close the door. I would rush to pour oil into the vessels out of amazement and excitement of experiencing the miracle.

Sometimes, God performs miracles in public. Do you remember the story of Jesus feeding 5000 with five loaves of bread and two fish? They were in the field and there was not any private space. Jesus openly thanked for the food and in front of many, he distributed food to everyone. With five loaves of bread and two fish, only.

So, performing the miracle in secret means something in our story today. God wants personal relationship with each and every one of us. Some has stories cannot be shared with others. Wounded deep inside the heart and cannot talk about it outside. Like the woman who were sick for 12 years, she secretly touched the hem of Jesus' clothes. She tried to run away but Jesus called her and, publicly, announced that she was clean. She did not want her to be in the public. She didn't want any attention from others. But, Jesus made her known to everyone, for the sake of her inner healing. Therefore, God can give us miracles in the most suitable way for us, according to our situations and our characteristics. Today, for the widow and the two sons, they needed privacy to protect them, so God told them close the door.

Who can give miracles? God alone. Even though it happened in private, God reveals himself in his power and glory. Imagine that you were the boys carrying the containers to your mom. Or you are the mom. You know how much oil you had. But, you are pouring out oil again and again and again. It never stops until it filled up the last jug. With thankfulness and excitement, they would praise God and give him glory. God saved the family. The two sons were delivered from the hands of the creditors.

Today, I titled today's message, "The Secret of Blessing." First it sounded like the prosperity gospel. But, the blessing is not only the material blessing, but it is the deliverance of the sons. Also, it is obtaining God experience. In other words, it is building the personal relationship with God. That is the true blessing we are after. Lots of containers with oil is great. But, think about who is the Giver? Isn't he more than all the things he has given us? Pursuing material blessings from God is great! But, if we focus only on the material blessings, it's saying that I like the gifts you gave me more than you are. When Jesus had a meal with his disciples, a gentile woman whose daughter was demon possessed came to him. She asked for help. Jesus completely ignored her and told her, **"it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs". (Matt. 15:26)** This is the answer of the gentile woman, **Matthew 15:27, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."**

The blessings we have from God is the crumbs that fall from God's table. I am not saying that blessings from God is nothing. What I am saying is this. Comparing blessings from God and God himself, the blessings are the crumbs.

Today's story is open-ended. After pouring out the last vessel, the oil stopped. Elisha said to her, **"Go sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your children can live on the rest."**

The family is blessed materialistically. The Bible does not give us how they lived afterwards.

Last week was Thanksgiving. I told you to count your blessings. Have you thought of how much you were given by God? Grateful heart? Any complains?

Whether we have much or less, we sure have blessings from God. Now, it is our turn to write the story's ending with our own lives. God gave us blessings and God gave himself to us. How would you respond to God?

Let us pray.

God of love and grace, you are an abundant God. The earth and everything in it is yours. You are the richest Father of all ages. Thank you for this message of blessing. You not only provide us what we can live on, but also you gave yourself for us to have the true life. Thank you.

Today's story does not have an ending. We will write the ending of this story through our lives. You've given us much. We want to use your gifts in the ways you are pleased. We want to make you happy and we long for you to be proud of us. We want to glorify you through our lives. Help us use our blessings in your ways and help us know that you are the true blessing. The relationship with you is our privilege and the best thing can happen in our lives. Thank you for wanting us and thank you for being our God and Father. Be praised with our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Let us continue to pray for the people of God.

Prayer for the people

Glorious and mysterious God, we love to be with you. We want to stay in your presence and enjoy the fellowship with you all the time. Thank you for your presence in our lives and thank you for giving us faith to follow and love you. We are lifting up our prayers and the people who need you. Please listen our prayers and grant us our prayers.

We are praying for the Elder election in our church. Very soon, we are going to count the nominations for elders. We are nervous and excited to find out whose names would be there. Gracious God, we pray for the nominees. Give them comfort and confidence in you. Fill their hearts with courage and passion for you, as they are committing themselves to participate as elders in our congregation. Make them wise and strong. Have mercy upon our church.

Loving God, what do you think about reopening? Two thoughts are colliding every day. We want to have fellowship. We want to have intimate presence of you as we worship together in one space. But, we are worried because of this highly contagious virus, and the number is going up every day.

Our church building is physically ready, but we are being very careful to invite our sisters and brothers into the same space at the same time again. Father God, give your wisdom upon us. Help us.

God of mercy, we are praying for the people who are staying in the street in the coming cold weather. It's already very cold. Because of the Pandemic, many places are closed and it will be more difficult for them to survive the cold weather. Heavenly God, give them place to stay and give them food. Help us participate helping the poor and isolated. Because you gave us generously, we want to share your blessings with others who need our help. Open our eyes and let us see what we can do to help people whom you are holding in your heart.

As pandemic prolongs, many became more vulnerable physically and mentally. Help them hang in there because you are with them. And help this situation. Watch over us with your love and grace. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: Jesus reminds us to give to God the things that are God's. Our God has been so generous and faithful to us. Truly we owe God our lives. So let us give back to God what God has shared with us, so that God's goodness can spread in the world in the name of Jesus. Let the offering of the Lord be received.

Offering – Paul's music

Offering prayer: God of abundance, we bring what we have to share, the fruit of our lives, a portion of your goodness in our lives. Bless our gifts and our lives, so that generosity and justice will join hands and your goodness will be shared with those in need, in Jesus' precious name, Amen.

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. True blessing comes from the secret relationship with our God. Have him in your daily lives. Live like you are holding God's hand. Let us make him proud. May these words of "our" mouth and this meditation of "our" hearts be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.

Ponder Upon Questions:

1. Knowing the plan of Elisha, how many vessels would I be satisfied? (How many vessels would I bring before pouring oil in them?) How many is my "A LOT"?
2. Do I give any private time for God so he can talk to me and he can reveal himself to me?
3. After paying the debts, what kind of life would I live if I were the mother in the story? What would be my ending of this story?