

The Shunammite Woman 2 Kings 8

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[0 : 0 0] I pray to the Lord it's lovely to be back here in the Isle of Harris this weekend and it's always one of the highlights of our year to come to the Isle of Harris very very beautiful part of the world but we don't come for the beauty of the scenery we come for the wonderful people that are here and we always enjoy fellowship with your folks here on Harris and it's just been wonderful to get to know quite a number of you over the years and we just feel honoured and delighted to be here this weekend again and just before I share God's word I'll bring a little update of our children's ministry that we're involved with and I know most of you know about it you receive the newsletters up here and you pray for the work and we really do appreciate you praying for us and I would ask you this evening to continue to pray for us it's very thrilling for Lucy and myself to know that wherever we are in the world that people on the Isle of Harris are actually praying for us and I find that overwhelming it's absolutely wonderful praise the Lord well last year after we left here we was here in October last year and the following month

Lucy and I went out to Nepal and it turned out to be an absolutely wonderful and joyous trip for one or two reasons one of the reasons was one of our oldest boys that was brought up in a children's home got married and we were invited to the wedding which was up in the Gorka district in a little church up there and Denys when he was in the children's home had given his heart to the Lord and he studied well and he trained to be an accountant but there wasn't really much accountancy work for him in Nepal so eventually he ended up getting a job as an accountant in Dubai we were quite concerned when we heard he was going to Dubai we thought maybe he'll end up working for some very strict Arab that would treat him difficult and it might have a bad time so we prayed much for him as he went out to Dubai and to our joy and amazement and God does answer prayer you know he found himself out there working for a Christian firm from South Korea and they were an import export firm and they'd taken him on to do the wages and do the accounts for them and also give him a lot more training as well and whilst he was out there he went along to the Nepali church a lot of Nepalis work out in Dubai and he attended a church in Dubai where there's 150 Nepalis meet every week which is incredible and they have a Nepali pastor as well and whilst he was at that particular church he met a young lady a Nepali girl and eventually they decided to get married now this girl had left Nepal and gone to work out in Dubai and she didn't know anything about Christianity she hadn't been taught anything of the gospel come from the Gorka district and found herself out in Dubai and met up with a group of Nepali people from the church they encouraged her to go along to the meetings there she gave her heart to Jesus and became a committed

Christian and Denys eventually invited her to marry him and they travelled back to Nepal to get married in Nepal and they arranged the wedding to coincide with the Lucy nice trip over there so we actually went to the wedding which was a really joyful day because it was good to be with them when they got married but also it was lovely to see so many of the older children that had been brought up in a children's home had all gathered up for the wedding some of them we hadn't seen for quite a long while and they all made their way up to Gorka and it was just an absolutely joyful time so that was a really blessed day up in the Gorka district and actually I think the day before that was our first day in Nepal and we travelled down to a little place called Kairini stayed overnight in the hotel because it was too far to go to the children's home and then go back up to the wedding and so we stayed in this hotel in Kairini

I call it the Hilton and it was just unbelievable I've stayed in I've stayed in the hotel before in Kairini and I would not recommend it to anybody it's just absolutely unbelievable but anyway we stayed overnight and the bathroom just wasn't fit to go in really never mind getting ready for a wedding but anyway we survived but the day before we arrived down there in the afternoon and we were invited to visit a school that had been destroyed during the earthquake in 2015 and after the earthquake had happened in 2015 we'd received people began to send money to us and said can you get this out to Nepal and over a period of a few weeks £10,000 was sent to Lucy and I and we just kept sending it out to Nepal to Rishi who runs our children's home and he was taking it out and distributing it to where it was needed that was great because it got right into the very hands of the people that had lost everything and as a result of that £10,000 coming in we were actually able to put five roofs on schools that had been destroyed and one of the schools was fairly close by to this village of Kairini and so we were invited by the headmaster to go up the mountain and visit the school which if you remember last year Lucy had quite a bad back and she was really struggling to get about and we parked the car and looked across the river and you could see up right up on the mountainside was this school and I thought oh this is going to be a test anyway she made it right to the top and all those children were there and it was just absolutely wonderful to see this new school roof that had been put on and the buildings that had been repaired and all the children were sat around out in the open air and they began to tell us and so had the teachers that these children were from the lowest of the low caste Hindus and they're classed as untouchable and if a high caste Hindu was to actually touch one of these children then they would have to go and wash their hands well they were all

God's children and they were beautiful and as soon as I heard that I went and sat amongst them and I put my arms around them and gave them a hug and I would move on a bit and I made sure I touched every one of them and prayed over them and blessed them and I thought there's no child ever stood in front of me that is untouchable and I just wanted to touch them and share the love of Jesus with them and so that was an unexpected side trip really to our trip down to the children's home we eventually arrived down there and we had a wonderful time for a couple of weeks with the children teaching the gospel every night with the kids and then on the last night or the night before the last we had a party it was getting towards Christmas so we had a Christmas party and many of the older children were invited to come along and there was one particular boy that came along to the party with his wife and we hadn't seen this young man for 14 years and he'd had to flee the country when the Maoist uprising was on because otherwise he would have been drafted into the Maoist army against his will so he fled to India and lived in India for quite a number of years and just a little bit prior to this we found out that Lucy picked him up on Facebook and we found out he was back in Nepal married a Christian girl and got a little daughter and so he was very anxious to see us after 14 years and so on the party day in the afternoon this young man called Tez just walked into the grounds of the children's home and Lucy's upstairs so I went up and I said there's someone downstairs to meet you well it was just totally overwhelming really and he just came and threw his arms around Lucy and he just wept and wept together it was just an absolute joyous joyous reunion and to know that even though he'd only spent a few years in the children's home he'd given his heart to the Lord while he was in the children's home he was still going on with God and he still loved the Lord he'd married a Christian girl and he got this beautiful little daughter and last week was it last week they got another little daughter praise the Lord so they now have two children so it was just a time of meeting up with some of the old children that had left the home they came back one young girl flew back from Bahrain and spent the whole time we was at Rishi's she spent the whole time with us and it was just lovely we sat around the table on the first day she was there and she said oh Mervyn and Lucy it is so nice to sit around the table with you again after 10 years we hadn't seen her for 10 years she's working for a family out in Bahrain and still loves the Lord and still going on with God so we had a really blessed time so keep praying for us keep praying for Nepal and for the work that's going on out there

[9 : 44]

God's moving in that nation and many many people are getting saved and we came across a few needs while we were there last time in November and one of them was in a church in Mugling which is like a junction town and we decided that we would help them to build a Sunday school they built a church a number of years ago and they have about 200 members of the congregation and now they're building an extension on it for a Sunday school so we've actually raised the money for them to do that and also we built a house for one of our girls that was brought up in the children's home she married a farm worker and I'm a farm worker so I know farm workers aren't really well off and I know what it's like so I said yes we'll raise money and we've actually raised enough money to build Martha a house and she's got a lovely family there's three children and the fourth one is actually probably going to be born in the new house and the new house is almost finished so God's doing great things and really exciting time and then we came home for Christmas and then back in January we went out to Burma and then on to Thailand and during our trip in Burma we went down to visit a village in the delta region of the Irrawaddy River which is right at the bottom of Burma and right at the top of the Bay of Bengal and a number of years ago there was a very bad cyclone that had come up the Bay of Bengal and it had drowned thousands of people there was a 12 foot wave came in right across the land and just washed villages away and washed people away absolutely dreadful at the time and we sent money out there from a fisherman in Scotland actually who raised quite a lot of money and we sent the money out and bought eight brand new fishing boats and just gave them to the village in the delta region and as a result of that and our friends went down and shared the gospel it was a totally closed area for the gospel as a result of that 42 people got saved and were baptized in the sea and so they was wanting to build a church in that area so that the work would continue to grow and so Lucy and I went down in a little boat we drove for four hours one morning got to the sea the delta region and we got into this little boat and chucked our way down into the Bay of Bengal and we eventually came to the village and we climbed off the boat and it was just so primitive

I'd never seen anything quite like it for a number of years just a very very primitive village and all the land was dead flat and when the tide was in all the land was about one metre above sea level so they're living in a very dangerous area really but that's where they were born that's where they were born and bred so no choice but to live there but God is beginning to raise up a people in that little village there and so we've actually raised the funds and we'll be starting the building work after the rainy season has finished in a few months time so a little update on what's going on from there we moved on to Thailand and visited the works that we're involved in in Thailand and had a really blessed time over there so just a little update really lots of things happening and it keeps us busy but praise God we're here tonight we've been all over the world but we're here tonight and there's not many places where I'd rather be than here tonight praise the Lord we read this evening

I'm going to share God's word I want to speak a little bit tonight and I must just look at my watch because time goes by so quickly we read the story of the Shunammite woman and I'm sure we're all familiar with that story of this Shunammite woman and you know the real key to God blessing the Shunammite woman you'll find in the verses of the scripture that we read in verse probably nine and ten and we read these words and she said to her husband look now I know that this is a holy man of God who passes by us regularly please let us make a small upper room on the wall and let us put a bed for him there and a table and a chair and a lamp stand so it will be whenever he comes to us he can turn in there and this woman had room in her heart for the man of God and she had room because she had room in her heart for God's prophet

God's man it shows to me that she had room in her heart for God and she wanted whenever Elisha was to pass by she wanted to make it possible for this godly man to come and stay in her home where she could have fellowship and where she could be blessed and where she could know and feel the presence of God and so so much so they built a little guest room on top of the house and so that whenever Elisha passed by he would pop in with his servant Gehazi and because of that and because of her heart's desire for the Lord God blessed her and we were talking about this just before we came out tonight you know if we serve God if we are a blessing to God's people or a blessing to people who are in need then God will bless us and if we choose to bless the Lord and choose to serve God and reach out to people there's always a blessing for us as we serve God we never lose out when we serve God and this woman received a tremendous blessing in her life because she made room for Elisha and because she made room for God in her life and we know the blessing was a little boy she didn't have a son and she got this little boy and

Elisha said what shall we do for you should we have a word with the king or should I have a word with the commander of the army and she didn't want any of that and she said no I dwell amongst my own people and sure enough it would be I'm sure the same for you and me tonight if someone came here and said well shall I have a word with the queen would you like to go and live down in London I'm sure you would say no I dwell amongst my own people this is where I want to be and then Gehazi said but she hasn't got a son and Elisha prophesied and said about this time next year you shall have a baby boy you'll have a son and she said oh don't say that because my husband's old and that's just not going to happen don't tell me lies but the miracle happened Elisha was a miracle man and the miracle happened and as it was and as he said it would happen so it did and he got the little boy and tragedy one day the boy was out with the reapers with his dad and tragedy struck and he said my head my head maybe he had some stroke

[17 : 32] I don't know what happened but she came back and they brought him back to the house and he died and this woman had faith you notice in the passage of scripture that she didn't tell her husband that little boy had died she said to her husband get me donkey the fastest one you've got and we're in a hurry and we're going to see the prophet and and when she got on the donkey she said to her servant don't slacken off keep going full street ahead because it was urgent the little boy had died you see if and when her husband challenged her about it and said what are you doing it's not the new moon you don't normally go and see the prophet at this time and she said oh it's okay it's well it's well leave it you know and I reckon that if she'd said to her husband the little boy has died because of the culture and because of the hot country where they was living in that boy would probably have been buried before night but she wanted to give God a chance and she wanted to tell the man of God and so she raced off to

Elisha and we know the story well don't we read it tonight when Elisha came and the boy was raised back to life it was a miracle a miracle of God raising a little boy from the dead but I want to go on a little bit tonight and go to 2nd Kings and chapter 8 and we pick up again Elisha's ministry with a Shunammite woman then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life saying arise and go you and your household and sojourn wherever you can sojourn for the Lord has called for a famine and furthermore it will come upon the land for seven years so the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God and she went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines for seven years it came to pass at the end of seven years that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines and she went to make an appeal to the king for a house and for a land then the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God saying tell me please all the great things

Elisha has done now it happened as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life that there was a woman whose son he had restored to life appealing to the king for a house and for a land and Gehazi said my lord oh king this is the woman and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life and when the king asked the woman she told him so the king appointed a certain officer for her saying restore all that was hers and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now what I want to share a little bit tonight is about God causing God's timing God's timing is perfect and you know when you and I serve the Lord if we are waiting on God and we need God to answer our prayers or if God has called us to do something

God's timing is always absolutely perfect God's never late is never early but is always on time now it happened here that this Shunammite woman we don't even know a name it doesn't even tell us what she's called she's always addressed as the Shunammite woman that's how Elisha called her and she had been away for seven years and when she came back she had to go to the king to ask for a house and for a land maybe someone had moved in she'd been away seven years the house had been empty and she'd come to appeal to the king but she didn't know the king she probably never met the king and it would be quite difficult to go to see the king and say hello Mr. King can I have my house and my land but notice what was happening when she got there

Gehazi Elisha's servant was already having a chat with the king and the king had said to Gehazi tell me all about the miracles that Elisha had done well there's lots of them as you read these passages of scripture here it's tremendous the miracles that took place through Elisha's ministry and he was no doubt telling the king all these miracles and then he came to the part probably where which was the greatest miracle of all when he began to tell the king about the Shunammite woman and how that she'd got this son and how that Elisha had raised this son from the dead and he was just going through this story to the king when he turned around and there she was there she was and he said my lord oh king this is the woman and this is her son this is who

[23 : 14] I'm speaking about this is who I'm telling you about it's just amazing that the Shunammite woman would turn up at the very moment that Gehazi was speaking about her to the king and the problem was solved immediately the problem was solved immediately because she was stood before the king and the little boy and she told the story and immediately the king set out an officer and said yes you can have you can have your house back you can have your land back and you can have everything that the land has produced back over the last seven years God blessed the Shunammite woman from the moment she opened her home for Elisha to use her home God blessed her and right here again we see that God blessed her by giving her house back and by giving her the proceeds of the land

God's timing was absolutely banal absolutely perfect and I'm sure many of us here tonight can testify how God came just at the right time and answered our prayer and I want to encourage each one of you tonight folks that God hears and answers prayer and there's nothing impossible with God and God can work it all out according to his plan at the right time and at the right purpose God is always on time and this woman received a miracle again of everything that she's lost out was all handed back to her at the right time because God was blessing her life and you know friends as we serve the Lord we can see God's hand at work and God's timing is just incredible let me just tell you a little story a number of years ago the girl that runs our children's home in Nepal and we have two children's homes not sorry we have two children's homes in Burma not Nepal

Burma and we have one in Yangon and one 800 miles north in the town of Patau and and Ginsley the girl that runs the children's homes she's actually been here on the Isle of Harris some of you might remember her and one day she got a message to say that the cook who was working in Patau 800 miles north had had an accident on his bicycle and a vehicle had hit the bicycle while he was riding it and the handlebars had spun round and ruptured his sleeve and he was bleeding to death but the people up there didn't really know what was wrong with him they knew he was ill and they knew he had an accident so they took him home and laid him out on his bed and gave him some herbal medicine which wasn't going to save his life and every day it got worse and so they telephoned Ginsley and said you need to come and so she caught the next flight and flew up to Northern Burma and when she got there she set him straight to hospital and they operated on him and I think they took his spleen out

I'm not sure what they did but they saved his life and so that was wonderful but the problem was in Burma you have to pay for your hospital treatment and she didn't have the money but she sent him to hospital to save his life and said get him there get him fixed up and so he came out and he was doing okay but that left Ginsley with a bill and then she was a few days later she was flying back down to Yangon and she was probably going to ring Mervyn Lucy and say can you send him an extra money because we need it with a hospital bill but you know God was watching over the situation and she was in the airport in Patau and stood waiting for the plane and a lady came up to her and said to her I like the dress that you're wearing that's unusual isn't it and this lady was from England and there's Ginsley from Burma never met this woman in her life before she was still there waiting for a plane and a lady totally out of the blue walked up to her and said

I like your dress pace the dress smart you know pace the dress smart you never know do you but anyway she was dressed nicely and this lady admired her clothes and then Ginsley said to the lady where do you come from and she said oh I come from England and Ginsley said oh I've been to England she was shocked the lady from England was shocked I've been to England where did you go into England I went to Preston Preston she said people go to England they go to London but they don't go to Preston what was she doing in Preston and then she told her the story of the children's home and she said I'm actually flying down to Yangon today and going back to the children's home in Yangon and this lady said well I'm flying down to Yangon as well we've been on holiday up in the north bird watching and walking in the mountains and she said can I come and visit the children's home and Ginsley said yes if you want to and gave her the address and they got the plane and they flew down and then the day after the lady turned up right at the time when the children were singing and worshipping God at night they tried all day to get there and every time they got in the taxi oh yes I know where it's at because the taxi driver wanted the fare and then they got lost and it took four taxis to actually get to the children's home but they arrived there and as the children were singing and worshipping God and Ginsley didn't even know whether this couple were

[29 : 21] Christians or not but she said halfway through the singing the children were really singing and rejoicing and this man had walked in stood up at the back and said praise the Lord I can feel Jesus in this place and so she said I knew then they were Christians so I invited them to come and speak and to share with the children and she said we had a wonderful evening together and then she said as he was leaving she said we're flying home tomorrow and she said we have quite a little bit of money left so she said I'd like to give you it for your work and she put her hand in her pocket and emptied all the money that Chad put it in Ginsley's hand exactly the right amount to pay the hospital bill not a penny less not a penny more God's timing absolutely perfect what were the chances of Ginsley meeting a woman from England in an airport on her way back down to Yangon it's just God's timing is perfect exactly the same as this passage that we read tonight when the Shunammite woman stood before the king she was there at exactly the right time and

I want to say to each one of you tonight friends God will do it for you he'll do it for you if you are serving God and walking in God's ways God will work out his plan and his purpose in your life and it's very very exciting and it's wonderful to know that God is in control you know there was another time in the scripture there was lots of stories in the scripture where we read about God's timing there was another time in the book of Esther and Haman had decided he was going to destroy all of God's people bad plan very bad plan people have tried it time and time again it will never happen and Haman had got it into his head that he was going to destroy all of God's people but not only that he'd got it into his head that he was going to destroy Mordecai who was the queen's uncle and so much was his plan his plan was so much advanced that he'd even got the gallows built and he had arrived at the king's palace very early in the morning to persuade the king to let him hang

Mordecai and the Bible says that night the king could not sleep God's hand again and the king couldn't sleep and so like you and I if you couldn't sleep get the books out get the books out the best way to fall asleep is get the book out and start reading and so he said because he was a king he didn't read himself he got his servant to read for him and he said read the diary the chronicles and he came across Mordecai how Mordecai had saved the king's life a while ago and he said was anything done for Mordecai how did we honor Mordecai for saving the king's life was anything done for him and his servant that was reading said no no he said well we should have done something for him who's out in the court well who's outside Haman he was there to come and persuade the king to hang Mordecai and so he said to

Haman come on in so Haman went in and he said the king said to Haman what should we do to the man in whom the king delights well Haman thought that's me and Haman was puffed up with pride he said well let him wear some of the king's clothes Haman was full of pride let him wear the king's cloak and let him be put on the king's horse and let him be paraded up and down the city as though he's the king Mordecai was so sure Haman was so sure it was him and then the king said well go and do it to Mordecai can you imagine Haman's response can you imagine Haman's face when he said go and do it to Mordecai his plans were totally destroyed there was no way now could he go and say I want to hang Mordecai no his plans were totally destroyed

God's timing is perfect hallelujah God moved in the situation and you know friends God timing for you and I see all these men that we spoke about tonight they've all gone where are they well the ones that serve God they're in heaven and you're going to see them all one day but it's our day isn't it it's our day to serve God it's your day we used to sing a little chorus it's your day it's my day it's our day to set the world on fire for God so let's just live like those who've gone before and prayed down the fire as in the days of yours it's your day it's my day it's our day to set the world on fire for God you know these men serve God we read about them in the scripture and they've gone to be with the Lord but it's our day it's our day and God is willing more than willing to use you if you're willing to let him all we have to do is surrender our heart and our life and give him our self and say

[34 : 58] Lord take my life and let it be consecrated Lord today you know friends never in a million years when I was brought up on a farm on a hill farm looking after a few sheep and milking 20 cows when I was 15 years old on my dad's farm never in my wildest dreams did I think that I'd ever be preaching here in Isle of Harris never mind preaching in India Nepal Thailand and Burma never in my wildest dreams but it all starts when we say yes to the Lord and we give him our everything and you know it's exciting following the Lord Jesus Christ and we'll see God's hand at work time and time again we'll see God's timing working in situations in our hearts and in our lives and we'll be amazed we see God's the same God's never changed he's the same yesterday and today and forever and he will still work and move and cause things to happen

I like it in the scripture here where it says and it happened it just so happened hallelujah it just so happened that whilst Gehazi was speaking to the king the Shunammite woman walked in you couldn't arrange it could you you couldn't arrange it you couldn't write a book like this this book is amazing God's word is amazing every time I read the book it thrills my heart God's word is thrilling and if we read it and take it in you know it drives us on and drives us forward there's nothing impossible with God and Paul said I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you all we have to do is give him everything and give him the reins of our life and we'll have an exciting adventure as we go through life and we'll see God's hand at work we'll see

God's provision in a way that we can't even begin to imagine it's amazing God God is amazing and I love him tonight with all my heart and I love God's people and I love you people here on the Isle of Harris let's keep going forward you're busy at the moment building converting this is wonderful isn't it converting a pub into a church I've seen too many churches converted into pubs and I come to the Isle of Harris and you do it the other way around and I say God bless you all for doing that and God will bless you for doing that and let's pray as you move on in what God has got for you here on the Isle of Harris let's pray that many more will be added to your company as you faithfully serve God and preach the gospel God is willing to work with those who are willing to let him are you willing to let him tonight God bless you all Amen