



Sermon Series: Elisha: Seeing the Hand of God at Work

To be used with Session 3: God's Hand in Meeting Other's Needs

Sermon Title Possibilities: What's Your Motivation?

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:8-15; 32-37

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study "Elisha: Seeing the Hand of God at Work," this sermon supports the lesson by focusing on the principles that motivates Christians to meet the needs of others.

Introduction: What happens when a judge enters a courtroom? Those physically able stand to their feet. What moves someone to bless those who curse and persecute them? What drives individuals to pray for those who spitefully use them? What moves people to respond in these ways? I would submit to you that these types of actions happen when God is at work in their lives. He transforms their lives so that they will be more like Christ.

1. Moved by Honor (2 Kings 4:8-10).

Elisha was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. God empowered prophets to proclaim His Word to the nations which included present and future intentions to save and bring judgment. Elisha went to Shunem, a city within the territory of the tribe of Issachar. While in the city a wealthy woman persuaded him to come to her home and dine with her and her husband (v. 9). After multiple visits she persuaded her husband to make a small room from him to stay in when the prophet came through (v. 10). A commandment of hospitality may have prompted her invitation. The LORD commanded His people to show hospitality to strangers (Ex. 21:22). He also called them to show kindness to their enemies (23:4). What moved her to honor the man of God with provisions? She was moved by his position.

We are called to give "honor to those you owe honor" (Rom. 13:7). We respect the position. Because God has the highest position, we honor Him above all others.

2. Moved by Humility (2 Kings 4:11-18).

While relaxing in the room provided, the prophet called the woman before him. He wanted to show his gratitude to her for all the care shown him (v. 13). She had created an environment of appreciation that the prophet felt loved by this family. Elisha asked her how

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he could bless the one who had blessed him. Her response was one of humility. She understood that it is “better to be lowly of spirit with the humble than to divide plunder with the proud” (Prov. 16:19). God already blessed her, and she used what she had to bless the man of God. Although she was childless, she chose to live life without grumbling and arguing, (Phil. 2:14).

What is our mindset? God calls His people to be content with what they have (Heb. 13:5) and to humble themselves in His sight so that He would exalt us in His timing (Jas. 4:10). We should remember that living godly and being content is a great gain (1 Tim. 6:6). We know that “God will supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

3. Moved by Hope (2 Kings 4:32-37).

After some time, the woman’s son became very ill and then died (vs 20-21). We can imagine the pain she felt. She lost the only son she had. How did she respond to her aching heart? She responded with hope. The expectation that God could bring a positive outcome. Her hope moved her to put her dead son in the room of the man of God. Hope in God moved her to go looking for Elisha (v. 25). Her belief that God could change this situation caused her to respond when asked about her state with “It’s all right” (v. 26). With hope, she looked to the prophet to intervene on her behalf without her having to ask (vv. 28-29).

Hope against hope, like David, who knew that God said the baby would die but he fasted and prayed thinking perhaps the LORD would be gracious (2 Sam. 12:22). Life does not always turn out the way we want it to but how we respond is what is important. When sickness or death arrive at your door, do you still hope in God?

Conclusion: Money, pain, fame, material goods, guilt, and belonging often move people to act either positively or negatively. These are short-term motivators that are horizontal in nature. Yet, as a Christian, we are called to a higher standard, a vertical motivator. God calls for us to be motivated by fear of Him (Prov. 1:7; Ps. 111:10), which in turn motivates us to honor, to be humble, and to hope.

Author Bio

Dr. Brian M. Carmichael Sr. is married to Stacey of twenty-seven years. They have four grown children (three boys and one girl) and two grandchildren. He is the pastor of Holy Temple Baptist in Memphis, TN. He is also on faculty with MCUTS of Union University. He received his BSCL from Union University (Jackson, TN) and his MDIV and Ph.D. from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. As a Christian leader, he has a passion for preaching, teaching, disciple-making, and all things church related.