Bold: Unleash Your Faith – Part 4

# What Do You Have?

# (2 Kings 4:1-7)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. We’ve been talking about Unleashing Your Faith and we’ve been looking at various miracles, different ways that God answers prayer, and we’ve seen his miraculous power at work. Over the past weeks we’ve seen miracles of deliverance, miracles of healing, and miracles of protection and today we’re going to be looking at 2 Kings chapter 4 as we look at an amazing miracle of provision.

In this section of Scripture, we’re going to see a widow who’s desperate, because all she could see was lack, all she could see was what she didn’t have, but the prophet Elisha was about to show her that she had everything she needed. And so, today I want to bring you a word of encouragement, because all through scripture every time you see a story of need, you also find a miracle of provision. And so, let’s allow God to speak to us as we begin reading in second Kings, chapter 4,

“The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves." Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?" "Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil" (2 Kings 4:1-2).

As we’re introduced to this story there’s a woman, we don’t know her name, but we do know that she’s a widow who had a great financial need. She was in debt, she’d lost her husband, her creditor was coming for collection, and because she had no way to pay him off, his intention was to take her two sons as slaves. And so, we recognize that this widow has a very significant need and yet the power of our miracle working God is about to explode and transform her whole situation.

I’m believing that God is going to do something deep in our souls, building our faith and releasing the miraculous in our lives today. You see, the reality is that many of us here this morning have significant needs, but time and time again in the Scriptures we discover that when we don’t have what we need, it’s at that very point that we discover that God is all we need. It was Jacob who saw a ladder coming down from heaven and recognized that God comes down to be with us. Moses leads the children of Israel to the promise land, but he relies upon God, because it’s really God who by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night that is leading them. We see this in the Ark of the Covenant, in the Temple, and in the Holy of Holies that God comes down to be with his people. And then, in fulfillment of ancient prophecy, Jesus comes, born of a virgin, perfect in every way, coming as our Savior and meeting our greatest need; the forgiveness of sins. And so, whether it’s bread from heaven, or meat delivered by birds, over and over and over in every story of need, there’s a miracle of provision. It’s just as the Bible says in Philippians chapter 4,

“My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

And so, as we consider God’s miraculous provision, we need to acknowledge that God promises to meet our needs; and yet we often misinterpret what we’re expecting him to do, because we filter his promise through an innate desire for him to provide all of our wants. But there’s a really big difference between what we need and what we want, and so, we’re going to look at three principles of God’s miraculous provision, number one being that when God guides…

## 1. God Guides

When God is the one guiding you, he will meet all of your needs. When God guides, his provision is always following. When God guides, even if everything around you is barren, he will satisfy your needs. The prophet Isaiah tells us,

“The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail” (Isaiah 58:11).

And so, an important concept to understanding this is to know that God will only guide those who are willing to be guided. You see, God can only guide a moving vehicle, because like a steering wheel, if the vehicle isn’t moving it can’t be directed. For example, if you’re sitting in your parking spot you can turn your wheel all the way to the left and you can turn the wheel all way to the right, but if you’re not moving it’s not going to make any difference. You’ve got to put it in gear, you’ve got to let out the clutch, you’ve got to start moving… and in the same way, it’s your willingness to obey God, to step out in faith, that prepares you for his guidance and your miraculous provision.

Now how many of you know that sometimes God’s guidance doesn’t make sense?

For example, in Acts chapter 16, the apostle Paul set out to visit the churches that he helped to start on his first missionary trip. But the Bible says that Paul and his companions were kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia, the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to enter Bithynia, and then finally one-night Paul had a vision of a man begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:6-9).

And so, sometimes the way that God guides us just doesn’t make sense. You know, if God wanted Paul to go to Macedonia why didn't he just tell him? And I think that sometimes God just wants to get us moving, doing something, anything, so he starts us out on a certain course to fulfill a certain purpose, and then at just the right time he gives us guidance we need, even changing our course. You know, I think in a lot of ways God’s like the captain of a large boat. You may be moving along just fine, but God’s there, he’s at the helm guiding you, he’s out of sight, watching over you, and steering you away from disaster, storms, or hidden dangers in the water. Or maybe at other times he’s like a good coach, who waits and doesn’t put you in the game until you’re ready.

Isaiah tells us, “The Lord will guide you always…”, but there are prerequisites to receiving that divine guidance, we’ve got to be moving, we’ve got to be in tune with the Spirit of God, and we’ve got to be walking in faith and obedience. We see that here with the widow as we return to our story in verse three,

“Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars and as each is filled put it to one side" (2 Kings 4:3-4).

Now, it doesn’t make sense, but God guides her through the prophet Elisha, just like he said to Moses, “Throw down your staff”. Or to the invalid, Jesus said, “Pick up your mat and walk”, to a blind man, “Wash your eyes”, to a leper, “Go to the priest”, to Peter, “Get out of the boat and walk!” You see, God guides, but he often requires radical obedience, like go to your neighbors for empty jars, or step out of the boat and come to me walking on the water, but something that just seems totally ridiculous to the logical mind. However, it’s there when that act of faith to a command, to the Word of God, is mixed with our obedience that God moves.

Today, God may have already put in place what you need to meet your need, but he’s simply waiting for you to begin moving by faith. Maybe you need to pray, asking him what to do? You know, maybe you need to take the next step, begin walking into the water, moving in a certain direction even if the water’s up to your waist? But whatever it is, when you let God guide you, when you’re walking in sync with his Spirit and his will, number two, his provision will always be there. God provides.

## 2. God Provides

Notice how Elisha responds to the widow, “What do you have?” he asks. In other words, “What do we have to work with? What has God already put in place?” It’s just like when God asked Moses, "What’s that in your hand?" (Exodus 4:2). “A staff,” he replied. And so, God tells Moses, “Throw it down” and it turned into a snake. You see, God guides and he told him, “Reach out and take it by the tail.” Moses obeyed, reaching out, taking hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. It became a powerful tool in his hand, because where God guides, he also provides.

Notice that Elisha didn’t ask the widow, “What do you want” or “what do you need” he asked, “What do you have?” And the Lord has really impressed upon me this week that we need to stop grumbling and complaining about what we don’t have, waiting for what we want, and start moving, start working with what we have.

Elisha asked her, “What do you have?” And she replied, “Nothing… Nothing, except this little jar of oil.”

Now, isn’t that so much like us, you know, when all you can see, all you can think about, is what you don’t have? Well, that’s exactly where this widow was, but God’s going to show her that she needed to start working with what she had. You see, it may be a little in our hands, but in the hands of our miracle working God… Church we need to unleash our faith! God’s given us everything we need to do everything he wants us to do. And so, she’s got this little jar of oil and the Bible tells us in verse five, that the widow left Elijah,

“She shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring” (2 Kings 4:5).

Her sons kept gathering jars from their neighbors and she kept pouring. You see, our God specializes in doing a lot with a little. And some of you might be thinking, “I’ve just got a little” but I've got a mortgage payment, a car payment, and I still haven’t paid off the credit card from last Christmas. And yet, I wonder if this morning God’s calling us into a place of deeper faith, greater stewardship, where we begin letting that little flow into our lives.

There’s an amazing story in the Old Testament, when the Army of Israel was afraid of a giant Philistine named Goliath. He was the champion of the Philistine army, but a little shepherd boy named David with a little bit of faith and a little stone said,

“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (1 Samuel 17:26).

You see, that little shepherd boy, with a little faith, and a little stone took that giant down. While everybody else thought he was too big to beat, David knew that in the name of the Lord he was too big to miss. And I tell you that, because Jesus made it very clear, if you have just a little bit of faith, not a lot, he said,

“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20).

We serve a God who can do a lot with a little and many of you know this, because we started this church in what was the size of a large two-car garage. And today, we’re in a 6000 square-foot building, looking at how we can best utilize the space, making accommodations for overflow and working with what we’ve got. You see, God always provides, he gives us what we need at just the right time, and so we’ve got to keep working with what we have, and pouring, and pouring, and pouring.

One of my favorite examples of this was when our family was looking to adopt a child internationally. Even though Dana and I only had a little, we had this big burden on our hearts, and so we began looking into it, but shortly thereafter God closed that door, because he had something better for us. And so, we began looking at domestic adoption, but there were still the financial implications, we still had a “little”, but there were some of you here who felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to give. And together we poured out our “little” and some of you are literally part of Jeremy’s family, because you’ve invested in his story.

You see, when God’s the one guiding you, his provision’s always there, and you may have moments where you begin to question yourself, but God’s provision is always there. When God guides, when he's leading and you’re obeying, he always provides. And then the third thing I want to point out is that God multiplies.

## 3. God Multiplies

Now God could work all by himself, but he wants to unleash your faith, so he invites you to be a part of his miracle, and he simply asks you to give. The moment you begin to give what you have, he begins to miraculously multiply it. Let’s look at verse six and see what happened when the widow poured out all that she had. Verse six says

“When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing” (2 Kings 4:6).

All this widow had was a little jar of oil, but Elisha knew that if she would trust God and pour out what she had, that God would multiply her oil, filling her jar so that she could keep on pouring. And so, her sons kept bringing her jars and she kept pouring; as long as there was an empty jar, God would fill it, but when there were no more jars, the oil stopped flowing. You see, when God guided, she gave what little she had, and God provided everything she needed. When they ran out of jars, verse seven tells us, she told Elisha and he said,

“Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left” (2 Kings 4:7).

God miraculously provided for her, paid her debt to her creditor, multiplying what she gave so that she and her sons could live on what is left.

In 2012 when Christ’s Community Church first began meeting in Emmitsburg, we began serving this community, we didn’t have much to offer; but we came week after week, and we poured out what we had. This is important, because when we show God our faith, we get to see his faithfulness as he multiplies what we give. And the Bible tells us that,

“We ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves” (2 Corinthians 4:7, NLT).

And so, you and I have become those jars and God has guided us, he has provided for us, and he’s continued to multiply our resources. As we bring him our empty jars it’s clear that this great power is from God and not from ourselves. And as we give, pouring out our love, serving this community, letting his light shine in our hearts, we can’t miss the power of this principle of multiplication.

You know, just think about this widow, as she’s pouring out the oil when did the multiplication happen? Did God multiply her little bit of oil before she poured it or as she poured it? It was as she poured it right? And so, what I am saying is that God miraculously multiplies what is given in faith.

Today there are those of you here whom God is inviting to be part of that miracle. The Word of God actually tells us this in 2 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 10,

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness” (2 Corinthians 9:10).

And so, as God supplies seed to the sower, seed for the farmer, it becomes bread for our meals, the apostle tells us that multiplication is already happening. But he tells us that God supplies and increases your store of seed so that you can do what? So that you can sow it, so that you can plant that seed, so that by faith as you’re sowing you can be part of that miracle. The whole point of the miracle is for you to sow, growing in your faith, enlarging the harvest, the blessings, and rewards of your righteousness.

And it’s this principle of giving that goes all the way back to the beginning, because the Bible tells us in Genesis chapter 4,

“When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock…” (Genesis 4:3-4, NLT).

And so, Cain brought “some”, but Abel brought the best, Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and God accepted his gift. We see an example of this again with Abram in Genesis chapter 14. Now remember, this was centuries before God gave Moses the law and yet here Abram gave King Melchizedek (who was a type of Christ) a tenth of everything (Genesis 14:20). And so, there is nothing that honors God and testifies to your faith in God as your provider like giving him the tithe, that first 10% of your income, because God always has to be first. That’s why Jesus said,

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

It’s as we choose to give God first place in every area of our lives that we find ourselves aligned with the will of God, living in the supernatural, and experiencing his miraculous provision. You see, God has a purpose and a calling for your life and when you put him first, you’re finally ready to carry that responsibility. Some of you may be preparing for a miracle of provision in your own lives, while others of you might be the answer to someone else's prayer. In fact, this is what the Bible tells us, Paul says,

“You will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God” (2 Corinthians 9:11, NLT).

And so, God guides, God provides, and God multiplies. Why? So you could have more for yourself? No! He said so that you can always be generous, which will result in thanksgiving to God.

And so, let me ask you this as we close. Are you collecting lots of jars so that the oil keeps flowing? Are you believing God for big things or are you limiting Him? You see, there’s a big difference between faith and fear. Fear worries about running out, but faith looks for opportunities to give. Fear tells you that you can’t afford to tithe, you can’t afford to give, but faith recognizes that 90% with God’s blessings goes a whole lot farther than 100% without. And so, fear says I don’t have enough, but faith says that my God is more than enough. The apostle Paul says it this way,

“My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

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