

Weekly Word

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By Mary Ruth Stone

Devotion

Mothers in the Bible: The Shunammite Woman

The Shunammite woman is an interesting part of the life of the Prophet Elisha. She was a hospitable woman who often fed the prophet as he traveled past her house. Eventually she and her husband built a room onto their house so the prophet could rest during his visits. Elisha was grateful for this kindness and wanted to return a favor to them.

Elisha and his servant Gehazi discussed what might bless them. After considering various possibilities, the prophet told the barren woman that she would have a child the following year. The prophecy sounded too good to be true. It was exactly what she wanted, but she was afraid to believe. What if it didn't happen? What if she allowed herself to believe only to be disappointed? She warned Elisha against such a let down.

True to the word of the prophet and the grace of God, she conceived and bore a son. The child grew until he was old enough to go to the field with his father. One day after suffering great pain in his head, he died on his mother's lap. She laid him on Elisha's bed and, without telling her husband, went and summoned the prophet. She fell down, grabbed his feet and said: "Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" Elisha discerned her deep distress. He rushed to her home, and God restored the child.

Here was a woman with the gift of hospitality. She had learned to live with her barrenness. She obviously preferred barrenness over loss and grief. God gave her a son twice—once in birth and once in restoration. She received what she wanted two times over.

It is wonderful when such miracles occur. However, sometimes what comes is God's full measure of grace sufficient for us to accept disappointments and losses. Such times are difficult to understand and painful to bear. But they are possible to bear and often open doors to minister to others who suffer similarly. God's grace is sufficient for our need, even the needs of a mother's broken heart.

Scripture

"Then he said, 'About this time next year you shall embrace a son.' And she said, 'No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!'"

(2 Kings 4:16).

This 'n That

"Submitting to God's pruning can be painful. Yielding requires persistent faith. We must hold tightly to God's character with tears in our eyes."

— Anna Britt Chole

Prayer

Lord,

Help me trust You even when I don't understand. Amen.

In His Grace,
Mary Ruth