

Responsibility in Revival
“Too Little for So Much” – Part 1
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As transcribed by Jane Vaughn

In Second Kings, Chapter 4, we read a story about Elisha. It begins like this. ¹“Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant, my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. ²And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, except a pot of oil. ³Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels from all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. ⁴And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. ⁵So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. ⁶And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.” The next verse declares that she took it to the man of God and he said, “Sell the oil, pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children.”

The first thing we can see here is *too few vessels for the oil*. This begins as a sad story, I think. A lady comes to the man of God and declares she has a problem. Further, her husband was such a godly man she somehow feels she can come to Elisha on these, the husband’s merits. It’s a tragic thing when we only represent ourselves based on the merits of another: a husband or wife or a son or daughter or even a church or a denomination. “Lord, You know I grew up in this denomination; I’m *identified* with it.” “I’m Mrs. So-and-So. You know my husband. Well, I just....” The answer comes back to the woman from Elisha: “What shall I do for you?” Or, “Let’s talk about *you!*” She responds, “Well, my husband was such a godly man and he was a good servant for you. He did have one little problem: he left us in this huge debt.”

Indebtedness in Bible days, especially in Old Testament days, was tremendously terrorizing. When one’s debt came due and he was unable to pay it plus the usury (we would call it “interest”), it was legal for the lender to come and take his possessions. If he didn’t own anything, they could take the children and make them servants. Or, they could literally take the wife out of the home and make her a servant. It was no small thing to be in debt. It was a very heavy load.

If the debt was large enough, they could take the man of the house, the head of the household, and make him a servant until he could pay it all off. Now, he never could pay off the debt, because the usury was so high that if the debt couldn’t be paid when he was taken into servitude, the interest continued to compound (interest upon interest) and eventually it was all due. In other words, a man could become a servant with no pay for life. Servants were not hirelings, therefore they received no income.

This was a very grave situation, and we can see it accurately represents how we feel at certain times of our lives – certainly before we met Jesus. There was an enormous debt! We could never pay the price for our sin! Didn’t we used to sing it? “I owed a debt I could not pay. He paid a debt He did not owe...” What a tremendous insight the writer of that chorus had! And that’s the situation here, for the woman and her sons. It would be impossible for her to pay off the indebtedness.

Wisely, however, she went to Elisha. We can see him as the man of God – the prophet, one who has a word from God – or we could legitimately see him as a type of Christ. Either way really doesn’t change this contextual meaning at all. She goes to him and says, “I have an *insurmountable problem*.” Let’s pause here, just long enough to recall that nothing is impossible with God (Mt.19:26; Mk.10:27; Lk.18:27). I believe it’s time for the Church, and individuals in the Church, to be able to come back to bringing insurmountable problems to the Lord. “Got any mountains you can’t tunnel through?” Remember those old choruses? “God specializes in things thought impossible. And He will do what no

other power can do!” *If the people of God don’t believe in the God of the impossible, how do we expect the sinners to believe?*

The woman comes to Elisha and says, “I’ve got this problem.” His response is something like this: “Alright. What is it you want me to do *for you?*” For you? “Let’s talk about *you!*” She says, “Well, here’s my situation. It is really an impossible thing. I can’t handle this!” With great wisdom, he says to her: “All you’re focused on...” – now hear this, Church! – “*All you’re focused in on is what you **don’t** have.* I’ve got a great question for you! What *do* you have?”

What do you have? So many Christians are throwing “pity-parties” today – they feel so sorry for themselves and all their hard times. Have you noticed that? We shouldn’t go to their parties! It only feeds and even extends their negative situation when we commiserate with them. When you talk to such people and they whine, “You know I don’t have anything. Everything’s been taken from me. I tell you, I’ve given up everything... and it just seems as if...”

And Elisha said what we ought to say to one another! “What do you have?” She responded, “I don’t have anything. Oh, yeah, *I only have this little pot of oil.*”

What do you have, Church? You have the ***oil of the Holy Spirit*** in your life! Elijah says, “I’ll tell you what your problem is, you don’t pour out what you have! You don’t use it!” Then he says, “What you need to do is *borrow some vessels.*” This frustrated me throughout my growing-up years in Sunday School, because it never made sense to me that she had to go out and borrow vessels! I innately knew there had to be a deeper meaning than just this lady needing something to pour oil into so she could go out, sell it, and pay off her indebtedness.

I knew there was another meaning and no one ever made it clear to me, or perhaps I didn’t have the spirit of understanding to receive it at that time. But one day, I saw it. ***This is one of the most explicit passages to teach what true evangelism is all about!*** What the Lord is saying to you, my Friend is, “Go out and borrow some vessels that you can pour oil into. And don’t just borrow a few! Borrow enough!” He says “borrow” because there’s a tendency on the part of people who pour into others to think they then own them. It’s “borrow.”

As soon as I have an input into someone’s life, there’s that tendency (it’s a test for the pourer!) to make the recipients dependent, utterly dependent on me! “I’m their spiritual mother. They wouldn’t dare listen to anyone else!” “I’m their spiritual father. They better just hear it from me!” And you know what that’s like? It’s a tragic thing! Because *children never choose to wean themselves!* I raised two children – neither of them ever voted “yes” on being weaned. ☺ And they voted a very loud “no” at 2a.m! I know most of you can identify with that! ☺

There must come a time in our lives, when we are willing to pour into someone else – pour until they are full of what we already have, and then sell that, as it were. They are “borrowed vessels,” not our permanent possession. Let them go – let them move on – let them grow up further – wean them. It’s time for them to grow up beyond what we can offer. Give them to someone else, so to speak, who has a little more insight, a little more experience, a little more knowledge, who can take them beyond where we are.

Do you know that whole pastorates can be made up of “babies” who have known the Lord umpteen years, but are never permitted to grow up beyond a certain level because it is so “need-meeting” to the leaders? How tragic! Those “babies” ought to grow up and have babies who grow up who have babies to grow up who have babies... and so on! That’s the Church! The Church ought to be made up of every generation alive on earth today! Every child of God has something to give to someone else. As long as there were vessels to pour into, the oil didn’t stop!

Let me tell you another tragedy that we do to ourselves in the Church! We put a premium on certain ages. We somehow feel that the only truly qualified people in a church are between this age and that age, married, with x-number of this, and a certain amount of income. Then everyone who's beyond that age is kind of relegated to pillarship! And we say of them, "Good ole Sister So-and-So. Good ole Brother So-and-So. They're "pillars in the church," which means they hadn't better speak up. Just give us your money and sit there!

And we say of any "immature" individuals in the church, "You're too young! You're too young to flow in the gifts. You're too young to pray for someone else. You're too young to speak – you won't say it right. You might use slang. That would be very embarrassing to your leaders." Or, "you might hurt someone. You might be too curt." How did you learn, Miss Perfect? We learned by embarrassing someone! I'm not trying to develop some negative pattern, but I'm trying to *break a pattern* that I believe is already developed among us which is negative. Every one is important to God!

We desperately need those who have gone before us because they have learned some lessons that can only be learned by living life. I know today we are a sophisticated society, and I know there's a great premium on education, and I'm extremely grateful that education has indeed increased. I was on an airplane with a man who told me he had a Master's Degree and a Doctorate in Physics. He said, "What's amazing to me is, today it is a normal, regular, high school course." What years ago he struggled and strove to discover in his Doctorate is now being taught in high school. I said, "Isn't that wonderful, though?"

I'm glad we're challenging the minds of our youth in our schools. But are we also challenging them in the church? Do we aim our instruction for the middle of the road – the middle class – the middle age – the middle everything – and hope that the pieces just fall where they ought to fall? Oh, God, stir us to *borrow some vessels*. Of course, it is an impossibility for those of us who have a public ministry to do much other than that – aim for the middle level of understanding. That's why I believe the Lord is going to change the patterns of some things, and He's going to change some methods as well! God's going to change some things and some church services are going to be different than they ever were before! We're going to become *more interested in the people receiving the oil and the word of truth* than we are in impressing them with how it was presented! That's going to take some time to change because we are so entrenched in our ideas of what "church" should look like!

In the interim, God is saying – Father, give them understanding for this, in Jesus' name – God is saying to you, "***Start borrowing vessels!***" I must give you a warning in this mind-set. There is a danger. Let me put up a yellow flag. Will you please see this accurately? The yellow flag is this: When you start pouring oil into borrowed vessels, when you start ministering one-on-one, the oil is going to make room for you! Those lives are going to change. They're going to be transformed, set free. They will begin to praise and worship God and exalt the Lord – and others are going to come to dip in "your" river.

They will bring people to you to receive what you have to pour. Then the next voice you hear will say something like this: "You're called into the ministry full time!" The insipid (dull, wishy-washy, bland, flavorless) condition of the local church today, in Iverna's opinion (which makes it right ☺ – maybe), at least partly is due to our putting such a high premium on the "clergy" position and minimizing the call of ministry in "laymen." We treat laymen like they are nothing! And if they're anointed, we give them an official clergyman's card and send them out to some place that God never called them. We employ the Peter Principle, pushing them beyond their capacity and/or ability, and certainly beyond their call. They fail in the ministry and therefore never go back to pour oil where they were called by God to pour it! And this is not a word for women only; it's an operative truth for men as well!

If you've have a legitimate call of God on your life to preach the Gospel, as in fulltime ministry, I'm not worried about you reading the warning given above concerning going into fulltime ministry just because God is using you. If your call to fulltime ministry is truly of God you will be unable to get away from it! Does that make sense? But God is calling many, many, many, many of you, to minister right where you

are, as lay-leaders in your church. So, begin to minister as that. There's going to be a double-portion-anointing of oil on you. The oil's going to be able to flow as long as there's a vessel out in front of you and you are willing to pour and pour and pour. The oil of the Holy Spirit will flow.

Let me tell you the beauty of all this: you will learn so much while you're teaching. Sometimes I stop and say "Amen" to my own message! ☺ I'll look over at my secretary and just smile. She knows what that means. "Write it down, Iverna wants to remember that!" I *still* need to learn some things, a lot of things. That's what God wants to do – *enlarge our capacity for Him*. There have been too few vessels for the oil. It was not until the woman and her sons ran out of vessels that the oil stopped.

Let me tell you what that means: *God's not about to give you all the things you're crying for until He sees what you're going to do with what you have*. Many of us want new insights, new truth, new revelation. God says, "Why? You haven't done one thing with the last Truth I gave you! I'm not interested in just making you a key person with all of this 'contained knowledge'!" If you watch those – Peter and John and others that were known – the Bible says the people of Jerusalem who witnessed the outpouring of something magnificent on Jesus' disciples, the 120 in the Upper Room, although they could not identify what this wonder was, they "marveled" that they were unlearned men, mere fishermen. But they also took note that these had been with Jesus. (Acts.2:6ff) He rubbed off on them, their lives were positively changed, because they had spent quality preparatory time with Him.

What was it that the people noticed? Well, for one thing, they began to pour out the oil. Hallelujah! And as they poured it out, it came with knowledge, insight, revelation, and aptitude; it fit the situation (Ac.2:14ff). And the observers said, "My, that's amazing that these unlearned, unskilled men could bring forth such a word." And God says, "They're so impressed with that, I'm gong to call a skilled, learned, knowledge-filled man and reduce him to love." So, He called Paul! He was Saul then (Ac.9). Saul means "sought after." God said, "I'll call you 'little-sought-after,' put My Spirit upon and within you and then send you forth to the Body of Christ. And when you get really good at it, I'll rename you. Instead of "sought after," I'll call you Paul, which means "little man."

That's ministry, Church. The more you get of God, the less you have of your own, the smaller you become to yourself. "Oh, God, stir up some vessels here, in the name of Jesus! Let them go forth and begin to borrow some vessels and pour and pour and pour. Let their delight be in You, Lord." Don't listen to the lies Satan says to you. "You're tired. You've worked five days. These other people – they are the ministry staff. They get paid to do this. They sleep all day and they just come to church at night." ☺ Not true, of course. But, don't you listen to those voices, because *the real joy of the Lord comes when you begin to give forth to others*. Hallelujah!

We looked at the story concerning Elisha and the woman with a huge debt to pay (2Kgs4). She was instructed to borrow vessels into which she could pour what she had - oil. When the vessels were used up, the oil ceased. Too few vessels. Let's look at another "too small." A marvelous story. 2 Kings 13:14. "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died."

I just have to interject this at the beginning. I believe in divine healing. You must know I do. I've been healed by the mighty hand of God many, many times. There are times in meetings or congregations when it is as a wave of healing flowing in the place and scores of people are healed. I believe in that. But there also comes a time when it is the end of a person's life on earth, and the Lord wants to take them home. Many such times, He uses the vehicle of sickness to take His people home. Why? I know you need an answer, so I'm going to make one up! ☺ I have to confess, I don't really know. I'm going to use a line of logical thinking for us, however. I believe God uses sickness to bring about physical death, mainly for the people who are going to be left here. When you see your loved one so gravely ill, you begin an expectancy of being without them. It is a time of preparation for the ones who will be left.

My father tried to die, for about three years. Poor guy! He had just a little touch of cancer of the bone. And he wasn't really in very much pain at first, but his main problem was four out of five of his children

were preachers! And we'd go in to see him and command that cancer to leave, and it would go. We kept the poor guy reeling back and forth for three years! Honestly, we did! Judson would fly in and take control and speak healing. Dad would get up, dressed, get on with the program, and then he'd get sick again. Then I'd fly in. And then Bob would come. And then Jim would be there. And we'd just take authority over the sickness and.... One day, God spoke to me, "I want to take him home using this vehicle and your mother needs to know his end is coming!" The day God spoke that to me, that very same day, Judson had been overseas and just got back in town. He called and said, "Sis, I had a dream last night in which I attended Dad's funeral. What do you think about that?" I said, "Let me tell you what I just heard from God!" Judson said, "We need to release Dad in prayer." We released him and let him go. So, there is that truth, too. Jesus Christ is healer, absolutely. He's also Lord. And we need to be sensitive to what His purposes are when one is not healed.

Second Kings 13, verse 14. Elisha was sick, he was going to die. That's it. He's leaving. Nobody is going to lay hands on him and raise him from the sick-bed. God says, "This is it. Elijah went up in a whirlwind (2Kgs.2:1) but Elisha's going to go by sickness." Is that lack of faith on Elisha's part? Look! This guy is still ministering on his deathbed! Are you going to tell me he doesn't have faith?

Let's read on in verse 14, "And Joash, the king of Israel" – the king of *God's people* – "came down unto him," and starts crying "over his face." We're so good at that. "Oh, please don't go! Please don't go!" Do we as Christians not need to learn how to deal with death? Joash is not crying for Elisha! He's crying for himself! He says basically, "[I... you know we're in trouble.] O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Those are the very words that Elisha said to Elijah (2Kns.2:12). It is a very self-serving statement. It says, "Don't leave me! I need you! You're the only hope we have! We're being besieged by the king of Syria. He's won so many times! You're the only hope!"

"And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And [the king] took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow." You're going to get involved with deliverance whether you like it or not! "And he put his hand upon it, and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands." Oh, church, your hand will never be alone upon the bow and arrows of God's deliverance! But God will never put His hand on it until yours is there first! Selah!

"And he said (verse 17), Open the window eastward. And he opened it." It is profitable to pause here and discover through a little research, "why eastward?" It is not some religious thing about facing Jerusalem or some certain direction. Eastward was toward Gilead and Bashan which was where Syria had affected their greatest influence against God's people. Those victories under Hazael, at this time, had been won in the east. Now here is our application: our Lord is saying to us, "Alright, let's look at the area where you lose your battles most often. Let's find the hardest area. It's right out there – toward the east. Somebody open that window toward the east." The man of God says, "Get your hand on the bow." And then the Lord puts His hand over ours. Hallelujah! Aren't you glad He holds your hand? And Elisha put is hand on the king's and says to Joash, "Alright, shoot!"

Verse 17. "And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them." Now, this is a prophetic word through the man of God to the king who is in charge. He says, "You have now taken the bow. Put your hand on the bow and stretch it back." You've seen archers, haven't you? You begin to pull and you pull and you pull. It's not so easy to do it right. When you have pulled that string just so far, there's no way you can pull it back further, until the Lord gets hold of it! You get about this far, and the enemy says, "It won't work!" And we get tired pulling and let go of the string – until we hear the Lord say, "Get that bow up again! Enough of this defeat in your life! I have made you 'more than conquerors through him that loved you' (Rom.8:37). Come on! Let's do it! You and Me!" And He puts His hand over ours and our strength is renewed. Now, we can successfully pull that thing back and let go of the arrow and say, "the deliverance of the Lord" as it shoots out. Then the word of the Lord comes, "You're going to defeat the Syrians." Hallelujah! We *can* do all things through Christ (Phil.4:13); it's His strength!

Then Elisha says, “Take the arrows (verse 18). And he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground.” We’re talking about demonstrating the victory, here. We could say, “Declare it!” “Smite the ground.” And the king took the arrows, so he was involved with this also. He smites the ground once. “The arrow of the Lord’s deliverance.” He feels so good about it he does it twice. “The arrow of the Lord’s deliverance.” “Oooohhhh!” he says, “Glory to God! The arrow of the Lord’s deliverance!” “[Three times] he smote and [quit].

“And the man of God (verse 19) was wroth with him, and said, thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria...” – just what you believe for – three times. You see, Church, we have been satisfied with partial victories long enough. We say, “Well, we didn’t win the war but we won this battle. Hallelujah!” And the Lord says, “No! I didn’t call you just to win little battles! I want you to win the war!”

Oh, it’s easy when we think of our societal circumstances and become involved in all sorts of social or political issues. But I’m talking about *your life*. I’m talking about Iverna’s life. The Lord and I have a little talk, and He says, “You need to completely conquer the enemy in every area of your life. Now, here’s My hand over yours. Let’s shoot some arrows!” So, I shoot the arrow and I say, “Amen, Lord! I’m more than a conqueror through Christ!” He says, “That’s right! Let’s see how much you believe that! Start walking it out!” And I walk it out, once, and I feel good about once. And I’m ready for two. “Alright Satan, I’m coming after you in this area.” And I smite him a second time. “Glory to God! You see that victory?” I jump and dance and sing and rejoice. “Come on in! I’m not afraid of you!” And he comes to my arena and I smite him the third time. “You’re not getting me, Satan! Hallelujah! I am victorious in Christ!”

And I say, “Now I have to tell the people how victorious I am. Hey, people! Three times! Do you believe that? Three areas of my life that once the enemy ruled. I want you to know the Lord has given me faith and strength and I have won over those three areas.” One little problem with that. While I’m fighting Syria for the third time, Assyria is gathering forces together and I don’t have faith for this one. And yes, if you look at it historically, you’ll discover Assyria came in, attacked God’s people and won (2Kgs.15:29ff). In fact, the Israelites went back into captivity.

They only had three victories over Syria (2Kgs.13:25). And later, Syria wins over them again (2Kgs.16). You see, that’s the story of too many Christians’ lives! They’ve become fairly victorious – once, twice, three times – and then said, “I give up!” This is not time to give up! You see, **the problem with this is too small of a vision for so large an ability.**

Paul said, “I can do all things...” (Phil.4:13). Look at his life. Walk through New Testament with a fresh observation. Read it now – read it again next month. It doesn’t take long to read the New Testament. Read it through again. Watch Paul. This little nobody, this little man of four foot eleven. He’s not so great! Beady eyes, big nose, eye trouble, bald head and bowed legs! That’s really what the historians write of him. It’s an honest description of Paul. He had nothing going for him. His intellectual education was his problem, not a blessing, as he had trouble communicating with people because he was so brilliant!

You wonder, “How do you know that?” Well, read it! He says, “I’ve determined to know nothing among you but Christ (1Cor.2:2). Now, let’s talk about where you are. I want you to understand. It’s this: Jesus Christ is the hope of glory” (Col.1:27). Paul had studied under Gamaliel (Ac.22:3), a very well known and highly lauded Rabbi. Not everyone was accepted into his school. Paul was brilliant and highly educated, but he is now reduced to simply declaring, “I’ve got to get this message across.” He’d go into a city, they’d stone him, throw him out and then say to him, “If you ever come back into this country at all, you’re going to spend the rest of your life in prison.” So, he’d get on a boat and go to the next country – no home, no possessions, no money. You can read all this in the Book of Acts, beginning in Chapter 13.

I think the story I like best about Paul is when he was in Athens. (Ac.17:16ff) I love it when he arrived there. He disembarked from the ship, alone. He has nothing and his whole attitude is, “Oh, this is ‘sin city’! Where shall I begin?” And he thinks, “Let’s see, I guess the most people are down in the marketplace.” So, he goes down to the marketplace. And he says things like: “Do you know Jesus Christ? Do you realize He’s the only begotten of the Father? He was crucified in Jerusalem. But, do you know He was resurrected from the dead? He’s the Messiah you’ve been waiting for.” And he gathers a crowd.

The great philosophers hear him and think he’s the funniest little nothing they’ve ever seen. They got together and made a spurious invitation: “Hey, you seem to be espousing some new doctrine. How would you like a chance at it on Mars’ Hill?” That’s the place the philosophers used to go to argue lofty ideas. It was a natural setting where easily heard, sort of like a pavilion. And the people would come and listen to them in their great exhortations and so on. They probably thought it would be great fun to embarrass Paul with their deep thinking.

“How’d I like to go to Mars’ Hill? Are you serious?” Paul says. “Great! Oh, terrific idea! I’d love the opportunity!” They think, “This is going to be fun! We’re going to make mincemeat out of this little guy!” Paul shows up at Mars’ Hill. As he walks through the streets of this pagan city, he sees all the different altars to a myriad of gods. Little “g.” The Greeks were pantheistic, believing in the existence of many gods, whom they worshipped all at once. Paul’s opening statement is this (verse 22): “Men, as I came here to speak to you today, I noticed that you are very religious and even have an altar marked ‘To the Unknown God.’ I know Him well! I’d like to tell you about Him.”

You see, that reveals Paul’s vision. This little man had a big vision of starting churches everywhere he went. He’d stay long enough to pour the oil into the vessels until they could carry on in his absence. Paul grounded them in the truths of the Gospel, set them in place as a church, and went elsewhere to create more of the same. We’ve lost that. We sit around saying, “Ooohhh, I wish that there was some group here. I wish there was a ‘well’ in this area. Oh, God. What I wouldn’t give if there was just someone in this area who could...” You’re there! Why don’t you dig a well? I can hear your reaction, “Well, I’m no preacher!” Neither was Lydia! (Ac.16:14,40). But she started a prayer group and got them together so that when the Lord tricked Paul into going there – oh, yeah, He did too! Paul was not intending to go there.

You don’t read your Bible right, ☺ and you miss so many things! You think Paul would have gone over there if Lydia had written him a letter saying, “There’s a lot of us here – most of us are women – but we need a touch. We’re gathered together over here in Macedonia and Philippi. We’d like you to come and minister to our group.” It was a male-dominated society. Can’t you just hear them? “Oh, listen, we’d love to come but our itinerary is filled for the next twenty-five years!” So, the Lord gives Paul a vision of a great big *man*. Read it: Acts 16:6-10. This man in the vision says, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” “We’ll be right there! Men, pack it up. We’re going to Macedonia!”

When Paul gets over there and starts looking for the church, what does he find? “Where’s this big man God showed me?” “I don’t know about that. The only group of believers is down by the river, headed by someone by the name of Lydia.” You see, if you get the thing going, God will send you the pail – His resource – His provision.

Back to 2 Kings 13, verse 20. Elisha did die. Oh, this is a funny story. You look at it. Verses 20 and 21. Elisha dies and they just put him in a pit, which is their custom. About the same time, some others were carrying another man who had died and they were going to bury him nearby. And all of a sudden, they see the Moabites coming – the enemy shows up! They are so frightened, they take this corpse and dump him. “Hey, get rid of him.” And their hurry-up attitude is, “every man for himself!” VOOP!! They toss this dead man and he happens – he just happens – to fall into Elisha’s grave, right on top of him! And as soon as he touches the bones of Elisha, the Spirit in Elisha hits him and he stands back up, revived! I would have loved to see their faces when he came crawling out! ☺

I've already talked to you about too little oil. When we think of this, we have to consider the story from Matthew 25 about the ten virgins. We can learn so much from them. Let me mention just this: the one thing that the five foolish virgins did not have was enough oil – to wait. We must have our lives so completely filled with the Holy Spirit to enable us to wait until the Lord shows up in response to our pleas. Now that's a part of: Ask, and then seek, and then stand at the door and knock (Mt.7:7,8) and expect Him to respond. Some times we leave before He has an opportunity to respond. We get tired of waiting for His answer and give up. But Jesus is telling us in Matthew 7 to hang in there, to keep on asking until we receive what we are asking, seeking, and knocking for. "Lord, You're there!" and we're so surprised sometimes. He says, "That's fine. Keep the lamps bright because I'm going to do what I promised you I would do."

I don't care how long those prophecies, or that special Scripture that came alive to you, burn within your heart. Just last week, an eighty-something lady came to me and shared some marvelous promises that God had given her years ago. She said, "You know, I'm feeling physically weaker and weaker as time goes on, do you think that I have a right to hold to those promises?" I said, "Sister, you not only have a right, you have a responsibility. Just keep the oil flowing in your own life, because one of these days it'll seem like a suddenly, an act in the twinkling of an eye, but you're going to see God fulfill every word He has promised you."

But I do need to show you something else that is problematic for us. Turn with me to Hebrews, Chapter 5. The writer here is talking about Christ and all of the beautiful comparisons of Christ in the Book of Hebrews. Here's the part we need to observe, verse 10: "Called of God, a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again..." *That's the key to the problem.*

It's not "the problem." The problem is not that when you should be teachers you have need that someone teach you. That should always be true. I'm afraid for people who think they know so much they don't have anything left to learn. They scare me. Don't read it that way! **The problem is that they have already been taught things that they have not put into practice in their own lives.** They have not *assimilated* the truths already taught.

This writer discerns the problem and says, "I have some things on my heart that are revelatory to me that are hard to understand." I can identify with that. I'm sure many of you do. I've felt that way about many messages I've shared. They were revelatory to me, and hard to understand, unless the Holy Spirit quickened the comprehension. I didn't have any great desire just to be controversial. I knew the messages would be hard to understand. I also knew that when God gave them to me, He had divine purpose and timing for their delivery. He even knew who would be sitting in each service to hear them!

This author said, "Now, what I have is hard to understand." And he added, "I wanted to bring that to you, but you're too dull of hearing. You wouldn't get it!" And he continues, "Your problem is that you ought to be teaching everything you've already been taught and learned. But what you need is for one to come back and once again re-teach you what you've already been taught."

"What is it Lord, that we've missed?" The writer says, "It's 'the first principles of the oracles of God,' and what you've become is like those who need milk, and not strong meat" (Heb.5:12). Now listen to this carefully. People who are in this condition do not desire milk – they desire strong meat. But they can't digest it yet! So, it becomes as destructive as it is for an individual who hasn't even acquired the basic principles yet. A person like this is not living according to what God has already said to them. Not living an overcoming life. Not flowing in joy and love to everyone. Not walking in humility, but thinking they are something special. Those are basic foundational principles. And you're saying, "I know all those things already! Give me something 'meatier'! Tell me something I don't know. I want new truths."

What is new truth? Truth you finally saw! I'm not preaching anything new to you – not one thing that never existed before. But it's new to me because I finally saw it! Wish I'd seen it years ago. Obviously, I was not in the position or condition to see it years ago, or I couldn't be trusted with it because I'd preach it right away! God knew that! He says, "Iverna, you have to wait until I get the people ready to hear."

This is a tragic thing because it's too little growth for the amount of meat Father wants so serve at His banqueting table. What are you struggling with today, Sir? Lady, what plagues you today? What part of these basics consumes the greater amount of your prayer time? Are you still dealing with a sexual problem? A drinking problem? Smoking problem? Marriage problem? Those are basic elements. You need to learn to *apply* the Lord and His Truth to your life and walk uprightly regardless of your fleshly desires. You say, "Well, I've just got strong physical needs." And let me tell you, they will get stronger as you continue to give in and meet them, until they become the drivers of your life!

I believe the enemy tries to keep us in the "outer court," fighting with temporal things. He's not worried about whether or not we ever get into the Holy of Holies, the inner chamber before the presence of the Lord. He's not worried about that because we have such trouble handling matters in the outer court we simply do not press into God for ourselves! We must deal with the basics first, and get to the place of victory in our lives while we're still on milk before we will be able to move on to the meatier things of God!

Let's look at Jeremiah 12:5: "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, where you trusted, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do with the swelling of Jordan?" Jordan is a place of "descent" – "jor" means "spread" and "dan" means "judgment." Hello! Judgment is often a time of testing, or evaluation, a time of measuring against the standard. I mean, if you can't make it now in these easier times ("with the footmen"), how are you going to make it when the battle really starts happening? Have you ever seen the destructive power of a river at flood-stage?

Oh, Church. I know I can sound, someone said, "like a tank." I don't mean to run over you. I mean to stand in front of you with encouragement. "Greater is He that is in us!" (1Jn.4:4) We've got to come into God and He is making a way to do that. He *has already* made the way! We have had so much good teaching from the Word. We've had tapes and speakers and conferences for years, decades really, and now it's time for *you* to do some teaching! You do know some things you can teach to others coming up behind you. Take a look at your life and stop sparring in the outer court. Take your pot of oil. Borrow some vessels. Start pouring out the good things you have in you.

Of course I'm mindful of the struggle that is still there. But it's time for you, some of you, to hit the arrows on the floor about a dozen times and then walk over, step over, the things you've killed – the things you have put an end to in your lives. It is time to get into the inner court where you can live victoriously with the people of God.

I'm desperate for you because this coming Revival demands you be a part of it. We need you! We need you experienced, mature, and victorious. The Body of Christ needs to be comprised of stalwart individuals who are over-comers – not yielding to every little nagging thing. The Body of Christ needs men and women who are always praising, who pray regularly and fervently, and who know how to lean on God. "I would," says God, "that men everywhere would lift holy hands and pray" (1Tim.2:8).

The Body of Christ needs to be made up of individuals who are "ministers in the pews," so that we can now direct the teaching from the platform, the pulpit, to the "meat of the Word" and feed you, so that the sinners there will be fed *by you*. It is the mother who masticates and assimilates the meat from the table. Then when it is within her, assimilated, it provides nourishment for her body. The "meat" becomes a part of her, and out of her breasts flows the milk that is produced from what she takes in. Do you understand that? That's why in the Song of Solomon, it is said about the Church, the Bride, "Your breasts, your two

breasts are beautiful” (S/S:4:5;7:3 paraphrased). It’s not just some kind of ancient love language. It’s God’s way of saying, “I will have a people who can eat meat at My table, make it to be applied to their lives, assimilate it within, and then I can trust My Church to nurse those who have need of the milk of the Word.”

It takes strength, doesn’t it? How many of you have felt the need, this year, for strength? More than you ever have in your whole life? Me, too. Listen to some of the things the Lord says to us about strength: Psalm 118:4 – “The Lord is my strength.” Psalm 18:32 – “The Lord girds me with strength.” Psalm 21:1 – “In thy strength, I rejoice.” Psalm 105:4 – “Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face continually.” These are only a few of the references in His Word to strength; there are many, many others. *Strength* is promised to the saints of God, but strength is not given to you for the purpose of sinning!

I know we don’t like to hear the word “holiness.” We’re afraid of that word and some of us think we have a reason to be, pardon me, because it was equated with physical ugliness and a lot of other things in days not so long ago. But my friend, you might as well get used to the word, because God *is going to bring the Church back to holiness* – back to holy living. He not only wants those of us who could be called pillars (the older generation) to walk in holy lives, but He wants young singles and young married couples to be holy in their relationships together and to be holy before their children.

How do you think little boys feel when they see Dad ignoring Mother, and they hear Mother crying in her room, saying, “Well, that’s just the way Daddy is?” I’ll tell you what it says to them: “In order to be macho and masculine, you have to be tough on women!” Oh, yes! The *way* we live speaks volumes to everyone around us! Nonverbal communication. It has been that way in this country until we have raised a whole generation of young boys who have absolutely zero respect for females of any age. Take a careful look at that whole “street scene.”

I believe the Church can turn this tragic situation around when we begin to grow up godly men who truly love godly women; who respect them and not only lust after what the women can give them. It will take both genders actively involved in this revolution! Hallelujah! And children and grandchildren will come into that new scene and recognize – *This* is love! This is purity. This is wholeness. *This is real!* Then we can say to little girls, marriage is beautiful! Try telling them that now, in the homes they grow up in! In too many American homes today, marriage is not beautiful to them, it’s ugly. It’s frightening. It means that a man is going to take advantage of you. It means that you do the cooking and the housekeeping and the childrearing, and you also go out and work and help support the family. It means that you’ll always do the work and get little credit or recognition or thanks. It means “he’s” the chief of the house; when Daddy comes home he gets what he wants. He does nothing to help at home. He puts up his feet and gripes at everything! Try telling young girls they ought to get married!

We CAN change things! You say, “Well, it’s too late for me. I’ve already blown that!” Then start pouring some oil! “Well, I don’t feel that I have a right to tell anyone else how to do it right because, you see, I did it all wrong!” It isn’t because I have a right. It’s because I’m called of God and I have a responsibility. It’s the Word we’re talking about, not my life. I didn’t come in and say, “Look how well I did it, now you do it like my example!” I come in saying, “Here’s the pattern! We find it in God’s Word! Let’s learn all we can.”

Look at Hebrews 5:13 once again. What the author is saying is, “The problem with those of you that ought to be able to take, eat strong meat is that you still have a need for milk, pabulum – that which is more easily digested. Everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: because he’s a babe.” This has nothing to do with chronological age – it is unrelated to the number of years one has lived or even been saved. Hebrews is talking about individuals who are not applying the Scriptures they already have received. They have heard the Word but they have not appropriated truth to their living levels. It is almost as if the truth of God’s Word remains undigested, certainly not effectively assimilated.

Further, we can understand this verse to say, “You’re unskillful in the word until the word is skillful in you.” “Thy word have I hid in my heart so that I might not sin against Thee” (Psa.119:11). What right do you have to handle the Word of God, to pour into another’s life? You have every right *if you’re putting it to practice in your own life*. Then you can say, “the Word says, the Word says, the Word says!” But the Bible also says, “Woe unto you who want to teach somebody else to do what you refuse to do.” (Isa.5:21;30:1; Mt.18:7; Lk.11:39-44).

Everyone who uses milk is unskillful, but strong meat, Hebrews 5:14 – “strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, those who by reason of use...” Please underline that in your Bible. “Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and to discern evil.” What does that mean?

Milk isn’t very dangerous, even when it sours. We eat it. We drink it. We cook with it. You don’t have to have much discernment if the only thing you partake of is milk. But meat, if it gets old, kills! You who want the strong meat of the Word must by *reason of use* – by diligently applying God’s Word to your lives – have developed your senses to be so *one with the Holy Spirit* that you smell (discern) meat that is old, spoiled, or putrid! It isn’t milk that changes doctrinal stands. It is meat.

So, I bring you that heavy word. I see it as a responsibility in the Revival. We must press on into the depths of God. We cannot remain as mere children demanding everything to be pureed or strained so we can digest it better. We must learn to handle the meat of God’s Word for ourselves, and then to pass it on.

“I pray God, reverently, that You will make meat-eaters out of every one who desperately desires that.” Some of us may be really struggling with this commitment-level because we’re afraid to fail again. I challenge you to hit those arrows more than just three times. You don’t have to fail again. This time, if you’ll let your vision enlarge and increase, you can be victorious in your life. You can be one who loves the Word of God, who looks forward to the changes that it will bring, and is ready to eat the meat.

“Father, it takes strength to smite the ground of our lives with the arrows, and You’ve promised us that strength. God, I’m asking that You will enable us to fulfill the commitments made. Oh, Lord, I’m asking in Your grace that You do a quick work of it. Help us to partake and assimilate the truth of Your Word, until very quickly we can begin to pour out from what good results we have had in our own lives.”

From the moment they start pouring out, Lord, You’re going to feed them meat that will in turn supply the milk that must come forth. They’ve eaten some of that meat in this message. It was very, very tough, but they’ve chewed it well and I thank You for it. And I pray You’ll not let them get away from the truth of this word. Every word that was ministered to them as individuals, keep it there Holy Spirit until there is a performance of those things ministered.