

Elisha and the Widow's Oil

A poor widow cries to Elisha for help. With just one jar of oil and borrowed empty containers, God provides enough to pay all her debts.

2 Kings 4:1-7

CHARACTERS: Elisha, The widow, Her sons

THEMES: Provision, Faith, Miracles, Debt, Abundance

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.'

In ancient Israel, debts that couldn't be paid could result in family members being sold into slavery. This widow faced losing her children.

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 small jar of olive oil.'

One small jar—nearly nothing. But it was something.

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.'

She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her, and she kept pouring. One jar filled. Another. Another. The oil kept coming.

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.

She went and told the man of God, and he said, 'Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.'

God's provision matched her faith and obedience. Had she gathered more jars, there would have been more oil. The limit was not God's power but the containers she had prepared. Her sons were saved, her debts were paid, and she had enough to live on—all from one small jar of oil and a God who multiplies what we bring Him.

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