

God Understands

2 Kings 4:8-17

Introduction

Sometimes life can be painful. Often the pain is not a direct result of our own doing but the circumstances surrounding us. This reminds me of the avid golfer who went to the dentist with his wife.

Illus: The man says to the dentist, "Doc, I'm in one heck of a hurry. I have two buddies sitting out in my car waiting for us to go play golf, so forget about the anesthetic. I don't have time for the gums to get numb. I just want you to pull the tooth, and be done with it! We have a 10:00 AM tee time at the best golf course in town and its 9:30 already... I don't have time to wait for the anesthetic to work!" The dentist thought to himself, "My goodness, this is surely a very brave man asking to have his tooth pulled without using anything to kill the pain." So the dentist asks him, "Which tooth is it, sir?" The man turned to his wife and said, "Open your mouth Honey, and show him your tooth."

Life can be painful. We all have our moments when we feel as though God just isn't paying attention. We feel as if our prayers, our needs and even our good **deeds are going completely unnoticed by God.**

So, does God understand your own personal circumstance?

Scripture - 2 Kings 4:8-17

⁸ *One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat.* ⁹ *She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God.* ¹⁰ *Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us."*

¹¹ *One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there.* ¹² *He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite."* So he called her, and she stood before him. ¹³ *Elisha said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?'"*

She replied, "I have a home among my own people."

¹⁴ *"What can be done for her?" Elisha asked.*

Gehazi said, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old."

¹⁵ *Then Elisha said, "Call her."* So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. ¹⁶ *"About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms."* "No, my lord," she objected. "Don't mislead your servant, O man of God!"

¹⁷ *But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.*
2 Kings 4:8-17 NIV

Content

Today, I want you to know that **God does understand.** Not only does He understand your difficulties, He makes provisions to **answer your cries of desperation.**

Everyone faces struggles and challenges. Even small children face difficulty.

Illus: Calvin Parker Story

But God understands our circumstances **more keenly than we can imagine.** Let's look at three areas from our text where God understands this woman's struggles.

1. God Understands Our Faithfulness

We see that this otherwise **ordinary woman was kind**, generous and strong in her faith. She urged Elisha to come and eat at her house. She later got the idea to put **a room on her roof for Elisha** and obtained her husband's approval.

We can tell that the woman took great joy in having Elisha and his servant in her home. Obviously she did not mind the inconvenience and valued having the man of God in her home.

Clearly, this was a ministry to her. By being a blessing to this man and his ministry, **she was serving God with her actions.**

Every single one of us should be able to point to something that we know is our way of serving God. I have heard people say, "I can't do much, but I can do this..." We must all find a way to minister in the name of Jesus Christ, and not limit God.

What is your ministry? What is it that you do to bring glory and honor to our Lord?

God's Word is careful to describe the Shunammite woman's acts of generosity towards Elisha. Clearly this is evidence that God took notice of her faithfulness. God chose to insure that this **account made it into the Holy Scriptures.**

Rest assured God understands when you and I find the **avenue in our lives that we can truly and unselfishly serve Him.** It may not seem like something large but God notices when others may not.

God notices this woman's faithfulness and rewards it by having Elisha ask her what he can do for her.

I am reminded of those who teach Sunday School and work in different volunteer positions in our church. These are often thankless jobs. Rarely do you receive encouragement from fellow Christians. But rest assured God sees your faithfulness and He will reward you.

2. God Understands Our Heart's Desire

When Elisha inquires about what they can do for her, the woman gives an interesting answer, **"I have a home among my own people."**

This indicates that the woman was satisfied being among family and friends. She did not desire great fame or further wealth as she was content to be with family & friends.

Illus: How often do we ask someone a question and get a dishonest answer? We know we are getting an answer that means something like this, "There is no sense in going into my real hurts and needs. You won't understand and you can't help so why drag it all out."

Yet we further discover through the words of Elisha's servant that **she did have a deep need and desire.** Notice that it was the servant **Gehazi who made the observation** and brought it to Elisha's attention. God uses everyone, not just the official "man of God."

When Elisha tells her she will have a son in one year, **her response speaks volumes.** *"No, my lord," she objected. "Don't mislead your servant, O man of God!" vs. 16*

You can almost hear her saying, "Oh no don't go there. Don't bring up all of that pain again."

In that day, **a woman with no children was considered inferior** and a woman with a boy was considered highly blessed. Her response shows us the woman carried **a deep grief inside.**

She obviously had a strong desire to have a son but had accepted life without that blessing. **She carries a precious dream** inside and her response is to say, "don't get my hopes up falsely."

But this time it would be different. God knew her desires and He was now making her a promise. **Her dearest and most heartfelt dream was about to become a reality.**

Just as in the case of the Shunammite woman, God wants to deal with us by going right to the heart of our struggles. He is more interested in us opening up with Him than playing church.

What is your hearts desire? God understands and he makes provisions to satisfy you. It may not be in the manner you expect and it may not be in the timing your desire, but please know that God understands!

You too may fear the turmoil of being disappointed. But, do not let that stop you. Do as the Shunammite woman did, serve the Lord and trust him with your desires.

3. God Understands Our Pain

So often, we are tempted to give up on our dreams and desires. We set our **innermost thoughts on the shelf and conclude in defeat that no one cares.** You need to remember that **God cares.**

Jesus said, *“²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”* Matthew 10:29-31 NIV

God understands everything about you. God notices what you do for others, your faithfulness, your actions, your sacrifices, your commitment, your efforts, your worries, and your fears. God even understands your pain.

Illus: In the movie Forrest Gump, Jenny and Forrest are childhood friends. Jenny lives with her father who has abused her for years. She has an awful childhood. After her father passes away, she returns home. Standing outside with Forrest she begins to frantically cry and throw rocks at the old house where she grew up.

Forrest sits down and patiently allows her to vent on the old house where so many bad memories were born. Finally he says, “Sometimes there just aren’t enough rocks.”

There are never enough rocks to ease our pain and find peace. Real peace can only be found in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord Jesus himself endured great pain that He might experience the full impact of sin’s pain and hurt. Beaten beyond recognition, Christ hung on the cross and at the weakest moment when the weight of all earth’s sin was upon Him, He cried out, *“My God My God, why have you forsaken me.”*

But God had not forsaken our Lord and He will not forsake you.

Our Lord said, “I am with you always.”

⁵⁰My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life. Psalm 119:50 NIV God Understands.

Conclusion

Illus: Orel Hirschheiser was the great pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers in the 1980s. One night when Orel appeared on the Johnny Carson show, he was shown a movie clip of himself standing at the fence of the doug-out. In it he appeared to be talking to himself. Johnny asked him what he was saying.

“I wasn’t saying anything, I was singing,” Orel responded. “You were singing?” Johnny said. “I didn’t know you were a singer.” “Aw,” Orel said, “I’m not.” Johnny persisted, “What were you singing? Sing it for us now.” “Nah, I don’t want to sing.” But by that time the audience was chiming in with “Sing it, sing it to us!”

Finally, Orel Hirschheiser started to sing, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below.” And Johnny Carson was speechless. The whole audience was dead silent. Then one person started clapping, and soon the whole audience joined in applause.

God understands and He will bring you peace. Praise Him!