

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Message Series: Weird Stuff in the Bible

Message Title:

Speaker: Pastor Trey Hildelbrant

Date: July 16, 2017

Icebreaker:

Share a time when you were overwhelmed and empty and someone asked, "How can I help you?" – How did it feel when you were overwhelmed and someone else offered a helping hand?

Message Overview:

Trey uses the passage from I Kings 4 to illustrate how God meets us and provides when we are down and empty. We might be having financial problems, family problems, struggling with low faith, or little hope. Elisha meets the widow of one of the prophets. She has nothing to pay her bills and is about to lose her two sons because of her debt. When Elisha discovers that she only has a jar of olive oil, he tells her to get other jars from her neighbors. She then pours her oil into all the other jars until there are no more jars. Now she can sell the oil and pay her bills and save her sons. This weird story shows us how powerful God is and that He is not bound by the laws of our material world. He is able to provide from His resources and power when we trust Him.

When you don't have what you want, God is what you need.

An even better way to say this is that God is *who* we need. Often when we are empty and life is rough, we look at what we don't have instead of looking to God. We can learn to trust Him for all we need. There is value in being empty because it turns us to dependency. Dependency on God is the path to the most valuable and satisfying life. There are three practical lessons here:

- 1) **Stop looking at what you want.** The widow first said that she had nothing at all. Her focus was on what she did not have. We easily fall into comparing ourselves, our material things, and our circumstances to what others have. This leads to worry and anxiety.
- 2) **Start working with what you have.** The widow finished her sentence with "except a jar of olive oil." Olive oil was very valuable. She forgot that God can do a lot with a little. When she gave it to Him, He increased it by His power.
- 3) **Trust God to provide what you need.** Trusting God is not a theory. Real trust is visible and tangible and shows up in how we live life. He provides when we trust and obey. When something is missing, that is when miracles happen. We can trust His heart. It is powerful when we trust regardless of circumstances. Dependency is valuable.

Some of us might be in a good place right now as was Elisha. When he saw the widow's need he did not respond casually with, "I will pray for you" and then leave. He asked, "How can I help you?"

He wanted to make a difference. We can ask God to give us opportunities to help others and the courage to follow through.

Pastor Trey wants our perspectives to change from seeing only what we lack to depending on God and His great love for us to fulfill what we need. God is ready to fill our empty places. He is enough and His love never runs out. His love is not defined by our circumstances.

Discussion:

(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion on this week's primary Message points. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased *biblical* awareness, as well as individual *self* awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

- Have you ever experienced a time when God seemed to work a miracle to meet a need in your life or the life of someone else? Share that experience and how it changed your perspective.
- Read aloud II Corinthians 9:8. Note all the words that indicate "completeness, totality." How can this verse help you where you are currently struggling to see God's provision and/or love in your life?
- Can you think of a struggle in your life where you should start working with what you have instead of focusing on what you don't have?
- Do you know someone who is hurting and struggling that you could ask, "How can I help you?"
- Discuss the differences in looking at God's hand versus looking at His heart. How can that apply to looking at other people's hands versus their hearts?
- Read aloud the passage that Pastor Trey prayed—Ephesians 3: 14-20. Discuss some of God's attributes and how they can help us trust Him more.

Wrap-Up/Close:

Where do you need to offer God what you have? Where are you holding back from God?

Where do you need to trust Him to provide? Where do you need to trust Him to grow you?

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

Memorize Philippians 4: 19—My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Memorize II Corinthians 9:8.