

# Elisha and the Shunamite

by C.I. Scofield

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*True Christian service requires a living and life-giving staff, which is the Word of God, and a willingness to lose one's life for the sake of the Gospel.*

**Scripture:** Mark 5:30

**Topics:** "Faith And Service", "Christian Devotion"

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## Description

C.I. Scofield preaches on the story of the Shunamite woman's faith and the lessons we can learn from her experience. Her unwavering faith in the face of tragedy is a powerful example of true faith, declaring 'It is well' even in the midst of sorrow. The heart of the lesson emphasizes the vital nature of true Christian service, highlighting the importance of personal sacrifice and genuine devotion to Christ in our service to others.

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## Transcript

(2 Kings iv:25-37.)

### I. The Analysis.

1. The Faith of the Shunamite (verses 25, 26).--The woman's answer, "It is well," was a sublime instance of true faith. Her child lay dead, but she could still say, "It is well."
2. The Sorrow Told Out (verses 27, 28).--Faith says, "It is well" in the very instant that faith grasps as it were the feet of God to tell Him all the sorrowful story.
3. The Fruitless Errand (verses 29-32).--See "The Heart of the Lesson."
4. The Effective Service (verses 32-37).--See "The Heart of the Lesson."

### II. The Heart of the Lesson.

The intensely vital character of true Christian service is the heart of things here. There is a vast deal of so-called Christian service which is naught but sending a servant with a dead stick. If there is a need somewhere we proceed to organize. A society is formed, or at least a committee. These require chairmen, secretaries, treasurers, and, above all, much, very much, talk. Then these chairmen, secretaries and treasurers are supposed to be in "Christian service," and all the rest of us, who are not officers, but

"belong," are also supposed to be in "Christian service." If it is a home affair the "service" consists in holding stated meetings of the society or committee, and in more or less zealous efforts to induce others to "join." As some one has wittily said, "We have a lookout committee, but not a go-out committee."

If it is a foreign affair we send some one, after a farewell meeting somewhat after the fashion of that which Elisha held for Gehazi. What a "charge" that was! "Gird up thy loins, and take thy staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man salute him not." How impressive! The staff we send by our Gehazi has been fashioned and polished during three years in a theological seminary. Thank God many a Gehazi finds a better one, a living and life-giving staff in the Word of God--but we do not require him to have this staff, but only that.

And when, equipped well or ill, we once send Gehazi we practically wash our hands of him. A few pray for him, a few send him of their substance, but for the immense majority of us, he is a forgotten Gehazi. And all this, and more of like method and quality, we call Christian service. And Christian service it truly is for him who, in real devotedness to Christ, goes; and Christian service it truly is for those who, in ceaseless prayer, and in sacrificial gifts, are really, in the sent one stretching themselves upon the spiritually dead ones to whom he has gone--but for us! Alas, what mockery!

True service costs, and costs vitally--costs life itself. Not a dead staff but a living heart laid upon a dead heart--that counts, and that, be it repeated, costs.

When the woman in the Syrian street touched the swaying hem of Christ's seamless robe as He walked, she was instantly healed. What else? The Lord of life stopped. "Who hath touched me? for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." The woman was healed, but it cost, cost vitality.

An American woman whose giving is the giving of a princess of the kingdom of God, said to me: "It is so easy just to sign checks if one happens to have money at the bank, but I don't think that counts unless we find a way to give ourselves, too."

And we must remember the terms of our commission, "Go ye." Doubtless the Lord knew that the church would soon come to read that personal imperative, "Send Gehazi," but nevertheless what He actually said was "Go ye!" One does not recall that he ever, when message bearing was in question, asked a disciple to ask another disciple to go.

All this does not mean that some measure of organization is not necessary to some spheres of Christian service. Good order and efficiency sometimes requires this; but it does mean that in so far as we are not ourselves losing our lives in this service that we may find them again, we are mere senders of Gehazi. For He who said of Himself, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit," said in the next breath, "if any man will save his life he shall lose it, but if he lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's he shall find it again."

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