

A Widow and a Would-be King

Elisha: Living the Impossible Life – Part VIII

II Kings 8

Introduction

Let me turn your attention to the book of II Kings, chapter 8, to the story of a widow and a would-be king. It is two stories, actually, that are a sequel to chapter 4.

You may remember, Elisha was invited to stay with a Shunammite couple and receive, what we would call, Shunammite hospitality. This couple loved the Lord God of Israel and wanted to extend hospitality to Elisha any time he came to town. Eventually, they even built a room for him on their roof that was a plush accommodation with every cultural advantage that they could afford.

Now, evidently, according to this sequel, the husband has died. The widow is alone with her son and household. And, Elisha, knowing that a famine is coming her way, commands that she, her son, and her household leave. They were to go to the area of the Philistines in order to survive the famine.

Review – The Widow and Elisha

So, the author picks up this conversation as a review. Let us start at verses 1 through 4 of chapter 8.

Now Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, “Arise and go with your household, and sojourn wherever you can sojourn; for the Lord has called for a famine, and it will even come on the land for seven years.” So the woman arose and did according to the word of the man of God, and she went with her household and

sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. At the end of seven years, the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went out to appeal to the king for her house and for her field. Now the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, “Please relate to me all the great things that Elisha has done.”

Now, we will stop here because, if you have heard the previous discussions of this book, that reference to Gehazi probably raises some questions in your mind. You may remember the story of Gehazi, who, in chapter 5, is stricken with the leprosy of Naaman and ceases to be the servant of the man of God. The question is then, how can he be referred to, years later, as Elisha’s servant?

That is a good question. It mired me down for awhile, as I read more opinions than I care to share. Of all of the writings that I researched, two possibilities seemed to make the most sense.

- Opinion number one says that this is not occurring in chronological order.

Certainly Jeremiah, and Ezra later, did not put events in strict chronological order. This is similar to the confusion that can be caused by the synoptic gospels, which were never really in chronological order, as they give us the story of Christ’s life on earth.

So, it is possible that this story in II Kings is occurring earlier than the incident with Naaman. The problem that still raises, however, is that this is

occurring seven years after the raising of the Shunammite's son. That poses a problem.

- Of all the opinions, I think the second opinion makes the most sense, although I could be wrong. It is based on the fact that Gehazi's role was one of the most prominent roles in Israel's time.

The servant of the man of God could inherit the role of the man of God. In fact, it had happened already with Elisha, who had been the servant of the man of God, Elijah, and then himself, became the leading prophet. So, Gehazi was in line, I believe, to inherit the role, once Elisha went home to be with his King in heaven.

I happen to believe that this title is as much a title as it is a role. It would be a title that would stick with Gehazi in the eyes of the people as long as he lived.

There are other titles that have stuck as well. Let me give you a couple of illustrations. Rahab, the harlot is one illustration. Long after she left that profession, she was still referred to as Rahab, the harlot. Centuries later, in the New Testament, we hear her referred to as Rahab, the harlot, much to her chagrin, I am sure. We have in our own culture, the idea of one particular role, and that is, the President. Long after they have left office, whether we believe they are deserving or not, we still refer to them as Mr. President.

I happen to believe that Gehazi was known as being the servant of the man of God, even though it was in the past tense, as long as he lived. So, in these verses, in the king's court, he is still referred to in that way, even though he has long since left that position.

Continue to verses 5 and 6.

As he was relating to the king how he had restored to life the one who was dead, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life appealed to the king for her house and for her field. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life." When the king asked the woman, she related it to him. So the king appointed for her a certain officer, saying, "Restore all that was hers and all the produce of the field from the day that she left the land even until now."

That is interesting. The king said to not only give the land back to the widow, but to give all of the

wages for the produce from her property from the previous seven years as well, in one lump sum.

The Tribulations of a Hebrew Widow

At first review, it is easy to overlook the tough times that this woman endured. We are given the silver lining in full view, but it is easy to forget the storm that has just swept through her life. I fear that if we do not take some time to look at the storm, we will not be able to appreciate God's solution.

This morning, when I awoke, I appreciated the sunshine. It rained last night, with thunder and lightning, and it was predicted to rain today. I thought of all the mothers with babies and children who would have to walk in the rain into the church. I appreciated the sunshine, because of the storm.

In most cases, however, we tend to overlook the value of the solution and how wonderful it is, because we fail to remember the storm.

Two truths about tough times

Now, I want to suggest that the sequel in this widow's biography gives us some modern day challenges. Let me give two truths about tough times that relate to her life.

God most clearly works in the lives of those who are willing to accept the penalties of obedience

1. The first truth is that God most clearly works in the lives of those who are willing to accept the penalties of obedience.

I know the word "penalty" does not sound very spiritual. Preachers are not supposed to use words like "penalties of obedience," but that is a truth that we happen to live with.

Do not overlook the fact that the widow's obedience to the prophet brought the penalties of obedience. That is, it brought the storm; it brought difficult times. Do not overlook the fact that obedience to the prophet would thrust her into the unknown. Look again at verse 1, as Elisha speaks to her, saying,

. . . Arise and go with your household, and sojourn wherever you can sojourn . . .

"Thanks a lot! That's a big help!"

Elisha never gives her a forwarding address. He never says to her, “Listen, Ma’am, I want you to leave here, go five miles and turn left, then four more miles and turn right. At that point, there will be someone waiting for you.”

No. He says, “I want you to leave here with your son, and go wherever you can. Wherever you can find a place to survive, live there.”

When the widow obeyed the prophet it meant:

- leaving her home, family, and friends;
- turning her back, perhaps forever, on the estate that she and her husband, who is now dead, had built with their own hands and had cherished;
- going to a strange land which would never be inviting to her;
- living, as an Israelite who loves God, among idolatrous Philistines.

How do you determine the providence of God in your life? What is it in your life that has to occur before you say, “Wow! God is really at work in my life!”?

You say that in triumphant times, not tough times. Yet, this woman had God at work in her life, even though her times were, at this time, tough, difficult, challenging.

The solutions of God are most often experienced by those who are willing to trust Him with a difficult future.

2. A second truth is that the solutions of God are most often experienced by those who are willing to trust Him with a difficult future.

When this widow obeyed the prophet, she abandoned any and all hope of a secure future. He told her, “Go out and live wherever you can,” with no promise that in seven years, she could come back and have her home restored to her, along with seven year’s worth of wages from all that her land had produced. If that were known, who would not go? It would be a seven year vacation! She had no guarantee.

This widow, by obeying the prophet, was in effect, giving God permission to make her life difficult. Have you ever done that? Have you ever been right in the middle of a difficulty and struggled with how God was at work in your life? Perhaps, when you are surrounded by difficult, tough,

challenging, oppressive times, it seems as if God is not at work at all. Maybe you have had to reach the conclusion that either you must say, “Lord, I have had enough, so forget this,” or “Lord, You have, from a human standpoint, permission to make my life tough.”

The famous missionary, David Livingston, was once contacted by a missions agency in England. The letter suggested that several missionaries would be willing to join him in Africa. Then, the agency asked, on behalf of the men, “Are there any good roads leading to where you are?” Livingston responded in writing, “If the men you are sending require good roads, do not send them.”

Discipleship is a distasteful word today. We want Christianity without a personal cross; Christian service opportunities without inconvenience. We say, “I’ll follow Christ, as long as He guarantees a safe future.”

This widow had nothing but a prayer to ever hope of having her home returned to her again after seven years.

Some of you have had the privilege of being raised in one home. It is rare for that to occur today, but I grew up in one home. It was not until I was in college that my parents moved. A few years ago, I went back to that house. The front yard, which used to seem so big, was in fact, quite small. There was a tree that I used to climb, only the best limb for climbing had evidently been cut off.

I knocked on the door, hoping that whoever lived there would let me walk through and remember. I knew that would be a strange request!

A young woman carrying a baby answered the door. I said, “Hello. I know this is going to sound strange, but I grew up in this house. I lived here for eighteen years and I have come back to see it.”

She said, “Cool!”

So, I felt courage to ask her if I could come in, and she said, “Sure, c’mon in.”

So, I did. I walked into the living room. We were never allowed to come into the house with shoes on. I almost took them off out of habit! I walked into the dining room, where the drop ceiling still hung that my father had put in. I went into the kitchen and looked through the side door that looked out into the back yard. The big bush was missing that had been right outside the kitchen door and used to supply my mother with the most effective switches for four bare-legged boys. God had answered our prayers – that

bush was destroyed, only twenty years too late! I went down to the basement, where we use to play ping pong and where I slaved through piano lessons. These people had carved that big basement into little rooms and I thought, "What a rotten idea." There was no way now, that you can have the world's longest hot wheel track for races. I went up to my little bedroom and remembered that spring night when I knelt alone, beside my bed, and gave my heart to Christ.

There will always be something special about that little place on Red Brook Road. Do you have a place like that? Maybe you left that place to live where you are now.

When I read this story of the widow, I immediately thought back to that home. This is a home that she cherished. It is the house that her husband had built and it was a beautiful estate that held all of their memories. Can you imagine her riding out to see it again, only, this time, there are people living in it; people she does not know. There is the room that she and her husband built onto the house for the prophet Elisha. Think of all the memories.

This woman had been willing to leave it all behind in obedience to the prophet of God. She had sacrificed all hope of future security. She had no place to call home. The only hope that she had was to personally talk to the king, the highest judge in the land. Maybe he would be unique; maybe he would give rather than grasp, this youngest son of Ahab and Jezebel. He had seen his father rip from Naboth the vineyard that he coveted. Why would he ever give away property? She had only the remotest hope.

Notice, however, the timing of God as we move to the solution that the king came to so quickly. Just as the widow is walking past the palace guards into the courtroom of the king to stake her claim and tell her story, Gehazi is in the middle of telling the story of this woman. Look back at verse 5 again.

As he was relating to the king how he had restored to life the one who was dead, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life appealed to the king for her house and for her field. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life."

It is implied, "We were just talking about you! I was just telling the king about your story! What a coincidence!"

Is the timing of these events a coincidence? Not on your life!

- Did it just so happen that this wayward Israelite king suddenly developed a curiosity to hear the life story of the prophet he cared little for? "I'd like to hear about my enemy. Come in and tell me his whole story."
- Did it just so happen that Gehazi, the man who was still referred to and known as the servant of Elisha and knew more about Elisha than anyone, was called into the king's court that day to tell this story?
- Did it just so happen that on the day Gehazi arrives and at the moment that Gehazi is finishing the story of the widow and her son that the widow arrives with her request?
- Did it just so happen that as she came without a representative to validate her claim, which was the custom of that day, that the only man, aside from Elisha, who could testify to the truth of her claim was in the palace court that day?

To those who wait upon the Lord, there is no such thing as a coincidence.

There is a verse that we well know and wear out in Romans, chapter 8, verse 28,

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

And, ultimately, as the next verse declares, this is so that we might,

. . . become conformed to the image of His Son . . .

If there is anyone deserving of that reward it is this woman. We like to attach this verse to our week-long prayer, "Okay, Lord, work it out." We like to attach it to the journal that exposes a six month crisis or challenge. But, if anyone deserves this verse, it is this woman who waited seven years to see God move on her behalf.

When God does move, there are no coincidences. I have read it put this way, "A coincidence is really a small miracle where God prefers to remain anonymous."

We should be praying for the perception and insight to see God in the small miracles. The timing of a letter; a phone call; a conversation; something

that happened; something that worked and something that did not; some interruption – these are God’s hands at work. For those who are willing to trust Him with the uncertainties of life and the penalties of obedience, like this woman, you can see His hand at work eventually.

There is a happy ending to the trials and tribulations of this godly widow, as God worked all things together. And, by the way, ultimately, every believer will have a happy ending when they lay claim to their inheritance in the eternal kingdom, and their representative in court, the Lord Jesus Christ, validates their claim to the Father’s estate.

The Temptations of a Would-be King

Now the chapter moves on to a second story and I want to discuss these two stories together. This is the story of temptation that is hidden, that is a secret. It goes well with the story that we have just finished. The first is the story of a woman who succeeded and the second is the story of a man who failed.

Look at verses 7 and 8 of II Kings, chapter 8. It gives us incredible insight into the power of temptation.

Then Elisha came to Damascus. Now Ben-hadad king of Aram was sick, and it was told him, saying, “The man of God has come here.” The king said to Hazael, “Take a gift in your hand and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, “Will I recover from this sickness?”

It always fascinates me, by the way, to see people who have denied God throughout their whole lives, upon their sick bed, call for the man of God. It still happens today.

Continue to verse 9.

So Hazael went to meet him and took a gift in his hand, even every kind of good thing of Damascus, forty camels’ loads; and he came and stood before him and said, “Your son Ben-hadad king of Aram has sent me to you, saying, ‘Will I recover from this sickness?’”

I imagine Elisha chuckled at hearing Ben-hadad called his son. Continue to verse 10.

Then Elisha said to him, “Go, say to him, ‘You will surely recover,’ but the Lord has shown me that he will certainly die.”

Now, it is one thing to have one problem passage to deal with in a sermon, it is another thing to have two. This verse presents the second. At first glance, the verse is troublesome to me, and probably to you as you read it. It seems that Elisha told Hazael to report a lie. He said to say, “You’re going to get well, O king,” when, in fact, the king was going to die. Is Elisha telling Hazael to lie?

As we work through this, I think you will find the answer, as did I. Look at verse 11a.

He [Elisha] fixed his gaze steadily on him until he [Hazael] was ashamed, . . .

This is quite a clue. Elisha delivers his prophecy about the king’s recovery, saying, “He will recover from this illness. He is not going to die from it, but he will die unexpectedly.”

Elisha never says how the king will die. However, after saying that to Hazael, he stares at him. His eyes lock with Hazael’s and it is as if the prophet is reading the soul of this man and reading the intentions of his heart. Then, after a long space of time when the prophet of God is simply looking at Hazael, the Bible tells us that Hazael was ashamed. Perhaps Hazael had to look away. Maybe he shuffled his feet and whistled or something. He could not keep looking at the prophet of God – he was ashamed. That tells you that he was hiding something; he had a secret that no one knew.

Then suddenly, in verse 11b, of all things, we are told of Elisha,

. . . the man of God wept.

What a scene. Elisha just breaks down crying in front of this man. What is going on? Look at verses 12 and 13.

Hazael said, “Why does my lord weep?” Then he answered, “Because I know the evil that you will do to the sons of Israel: their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword, and their little ones you will dash in pieces, and their women with child you will rip up.” Then Hazael said, “But what is your servant, who is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?” And Elisha answered, “The Lord has shown me that you will be king over Aram.”

This is the key to understanding. Elisha never said, “Hazael, you’re going to murder the king and take his throne,” but he did say, “Hazael, the king is

going to recover from his illness, but he is going to die,” and then he stares at Hazael until he becomes ashamed. Elisha was reading the heart of this man who was, at that very moment, feigning loyalty to the king, while in his heart, planning a coup attempt. He was feigning concern over the king, who was sick, while thinking in his heart, “Now is the time to take the throne from this weak man. Now is the time to kill him and be rid of him. Now is the time for me to grasp the throne.”

Elisha had read the intentions of Hazael’s heart.

Notice in verse 15, Hazael could not even wait twenty-four hours.

On the following day, he took the cover and dipped it in water and spread it on his face, so that he died. And Hazael became king in his place.

This is a clever assassination. The word “cover” in my translation, is the Hebrew word, “makbar,” which means, “to intertwine; woven”. Many that I read, believe it was a reference to the mosquito net that was held in place around the bed of a sick person to keep away the flies and mosquitoes and other bugs. According to the historians that I read, it was a common practice to dip the net, just before retiring, in water and that would cool the air around the sick person’s bed. It shows us how despicable this gruesome sight was. Hazael volunteers, out of “love,” “Oh, I’ll fix your net for you.” Maybe all the other servants have left, except for a soldier or two who were part of the coup attempt. Hazael wets the net and comes back and, perhaps as the king is thanking him for his graciousness, he winds the net around his hands and leaps upon the bed and suffocates the king until the king stops struggling and is dead. What unbelievable treachery.

The archaeologists have uncovered something interesting from a time that is not too distant. They found an Assyrian inscription that mentions King Hazael by name, and his kingdom. It dates to this point in time that we are studying. The inscription is short, brief, cryptic. The words almost tell you of the dislike of this king by the one writing. The inscription reads, “Hazael, the son of nobody, seized the throne.”

Now, consider the steps downward for this man. He was, at one point in time, loyal. He had risen through the ranks as the confidant of the king. He was faithful and trustworthy. Then, his life intersected with a man who could read his heart. His steps would no longer just be one or two gradually,

but now would rush down that slippery slope into dishonesty and terrible immorality.

If you look at the steps, once he meets the prophet, instead of repenting when the prophet pulls the mask off of his heart, Hazael defends it. He says, “Who in the world do you think I am? A dog, that I would take the lives of innocent people?”

He goes back to the king and delivers half a message. Then, with his own bare hands, he takes the life of the king and steals the throne. And, through the rest of II Kings, we will discover the truth of Elisha’s prophecy, as Hazael becomes the most brutal enemy of Israel to date.

Stages of temptation

There is a progression toward ungodliness and there is a progression toward godliness. The following table may be helpful in understanding five steps in these progressions. It is taken from J. B. Mayor’s commentary on the book of James, *The Epistle of St. James*. James gives every New Testament disciple the steps of progression downward into sin that we could never imagine ourselves possibly committing.

| Steps to Ungodliness | Steps to Godliness |
|---|---|
| The will passively yields to fleshly influence. | The will actively resists under divine influence. |
| The impulse visualizes the pleasure of gratification. | The impulse visualizes the aspects of sin and consequence. |
| The will identifies with the impulse and resolves to proceed. | The will identifies with the conscience and refuses to proceed. |
| The sinful act is committed. | The virtuous choice is committed. |
| A habit of sin is formed by repetition of sinful acts. | A habit of godly character is formed by repetition of virtuous choices. |

Now, thanks to my two-and-a-half year old daughter, I have been watching a lot of the movie *Pinocchio* lately. What a great story. There is a classic section in that cartoon, if you have ever seen it, where Pinocchio is challenged by Jiminy Cricket. Jiminy challenges Pinocchio about listening to the conscience; about what temptation is all about and

how all the world is filled with it. Let me read the words.

Pinocchio is told by the Blue Fairy, "It is entirely up to you."

"Up to me?"

"Prove yourself brave, truthful, and unselfish, and someday, you will be a real boy."

"A real boy!"

Jiminy Cricket says, "That won't be easy."

Then, Pinocchio is told by the Blue Fairy, "You must learn to choose between right and wrong."

"Right and wrong? But how will I know?"

"Your conscience will tell you."

"What are conscience?"

Jiminy says, "What are conscience?! I'll tell you. The conscience is that still, small voice that people don't listen to. That's just the trouble with the world today."

Pinocchio asks, "Are you my conscience?"

"Who me?!"

Jiminy is asked by the Blue Fairy, "Would you like to be Pinocchio's conscience?"

Jiminy replies, "Well, I uh, I uh, oh . . . uh huh."

The Blue Fairy says, "Very well. What is your name."

Jiminy answers, "Cricket's the name, Jiminy Cricket."

"Kneel, Mr. Cricket. I dub you Pinocchio's conscience; lord high keeper of the knowledge of right and wrong; counselor in moments of temptation, and guide along the straight and narrow path. Arise, Sir Jiminy Cricket."

Jiminy says, "Well, my, my. Say, that's pretty swell. Gee, thanks. But, don't I get a badge or something?"

"Well, we'll see."

"You mean, maybe I will? A gold one?"

"I shouldn't wonder. Now remember, Pinocchio, be a good boy and always let your conscience be your guide."

Jiminy says, "Goodbye, my lady."

Pinocchio says, "Goodbye."

Jiminy says, "Not bad, says I! Oh yea, I almost forgot about you. Well, 'Pinocch,' maybe you and I better have a heart to heart."

"Why?"

"Well, you want to be a real boy, don't you?"

"Uh huh."

"Well, sit down, son. Now you see, the world is full of temptations."

"Temptations?"

"Yep, temptations. They're the wrong things that seem right at the time. But, uh, even though the right things may seem wrong sometimes, sometimes the wrong things may be right at the wrong time or um, vice versa. Understand?"

"No, but I'm going to do right."

"That a boy, 'Pinocch,' and I'm going to help you. Any time you need me, just whistle, like this (whistle)."

"Like this (attempt to whistle)."

"No, like this (whistle)."

"Like this (whistle)."

"That's it! Let's sing it. When you get in trouble and you don't know right from wrong, give a little whistle (whistle), give a little whistle (whistle). When you meet temptation and the urge is very strong, give a little whistle (whistle), give a little whistle (whistle). Not just a little squeak, pucker up and blow (whistle). And if your whistle's weak, yell, 'Jiminy Cricket.' Take the straight and narrow path and if you start to slide, give a little whistle (whistle), give a little (whistle). And always let your conscience be your guide."

Isn't that good? Perhaps you would like to continue to talk about *Pinocchio*, but let us talk about temptation, as we wrap up our study!

It should not seem strange to us that part of the prayer the Lord taught us to pray is, "And lead us not into temptation". It is not that we can avoid the presence of temptation, but that we need to recognize our weakness.

Mark Twain once said, "I can resist anything but temptation!"

The prayer goes on to say, "But deliver us from evil". That is the next step in the progression – falling to the lure of temptation and sinning.

And, as someone wrote, “The bad thing about little sins is that they grow up so fast.”

Two truths about temptation

There are two truths about temptation that I want to share with you.

The presence of temptation is inevitable in spite of fellowship with God

1. The first truth is that the presence of temptation is inevitable in spite of fellowship with God.

Perhaps this is a surprising truth. It is never a matter of *if* you will be tempted, but *when*. It does not matter if you have had your quiet time; if you are sharing your faith; if you are a testimony at work, you do not; you cannot ever avoid the presence of temptation.

I will never forget a seminary professor that I had, who shared with me in his office one day, about temptation in his life. He was a man who had pastored a number of churches, written books, served faithfully as a teacher of pastors and teachers, and was closing in on seventy years of age. He told me, “The closer I walk with God, the more severe temptation becomes.”

I thought, “Now that’s encouraging.”

Hazael recoiled with horror at the thought that he would fall to the temptation of doing brutal things. He said, “Who do you think I am? Some dog that I would do that?”

Well, Hazael had not been that way, but he became that way. It started with a thought, “I’d like to be king.” Then it involved deceit, followed by a life of deception, and ultimately, murder.

This is true for unbelievers. It is also true for believers. That is why Paul wrote in I Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 12, that we are to beware, we are to be careful,

. . . let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

In other words, at the very point where you believe you are the strongest, you need to beware; at the point where you are standing, you need to be careful, as that will be the point of attack. And, what you think you would never be capable of doing at that point, is where you will be tempted.

The power of temptation is impossible to overcome without intervention from God

2. The second truth is that the power of temptation is impossible to overcome without intervention from God.

You cannot handle temptation alone. It demands intervention from God.

Paul writes in I Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 13,

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

That is, if you reach that intersection in your life where you have to make a decision between your will and your conscience, and you say, “Lord, I want to do Your will,” He will mark a door with, “Emergency Escape,” for you. There is nothing really dignified about running toward it; there is nothing very spiritual about hurling yourself toward it, but you may be saving your life. You cannot handle it alone.

The point that I would argue with Mr. Disney’s cartoon theologian Jiminy Cricket, is that, when you are facing temptation, you should not whistle for your conscience, but cry out for the grace and power of God.

You will discover at those times, when you recognize, like the hymn writer of *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, that you are:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love;

Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,

Seal it for thy courts above.

At moments like that, when you recognize your weakness, and you lean entirely upon God, you will find Him to be a shield to those who trust Him; you will find Him to be a strong tower to those who are willing to run therein.

Now, I want to get very specific. Let us move temptation from the thrones of kings and coup attempts into our culture today.

- You might be even now, planning to walk away from a difficult or, what the world would categorize as, an impossible marriage,

and you have the logic all worked out in your heart.

- Perhaps you have just subscribed to a magazine that only you know about. Or perhaps you would never do that, but you did buy the latest swimsuit issue, which I refer to as “socially acceptable pornography”.
- Maybe you are a senior high student who is struggling with peer pressure. Prom night is just around the corner and the pressure is on to conform.
- Perhaps you are on the verge of yielding to the advances of a co-worker, and you have already begun to rationalize the way you are feeling and what you are thinking.
- You might be thinking of making a job change that would be wonderful for your career, but terrible for your children and spouse, as they will hardly ever see you.
- Maybe you are a college student who is struggling with upcoming final exams. The easy temptation is there to take short-cuts on papers and to cheat on the tests.

Someone said, “Whenever temptation knocks, send the Lord Jesus to answer the door.”

When temptation knocks at your door, who are you going to send to answer?

Maybe you need to make something right. Maybe you need to ask God to cleanse your plans and your thoughts, not yet having accomplished the deeds. Maybe you have accomplished the first steps and need to ask Him for forgiveness, as His child. Maybe you can identify with the widow, you have had long years of loneliness and you are struggling with the penalties of obedience to His plan. Maybe you need to re-submit today to His Lordship; His sovereign right to do with you whatever He wills.

Pray the song:

In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified.

In my life, Lord, be glorified today.

In my heart, Lord, be glorified, be glorified.

In my heart, Lord, be glorified today.

In my plans, Lord, be glorified, be glorified.

In my plans, Lord, be glorified today.

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