

EMPTY ENOUGH TO BE FILLED

Text: Ps 34:17-18

17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Matt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Introduction: Everyone of us knows that if a glass or container, regardless of its size, can not hold any more if it has been filled to the brim. As much as you may want to add just a little more, there is simply no way that it is going to happen. One author said: "The volume of your emptiness determines the amount of your filling."

Let us look at this concept of preparing ourselves for an in filling of God's righteousness and power in our lives. The question is "How hungry and thirsty are you?"

1. A Biblical Example.

II Ki 4:1 Now a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves."

2 And Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil."

3 Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels at large for yourself from all your neighbors, even empty vessels; do not get a few.

A. The widow was desperate for help.

1. She had a great need.
2. She was desperate for God's supply.
- B. The prophet, Elisha told her to collect "**emptiness.**"
 1. She was to gather empty vessels.
 2. As the Authorized Version puts it: "Borrow not a few."
 3. In simply layman's terms, get as many vessels as you can find.
 4. Collect all the emptiness you can find.
 5. That is what I hoped to do by requesting of you to come "**empty**" today.
- C. The widow had no idea that the volume of her collected emptiness was going to determine her future.
 1. The prophet gave her a hint of God's supernatural response to her need.

II Ki 4:4 "And you shall go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all these vessels; and you shall set aside what is full."

5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons; they were bringing the vessels to her and she poured.

6 And it came about when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "There is not one vessel more." And the oil stopped.

7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt, and you and your sons can live on the rest."

2. As long as she was presented with an empty vessel, the oil flowed.
- D. Is God any different today? Is He looking for empty vessels to fill?

2. Emptying My Vessel.

A. What many Christians want to do is ‘present their fullness’ for God to fill.

1. God is not interested in your independence.
2. He responds to your dependence.
3. His strength is attracted to our weakness.

B. God loves to pour out His fullness on man’s emptiness.

1. But this will not happen until we run out [or willingly lay down] our strength, resources, ideas, programs, agendas, and personal charisma.
2. The New Testament writer says:

James 5:11b ...and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

3. God is “full of pity” or compassionate.
4. When you present your emptiness, God will fill it.

C. God says, “Pour out whatever oil you have.”

1. We must empty ourselves so He can fill us with “Himself.”
2. He cannot fill anything more than what you can present to Him.
3. The volume of our emptiness determines the amount of our filling.

D. Our problem is our diet.

1. We like to stuff ourselves on spiritual junk food and dainty “bless-me treats.”
2. We want “flesh-blessing snacks.”
3. God is not obligated to feed causal nibblers at His Communion table.

- E. Many Christians have become like people at a smorgasbord.
 - 1. Looking for “just the right song.”
 - 2. ‘Just the right feeling.’
 - 3. Nibbling a little of this and sipping a little of that.
 - 4. But never feasting until they have been filled.

Conclusion: I am tired of being offered a spiritual pacifier or spiritual pabulum for my hunger and thirst for God. I have had it up to you know where with quick-fix services that make me feel satisfied until about the time I get home. I don't want to be ‘zapped.’ I don't want anyone's hands laid on me except His. I don't need another ‘word.’ I need the WORD! I have left church with hunger pangs too many times

- 1. I believe that God is looking for really hungry people.
 - A. He hopes to find them in the Church.
 - B. But if necessary, He will bypass an entire temple filled with nibblers just to find a few really hungry people.
 - 1. On the street.
 - 2. In a bar.
 - 3. Or on the wrong side of town.
- 2. Really hungry people tend to be really desperate people.
 - A. In the natural, true hunger can turn an honest man into a dishonest man.
 - B. It can transform a nonviolent man into a violent maniac.
 - C. True hunger will make you do things you never thought you would do [in the natural and the spiritual realm].

3. Manners and social graces are lost in the presence of starvation.
4. Why don't you forget where you are right now and respond to your hunger for God?
 - A. Why don't you rush to His table and feast?
 - B. Why don't you put your cup out for Him to fill?
5. Like the story of the widow.
 - A. I have brought some empty vessels.
 - B. And I have the cruse of oil of His Spirit ready to pour.

SOMEBODY CRY - FILL ME LORD! FILL ME WITH YOUR PRESENCE!