



## Take Him To His Mother

### 2 KINGS 4:17-20

**2 Kings 4:17-20** -- “17 And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.” “18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.” “19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.” “20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.”

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The year was 1820 and Peter Richley was a grateful man. He had survived one of the strangest and most harrowing events known to mankind. The ship which he had been traveling on sank. He was rescued. By some strange twist of circumstance, however, this ship he was on now sank.

He was rescued again. But, this third ship sank likewise. He was rescued for a third time. Yet, his fourth ship of passage soon sank. And unbelievably, he was rescued for a fourth time, but this fifth ship sank as well.

It would have been laughable had it not been so serious. On the high seas, however, he floated with the serene confidence that somehow God did not want him to die. And sure enough, as if on cue, another ship came by and answered his call for help.

This ocean liner, *The City of Leeds*, was named after it's British city of origin. It was bound from England to Australia and traveled the same sea lane as Peter Richley's downed ships. The crew of *The City of Leeds* hoisted Peter aboard. Dry clothing was provided to Peter. The ship's doctor gave him a cursory exam, pronounced him fit, and then asked an unusual favor.

“There's a lady on board who booked passage to Australia,” the doctor explained. “She's looking for her son who disappeared years ago. She's dying and she's asking to see her son. She knows everybody on board and since you're the only newcomer, would you pretend to be her son?”

Peter agreed. After all, his life had now been saved for the fifth time. He followed the doctor below deck and entered into a cabin. There on a small bed lay a frail woman with silvered-hair. She was obviously suffering from a very high fever. Deliriously, she was crying out. “Please God. Let me see my son before I die. I must see my son!”

The ship's doctor gently pushed the young man toward the bed. Soon, however, Peter Richley began sobbing. For lying there on that bed was the reason that he couldn't seem to die. Here was the lifeline that had kept him from drowning five times. For lying on that bed was none other than Sarah Richley—who had prayed for ten years to be reconciled to her son, Peter.

The ship's doctor stood in amazement as the young man fell down by the bed and embraced the sick woman. “I'm here mom! I'm here. It's me!” Within days the fever had subsided and his mother awakened to find an answered prayer seated on the edge of her bed.

(This story was told by western writer Louis L'Amour in an interview he gave. This story bears out the saying, “truth is stranger than fiction.” In researching the Louis L'Amour website there were additional references that bear out this

story to be a true story.)

Never, Never, Never, Never underestimate the power of a praying mother.

## **II. THE STORY SURROUNDING 2 KINGS 4**

-There is a Scripture that appears very early in this story that sets the tone for this lady's impact on her family.

**2 Kings 4:8** -- *"8 And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread."*

-The writer inserts a word there when describing this woman. He says that she was a "great" woman.

-What was it that made this woman great? She discovered the ability to not allow her surroundings to dictate to her where the real source of greatness came from. Even in a life that was no doubt very busy, she never allowed the little duties of her life to relegate her to being little.

-She was gifted with a kind heart that while her focus was centered on her home, she reached out to a world that needed her beyond her four walls.

-As one reads the story laid out to us in 2 Kings 4, we find that this great woman had an incredible sense of self-control. How quiet she was in all the tests of life that came to her. It stands as an excellent display of her inner character. But there would come a day in her life in which every fiber of her soul would be tested.

### **A. The History of the Child**

-We find that the prophet Elisha was traveling through the land of Shunem one day and having stopped in at this little home, he was given a great meal by this little lady. Soon it became a ritual that as he came through the country, he would stop in and have a meal with this family from Shunem. There were just two in this little family, the great woman and her husband.

-After several visits, Elisha returned and found himself very surprised that this family had built a small little room for the wandering prophet. When he came to visit, he would not only find a table to eat but also a room for rest and comfort.

-So the man of God determined one day to return blessing for blessing. His request came: What can I do for this family? It was then that the answer came almost as a lightning bolt from heaven, this couple was childless and so Elisha pronounced a promise that a child would soon grace their home.

-And so it was that some time later, a small baby entered the home. As the years rapidly flew by, I am sure that as Elisha traveled through Shunem that over the course of the years he had come to enjoy the friendship of this young man. But as one reads in 2 Kings 4:18, this young man went out one day to work with the reapers.

### **B. "My Head, My Head. . . ."**

-There are times when everything goes on smoothly, and one day is like another. Again, there are times when changes come, and whole years of joy and sorrow may be concentrated into a single day. So it was in the house at Shunem. When Elisha came (v. 8) it was a joyous time. When the child was born (v. 17) it was a joyous time. But the most memorable of all those days was that day when the only son was lost and found; was dead, and received back to life again.

-It took no more than a moment for the brightest day to become suddenly clouded with disaster. The day was quickly darkened by sorrow and the shadow of death.

-There came a cry in the middle of innocent work in the field. Life was progressing well. Yet surrounded here seemingly in a safe environment trouble struck. Working in the simplicity and purity of the farm in the countryside a major problem occurred.

-The young man had left home that morning running full on life but was brought in from the fields nearly cold and lifeless.

-Only one complaint had issued from the young man's mouth: *My head, My head!!!*

-The Bible tells us that her only child died. 2 Kings 4:21 states that even after the child died that her response was almost unfathomable in the moment of grief. But even in the midst of her trouble this woman was a great woman. This woman, great in her lot in life and also great in her ability to handle trouble.

-I ask you:

- Find the man who has walked across the hot Sahara desert, when you find him, you will find blisters on his feet.
- Find the man who has carried a burden of grief, when you find him, you will find his shoulders bent from his burden.
- Find the man who has sailed the seas in the great ships, when you find him, he will tell of the storms that he has weathered in life.

-There is no garden of comfort here in this world. Every garden of comfort soon finds that trouble will hitch up a muscular team of oxen and tear up and turn over the land with a burning plow of disaster.

-If we think that we can hoard our lives away from hurt and difficulty, we are only living in a pipe dream. Trouble forces it's way into every man's life regardless of where he sits.

## **1. The Devil Is After Our Children's Head**

-We live in a society that is corrupt. I am sure that every generation has thought their society was the most decadent, however, I am not so sure of that. As we become more familiar with history we find that the Bible deals with issues now just as clearly as it did in the centuries past.

-One of the reasons that we find our society seemingly viler than previous generations is because of our access with news agencies. During the times of the Roman decay, there are things recorded in history that marks them right beside our American society today.

-The devil was working then and apparently somewhat successful he merely continues the same traps for men today.

Dr. Erica Weintraub Austin, a media researcher at the Edward R. Murrow School of Communications at Washington State University, studied nearly 600 ninth- and 12th-graders to determine drinking habits and potential causes.

Austin's data revealed that about two-thirds of the teens had had at least one drink of alcohol in the six months prior to the study, while about one-third had had four alcoholic beverages in a row at least once during that time. Equally disturbing, about one-third of the kids said they had ridden in a car with a drinking driver.

One of the contributing factors appeared to be television, especially when the messages on TV shows or commercials made the teens feel that drinking would make them happier or more popular. **Source:** *Reuters*, 2/7/00; *USA Today*, 2/8/00

***-An ounce of mother is worth a pound of preacher.***

-There has been many a mother who by unfaltering work has reared children. She taught them manners, gave them a love for learning, and taught them a reverence for God, and by doing this she set them on a path. All in all she has done more for the world than many a woman whose name has sounded through all the lands and through the centuries.

***-An ounce of mother is worth a pound of preacher.***

-Consider some other things that our society condones today:

**"Art" at the Boulder Public Library.** Late last year, the public library in Boulder, Colorado, featured an art project of which I will not even mention the details of but just to say that it was extremely distasteful and uncouth.

**New York and California embrace homosexuality.** New York Governor George Pataki diluted the definition of "family" by giving gay partners the same access to terrorist relief benefits that married couples have. Meanwhile, California lawmakers continued their relentless campaign to undermine the institution of the family, passing a barrage of bills this year that advanced the pro-gay and pro-abortion agendas — eight of which were signed into law by Governor Gray Davis.

**Planned Parenthood and the UN use relief efforts to advance anti-family causes.** The United Nations Population Fund recently distributed "reproductive health care" items to Afghan women in refugee camps in Iran and Pakistan. A Catholic research organization, the Population Research Institute, more accurately described the products as "abortion kits" containing the morning-after pill. Meanwhile, on the home front, Planned Parenthood offices in New York City announced that they would be providing free "reproductive health care" services — including abortion — to women affected by the World Trade Center attack.

**New York schools and religious discrimination.** Last fall, New York City Public Schools Chancellor Harold Levy instituted a policy allowing Muslim students to rearrange their class schedule to pray during the month of Ramadan. Special rooms on campus were even to be set aside for this purpose. Mr. Levy, a vigorous opponent of Christian prayer in schools, didn't see the hypocrisy of his decision until William Donohue requested that Jewish and Christian students be extended the same courtesy.<sup>16</sup> However, rather than offering the same prayer privileges to members of other religions, Mr. Levy rescinded his invitation to Muslim students!

**PBS and "Evolution."** The Public Broadcasting System aired its new series "Evolution" in September. According to a PBS affiliate's internal memo, its goal was to preach Darwinian evolution in a manner that would "reach millions of students, parents, teachers, scientists, religious leaders, community groups and government leaders in an accessible, compelling way." Several dramatic recreations depicted creationists as Bible-thumping dimwits who care nothing for science. Thanks to PBS, an entire new generation of children will now go to school and learn how men evolved from tadpoles without a design or a Designer—and why anyone who disagrees with that notion is a religious weirdo. By the way, PBS and its leftist agenda is also funded significantly with our tax dollars.

**The continued decadence of popular culture.** Here are a few examples of what passed for "entertainment" in 2001, most of it marketed to children and teens.

In movies, audiences were treated to *American Pie 2*, the sequel to the raunchy teen comedy that featured depictions of, or references to immorality that I will not mention. In addition to marketing R-rated movies to teens, studios also included more and more depravity in PG-13 movies, making them virtually indistinguishable from adult fare.

In music, the thrash-metal band Slipknot entered the charts at #3 with their album *Iowa*, the lyrics of which graphically describe homicide. R&B artist Afroman hit the Top 10 with an album heavily emphasizing smoking marijuana and dealing drugs. Similarly, the latest release from Kid Rock (his previous album sold more than 10 million copies) glamorizes cocaine and features a song with a delicate title that I will not mention.

On TV, Aaron Sorkin, executive producer of NBC's "The West Wing," has lobbied the network for permission to script more profane uses of the Lord's name into upcoming episodes. In addition, CBS writers have submitted several scripts for primetime broadcasts that include the slowly desensitizing of America.

A 16-year-old broke his leg in April while trying to jump over an oncoming car, and a 19-year-old Minnesota male stopped traffic by running around with a chain saw in the rain while wearing a hospital gown. Both incidents were reportedly inspired by "stunts" depicted on MTV.

**The National Education Association and "queer curriculum."** California has already implemented such disturbing curricula. Consider, for example, the picture book *Jesse's Dream Skirt*. It includes a story for children in kindergarten through grade three that centers around a young boy who enjoys dressing in his mom's clothing and who eventually asks her to make him his own skirt. She obliges, and he wears the skirt to school and teaches his peers a lesson on acceptance. The boy's father objects, and he is made to be the villain of the story. The final illustration depicts the young boy twirling enthusiastically around the classroom in his beautiful skirt.<sup>46</sup>

The National Education Association's obsession with promoting homosexuality becomes even more outrageous when we consider the dismal academic state of our nation's schools. For example, fully 68 percent of fourth-graders cannot read at a proficient level, and a recent article in the *New York Post* proclaimed, "Failing students are being taught by instructors who can barely write in English."

-Yet despite this entire calamity, I am convinced that a praying mother is able to overcome the losses and impact her children's lives.

## **2. The Meanest Mother**

We had the meanest mother in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast. When others had a Pepsi and a Twinkie for lunch, we had to eat sandwiches. And you can guess our mother fixed us a dinner that was different from other kids had, too.

Mother insisted on knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were convicts in a prison. She had to know who our friends were, and what we were doing with them. She insisted that if we said we would be gone for an hour, we would be gone for an hour or less.

We were ashamed to admit it, but she had the nerve to break the Child Labor Laws by making us work. We had to wash the dishes, make the beds, learn to cook, vacuum the floor, do laundry, and all sorts of cruel jobs. I think she would lie awake at night thinking of more things for us to do. She always insisted on us telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

By the time we were teenagers, she could read our minds. Then, life was really tough! Mother wouldn't let our friends just honk the horn when they drove up. They had to come up to the door so she could meet them. While everyone else could date when they were 12 or 13, we had to wait until we were 16.

Because of our mother, we missed out on lots of things other kids experienced. None of us have ever been caught shoplifting, vandalizing other's property, or ever arrested for any crime. It was all her fault. We never got drunk, took up smoking, stayed out all night, or a million other things, other kids did. Sundays were reserved for church, and we never missed once. We knew better than to ask to spend the night with a friend on Saturdays.

Now that we have left home, we are all God-fearing, educated, honest adults. We are doing our best to be mean parents just like Mom was. I think that's what is wrong with the world today. It just doesn't have enough mean moms anymore.

### **III. DEEPER INTO THE RESURRECTION OF THIS CHILD**

-Now back to Shunem, before all was said and done, the child had an old prophet come in and breathe some life back into his life. That is why that every child needs a prophet, a pastor, a preacher in his life. FURTHERMORE, his parents ought to have a prophet, a pastor, a preacher in their lives too!!!

-There are some things that we can do for our children. I urge you to consider these steps as you develop a "battle plan".

#### **1. Start on your knees.**

Pray diligently for your children for the next 30 days. Most people already pray for their children. If you are praying two minutes a day, may I suggest you pray five minutes? If you pray ten minutes, may I suggest 20? I want to you double the amount of time you are presently praying for your children. Don't just ask God to "bless our children," but pray specifically for them. Ask God to encourage them to be spiritually strong and morally pure, and to surround them with godly friends and to help them make godly choices. Pray that their choices would encourage spiritual growth. Remember that nothing of eternal value is ever accomplished without prayer.

#### **2. Establish your limits.**

Your goal in establishing limits is to give your child a sense of security through a consistent understanding of what is acceptable in your home. You can't assume that a child "should know better." This ought to be for what they are listening to, looking at, and hanging out with.

#### **3. Evaluate your own life.**

It is not helpful to keep your child from listening to the empty philosophies of most secular music and television programs, if you're going to entertain yourself with the empty philosophies of R-rated videos. Parents may justify watching this material by saying they don't watch R-rated programs while the children are up. I'd like to remind you that morals don't change after 9:00 p.m. And it's not only videos. Most of the philosophies in today's television programs are worse than much of secular music. Also, you may not listen to secular rock music, but what kind of music are you listening to? Usually, parents justify their listening because it is mellower than what their children are

listening to. It may be mellower, but is it moral?

#### **4. Explain your limits to your children.**

At the end of the 30 days of prayer and discussing guidelines with your spouse, have a meeting to explain what you have decided. This process has taken place so that you will be able to redevelop your relationship with your children. They have been watching you pray for wisdom while discussing guidelines.

#### **5. Challenge your children to think biblically.**

How do you challenge someone to think? Ask questions without giving the answer immediately. To get someone to think biblically, ask him a question based on Scripture or a scriptural principle. To get someone to think biblically about entertainment, the following Scripture has proved to be very effective.

***Colossians 2:8 in the Living Bible***, "Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies. Their wrong shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas instead of on what Christ has said." This verse best describes today's entertainment industry. Think about it. Isn't today's music some man or woman's thoughts and ideas recorded on a CD? Aren't television programs, videos, and movies just someone's thoughts and ideas about life, love, violence, rebellion, sex, and drugs recorded on film or videotape and fed to us as entertainment?

With that understanding, what are some good questions to ask your children and yourself?

- How's your faith in Jesus?
- Is there a heaven?
- Is the Bible true?
- You say that your faith is strong?
- Good! How is your joy?
- Do you have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control?
- You remember the "Fruit of the Spirit" described in Galatians 5:22-23? Why doesn't it radiate in your life?

Maybe you have been letting the world undermine your Christian walk (faith and joy) with their empty philosophies.

#### **6. Explain the value of Christian music.**

It is impossible to properly explain the value of Christian music if you aren't setting the example by your own listening habits. How can you tell your children they should be listening to godly music, if you don't listen to godly music?

### **IV. CONCLUSION -- STAYIN' IN THE FIELDS**

Finally, I want to share a personal story told by John Corts. He said when he was 16 years of age he and his younger cousins went to visit his grandfather's farm. They couldn't wait to get there and go out into the fields. They wanted to pitch hay and ride on the tractor. It sounded like so much fun.

But the grandfather was reluctant to let them go. They whined and begged until finally he said to John, "You are the eldest. You can take the kids to the field if you promise not to bring them back early. You must keep them out there until the end of the day."

John said, "I will do that, Grandfather." So they all got on the hay wagon and the tractor pulled them out to the field. Very quickly, the kids got tired, and they started complaining. It was hot and sticky, and they were miserable. They began asking to go back to the house. But John said, "No, Grandfather told me to keep you out here."

At lunchtime, they were exhausted, and most of them were agitated. It was very hot; the hay was down their backs, and it itched, and they wanted to go back. But again John said, "No, Grandfather told me to keep you here."

At about 3:00 in the afternoon, a big black storm cloud came over, and the kids got scared. Some were crying. "Please!" they begged. "Let us go home." Still, the answer remained "no." At about 5:00 John said, "All right, it's time to quit." He got them all on the hay wagon, and they went back to the house. After they had had their baths and been

given something to eat, they rested for a while. Grandfather praised them warmly for the work they had done. Then, they became very proud of themselves.

That's when Grandfather told John why he wanted them to stay in the field. He said, "This farm has been successful through the years for one reason. We have stayed in the field when we felt like coming in. We did what needed to be done even when we wanted to quit. That is why I wanted the kids to have the satisfying experience of staying with something through the day."

John made his own application for his story, but let me tell you what it means to me. We're in a very difficult situation now. It's tough. It's hard moving against the tide of public opinion, the media, the entertainment industry, the Congress, the libraries, the professions and the other cultural forces that are making fun of us.

What was said during a passing conversation that I had with someone sometime back is accurate. It is unpleasant to be called "the religious right" and "the far right" and "religious extremists " and "fundamentalist right-wing crazies." None of us likes that. But being ridiculed and marginalized is the price we must pay to defend what we believe. Jesus told us that it would be that way.

**2 Timothy 4:6-8** -- “6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” “7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:” “8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

-And I don't know about you, but my wife and I are stayin' in the field.