

Torrey 1989 How God Fills Us Up at Low Points of Life

Session 4

By Jill Briscoe

Good evening. Try that again. Good evening. Wondered if anyone was there.

Well, we're thinking of a lot of people that were running on empty. Elijah, too burned out to burn on. Isaiah, too hurt to hang in there. Habakkuk, too worried to worship. Martha. Too busy to be blessed.

And tonight a little widow, too battered to believe. We find her story in two Kings Chapter four. Two Kings, chapter four. Let me read it for you. "The wife of a man from the company of the Prophets cried out to Elisha. 'Your servant, my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves.' Elisha replied to her, 'How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?' 'Well, your servant has nothing in the house at all,' she said, 'except a little oil.'

"Elisha said, 'Well, go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside. Shut the door behind you and your sons and pour oil into all the jars. And as each is filled, put it to one side.'

"So she left him and afterwards shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her sons, 'Bring me another.' But he replied, 'There isn't a jar left.' Then the oil stopped flowing. She went and told the man of

God, and he said, 'Go and sell the oil. Pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.'"

Well, there's no question about it. She'd run out. She was running on empty. "What have you got in the house?" Said Elisha. And she said "Nothing." Nothing in the house. She was running on empty. She had good reason to be. She was a woman in trouble. She was a woman in crisis.

She was running out of options. First of all, she'd run out of her husband. She was bereaved.

"Thy servant, my husband is dead," she said, and there is a little touch, I believe, of anger here.

"Thy servant."

She reminds him. He's a good man. He's a godly man. We don't have too many of those around anymore. Jezebel has been cutting all their heads off and they've been on the run. And this was a godly man. You know that. He was your servant, my husband, and he's dead. She'd run out of marriage. She'd run out of kisses. She'd run out of love.

She knew an intimate loneliness that only a widow knows. Talked to a widow just a couple of weeks ago and she said, "Jill, it's like being half a pair of scissors." Good description. Now I want to know a whole lot of things. Might surprise you. I want to ask the text, questions. Who was she? Had she had a happy marriage? I want to peek around the corner of the verse and find the answers. But even in a good reference Bible, I'm not going to find too many answers here.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. We know that, and references lead us to other parts in the

scriptures that throw light upon scripture to scripture. But as I hunted and as I searched, I couldn't figure out who she was.

If only they'd tell me her name. Now, when the Bible doesn't tell us, we can turn to the experts. Those of you here at Biola know that, because you have a library full of books written by experts. We're so blessed to have tools, aren't we? Layman's tools.

I met an expert not too long ago. He is a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and he speaks 27 languages. He's sort of bright, you know. As I watched him listening to somebody preach, I was fascinated because I didn't know somebody could hold three books in his hand at once. They were all translations of Semitic languages that he was happily following along the text as it was read. And I thought, how can somebody have that many brains and not sort of burst up here? Fascinated me, watching him.

It's people like that that have written the books that tell us the questions that we want answered, give us our answers. And as I dug around in those books to try and figure out who this little widow was, I found the answer. And there seems to be no doubt about the fact. For many, many Jewish rabbis and historians in that area wrote about her in extra biblical literature.

She was, in fact, they say, Mrs. Obadiah. Mrs. Obadiah, and you say, well, that's neat. Who is she? Mrs. Obadiah happened to be married to Mr. Obadiah, and Mr. Obadiah was Ahab's steward. Ahab, all King compromise. Remember, we started with a story on Elijah when we started this series, Ahab was in trouble. He needed a good government. One of his men was

Obadiah. He kept the books. He was an expert in that affair, and that degree. Now then, this adds all sorts of connotations to this story.

What was Mr. Obadiah's widow doing in debt? What had happened? How had she got herself in such a mess? Well, maybe she was sort of different from her husband and she hadn't managed the books very well. I understand that because I'm married to an ex-banker. My husband was a Bank Inspector.

I didn't marry a preacher. I married a Bank Inspector, and he's very good with figures and books. He can look at a whole line column of figures and just tell you what it is at the bottom. I gave up math when I was about seven, I believe. And I don't even know how to keep a checkbook. When mine gets in a mess, I open another account, so I handle it. So here we are, Stuart and I, God, in his sense of humor, brings two people totally unlike each other together. You know, I often get calls at home. And a little voice says, Is the pastor in? And I say, no, because he never is.

And they say, Well, I need to talk to him. And I say, are you in trouble? And they say, yes. And I say, Can I help you? And they said, Well, I don't think so. We want a divorce. And that's why we want to talk to your husband. And I say, well, he doesn't do divorces. And then there's silence. And there's a little, well, and I say, now, what I mean is he institutes Christian marriages.

Yes. Where it's too late for that. We're in trouble. We want a divorce. And I say, what's the trouble? And she said all sorts of things. And I said, well, let me guess. And they say, well, you

don't even know me, right? But I bet you're incompatible. How did you know? So I said, because everybody is.

Otherwise we'd have a world full of clones, wouldn't we? Everybody's incompatible. And especially people that get married. I mean, opposites attract. And what attracts you before, irritates you after, I want to tell you. When you're living with it and seeing it over the breakfast table and all the rest of it for the rest of your life.

And so Mr. and Mrs. Obadiah, I believe, were very, very different. And it could have been that she got in a mess. But what did she do with all that money? I mean, they must have been very well off. Well, you know as well as I do because you're here at Biola. And I don't need to fill in the story for you that Mr. Obadiah was running a sort of secret operation. Do you remember he was hiding the prophets that Jezebel was after?

Remember, he put 100 of them in a cave. Now you can't just shove 100 people in a cave and say, see you in a month. You've got to do something about it. And so what was he doing? He was sneaking out, presumably after nightfall. Loading up the donkeys with food and risking his neck every day of his life to be back in time to stand in front of Jezebel and Ahab, and pretend he'd been home in bed.

So he was a brave man. He was a servant. As the little widow reminded, Elisha, "Your servant, my husband is dead." And that was her gripe. That was her complaint. He went and dropped dead. Now that was really most unnecessary. I mean, it was very inconvenient to drop dead just

in the middle of all this because it left her holding the baby. It left her trying to manage the books. It left her getting into debt.

It left her in a mess. And, of course, in the culture of the day, God had thought of an idea of looking after little widows. And it was that she might sell her own sons into, quote, slavery with limits. And this might sound a terrible thing. But in God's economy he had thought of a neat idea of protecting the children, giving them employment, teaching them a trade, and on the 7th year, sending them back to their family.

Now, unfortunately, human nature being what it was, that thing wasn't working very well and it had degenerated into slavery in the worst sort. And so when this little widow is faced, having sold this and sold that and got rid of the piano and the furniture and the clothes and everything else in the house and had nothing left to sell, the prospect of selling her two children or having them taken away from her was not a very bright one indeed. And so she'd run out. She'd run out of children. Almost.

She'd run out of marriage. She'd run out of the ability to cope. The ability to understand. It's one thing when you lose your husband. But it's another thing when you lose your children.

And I know that maybe in a crowd like this will be a couple of widows visiting. Maybe this is just for you. I don't know, but I know that it's another thing altogether when a widow loses her children, either when they leave home or she loses them in some other way. I was thinking of this and again I wanted to capture it and wrote: "As feather to a bird on high, as rain is to a cloud,

as light to Angels' wings in heaven, as laughter laughed out loud, as leaf to tree and leg to knee, and clear brook to the heart, our children to the widow and kisses to her heart. A Sunshine to the winter Earth, as frogs are to a pond, as shooting star to galaxy, as planet to beyond, as kitten to a dish of milk and horse to rope and cart, are children to the widow, and kisses to her heart. As baby is to mother's breast and hearth to wandering men, foundations to a building and pancakes to a pan, as Hairspray is to hair and curl, and dartboard is to dart, are children to the widow and kisses to her heart."

It's a terrible thing to run out of marriage and run out of money and run out of motherhood. And she was running on empty. She'd run out. So after she ran out, she did a very wise thing. She cried out. Who did she cry out to? Elisha?

Good person to cry out to. And you know something, at the end of the 20th century, God is looking for Elisha's, and you will either fit into one of these two categories tonight. You will either have come in here a little widow or you will have come in here, an Elisha.

And the strange thing is about the Christian life. You can be both in the same day. You can wake up a little widow and you're out and God can touch you and fill you up at the point of your need. And you can become an Elisha for a little widow by evening. That's the Christian life and the idea of the Christian life is to learn how to be an Elisha every moment of your life. That's the challenge.

So she cried out to Elisha. Why Elisha? Why didn't she go to somebody in the palace that she must have known? Well, that's another question. Why, you have to do a whole study for about a year or two on the life of Elisha to figure out why.

And you'll come up with a whole book full of answers. It's the neat thing about Bible study. One thing leads to another, to another, to another, and you just get irritated with anybody that interrupts. I came up with a few ideas of my own. I think she cried out to Elisha because he was a man of the Word.

And if you want to be used of God and equipped for his service, be a man of the Word. Be a woman of the Word. If you're a woman, say to God, make me a wise woman and mean it. If you're a man say, make me a man of the word and mean it.

When you say that, God will. You'll do it together because you'll do the work and he'll give you the enabling. He never calls you to do anything he doesn't equip you for and call you for and strengthen you for. But you'll have a path beaten to your door. You won't need to do anything else because people will know that you are a man or a woman of the Word, and you won't have to have a resume to prove it.

A hurting world will know. Maybe that was why he was a man of prayer. She knew that if she got to him, he'd pray and God would answer his prayers. Are you known for having an in with an unseen power? I had a guy who was a secret servant agent who was an absolute character.

I wouldn't like to tell you the sort of things he was asked to do and has done in his life. He happened to be married to a friend of mine. She had a very dramatic conversion and we began to see God begin to work in this extraordinary man's life. And in the end, she'd taken all she could from him. And she decided to get rid of him, to tell him not to come home anymore.

And he decided to kill her. He started off by bugging the house, which was part of his business. And then he called me from a city in the States. And he told me what he was going to do.

And he said, Pray for me, Jill. Pray for me. And he began to cry. He said, I know if you pray for me, I won't do it.

Well, I tell you. I stood there with the phone in my hand and said, Boy, this is a heavy one. Why did he do that? I asked him years later. He's now a believer. Why did you do that?

He said, because I knew you were a woman of prayer. I knew you were a woman of prayer. And if you become a woman of prayer, if you become a man of prayer, people will know the little widow, the big, tough he man who doesn't want to do what he knows in his human anger he's going to do will beat a path to your door.

I also believe he was a man of faith that he would help her to believe again. You know, the hopelessness of people is what we're dealing with in ministry. They need encouragement. You know how to do that? We'll talk a little bit about that tomorrow.

I also believe that he was a man that was always the same. That was always the same. There's an incredible little sidelight to this story. He was consistent even after he died. Now you can't get more consistent than that.

There had been a situation where somebody had died and the guys were carrying his body along the road to bury it. And they got to this tomb and somebody took the thing away and they were getting all ready. No, they hadn't taken the stone away from the tomb. They got inside of the tomb, apparently. And some robbers came down from the hills and the guys that were carrying the corpse said, oh, boy, we're going to get robbed.

Now just imagine, that's a dilemma. Your hands are full of body and you've got robbers to fight. What you're going to do? So as they were going on the way to the tomb, they saw another tomb and they said, well, let's shove him in here. And then afterwards we'll get him out and go and bury him. And so they took the stone away and they threw the corpse in and they ran and hid.

And the robbers came and went. And after a bit they saw they were safe. So they came out and they took the stone away and the corpse said, Hi. Quite a shock, huh? Do you know that happened? How did that happen? Because his corpse had been thrown on top of the body of Elisha. You can't get more consistent than that. When anyone touches you and you give them life, even after you're dead, that's consistency. I tell you. I ask myself, do people touch me and get given life and I'm alive? I want to be like that.

I want to go on giving life after I'm gone. And when you're that sort of woman and you're that sort of man, the world will beat a path to your door. You won't have any trouble worrying what you're going to do for God. You'll just have trouble wondering how you're going to get all the time to do it. So there are many, many reasons.

I think she cried out to Elisha, and I look at his tender dealings with her. "What can I do for you?" He said. Do you know how neat it is to get up in the morning saying that? The girl that led me to Christ told me so many things. In fact, I met her again this last summer in England. I was sitting on the platform at Kazakh convention.

And there in the audience right at the back. I saw this face. And it was the girl that had led me to Christ. I haven't seen her since those days. I knew she was going to be there. And my eyes were going through the crowd looking for her. And I just lost it. And I just sat there saying, thank you, Jenny. Thank you for being an Elisha for me. She was an Elisha in my life. And I remember she said to me so many things. But one thing: "Wake up, Jill. Every day of your life determined to be a blessing."

And that's how we should do it. I'm going to be a blessing whether you want me to be or not. That's it because Christ is with him. He is the one that's going to bless. All I need to do is be the earthly vehicle for his divine action. That's what a body is. A body is the earthly vehicle for the spiritual entity that lives within it. It's the way the spirit gets around in a physical environment.

And that's the way Christ gets around in this physical environment. And I know he can be a blessing. What can I do for you? What can I do for you? Not what can you do for me, but what can I do for you?

The little widow is running around saying, what can you do for me? Elisha is saying, what can I do for you? And if you want to know what you are, ask yourself the question. Are you looking for someone to help you or you're looking for someone to help? And you'll know where you are today, whether you're a little widow or whether you're an Elisha.

Well, after he had said, what can I do for you? She said, I don't think you can do anything. I mean, I've got nothing in the house save a little pot of oil. He said, well, what have you got in the house? She said nothing. He said, now, what have you got in the house? Nothing.

He said, yes, you do. You've got a little pot of oil. Now, what does oil speak of? Many, many things. But we know that it is used as a picture and a symbol in the scriptures of the Holy Spirit. Of the Holy Spirit. And you know what Elisha does, her little widows. He reminds her that even when she thinks she's nothing in the house, she has the little pot of oil because you forget that when you're a little widow.

You forget it when you've run out. You've run out of relationships, you've run out of all the things that she ran out of and you run out of. You forget you have within you all that you need, all that you need. You have the little pot of oil. And that's Elisha's job. Our job is to throw the person in need back on the resources of God, not to let them come to us all the time, that we

might become their little pot of oil because that's not going to work, to stick with them until they've learned how to appropriate for themselves the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

But our job is to get them being Elisha's. That's our job. In fact, as you notice, Elisha said, Go in there and shut the door. I'm not coming with you. I want you to have a miracle all for yourself.

I want this to be yours and your sons. I don't want to be around or you might think this is Elisha. This is him. Do we believe God in such a way that we can say to the student that comes to us? I don't believe in God and say you pray to him.

Pray the Agnostic's prayer. God, if there is a God, show yourself to me. Can you tell her to do that and believe it's going to happen? Can you throw her back on him? Can you dare to say that with absolute confidence?

Remember my husband telling a young lady from Marquette University to do that quite a few years ago, she was the biggest Marxist on the University campus. She'd been abroad doing all sorts of things that she shouldn't have been doing, messing around in politics. She was a brilliant young lawyer. She is now a top public defender that got mixed up with defending people involved with the Mafia. And I tell you her story is incredible.

But this young lady at that point at the age of six, had laid on her back and looked up at heaven and said, God, I don't believe you're there by her own testimony. God, I don't believe you're

there. And she had by her own admission, chosen to become an atheist at that age. And she was a very bright one.

Well, actually, she was dumped outside our church by some friends when she was drunk on a dare to come in and disrupt the service on a Sunday night. She didn't disrupt this service. She came in and sat on the back pew because her friends took off on her. They just dumped her out and took off on her. They thought that was very funny.

And so it left Joy alone on the back pew. And even though she was pretty drunk, she wasn't too drunk to pick up a couple of things. The next day she knocked on our door. And that's how we met her. And Stuart began to work with her day after day after day, month after month after month, she read everything that Packard written.

She'd read everything that our Guinness has written. She read everything with him. He could hardly keep up with the things he gave her to read, that they were studying together. And in the end, she had an intellectual conversion. And about a year later she had a heart conversion.

Very interesting story. But I always remember Stuart coming down to me that first day, and he said, I got her to pray the Agnostic's prayer. "God, if you're there, show yourself to me." And he said it was a wonderful feeling of confidence.

I was able to say to her, Jill, you'll find him. He's there. And she's told me since it was the absolute confidence he had in his face, in his body language, in everything he was able to do for

her that day. That led her to search for him with all her heart until she found him. So as an Elisha, we have to have confidence in what we're saying and turn the Mac, tell him to go shut the door. He'll do it for you. He'll put your life back together again. People's lives are in such a mess. Talk about putting Humpty Dumpty back together again.

All the King's men can't do it, but the King can. And we have to believe that. And we have to tell them that. And so she went and gathered all her neighbor's empty vessels. And I'm into allegorizing too much. But I just like the picture because there's a lot of our neighbors who are pretty empty vessels and we need to help to pour the oil into them. And that's a nice little picture. But anyway, practically speaking, these young men went out. These little boys that were about to be sold and knew it probably and gathered all these empty vessels. They were going to be part of a miracle. And what happened?

She took that little pot of oil in her hand. And can you imagine how stupid she felt? I mean, at that point. And, you know, as a mother, I've been there. What happens if I start pouring and nothing comes? Can I tell my children God's going to work a miracle for me, for us? Can I tell my little child, "My boy, God's going to answer this prayer"?

It's sort of scary, very scary. But she began to pour in faith. And according to her faith, be it unto you. According to her faith, be it unto her. As long as she kept pouring, the oil poured.

When she stopped, the oil stopped. And according to your faith, be it unto you. She poured out of her emptiness, not out of her fullness. Out of her emptiness, because she'd forgotten she wasn't empty. She had the little pot of oil. And of course, all the vessels were filled.

They went and they sold the oil, which was, I'm sure, the best quality. God don't make no junk. It was the best quality oil, which brought a good price on the market, just like he made the best quality wine, only the best when the father's fingers are in it, only the best. And they sold it and lived off the rest.

This story has great encouragement and meaning for me because there was a time when I felt like that little widow and I've shared bits of that with you, a grass widow with my husband on the road in ministry for many years. And I used all my ingenuity to make things work out.

I missed my husband greatly, and I began to lose control of my kids because there came a point in my life when I couldn't be mom and dad anymore. Dave was twelve, Judy was ten, Pete was eight. I became bitter. I became angry. I went to God and said, hey, thy servant, my husband may as well be dead. And I cried out to God. When you run out, that's what you do. And then I looked around for an Elisha and I found one. There will always be one if you're looking. God always puts an Elisha there.

My Elisha was my senior missionary, and it took every single bit of courage to go to her because there was a lot of pride involved. How could I go and say I wasn't the good little evangelical

missionary she thought I was. And what would happen if my husband found out? Because I didn't want him to know. I didn't want him to be disappointed in me.

And what would happen if my children found out? But then, of course, my children knew. Kids always do. They pick it up like litmus paper. I remember putting Pete to bed one day and he said, "Where's Daddy?" And I said, "Oh, he's just gone off for Jesus again for three months." Smile.

And he said, "Where's he gone?" I said "To America." And he said, "Haven't they all heard yet over there?" And then he said, "Why does it have to be my Daddy? Why does it always have to be my Daddy? Why can't somebody else's Daddy go for a bit, share it out?" And I said just the right thing. Smiled my evangelical smile. Then I went to my room, cried my eyes out. And I decided, I'd go to Elisha. The next day I went and I said to her, Joan, I have nothing in the house. I'm bitter. I'm resentful. I want out. I want to go back into the business world. I can't do it. I can't be the single parent God wants me to be. And I have nothing in the house.

And she said, oh, yes, you do. You've got the little pot of oil. And she said, why don't you go out tonight and start pouring? I said, what do you mean? I'll send you a babysitter.

She'll get on the bus, go down to Morecambe, walk along the front and do what you used to do before you ever came here and pour out into some empty vessels. And so I did that night, on my own. Babysitter came. Got on the bus. I went down to Morecambe. Seaside holiday place, Big Fairground. And I tell you, never in my life have I felt so empty. And with every single reserve

of willpower I stopped a kid dead on the street and with no enthusiasm, no interest whatsoever, nothing inside. I said, "Would you like a talk about God?"

And to my horror, she said, "Yes, I would." I took her for a cup of coffee and ended up bringing her home with me. She was a Methodist preacher's kid on the run from home. Actually, we went and had this cup of coffee. I remember I was getting to know her a bit, and she began to talk and talk a bit more.

And she'd been living rough and she wasn't used to that sort of thing. And she was scared and she was sorry, she wanted to go home, but she wouldn't. And she said, my mom and dad never stopped this religious stuff and they're praying and praying and praying. And she said, I don't know. She said, Just to get away from all these Christians is so neat.

I said, really?

And I thought, how neat that her mom and her dad were on their knees. And I was a physical answer to their prayer. Only they could have known at that moment. And so Judy came home with me and eventually came to Christ. But I poured out that night and I began to pour out and pour out.

And Judy had friends she'd met when she was living rough down in Morecambe. And I went back the next night and I got another babysitter and another babysitter. And we poured out and

we all poured out. And we all poured out. And soon I didn't know what to do with all these kids because we lived in the middle of the country.

One day I was walking, driving the bus along the road. I think I told you this story and this farmer's wife was walking. Did I tell you this, Annette? No? I can't remember what I've told you and what I haven't. And I picked her up and I thought, well, this little girl looks lonely and I got to know her.

And I began to make a friend of her because I had begun pouring out. I turned into an Elijah instead of being a little widow. And I thought, well, she's not ready for a long time to come to Christ because she doesn't know anything about the Lord. She has no background. She's a bit like me.

And one day, about three months later, I was having another cup of coffee with her, building up like we're told to do in all our seminars. And she looked at me and she said, when are you going to lead me to Jesus?

And I said, you're not ready. She said, what do you mean, I'm not ready? I've been ready for three months, and she was. So I led her to Christ. And she said, you know, every time I'm here in your house, kids come out of the woodwork.

There's kids upstairs, there's kids downstairs. There's people living here. There's people wandering in and out. Who are they? So I told her what was happening because we were pouring

out down in Morecambe, she said, Well, what do you need for them? Can I help? First day, she was converted. First night, and I said, Well, I need a place for them. She said, oh, well, should I done about that? Will our barn do? And I said, well, the cows are in it.

She said, well, we can put the cows out. I said, really? She said, well, we'll have to get my husband saved. He wouldn't like the cows being put out. So I said, well, how do we do that? And she said, oh, leave that to me. Leave that to me. So a week later, she rang me. She said, well, that's all right. He's saved now. And he says the cows can go out to pasture.

So the cows got put out and we attacked the barn. And there are probably about 40 street kids that have found the Lord at that point. And they had to walk four and a half miles to get there because we didn't have transport, and they had to walk four and a half miles back. But we made that barn fabulous with color and white washing and a few things that needed doing. And it became the place where Christ was born all over again.

He loves barns, as you know, he was born in one. He was born again in that one over and over and over again. And the kids just came because we were all pouring out, you see, and we'd all become Elisha's instead of little widows. And one day the barn was full and one of the kids said, we're going to have to have two sort of sittings. We're going to have to have an early meeting and a late meeting.

But we need transport. We can't do this with everybody walking through the fields all night. So we need a bus. And I said, well, we don't have a bus. I was for a missionary living on \$1,000 a

year with three kids, £1000 a year, which was more than \$1,000 a year, but still wasn't that much more.

And we didn't have any money to buy a bus. And they didn't have any money. There were street kids. And he said, Well, Jill, you taught us that if we brought everything we had and then we'd given everything, then God would do the rest. And we need a bus.

So we're praying for a bus and we need it for next Thursday. I said, now, wait a minute. You don't pray for buses for next Thursday. I mean, it's just not done. So he said, well, we're doing it. So if you want to join us, fine. But we're having this prayer meeting for this bus. Now my kids were there. Their eyes were as big as horses. I remember David saying, why can't we pray for a bus? Mom, why can't Jesus give us a bus? I said, David, Jesus can't give us a bus. I was standing there with that little pot of oil in my hand and my son's big eyes looking at me. How dare I say, David, we're going to pray for a bus. Because then when God didn't give us one, I'd have to explain. God said no. So I gave them kids this little story about how God sometimes says yes, and sometimes there's no. And sometimes there's wait to prepare them because the bus wasn't going to come. Right?

Well, somebody in London whose name was can't even remember it. Fred had a van, a minibus. He was going on the mission field. He'd been to Capernwray Bible School, but I had never met him. He didn't know me. He started to try and give his bus away. He rang OM. They said no. OM said no. I mean, OM takes buses like magnets from all over the world, just lifted from one

continent to another by prayer. They are looking for buses. And they said, no, they didn't need one. Somebody's just given them two.

So he rang the Salvation out. And he said, do you want a bus? They said, Well, Funnily enough. Somebody just gave us one. We don't want it either.

So we went home and he said, God, nobody wants my bus. And he knelt down and he said, do you want me to turn it into money and put it in the bank? Give it to the mission? What do you want me to do? And into his mind came my name for no reason whatsoever. So insisntently that he took a day off work. And he got in the bus and he drove it up on Wednesday night. My kids and I were having supper and he drove that bus up. My dad was there, who was the biggest car dealer in the north of England.

He was not a believer. He was there. He was passing through. And that bus came driving up, and I'll never forget David's face. He said, Jesus has sent the bus and he was out there and he was all over it. And he was driving it. And the kids were all over the bus. And my dad said, that's a beautiful bus. That's only telling me what it was. And I was just sitting there with my mouth open.

And this guy comes in with these papers. And he says to me in front of my dad, well, here's this bus. How'd you do? I'm whoever, Fred. And this is my bus. And God's told me to give it to you. And I don't know if you want to sell it. Do. But I can't get rid of it. I've tried. I did this, and it turns around and off he goes, I mean, that was it. I never saw him again. And my dad said, what

does he mean? He's giving you the bus. And he picked the papers up and he looked at them and he said, you know what he's given you?

And he told me how wonderful this bus was and what model it was and how much money it cost. And that was the beginning. So we began to bring all these kids because we were pouring out and pouring out and pouring out. David came back in from the bus and he said, Can I pray for a bike now? But you see, my kids were part of the miracle. They were part of the miracle.

And they kept taking the full vessels and putting them to one side. And they've never been the same again because they saw their poor old mom, such a little widow with such a lot of oil pouring out, pouring out, pouring out.

One day, one of those kids said to me, Barnes, four, twice, three times. Need another place? There's a warehouse downtown, four stories high. Dead cats and dogs in the basement. But you'll soon clean those up. I like that bit. You will soon clean those up. Make a terrific place. We could have an art seller. We could have crafts, we could have a coffee bar. And I said, where is it? The main block downtown. Be terrific. Terrific location. Don't need the bus anymore. We can give it to someone else. And I said, oh, Martin.

And he said, Jill, if you will go to God and ask him about this warehouse, and he says nothing to you about it from the Scriptures. Okay. But if you will take just one evening when we have our prayer meeting, this had become a very dangerous prayer meeting. I shivered when they told me

what they were doing in this prayer meeting. Well, we're praying. We want you to read and seek God. And if he tells you to buy this warehouse, will you?

And I said, well, okay. I mean, what's God going to say to me about a warehouse? Warehouse. I mean, the word wasn't even in Greek or Hebrew, you know? I mean, I was going to be safe here. So I think, fine. So I settle down, put my kids to bed, light the fire, get my Bible, and look at the cleanest part, the safest bit. Malachi. Never read that. And of course, you know what I read because you're Bible students. I felt quite comfortable through the first chapter, relaxing.

No warehouse. And I came to the verse that said, "Bring ye all the tides into the warehouse and prove me now, says the Lord, because I'm going to open the windows of heaven. And I'm going to pour you out a blessing. And you're not going to be able to receive it." And on the strength of that, we bought it with nothing. And we began to pour out all over again.

About eight years later. It's a long story God had provided because when you pour out, he pours in, you pour out and he pours in, you pour out. He pours in. The supply never dries up. God had provided everything we needed for eight years' ministry in that place. The warehouse was transformed and it became a home God's home, God's focal point for the whole district.

And I remember the day I left in 1970. The music kids that have been playing their music around their old haunts just sat there and played song after song after song after song that they'd written themselves. I sat and cried my way through all of them and kept saying, Play this, sing that,

Chris, play this, Carrie play that Grace sent me this. We sat there till like we are the morning the place was packed. Kids were climbing out the windows.

They were outside. They couldn't get in because God had poured out a blessing and there wasn't room to receive it. One of those kids, Martin, walked up to me and he gave me this locket with Malachi 3:2-10 on the back of it. And he said, don't forget us, Jill.

And when I look at this verse, she kept pouring. I'm reminded of the warehouse and the barn and the bus and the bookstore and all the other miracles that God did for us. And I say to myself, oh, God, such a little widow with such a lot of oil. We're nothing. We're little dust people. But we're dignified with divinity, remember? We have all we need. We have a little pot of oil.

And if you will shut the door on the world and pour out of your emptiness, you will be transformed. You will no longer be Mrs. Obadiah. You will be Elisha in somebody's life. Let's pray together.

Lord, as I have told that wonderful story over again tonight I have been touched. I remember the faces and I remember the names. And I do remember them tonight. Each one. Those kids grown up now with their own families, deacons in churches. Miracle that is. Still running the warehouse, still using it as a center, still developing the work Elisha in their own right.

Pouring out God, may they keep pouring. God, some of us is such a mess. We cry out to you tonight. I have nothing in the house and we hear your voice. Oh, yes, you do. You have me. You

have the little pot of oil. And I pray with all my heart and all my soul that you will call men and women tonight to be Elisha's. But out of their poverty they may discover thy wealth. And they may keep pouring. But they may gather empty vessels to themselves wherever you send them and see them filled.

God, I know what it takes. We have to bring everything we are and have to you and prove you and then you'll open the windows of heaven and pour out. Lord, hear our prayers. See our tears.

Answer. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.