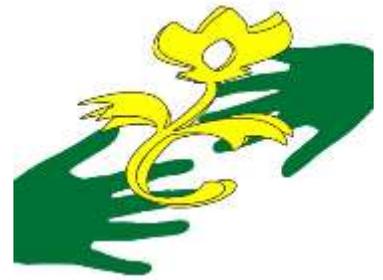


Hello!



You've been on my mind lately . . . and I'm sending this message to let you know you're important to me!

I'm grateful for you and thankful for all you do every day to help me and others. I know it's not easy.

I hope the next couple pages comfort and inspire you - if so, please pass the joy to another 😊

I wish you and those you love peace, health and safety as you rest in God's presence and never-ending care.

*** Thank YOU Thank YOU Thank YOU ***

"Knock, knock."

"Who's there?"

"I-care-about."

"I-care-about who?"

"I CARE ABOUT YOU!!"

“Get a lot of jars . . .”

(excerpted and adapted from **UNAFRAID: Living God’s Plan on a Ladder and a Promise**)

This story is a study of living in that sacred place where relying on God and working our part meet, and it’s a beautiful thing. The widow in the story asked Elisha for help. She came to the prophet, afraid that after her husband had died her sons would be taken as slaves to the Moabites because she had no way to support them.

Elisha replied to her, “How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?”

“Your servant has nothing there at all,” she said, “except a little oil.”

Elisha said, “Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don’t ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side.”

She left him and afterward 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 son, “Bring me another one.”

But he replied, “There is not a jar left.” Then the oil stopped flowing.

She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left” (2 Kings 4:1-7).

This story defines for us the way to trust and obey our God, how our work meets His will every time, a promise perfected. We can follow the widow’s example of trusting God and doing our part with what He’s given us. These four steps will guide us through the crisis we see before us, every time.

1. Take inventory of all you have. Elisha asked the woman what resources she had available to her. God asks us the same and it’s important that we don’t leave anything out when we present ourselves to Him. Even what looks to be almost nothing will be enough if we obey, because God needs our deep trust to use what we have, not resources aplenty and a doubting attitude. Even “*a little oil*” was enough for a miracle, so don’t overlook anything God’s given you to work with. Gather your supplies, tap into your resources, and submit all you have and all you are to God’s will in a peaceful trust that won’t waver. Do this first thing.

2. Get a lot of jars. A big challenge means big plans. That’s God’s way of thinking. No matter what part of the temple we’re building, it’s important that we get everything there is to get out of the opportunity, even if it looks like a little thing. Elisha understood that concept well. He told the widow to get not “just a few” jars, even get them from your neighbors, he said. The woman may have thought he was planning way too big, but she continued to trust. So can we. Even if we hold only one acorn today, we need to clear the spot the towering oak will need to flourish. **Even if we can only reach out to one person with compassion and understanding today, we need to do it so that she can reach out to someone else, so that God’s grace flows like it should, and we trust it to come back to us as part of His promise. Plan big, get a lot of jars.**

3. Shut your door and work. With her instructions and a plan, the widow wasted no time in doing the next thing. Often we think we need to do more than God asks. We have a hard time shutting our door and tending to the work He’s given us without meddling in someone else’s or trying to “help” Him in a way for which we’re not equipped. Our work is enough for our hands, and we honor God when we obey Him in our simple acceptance of the task He’s set before us. The woman kept her focus on her own temple building, not on her friends’ and not on what would be asked of her next. She stayed with the job until it was done, and that kind of commitment from us will be honored in the same way God honored it with her. His grace fills all the jars we have when we take hold of it and put it to work.

4. Let go and make room for more. It was never the plan for the widow to keep all the oil God supplied. It was simply a part of the provision, meant to be used so that He could provide even more. That’s how it works with us. The more we trust and obey, the more abundance we find, and then we have the chance to demonstrate God’s economy to those around us, those who see us receive and give away only to receive even more. While God partners in the product with us, we decide what to do with the bounty. He waits to see if we’ll bury it or celebrate it. He waits to see what kind of example we’ll set for those around us. He waits to see if we’ll trust Him enough to let go and make room for more.

Take care, be grateful, help others

We all have different circumstances and have to work within the confines of our lives, but we can all do many things daily to help ourselves – and then get to be a blessing to others!

1. Drink plenty of water, keep good eating and exercising habits, rest when you can – a healthy body is a great strength in times of struggle and uncertainty.
2. Eliminate as much stress from your life as you can, practice extreme forgiveness for others and yourself. Everything is a choice – be mindful of making good choices.
3. Think about the future – now is the time to form grand plans in your mind and then plot them out on paper. Make personal goals and family goals. All progress is valuable.
4. Look at things as if for the first time – gratitude is healing and uplifting. Thank God for all you have and thank those in your life for their love and care.

No kindness is insignificant. Every good thing matters to someone. It's an old story, but it's true:

An elderly gentleman stooped along the shore, carefully and intentionally throwing one object after another into the sea.

A curious passerby moved in for a closer look. "What are you doing?"

"I'm throwing these starfish back to the sea ... before they die."

"What's the point?" the younger man looked around at the hundreds of starfish washed up from a storm.

"There are so many, you're not going to make a difference."

Without hesitation, the old man threw another helpless creature to safety.

"I will for this one."

And so he made his way down the beach, **one starfish at a time.**

