

Title: Running on Empty

Text: 2 Kings 4:1-7

Target: God's greatest abundance comes in the place of our greatest levels of emptiness.

1. THE CRISIS: *"Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, 'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.'* (2 Kings 4:1)

- A. Death has Taken:** *"your servant my husband is dead,"*
- B. Debt is Owed:** *"creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves."*

2. THE COMMAND: *"And Elisha said to her, 'What shall I do for you? Tell me; what have you in the house?' And she said, 'Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.' Then he said, 'Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbors, empty vessels and not too few.'* (2 Kings 4:2-3)

- A. Compelled by Compassion:** *"what shall I do for you?"* (Vs. 2)
- B. Consideration of the Contents:** *"what have you in the house?....nothing in the house except a jar of oil."* (Vs. 2)
- C. Change of Countenance:** *"Go outside, borrow vessels from your neighbors,"* (Vs. 3)
- D. Capacity of the Containers:** *"empty vessels and not too few."* (Vs. 3)

3. THE CLOSET: *"Then go in and shut the door behind yourself and your sons and pour into all these vessels. And when one is full, set it aside.' So she went from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons. And as she poured they brought the vessels to her."*

(2 Kings 4:4-5)

- A. Limited Access:** *"shut the door"* (Vs. 5)
- B. Limited Audience:** *"herself and her sons."* (Vs. 5)
- C. Limited Availability:** *"she poured"* (Vs. 5)

4. THE CONFIRMATION: *"When the vessels were full, she said to her son, 'Bring me another vessel.' And he said to her, 'There is not another.' Then the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the man of God, and he said, 'Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.'* (2 Kings 4:6-7)

- A. Complete Filling:** *"vessels were full,"* (Vs. 6)
- B. Complete Lacking:** *"there is not another."* (Vs. 6)
- C. Complete Overflow:** *"pay your debts...live on the rest."* (Vs. 7)

Takeaway: Obedience creates Overflow.

Individual or Community Group Discussion Guide: Whether you are working through this discussion on your own or guiding a group, take a moment to slow your pace and open your heart before you begin. “Running on Empty” reminds us that God often meets us not at the height of our strength, but at the depth of our need. The widow in 2 Kings 4 did not come to Elisha with a plan; she came with a problem. What she discovered is that emptiness is not a liability in the Kingdom; it is often the doorway to God’s provision.

As you lead or reflect, resist the urge to rush to answers. These questions are designed to help you notice where you may be depleted, what God has already placed in your hands, and how obedience creates room for overflow. Create space for honesty and reflection. If you are leading a group, listen more than you speak. If you are reading alone, invite the Holy Spirit to illuminate areas of surrender and faith. Remember, God fills what we bring empty, and He still works best behind closed doors.

1. Running on Empty: Where in your life do you currently feel the most empty, depleted, or overwhelmed - emotionally, spiritually, relationally, or financially, and how does this story challenge the way you view that emptiness?

2. The Crisis: The widow faced both death and debt at the same time. Which part of her crisis do you resonate with more right now loss or pressure—and how do those seasons tend to affect your faith?

3. The Command: Elisha asked, “*What do you have in the house?*”

What is something small, overlooked, or ordinary in your life that God might be asking you to surrender and trust Him with?

4. The Containers: The oil only flowed as long as there were empty vessels. What does it look like for you to create capacity for God’s work in your life; time, obedience, faith, humility, or expectation?

5. The Closet: The miracle happened behind closed doors, with limited access and limited audience. Why do you think God often does His deepest work in private before public, and how comfortable are you with quiet obedience?

6. The Confirmation: The oil stopped flowing only when the assignment was complete. How does this shape your understanding of God’s provision that it is tied to purpose, not excess or spectacle?

7. Obedience Creates Overflow: Looking at the entire story, where is God inviting you to take a clear step of obedience, trusting that overflow will follow faithfulness?

Optional Closing Prompt for Individual/Groups

What would it look like this week to stop focusing on what you lack and start obeying with what you have?