

“Positioning Yourself for Increase”

Sunday, February 12th, 2012 – Eastgate Community Church
Pastor Dale Campfield

Intro:

Good morning. We’ve just finished our sermon series on Touching Heaven. Next Sunday we’ll begin a new series entitled, “Investing for Eternity.” But before we start that, I wanted to share with you the goal that God has given to me through our 40 days of fasting and praying for 2012 and beyond. I believe this goal is not only for the body of Eastgate, but they can be adapted and claimed by each of you reading this as well.

Pastor Dale Campfield Personal Goal for Eastgate Community Church – 2012

2 Cor. 9:8 (NIV)

“And God is able to make all grace “increase” to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will “increase” in every good work.”

Goal - That we will see INCREASE: spiritually, numerically and financially

Explosive, Abundant, Supernatural Expansion

Spiritually: An increase in the area of discipleship.

Numerically: An increase in the attendance of our Sunday celebration.

Financially: An increase of the giving of tithes and offerings.

So.... how do we carry this out? It all starts with discipleship. When we’ve caught the heart of discipleship then we can move forward with greater increase. When we know who we are in Christ, then increase will come. When we as a church move in a greater fashion in discipleship, the spiritual growth will come and the numerical and financial growth will be an automatic fruit of that discipleship.

Let's talk about INCREASE.

Explosive – The kind of increase that affects not only you, but everyone around you. The kind of increase that not only affects Eastgate, but the surrounding areas around us; our community, our city, our state, our nation and around the world. Like a hand grenade, it affects everyone around it.

Abundant – More than enough. If it comes from God, then there can be more than enough. The kind of increase that we can experience that is more than we can imagine. God says if we can imagine it, He can do more than that.

Supernatural – This means that it can only come from God. If we can bring about the growth on our own, then forget about it. We want something that takes the faith in God to accomplish. A supernatural move of the Spirit of God that brings forth increase.

2 Kings 4:1-7 tells a true story of increase. Let's take a look at it.

There are 13 things we can learn from this story.

1 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets

The wife of Obadiah.
Obadiah was one of integrity.
Had a reputation of being a Godly man.
One of the 7,000 that did not bow his knee to Baal.
Only income was the ministry, which meant had hardly no money.

The first thing we can learn:

#1. God takes care of His own (like this widow) **and He'll take care of you.**

cried out to Elisha,

cried out to Elisha
`aq (tsaw-ak'); to shriek

She was in major need.

#2. We need to cry out to God!

"Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. (Had a reputation of being a Godly man) But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

Obadiah was in debt for borrowing money to feed the other prophets.
Mosaic law permitted this to happen.
According to Mosaic law, children were considered property of their parents.
Creditors were permitted by law to take these children for the payment due.
Children would be their slaves till the year of Jubilee, then returned.
Can you imagine your children being taken from you – some of you have.

#3. Times in our lives can seem extremely bleak.

- 2 Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

#4. What do you have in your house? Spiritually speaking.

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

except a little oil KJ a pot of oil
'acuwk (aw-sook'); anointed, i.e. an oil-flask:
This was olive oil.
Some believe this was the oil set aside for her death and burial.

#5. A little oil can go a long ways!

What would have happened if she didn't even have that in that house?

- 3 Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars.

for empty jars
reyq (rake); or (shorter) req (rake); empty, and worthless.

#6. The Lord is looking for empty and worthless to the world vessels.

Don't ask for just a few.

#7. Raise your expectation of reception.

You'll receive whatever it is you ask for.

- 4 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."
5 She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons.

#8. Shut the door to your creditors.

Don't let them have a voice in your life.
Get alone with the presence of God.

They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring.

She kept pouring, not Elisha.

#9. Even you can be used by God.

She kept pouring, it was none stop, from one jar to the next, just move it over.

#10. The oil was valuable. They didn't want to drop an ounce.

The oil was to be multiplied in the pouring.

#11. The way to increase what we have is to use it.

To him that so hath shall be given.
It is not hoarding the talents, but trading with them, that doubles them

While there was a vessel to fill, there was oil sufficient; and it only ceased to flow when there was no vessel to receive it. This is a good emblem of the grace of God. While there is an empty, longing heart, there is a continual overflowing fountain of salvation. If we find in any place or at any time that the oil ceases to flow, it is because there are no empty vessels there, no souls hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

- 6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one."
She was probably excited and bubbly, with praise...
But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

#12. As long as there is an empty vessel, God will fill it.

- 7 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."

We may suppose, being produced by miracle, it was the best of its kind, like the wine (John 2:10), so that she might have both a good price and a good market for it. Probably the merchants bought it to export, for oil was one of the commodities that Israel traded in.

#13. The Father will provide for you, the BEST stuff!

Okay, let's get practical about this now.

We need to position ourselves for increase.

What do we need to do to be in the right position to receive increase?

As you move forward in your quest to make an IMPACT for the Kingdom; you have three choices...

Rut, Rot, or Revival

As you've seen in the text, we find a woman who is in a predicament that many individuals and many families find themselves in from time to time. She is in a "Rut." You know what a "rut" is don't you?

RUT - A rut is place where you feel "stuck, helpless and hopeless."

It's a terrible and frustrating place to be in because many times you feel like you haven't done anything to deserve being in a such a place.

Being in a rut will cause you to lose sleep at night. Being in a rut will cause you to have to take nerve medicine. Being in a rut will cause you to be irritable and hard to get along. But the worst thing about being in a rut is that if you don't find a way to get out of it, a rut will turn into a rot!

ROT – due to the inability to escape from a RUT, you are robbed of joy, peace, rest and leaves you in a dead and rotting place.

It's the kind of place this Widow woman of Zerapheth found herself in. Here in the scripture we find this poor widow in a desperate situation. She is trying to raise her family alone. Evidently, her husband died leaving her with a mountain of debt. How many of you know that bills will mess with your mind and put you in a mental rut?

The record says that she found herself in such financial trouble that the sheriff has threatened to come and take her sons as slaves. It was not unusual, during bible times that if a person got behind in their bills members of their family were sold into slavery until the bills were paid off. Thank God they don't do that today. If they did... there might not be many of us here this morning.

And so, this woman widow does what many of us have learned to do when we find ourselves in a rut. In her despair she cries out to the man of God. It's good to have a preacher in your corner! But now, sometimes you need to recognize that the preacher is human and gets tired. As a preacher who gets tired from time to time, I need to tell you that sometimes, you can get out of your rut yourself, if you know how to pray!

I'll give this woman credit... she got in touch with somebody who knew how to get in touch with heaven. Even if you know how to pray for yourself, it's good to be able to get in agreement with someone who has a right relationship with God. That way, you can touch on a thing and get a good result as you petition God together.

The bible says that this widow woman called on Elisha and asks him to help her find a way out of this seemingly impossible situation. She is looking for a miracle.

Now Note: the first thing Elisha does is to ask her a rather strange question. Although she has already explained that she is destitute, he asks her what she has in her house. She responds by saying: "Well, nothing at all" but then she remembers, "Well actually we do have something... there is just a little bit of oil"

REVIVAL – a Holy Spirit refreshing in one's body, soul and spirit which brings forth energy, life, purpose and direction.

That is just what we need!

Of course this is one of those O.T. stories that is really so very rich in meaning. You've probably heard this passage preached many times before. You know that as the widow gathers up empty jars from her neighbors, God indeed does a wonderful miracle with that tiny bit of oil. He multiplies it somehow so that once she starts to pour; the oil doesn't stop flowing until every vessel is filled. Then she takes the oil and sells it to pay off her debts.

Of course, the only thing that caused the oil to stop flowing was the fact that they ran out

of jars to contain it. But God was able to fill every jar that she was able to produce.

Notice what the Prophet told the woman to do here:

2 Kings 4:4 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."

The Prophet commanded the woman to close the door behind her and her sons. Jesus used the same language when he referred to going into the prayer closet didn't He? He said to "shut the door behind you." We need to shut the door behind us and pour out our hearts to God until the oil of His spirit starts to flow. And then, when the World starts banging on the door for our children, we need to cry out to God like this widow of old.

The prophet asked her "What do you have in your house?" And some of us, like that widow woman answered at first: "Nothing... Nothing at all.." Elisha challenged the Widow of Zerapheth to prepare for the blessing of God by borrowing vessels from her neighbors. As when she follows the instructions of the man of God, God indeed does a wonderful miracle. He multiplies it somehow so that once she starts to pour; the oil doesn't stop flowing until every vessel is filled. That's what I pray will happen to our families... that we make up our mind that we're not going to stop seeking the Lord unless every member of our families are saved!

So, the question is, how do we position ourselves for INCREASE? How can we receive the blessings of God?

God wants to pour His blessings into our lives. This passage teaches us...

Four Principles in Positioning Ourselves for Increase

(How we can receive His blessings.)

1. We must be aware of our need. (1)

She was about to lose her two sons to a creditor.

A desperate need = "If God does not intervene all will be lost."

A legitimate need = Not something to lavish upon our selfish wants or to impress others with our spirituality.

An urgent need = time was about to run out.

These are the kind of needs that the Lord loves to meet.

2. We must be aware of God's will for the situation. (2-4)

God's will for this widow was revealed through the prophet Elisha.

Sometimes God may speak into our lives through another person.

But He will always speak to our situation through His Word if it is a legitimate need.

God often starts with the "little" that we have to begin His miracle (Matthew 14:17-21).

3. We must show our faith through active obedience. (5,6)

She did exactly what she was told to the smallest detail.

Unlike Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-15). His was the miracle that almost wasn't because he was too proud to obey the Word of the Lord.

True faith is always expressed through obedience to God's Word.

No obedience no blessing, no faith no miracle.

She was blessed until there were no more empty vessels.

4. We must not limit the blessing of God. (7)

Our blessing may be limited by our capacity to receive.

See: 13:14-19 about Joash for an example of this self-imposed limitation principle.

God didn't just meet her immediate need He met her long-term need.

God is good and He desires to bless His people abundantly.

Let's not limit what He desires to do in our lives.

Conclusion:

Keys to Positioning Yourself for Increase

Humility

You must take on the position of humility. Without it, you will not receive the kind of Godly increase you need in your life. Sure, you may see increase in the natural, because of your "go get em" attitude, taking no prisoners, etc. But you will be miserable. True Godly increase must have the element of humility in the life of the vessel to receive it.

Obedience

Without obedience, forget about. Without your obedience to the Father, you will never truly have Godly increase. With obedience comes blessings – increase. With disobedience comes the curses if you will.

Truth

Absolute 100 percent truth. You've got to be truthful with God, others, yourself, etc. It is always the truth that will set you free, and nothing else. Live a life of truth.

Sacrifice

One must be willing to sacrifice everything in order to increase in that area. It seems contrary to what we should be doing in the natural. If you need more money one would think you would store up as much as you can and horde it to yourself. God says if you need more money, then give what you have away; and He'll supply you with more.

If you need peace, then give peace away. Love, then love. A neck tie, then give a neck tie away. Whatever you have need of, then give in that manner. If it's for your family to increase, then give you family to God. If it's for increase in your marriage, then give it to God.

You must sacrifice everything you have, will be, hope to be, have been, etc. to God in order to receive true increase. And this increase will be more than you can imagine!

The True Oil Comes from Within!
Do not let the OIL run out!

You watch, you wait, you'll see!