

Is It Well With Your Soul? - 2 Kings 4:8-37

Introduction: One of the most tragic stories behind the writing of a hymn is the story behind “*It Is Well With My Soul.*”

H.G. Spafford was a successful businessman from Chicago. He had a lovely family of 7 - he & his wife, and 5 beautiful children.

On Nov. 21, 1873, Mrs. Spafford and four of the children were on board the French ocean liner, *Villa de Marve*, returning from an overseas trip. Somehow, their ship collided with another large vessel and began to sink. As panic broke out, Mrs. Spafford gathered her children and knelt with them in prayer. Of course, she prayed that the ship would not sink, and that they would be alright; but also that if the ship could not be saved, that they would all be ready to die.

The ship sank within 30 minutes. Miraculously, Mrs. Spafford was found floating unconscious in the water where she was picked up and transported safely on board the other ship. Ten days later, that vessel landed safely in Cardiff, Wales. From there, Mrs. Spafford, aware that her husband had heard the news of the sunken ship, wired him this simple message: “*Saved, alone.*”

Two years later, Mr. & Mrs. Spafford and their surviving child were entertaining the famed Ira Sankey, the music evangelist who traveled with Dr. D.L Moody. As they talked about that fateful day, H.G. Spafford wrote the verses of “*It Is Well With My Soul.*” in commemoration of his children. The only comfort he could find in that tragedy, aside from the salvation of his dear wife’s life, was in the salvation of his precious children’s souls just a short time before the accident.

In 2 Kings 4, we find the story of the prophet Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Elisha went to the area called Shunem often, and when he did, he was always greeted by a well-to-do lady of the village. As they struck up a friendship, the lady and her husband gave Elisha a standing invitation to stay at their house whenever he was in the area. They even went so far as to build a small room on top of their house, and furnished it for him.

Elisha was so grateful for their hospitality and generosity, he ask the couple if he could speak to the king or the commander of the army on their behalf. The lady replied, “*No thanks, our home is among our people. We have everything we need.*”

But Elisha still wanted to do something to show his appreciation. So he called for his servant and asked if he knew of a need the couple had that he could fill. Gehazi remarked that he had noticed that the couple didn’t have any children and that the husband was quite a bit older than his wife, perhaps she couldn’t bear children.

Elisha called for her the next day, and told her that by this time next year, she would have a son. She replied to him something like Arnold would say to Willis, “*What you talkin’ ‘bout Willis?*” She said, “*No my lord, don’t mislead me...oh man of God.*”

But vs. 17 says that “*the woman became pregnant and the next year, about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.*” But before the boy had grown very much, he died because of some sort of head cold or infection. The mother took the boy to the room they had furnished for Elisha, and laid him on his bed. Then she took off to see Elisha to tell him of the bad news.

When Elisha heard of it, he went to the Shunimmite’s house, went in and prayed, and stretched himself out over the boy to warm him. In a few minutes, the boy arose and sneezed 7 times.

But what I want to focus on in that story is what happened as the woman was approaching Elisha to tell him the bad news. In vs. 26 it tells us that Elisha sent his servant out to meet her with three questions: Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with your child? Three very important questions. It is the same questions I want us to consider tonight. First:

1. Is It Well With You?

I don’t mean, “*How ya doin’?*” as a way of greeting. I mean for you to think about it. Are you all right before God? How are you doing in your spiritual life? Is it well with your soul?

It’s an important question. I ask it when I witness to folks – especially to those who might be close to death. “*Is everything OK between you and the Lord?*” You really need to think about it, because when you come down to the end of your life, that’s going to be your number one concern.

You probably don’t want to think about death right now, but some day you will have to. You can probably think of a million other things you had rather do in life, but someday, all those things will be reduced to memories. Someday, the only thing that will be on your mind will be where will I spend eternity. So ask yourself, “*Am I all right with God?*” If you were to stand before God as you are right now, is it well with your soul? The second question is:

2. Is It Well With Your Spouse?

We live in a day when everybody is looking for the quick and easy way. The Wall Street investors are looking for a quick buck. The politicians are looking for a quick vote. The lazy folks are looking for easy street. The world is looking for a quick fix. Even the church is looking for a quick and easy way to grow. But perhaps the most tragic of all the quick and easy ways people are seeking is the easy way out of marriage.

Let's face it...if your marriage is going to last, it will cost you something besides money. Some husbands and fathers say: *"I don't have a lot of time to spend with my family, but when I do spend time with them, I make sure it's quality time."*

There's only one problem: There is no such thing as quality without quantity. I could set before you an ounce of grilled chicken, a twig of steamed broccoli, a spoonful of unsweetened applesauce, and an ounce of skim milk, and call it a quality meal. But you wouldn't be satisfied would you? You'd have to have more of it to feel full. You wouldn't call that quality. So how can we think we can have a quality home life, if we don't spend time there?

But the fact is, the home is where our nation rises and falls. Somebody said, *"The home is where morality is manufactured. It's the laboratory of love, and the seedbed of stability."*

So, let's get our priorities straight: God first, family second, church third; and work must fall in line behind those three. The last question is:

3. Is it Well With Your Children?

The Shunammite woman fell at Elisha's feet and would not turn loose until he prayed for her son. She was grief-stricken and wanted to save her child. Nothing was more important than his well-being.

We live in a country where people have devoted themselves to all kind of causes: Greenpeace members risk their lives to save the whales. Environmentalists spend millions of dollars to preserve our forests and protect endangered species. The National Rifle Association is passionate about protecting the rights of gun-owners in America. I heard a celebrity say on TV one time that she believes so much in animal rights, that she wouldn't even swat a mosquito.

But let a Christian stand up for an unborn child, or take a stand against homosexuality, and all you hear is, *"What are you, some kind of right wing radical?"*

Children are being murdered, and perversion of God's order is gaining momentum, and we do so very little. Listen, the answer is not political, societal, or philosophical. The answer is spiritual. Until Christian's pray for God to rain down His spirit and power upon the earth, sin will run rampant. Until Moms and Dads stand up for their kids rights, and pray for God to change the hearts of men, babies will continue to be aborted.

Is it well with our children? Hardly! If things continue to go as they are going, they don't stand a chance. A recent article in the Christian Index said that this generation – the Millennial Generation is projected to be only 2-4% Christian. That means that in about 60 years, the world will be **96%** non Christian. Church, we cannot sit by

and let our families disintegrate. That is why we need our Youth and Children's programs. Apparently the parents aren't providing the spiritual guidance for our children. I know children and youth programs don't put any money in the church. In fact, they are financially draining. But we need to invest our resources in our kids because if we don't the alternative is bleak at best.

So, Dads, don't let the devil have your children. Do you realize that Satan will have to come through the fathers to get to the children? It's true, because God has set husbands and fathers as the spiritual head of their homes. Dad, you're the gatekeeper. It's your responsibility to guard your family spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

Mom, it's your responsibility to be there for your young ones. Before they grow older and are influenced by society, make sure they hear the story of Jesus in your home. Those children are like tender, small plants; they need lots of care and attention.

Moms and Dads, if you're not in the Word of God, get in it! If the Word of God is not in you, let it in! If the armor of God is not protecting you, you need to put it on. You need to honor the Lord in your home life.

Let's not turn over our homes to the devil. Take up the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit. Put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, and the shoes of peace and fight for your home with all you've got.

Let the world search for alternatives, but let us stand for the absolutes of God's Word. And stand, even if you stand alone

Is it well with your soul? Is it well with your family? If not, the Great Physician wants to come to your house, and revive your soul. He wants for you to be able to sing with Horatio G. Spafford:

“When peace like a river, attendeth my way;

When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, It is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come;

Let this blessed assurance control,

That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,

And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought;

Me sin, not in part but the whole,

Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Oh my soul.

It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight.

The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,

The Trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend;

Even so, it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.