

14 whole graham crackers + 1 cup graham cracker crumbs
 1/2 cup milk
 1 cup butter, divided
 1 cup brown sugar
 1 cup coconut
 1 8oz package softened cream cheese
 2 cups confectioner's sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla

Line the bottom of a greased 9x13 inch pan with whole graham crackers. In a large saucepan, heat milk and 1/2 cup butter, stirring until butter is melted. Stir in brown sugar, coconut, and graham cracker crumbs. Boil until thickened, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Pour mixture over graham crackers. Layer whole crackers over top. In a large bowl, cream together cream cheese, 1/2 cup butter, confectioner's sugar and vanilla. Spread over top of bars. Cool. Cut into squares. Makes 12 squares.

Men in Heaven - Who is the Head of the Household?

At the end of the age when all the believers were standing in line waiting to get into heaven, God appeared and said, "I want all the men to form two lines. One line will be for the men who were the true heads of their households. The other will be for the men who were dominated by their wives." God continued, "I want all the women to report to St. Peter."

The women left and the men formed two lines. The line of men who were dominated by their wives was seemingly unending. The line of men who were the true head of their household had one man in it.

God said to the first line, "You men ought to be ashamed of yourselves. I appointed you to be the heads of your households and you were disobedient and have not fulfilled your purpose. Of all of you, there is only one man who obeyed me. Learn from him."

Then God turned to the lone man and asked, "How did you come to be in this line?"

The man replied, "My wife told me to stand here."

Old Friendships

Old friendships last forever,
 Forever and a day;
 Like pictures in an album,
 The hearts and faces stay.

Old friendships are unchanging;
 They're ever fresh and sweet;
 They wait at intersections
 Where past and present meet.

Old friendships grow more precious
 With each passing year.
 They've learned to share life's laughter
 And let it dry each tear.

Old friends are the treasure
 Kept always bright and new,
 By saying to each other,
 "The way we used to do."

Old friendships last forever;
 The hearts and faces stay.
 Like pictures in an album,
 Forever and a day.

Kingdom Woman

TonyEvans.org

2 Kings 4:1-7

1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few.4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured out.6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is* not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this message on Filling a Mother's Emptiness is to remind us that God wants to take our pain and teach us to depend on His comfort and provision.

INTRODUCTION:

A woman once told a friend of hers, "I've got so many problems in my life right now that if anything else goes wrong, it'll take me two weeks before I can get around to worrying about it." Sometimes life gets that way, doesn't it? It's just one thing on top of another thing, on top of another thing, on top of another thing and it just goes on and on. And sometimes you want to throw in the towel. That's a problem because sometimes you throw in the towel and the ref still won't call off the fight, it just keeps coming. If your car breaks down, well you know where to go to find a mechanic. If your clothes are torn, you know to go to find a tailor. If the grades are failing, you get a tutor. But where do you turn when your life falls apart?

Today's passage tells us about a woman, a mother in crisis. Her world was falling apart. First of all, this mother was in emotional pain because her husband had died. Now we know she was hurting because 2 Kings 4:1 says, "she cried out." And there are people here today who are in emotional pain. Perhaps somebody in your world has died. Or maybe you have lost someone relationally or emotionally, perhaps through a divorce, or some other problem that has created heartache.

Not only did this woman have emotional pain, but she had financial pain. 11 Kings 4:1 says, "the creditors are at the door." Now everybody here can identify with that. The bills just keep on coming and we can't pay them. The cost of gasoline has put all of us in this category. But not only was she in financial

pain, she was in maternal pain because she says in 2 Kings 4:1, "they've come to take my two children to be slaves." During the time of the prophets, it was lawful for the children to work off the debts of the parents. So as you can see, no money, no husband, and she's losing her kids. This is too much for anyone to handle.

But not only was she in maternal pain, she was in physical pain—she was hungry. She said in 2 Kings 4:2, "all I have is a small jar of oil." She couldn't pay her bills and she couldn't go to the grocery store. Her stomach was churning. You know how it feels to want to get something to eat and for whatever reason not be able to get to it. It's much worse when you're out of food and there's no money to buy anything. But then it got really bad. Not only was she in emotional, physical, financial, and maternal pain, but she was in spiritual pain.

In 2 Kings 4:1 she says, "You know your servant, my husband feared the Lord." Nothing is worse than fearing God and not being able to locate Him when you need Him. That's spiritual pain. She told the prophet that her husband feared the Lord and led his family to do the same. But God took her husband away, allowed her resources to run out, and she was about to lose her children. I'm sure she wondered, Where is the payoff for fearing God

1. GOD'S WAY IS THE BEST WAY TO FIX LIFE'S PROBLEMS

Seek God's Word for your dilemma

- Human opinion won't solve your problems

- The Holy Spirit will give you guidance
Present your emptiness, not your fullness, to God

- Pride, depending on our self-sufficiency, prevents God from working in our lives (James 4:6)

- Humility, recognizing our insufficiency, opens the door for God's solution to your problems (1 Peter 5:5)

2. GOD IS OUR SOURCE AND PROVIDER

Give to others what you yourself need from God (Luke 6:38)

- It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)

- By hording we cut off God's blessing
Step out in faith and believe that God will provide

- Give to others when you feel empty (2 Kings 4:3)

- God will refill what you give away (2 Kings 4:6)

3. GOD'S WAY IS TRUSTWORTHY

Trust God enough to act on what He says

The Cross of Christ

- Walking by faith means acting like what God said is actually true (2 Corinthians 5:7)
- Faith is measured by our feet, not our feelings
Listen to God's Word and obey it
- The poor widow listened to Elijah's prophetic word (2 Chronicles 20:20)
- God's ways are higher than our ways, even though they sometimes defy logic (Isaiah 55:8)
4. GOD IS MORE GENEROUS THAN WE THINK (2 KINGS 4:7; EPHESIANS 3:20)
Trust that God rewards obedience
- God provided more than the poor widow needed
- The poor widow had enough oil to pay off her creditors
Trust that God moves in His timing
- When God gets ready to move, He moves fast!
- In six verses God provided enough for the poor widow to retire
- 5. GOD WILL POWERFULLY MULTIPLY OUR RESOURCES
Search Scripture for examples of God's power to work through meager means
- In the Old Testament, Moses used a stick to part the Red Sea (Exodus 7:10); David used a sling shot to kill Goliath (1 Samuel 17:45); and Samson used the jawbone of a donkey to kill 1,000 Philistines (Judges 5:15-16)
- In the New Testament, Jesus multiplied a few loaves and fish to feed 5,000 people (John 6:9-13)
Give God everything you have, even if it's not much
- God will take what Christians give Him in faith and multiply it for His glory
- God wants our faith and our poverty, not our wealth and self-sufficiency

In Old Testament times, people atoned for sin through repeated animal sacrifices. But that was a temporary measure, since the blood of bulls and goats covered sin without removing it (Heb. 10:4). The offering of animals, however, pointed to the ultimate solution: Jesus' shed blood on the cross—the perfect once-for-all sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

Calvary wasn't some improvised fix to correct the original system; Jesus giving up His life for us had been the plan all along ([Matt. 20:28](#)). Scripture reveals that God was never fully satisfied with burnt offerings, no matter how much they cost the person seeking forgiveness (Heb. 10:5-7). To eradicate sin, absolute perfection had to be offered. That's why Jesus came (Phil. 2:7-8)—and why the cross is a reminder of the greatest sacrifice love has ever made.

The cross is also an example Christ set for us. When James exhorted believers to “consider it all joy” as difficulties arise ([James 1:2](#)), he likely remembered how the Lord “for the joy set before Him endured the cross” ([Heb. 12:2](#)). Jesus said that to be His follower, one “must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For ... whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it” ([Luke 9:23-24](#)).

Billy Graham explained, “It was the same as saying, ‘Come and bring your electric chair with you. Take up the gas chamber and follow Me.’ He did not have a beautiful gold cross in mind—the cross on a church steeple or on the front of your Bible. Jesus had in mind a place of execution.”

God doesn't demand our own blood to pay for atonement but wants us to give our life in a different way—as a *living* sacrifice ([Rom. 12:1](#)), offered up in service for His kingdom. The cross of Christ is more than the wood His body was nailed to 2,000 years ago. It's more than a symbol, on churches or jewelry, of what Jesus did for us. The cross we carry must be a consciousness of the debt we owe God and the willingness to live—or die—for Him. -intouch.org

The "Christian" Horse

There's this guy who had been lost and walking in the desert for about 2 weeks. One hot day, he sees the home of a missionary. Tired and weak, he crawls up to the house and collapses on the doorstep. The missionary finds him and nurses him back to health. Feeling better, the man asks the missionary for directions to the nearest town. On his way out the backdoor, he sees this horse. He goes back into the house and asks the missionary, "Could I borrow your horse and give it back when I reach the town?"

The missionary says, "Sure but there is a special thing about this horse. You have to say 'Thank God' to make it go and 'Amen' to make it stop."

Not paying much attention, the man says, "Sure, ok."

So he gets on the horse and says, "Thank God" and the horse starts walking. Then he says, "Thank God, thank God," and the horse starts trotting.

Feeling really brave, the man says, "Thank God, thank God, thank God, thank God, thank God" and the horse just takes off. Pretty soon he sees this cliff coming up and he's doing everything he can to make the horse stop.

"Whoa, stop, hold on!!!!"

Finally he remembers, "Amen!!"

The horse stops 4 inches from the cliff. Then the man leans back in the saddle and says, "Thank God."

The Prodigal Son

Over at Fortitude Holiness Tabernacle, the Sunday School teacher, was telling his class the story of the Prodigal Son. Wishing to emphasize the resentful attitude of the elder brother, he laid stress on this part of the parable.

After describing the rejoicing of the household over the return of the wayward son, the teacher spoke of one who, in the midst of the festivities, failed to share in the jubilant spirit of the occasion. "Can anybody in the class," he asked, "tell me who this was?" Nine year old Olivia had been listening sympathetically to the story. She waved her hand in the air. "I know!" she said beamingly. "It was the fatted calf."

Adam's Rib

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny, a child in the kindergarten class, seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed him lying as though he were ill, and said. "Johnny what is the matter?"

Little Johnny responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

How to get to heaven

A teacher asked the children in her Sunday School class, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would I get into heaven?"

"NO!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into heaven?"

Again, the answer was "NO!"

"Well," she continued, "then how can I get to heaven?"

In the back of the room, a five-year-old boy shouted out, "You gotta be dead!"

English Muffin Hawaiian Pizza

15 mins to make, serves 1

Ingredients

Meat

- 2 slices Deli ham

Produce

- 2 tbsp Pineapple tidbits, canned
- 1 tbsp Red onion

Condiments

- 2 tbsp Marinara sauce

Bread & Baked Goods

- 1 English muffin, whole-wheat

Dairy

- 2 tbsp Mozzarella cheese

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. (you can use the toaster oven). Line a baking pan with foil and spray the foil lightly with cooking spray.
2. Toast the english muffin lightly. Remove from the oven and spread 1 tablespoon sauce on each muffin half. Place the muffin halves on your prepared baking pan. Distribute the cheese, ham, pineapple, and onion evenly over the muffin halves. Bake for 8-10 minutes, until heated through.

Cook's Notes

Nutrition Estimates Per Serving (entire recipe): 230 calories, 4.5 g fat, 34 g carbohydrates, 6.5 g fiber, 17 g. protein and *6 Weight Watchers PointsPlus.

One Sunday morning at a small southern church, the new pastor called on one of his older deacons to lead in the opening prayer. The deacon stood up, bowed his head and said, "Lord, I hate buttermilk."

The pastor opened one eye and wondered where this was going. The deacon continued, "Lord, I hate lard." Now the pastor was totally perplexed. The deacon continued, "Lord, I ain't too crazy about plain flour. But after you mix 'em all together and bake 'em in a hot oven, I just love biscuits."

"Lord help us to realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don't like, whenever we don't understand what You are doing, that we need to wait and see what You are making. After you get through mixing and baking, it'll probably be something even better than biscuits. Amen.

Romans 8:28

Baked Chimichangas:

1 8oz package of cream cheese

1 cup shredded cheese (you can use Mexican blend.)

1 1/2 TBSP taco seasoning

3-4 chicken breasts cooked and shredded

8 tortillas

cooking spray

garnishes (green onions, salsa, sour cream, guac, ect....)

Mix together {softened} cream cheese, shredded cheese and taco seasoning.

Fold in shredded chicken

Divide into tortillas and fold up edges

Place in sprayed cooking dish seam down; spray top of tortillas with cooking spray or brush with butter.

Cook at 350* for 15 minutes -THEN-Turn over and cook another 15 minutes.

Serve hot with topping of your choice.

Monkey Bread

Servings- 12

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon

2 cans (16.3 oz each) Pillsbury Grands Home-style refrigerated buttermilk biscuits

1/2 cup chopped walnuts, if desired

1/2 cup raisins, if desired

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar

3/4 cup melted butter or margarine

Heat oven to 350°

Lightly grease 12 cup fluted cake pan with either shortening or cooking spray.

In a large plastic food storage bag - mix sugar and cinnamon.

Separate dough into 16 biscuits; cut each into quarters.

Shake in plastic bag to coat each piece. Arrange in the fluted pan, adding walnuts and raisins among the biscuit pieces.

In a small bowl, mix the brown sugar and butter; pour over the biscuit pieces. Bake for 28 to 32 minutes or until golden brown and no longer doughy in center.

Cool in pan for 10 minutes. Turn upside down onto serving plate; pull apart to serve. Serve warm.

Principle #1
If God's Against It, So am I
By Renee Cox

Being in this world is tough. It is hard to stand against the world and be counted as a Christian. Jesus never promised us an easy life but one of peace and joy. Joy even in the toughest of times knowing that our victory is assured! Christ has already won! Therefore, we have already won. We have a place prepared for us in heaven. Knowing this we should be on fire spreading the Word to the world.

So why do we cool down? Become luke warm? What do we do? Pastor Glenn has said it, Pastor Mike has said it, and it is the first principle of RU - If God's Against It, So am I. We ALL know this! The Holy Spirit lets us know what we should and shouldn't do, what we should and shouldn't think and even how we should and shouldn't be on the inside. Do we always listen? No!

I think of Romans 6:1-2 "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound? God Forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*"

These verses have always slapped me in face with there simplicity, yet depth. I can just hear Paul shouting "God Forbid"! We should live for Him and follow his commands! He is on our side now, we are His! So stop putting everything BEFORE Jesus and start living FOR Him!

The poem below really epitomizes the way a Christian should live. I pray that it touches you as it has me, and pray that we ALL catch Fire for Jesus!

The Disciple of Jesus Christ

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed, the die has been cast, I have stepped over the line, the decision has been made - I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed vision, worldly talking, cheap giving and dwarfed goals.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up for the cause of Jesus Christ.

I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till everyone knows, work till He stops me and when He comes for His own, He will have no trouble recognizing me because my banner will have been clear.

Unknown Author

The Bird

I've written many times before about the goings on at my house with things like pantry moths and spiders. Having an older home obviously gives me many opportunities to encounter a wide variety of little intruders. Now I've had a new experience that was thankfully short lived and a friend told me I should write something about it. Since I had already been thinking the same thing, I decided to do just that.

Last week I came home from work as usual. My dogs met me at the door to be let out after being cooped up all day. After greeting me in passing, they were off to do their business. I preceded though the house to the kitchen and as I was laying my mail down, I noticed that the items normally on the windowsill over the counter had been displaced. They were lying on the counter below the window. My first thought was that they had been pushed out of the window sill by my current, but soon to be captured, mouse. I replaced the items to the sill and made my way back through the living room to let my dogs in from outside. That's when I noticed that there were items on the floor in that room that had also been displaced from two of the windows there. After letting the dogs in, I made my rounds of the other rooms in the house looking for what could possibly have done this. I found things pushed or knocked out of two other windows but found no trace of what had done it.

I started in the upstairs attic and worked my way down through the house to the basement but found nothing. The evidence told me it was a bird that had somehow gained access to the house and had been trying to get out. That was why only the things in windows had been disturbed. I walked all around and stopped often to listen for any bird sounds. I would have thought that if it was still inside the house, I would disturb it enough to make it flutter around a bit. But I was not rewarded with the slightest sound or movement of any kind. I listened and watched all that evening and the next morning before I left for work, but there was nothing out of the ordinary.

But when I arrived home that night, I was again treated to displaced items in and around the windows as well as bird droppings. There were droppings on a lampshade, some on and around the living room and kitchen windows, and various other places. It had perched on the back of a dining room chair and on the rounded top of the kitchen faucet – as indicated by more droppings. I saw the evidence of a bird having been there but I never saw the bird!

I was at a total loss as to where to look, but I got my big flashlight and started in the attic again. I checked every nook and cranny. I looked around, behind and under furniture. I found a lot of undisturbed dust webs that are going to require some attention come spring, but I did not find a bird. I looked in every room in like manner on the main floor and in the basement but to no avail. I couldn't understand why I never found it the night before when it obviously was still in the house. So, my concern was that even looking as well as I did the second night; it might still be in the house.

Again, I was on guard that night and the next morning, watching and listening

for a bird but saw and heard nothing.

I went to work and when I came home that night I checked for more evidence of a bird intruder but found none. In fact I haven't seen anything since. The bird must have found its way out of the house or when I do that spring cleaning, besides dust webs I may find the remains of a little bird. I hope not. I like to think it has escaped back to the outdoors where it belongs.

I was able to identify the type of intruder I had based on the minor chaos in my home. I used the areas affected – the windows especially targeted – and the droppings to know positively that it was a bird in my house. It was simply a matter of following the evidence. When God works in our lives it sometimes gets a little messy, too before it all gets worked out. God never promised us a life without stress or strife, but he did promise us that he would be with us thru it all.

There have been events in my life where I could see God's fingerprints all over what was going on. There's a line I like from a song by Casting Crowns that says, "your worlds not falling apart, it's falling into place". We can sometimes see the hand of God at work in our lives, actively making changes for our good. At other times, His way can be so subtle that it looks like the changes just happened as a natural consequence of events. We have to look at the evidence.

I don't believe in things happening by coincidence. I think if we believe and trust God with our life, He will make it a better place – on purpose. He has a good plan for us. We just need to trust, and have patience and faith. I think the bird in my house (the one I never saw) was to remind me that even though I could not see it, I had evidence that it really had been there. Just like without seeing God I can gain knowledge of Him and His existence from the evidence of His working on my behalf in this world. My God is as real to me as I know that little bird to be.

LeuAnna Taylor

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

I Corinthians 2:9,10

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
Hebrews 11:1

