

Multiply Your Investment

David Xu, 6 Aug 2017

2 King 4:1-7

1 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

2 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 small jar of olive oil."

3 Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few.

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 shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring.

6 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.

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."

Mark 6: 38-43

38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

How many of us want to have our assets multiplied? For example, you have one dollar, and it becomes 2 dollars, or even 10 dollars. We all want to have good investment.

Currently, if you put your money in the bank you will get about 3-4% interest, if you investment in real estate, the return will be higher, over the last 10 years, Auckland property value is doubled. If you invest in shares, say Google in 2005, you paid about \$88 per share, now it is \$523. Is it a good investment? of course.

Remember, above are good investments, how can you be sure it is a good investment at the time of you actual put money into it? For instance, we all know now Apple is a good investment, but back in 1990s not many people were so sure about this.

The 2 passages we study today, teaches us valuable lessons on how to make the most important invest our lives.

1. Know the Lord and Follow Him

The first principle of investment is to know what you are investing to. You need to do thorough study of the company, from its cash flow, to its debt ratio, from its location to transportation, everything you can think of. When you decide to invest, you commit to it and make long term investment.

Warren Buffet has a saying *"Only buy something that you'd be perfectly happy to hold if the market shut down for 10 years."*

"1 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

The Elisha's story starts with a financial problem. The widow's husband is a servant of Elisha, he knew the LORD, followed the LORD and " He revered the Lord". And he was poor. He was so poor that the debtors were going to take his sons as slaves to repay his debt after he died. This is a pretty sad situation. A man after serving the Lord for all his years, seemed didn't have a good ending. We know Paul had suffered tremendously, often struggled to find enough food and was eventually executed. Seems his life didn't end well.

Yet, the interesting fact is, even though the husband suffered financially, he didn't give up serving the Lord. Paul was whipped, stoned, and even before he was sentenced to death, he didn't give up serving Jesus. Why?

Because they knew what they invested their life for. They knew the return of their investment is far greater than the suffering they were experiencing. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul wrote about the hardship he had suffered, then right after that, in the beginning of chapter 12, he talked about his experience being lifted to the third heaven, and heard things inexpressible.

"24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,

26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers.

27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked."

The reason they were willing to suffer is because they knew and choose the best investment, different to most of people would choose. They choose to invest in eternity.

In Mark's story, the disciples came back from their first assignment. In previous verses we read they had performed many miracles, even demons were cast out. People around that area, saw the miracle, heard the name of Jesus, they wanted to know more about him. They wanted to experience more of him. So when they saw Jesus and disciples went away, they ran on foot to catch them. Think about this picture, 5000 men, women and children not counted, let's say at least 10,000 people were running to catch up Jesus. All I can think of is Auckland Marathon. These people didn't care where Jesus went, they didn't care that they were in the wilderness that they would starve, all they thought was it was a chance that they could invest to change their lives. And Jesus did.

"32 So they (Jesus and disciples) went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. **33** But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. **34** When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things."

2. Give First

Now you know what you want to invest for it is time for you to take action. If you don't give your money to the bank, how you could get interest? If you don't spend money to buy a house, how can you say you invest in property? To make an investment of any kind, whether it is Term Deposit, property, share, bond etc, you must take action. You must give out what you have first.

Same is your faith with Lord. Trust Lord, you must have action. Faith is an action. Faith without action is dead. A dead faith has no use, no value.

So how to live a life of faith. From the Elisha's story, we learn that we need to give what we have to God first.

"2 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 small jar of olive oil."

This is enough for God. Brothers and sisters, sometimes we think we don't have much to offer to God. We think we don't worth to work for God, we don't have qualification, talent, skills, or money or time. But remember God doesn't ask too much.

Same is in Jesus story.

38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

A small amount you give to God, is enough for him to give you a miracle.

Many people say they never see miracle happen in their lives, therefore, they don't believe miracle exists.

Well, in my view, reason we don't see miracles happened nowadays, compared to what Bible time, is because, we don't give everything we have to the Lord. Too often, we try to use our own logic thinking, knowledge to understand situation around us. And our knowledge and logic thinking has a limit, which limit our views to see bigger, greater picture of God's work.

In 2009, my second daughter Joanne was born, I sold my old small unit in hope to buy a bigger house. When I sold the unit, the market was going down, and when I started to look for the house, market started to go up. It was so stressful. Every day, after work, I spent time on Trademe, property express to look for house. I prayed never so eagerly before, so did Michelle. And then God showed a house to us. We liked it very much, we felt it suited us perfectly. We believed this is house God reserved for us. But there was a hurdle we had to overcome, that was the price which was way beyond what we could offer. Owner didn't want to negotiate the price. So we gave it up, and started to look for other houses.

But God didn't give up. The following Sunday morning, when I woke up, the first thing I saw, was a cheque, on it had a number which was \$550.50. this cheque was right in front of my eyes, following me everywhere. When I brushed my teeth, it is there; when I washed my face, it was there. So I closed my eyes, it was even clearer, I opened my eyes, it was still there.

Then I gave up, I decided to write a cheque of \$550.50. Before I did it, I said to my wife, "I am afraid, we have to write a big big cheque. It is almost my whole week income." So we did. And what happened?

3. Expect miracle.

After you put money in the bank, or invest in shares, bonds, all you can do is wait to see the outcome. You decision might be right, might be wrong. You may get good return, or you may loose everything you have invest.

What will you get when you invest in Jesus?

When the widow was ready to give all she had to Elisha, God started his process. When God is working, be ready for the miracle.

3 Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. 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 shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. 6 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. 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." (verse 3-7)

41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

42 They all ate and were satisfied, **43** and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish.

The problem which seemed so big, so impossible to solve, became a piece of cake in God's hand. And what is more, God blessed them more than they needed. The widow and her sons "can live on what is left". The crowd followed Jesus "they all ate and were satisfied, and 12 basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish".

To finish my house buying story. We wrote the cheque of \$550.50 to the church, and nothing happened...for 2 days. After 2 days, the owner called the agent, saying he was sorry being so rude and blunt, etc. Any way to cut long story short, after a very smooth negotiation, he reduced the price to the level we could accept. You know what, if you times \$550.50 by 100, is the amount he reduced. Yes, God blessed me 100 times for my small faith. The big problem in our eyes were so tiny in God's hand.

I told my story to my manage in ASB. She and her husband were selling property and buying a new one as well. They struggled to sell their property. After hearing my testimony, she asked her husband, how much he wanted for the property. He said 650k. So they wrote a chq of 650 to their church and within a week, they sold the property at the price they wanted.

In Malachi 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

We all know we shall not test the Lord, but here the Lord asks us to test Him. Why? Because, God wants to bless us, but we don't know how get the blessings. God wants to teach us the way to access to his unlimited blessings. We keep hold on the tiny amount we have, but forget the unlimited blessings God holds for us.

Well we have just talked about investment in financial terms, however the investment is not limited just in financial term. There are various ways to invest in Lord's bank.

For an example, we need many helpers in this church, Sunday school needs a leader, teachers and helpers, we need more musicians to join our worship teams, if you can play an instrument or sing, please help us; if you are a handyman, maybe you can give some of your time to look after church property;

I really like the first slide, connect, grow, serve and multiply.

We first need to connect to God, when we grow as we serve, then we can multiply. We can't grow our spiritual life without serving. Shall I say, if you don't serve, you can't grow.

[John 12:24](#)

24 Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

A seed will be only a seed if it remains in a storage, box or bag. But when it is in good soil, it will die and produces many seeds.

We are all seeds, our money, time, skill, talent are all seeds, are we willing to give them and ourselves to God, Do you want to invest in Jesus.