

One of my neighbors taught me an important lesson, that God's blessings come from unexpected places.

I was the priest in Cooperstown, ND, and the neighboring parish was without a pastor. I was excited about the prospect of one of my buddies moving close. I even did some campaigning with the priest personnel board to secure my desires. Yet, despite my best effort, none of my buddies received the appointment, and I was greatly disappointed.

It's a good thing I'm not in charge of the world. Though I never would have chosen him, the priest who became my neighbor also became my friend. His friendship and support exceeded my expectations a hundred times. God's blessings come from unexpected places.

The prophet Elisha passed through the town of Shunem. A woman came to him—a stranger—and begged him to dine with her. Put yourself in Elisha's shoes; you are in an unfamiliar town and a stranger asked you to dinner? No way! I am far too suspicious to be this spontaneous.

Elisha did dine with the woman. They became friends. Elisha prayed to God that this woman would have a son to care for her after her husband was gone. She did give birth to a son. The woman added a room on to her house so Elisha—the traveling prophet—would have a place to stay. God's blessings come from unexpected places, and are often greater than what we would have chosen for ourselves. This is good to remember as we stand at the eve of change.

If you find God's blessings in your life in short supply, I offer to you what I myself need to hear: quit trying to control God and look more closely at the people and events that surround you. The woman stranger from Shunem was barren, soon to be alone and frightened. She opened herself to God's Word, and God gave her blessings beyond her wildest dream.

God is eager to work miracles in the barren days of our lives. It is good to remember that God's blessings come from unexpected places.