

"Elisha and the Poison Soup"

2 Kings 4:38-41

Introduction: Tonight, in our study of Elisha's life we have come to another miracle in which the Holy Spirit only uses 4 verses to describe, but within these 4 verses there is much application for our lives. Let us begin by looking at the miracle and then we will look at the picture within the miracle for our lives.

I. **The Miracle**

Notice 2 Kings 4:38

After the miracle of the resurrection of the boy in the previous verses Elisha came again to Gilgal and at this time there was a dearth in the land.

A dearth was a famine and the famine tells us much about the spiritual conditions of Elisha's day. Let me show you the promises of blessing and cursing in Deuteronomy 28.

➤ **Promise of Blessing**

Deuteronomy 28:1-5

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

² *And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.*

³ *Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*

⁴ *Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.*

⁵ *Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

➤ **Promise of Cursing**

Deuteronomy 28:15-18, 23-24

¹⁵ *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:*

¹⁶ *Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.*

¹⁷ Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

¹⁸ Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

²³ And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.

²⁴ The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

So, in 2 Kings 4 we can be sure that the spiritual condition at this time is one of darkness and the result is a famine/dearth.

Notice 2 Kings 4:38 again.

The sons of the prophets needed to eat and so Elisha commanded that a great pot of soup was to be made.

Notice 2 Kings 4:39

One man made his way into the field looking for herbs for the soup and he found wild gourds which he gathered and brought them back and shredded them for the soup. No one knew if the gourds were good or bad, but they added them to the soup regardless.

Notice 2 Kings 4:40

When they began to eat the soup some of them realized there was death in the pot. The gourds were poison and the soup was not fit for consumption so they cried out to Elisha.

Notice 2 Kings 4:41

Elisha then called for meal and when it was poured into the soup the miracle was performed. The danger was removed, and the man were able to eat the soup.

II. The Picture and the Application

1. The Famine/Dearth

In our day the famine which God brings upon a land is far worse than a dearth of material food and this famine is mentioned in Amos.

Amos 8:11-12

¹¹ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

¹² *And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.*

We are living in a day when there is a FAMINE. It is not a lack of physical food, but it is a lack of spiritual food. Many places which were churches that stood strong upon the Word of God have been turned into social centers, political clubs and playhouses. The Word of God has been lost among the rubble which has been brought in. What has happened today reminds me of what we read in 2 Chronicles and it is a reminder of what needs to take place today.

2 Chronicles 34:1-8, 15-18

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

² *And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.*

³ *For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.*

⁴ *And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.*

⁵ *And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.*

⁶ *And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.*

⁷ *And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.*

⁸ *Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.*

¹⁵ And Hilkiyah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah delivered the book to Shaphan.

¹⁶ And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it.

¹⁷ And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

¹⁸ Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

They FOUND the Book of the Law in the House of the Lord. This tells me it had been lost. It was then brought out and read before the king.

This is what has happened in our day and this is also what needs to be done. The Word of God needs to be discovered again and it needs to be read and proclaimed. In many churches today, the Word has been lost among the "garbage" that has been carried into the church.

2. The Place

Notice 2 Kings 4:38

This happened at Gilgal. I point this out because this was a place of great accomplishments for Israel.

Joshua 4:18-22

¹⁸ And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

¹⁹ And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

²⁰ And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

²¹ And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

²² Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

This is just one of the accomplishments at Gilgal and the point I want you to see here is that a FAMINE of the Word of God can happen in a church where the Word was at one time held in high esteem. It could happen here if we do not keep a close watch upon what is brought in. A little compromise here and a little softening of the Word there and attention given to human reasoning from the pulpit and the next thing we know there is a FAMINE of the Word of God. Let me show you what Paul exhorted Timothy to do.

2 Timothy 2:15-16

¹⁵ Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

¹⁶ But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

² Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

⁵ But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

We live in a very dangerous time and so we MUST stay true to the Word of God.

3. The Danger

Notice 2 Kings 4:39

A certain man went out and he found many of the gourds that were deadly, and he gathered as many as he could carry.

The picture here for us is very alarming. When there is a FAMINE of the Word of God we can be sure that Satan will make available many poisonous teachings for people to feast upon and he will be sure there are false teachers to proclaim the lies. The gourds that this man picked were wild, but they must have looked very similar to those that were healthy. With that said I am reminded how Satan is a counterfeiter.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

This warning by Paul brings to our minds other verses as well.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

²¹ Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 John 4:1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

It is also important to notice that it was one of the sons of the prophets who gathered the wild gourds. This tells me that we need to be like the Bereans when it comes to sitting under the Word of God.

Acts 17:10-11

¹⁰ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

¹¹ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Proverbs 23:1

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee:

We could apply this verse by saying, "When thou sittest under a Bible teacher consider what is being taught very diligently."

Psalm 141:4 needs to be our prayer.

Psalm 141:4

⁴ Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

4. The Detectors

Notice 2 Kings 4:38

It was the men who were sitting at the feet of Elisha listening to his teaching that discovered the poison.

This is a picture of the importance of you and I learning the Word of God and receiving a steady diet of the Truth. The more of the Truth of the Word that we know the quicker we are to recognize false teaching that can poison our minds.

5. The Miracle

Notice 2 Kings 4:41

When the meal was cast into the pot the poison was gone.

The meal here is a picture of the Word of God. There have been many who have feasted upon the poisons which Satan has planted and their minds are confused but when the PURE WORD is poured into their minds God can wash out the poison and give to them a TRUE FEAST which will bring about growth in their walk.

Conclusion:

Be very careful whose books you read and whose teaching you listen to for Satan has planted many "wild gourds" in our society today.

John 6:33-35

³³ *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

³⁴ *Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

³⁵ *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*