

Elisha 5

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[0 : 00] Amen. Seeking the Lord's blessing, we'll turn again to 2 Kings, chapter 4.

And we'll read again at verse 40. 2 Kings, chapter 4, at verse 40. So they poured out for the men to eat, and it came to pass as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot, and they could not eat thereof.

But he said, Then bring meal, and he cast it into the pot. And he said, Pour out for the people that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

Now we read two miracles from Elisha's history in the Old Testament. And I want to take these two miracles together, because they teach more or less the same thing.

The first was the healing of the spring of water at Jericho. Jericho's water supply was polluted, and Elisha healed it by casting salt right at the source of the water.

[1 : 37] And the second miracle occurs here in Gilgal, where the sons of the prophets prepare a stew, a vegetable stew.

And that is found to be poisonous, because of a wild herb that has gone into the stew. And again Elisha cures this, not this time with salt, but by flour, which he casts into the pot.

So with the salt he makes the water good, and with the flour he makes the stew or the pottage wholesome. Now these two miracles are significant.

And now I'm going to describe or explain the significance of these miracles in a certain way, and perhaps many of you would question the way in which I do so, but perhaps for that reason I want to begin by just looking at the way in which we should understand these miracles that come before us in this way.

I'm not going to be shooting in the dark when I'm describing their spiritual significance. I want to explain, first of all, how we should look at something of this kind. Now, it'll take up a little time, but it's necessary for us to appreciate the thing properly, so bear with me.

[2 : 51] In the first place, these two events are miracles. It wasn't that there was a certain substance in the salt or in the flour that made these things happen naturally.

It was just a matter of a miracle. The Lord caused it to be so that the salt healed the water and the flour healed the pottage. Now, miracles in the Bible are never really just displays of power, and it's important to understand that.

Every miracle is a sign. Not every sign is a miracle, but every miracle is a sign. In other words, a miracle preaches. It is an event which, in the way in which it is done, or in the way in which God causes it to happen, it preaches.

It's a preaching in the form of an act. That is what the miracle is. And every single miracle in the Word of God, whether in the Old or New Testament, carries that with it.

It preaches a sermon in the way that it is done, and so on. And it's important for us in the first place to understand that. In the second place, we have to understand that many miracles in both the Old and New Testaments have to do with food or nourishment.

[4 : 12] They're to do with bread, water, and wine. Now, that, again, is just a simple fact. If you look in the Scriptures, you will find many miracles have to do with nourishment.

Bread, water, and wine. And usually, you will find the miracles either providing that nourishment or multiplying the nourishment.

And that, again, is true in the Old and New Testament. Take the Old Testament. First of all, you find nourishment provided in the Old Testament.

For example, God provided water from the rock, miraculously, in the desert for the Israelites. It's water gushed, as the word indicates. It gushed copiously out of the rock.

And then again, the Lord caused manna, or bread, to rain from heaven. Now, that was miraculous. And it had to do with the provision of food.

[5 : 13] And the same thing is true in the New Testament. The first miracle which the Lord himself performs is a miracle by which he converts water into wine. And he there provides wine for the people to drink.

So you have the same thing again. A miracle to do with food and drink. And then you have the multiplication of food and drink. You notice that in the Old Testament.

Elijah and Elisha both multiply the oil that the widow has. The widow of Sarephath saw her oil multiply. And in chapter 4, here at the beginning of the chapter, Elisha again causes a widow's oil to multiply.

In the New Testament, the most notable example is when the Lord himself takes the bread, the five loaves and the two fishes, and he distributes them among 5,000 people.

He causes that bread to multiply in the power of his own hand. Now these miracles of provision and multiplication are designed to teach this, that God alone can provide our nourishment.

[6 : 25] God alone provides spiritual food for us. And he gives it to us in the most unlikely circumstances and in the most impossible situations.

In a wilderness for your soul, God will give you the water of life and he'll give you the bread of life. And then again, he'll give that bread and water to you abundantly.

It is not just a matter of giving you a little here and there. There is an inexhaustible store of riches which the Lord himself has to give. As the psalmist said, Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.

And however big your appetite or however much you desire and however much all the Lord's people desire, God has enough of himself to give and more and so on into eternity.

He has bread and he has bread sufficient. He has bread in abundance. Now, as well as providing bread and as well as multiplying bread or food, there is one other thing which appears.

[7 : 29] And that's this, that in some miracles the Lord cleanses food. Or he makes food in such a way that you can eat it or that you can drink it.

And that symbolizes a particular thing as well. It symbolizes the power of God to remove sin or to deal with sin or to take away the power of sin.

Out of your life, out of a church, out of the world. And God will do it ultimately when he burns up the heavens and the earth and creates a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

God is purifying and God is cleansing. And that is sometimes why God's provision is put in terms of cleansing, I think. Somehow our life supply has become polluted.

It has become dirty. It's become infected. And what the Lord does is he comes in power and cleans that life supply so that we again feed or drink what is good, what is healthy, and what is wholesome.

[8 : 42] So the Lord cleans. And that is what is prefigured by these particular miracles here. Now you'll notice in Elisha's life you have this interesting phenomenon.

You have, first of all, you have him cleaning the water at Jericho. And a little while later he multiplies the oil for the widow.

Then a little while later he cleans the pottage for the prophets. And in the next breath he multiplies the bread that the man from Baal Shilisha brings to him.

Now you'll notice at the end of chapter 4 here that there is a multiplication of bread. It wasn't the Lord only who did that and very often people think it was the Lord only who multiplied bread.

Of course it was his power here also. But Elisha did it. He caused a little fruit, some loaves of barley and ears of corn to be given in abundance to a hundred men.

[9 : 42] So that they had enough to eat and left over. So Elisha cleans and he multiplies. Now what I want to look at with you is the two miracles of purification which Elisha performs here in the second book of Kings.

And I want us to understand what these purifications have to say to us. They are miracles. They teach and they teach spiritual lessons.

And in that connection notice the places where they happen. He heals the water at Jericho and he heals the pottage or the vegetable stew in Gilgal.

Now these places are significant because there were schools of prophets there. this was the still small voice at work. These schools of the prophets were springing up throughout the land and the Lord was strengthening them.

And in these schools those who are going to be teachers or preachers or expounders of the word of God would come together and there they would learn the word of God especially from the great prophet of the day whether it would be Elijah or Elisha or Samuel or whoever it was.

[11:00] Now these colleges had a long long history. Sometimes they would fall into disuse but at certain times they would be raised up and the Lord would use them and he would use them powerfully.

Now that's just before we pass on there's just a couple of details that I want to notice about these schools and it's interesting to note. In the first place they were communal they ate together. When Elisha taught them he asked the servant to go and to set on the great pot of pottage. So they not only studied together they ate together and eating together in the Bible symbolizes fellowship. They learned with one another and they were at one with one another. They ate together and they spoke of the things of the Lord and that was how they lived and that was how they learned. And then again it is quite clear that they did actually live together and they lived on the premises of the college itself. And that is an interesting thing. It was residential in that way.

[12:06] You notice in chapter 6 when Elisha is at another one of these colleges and verse 1 chapter 6 and verse 1 And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha Behold now the place where we dwell with thee is too straight for us.

It's too narrow it's too cramped. Now that was a good thing it meant that the word of God was prospering that there were more sons of the prophets being called of the Lord so that the place became too small.

Let us go we pray thee every man unto the Jordan and let us take every man abim and we'll make a place there where we may dwell and he answered go in peace.

So the Lord was putting laborers into the harvest sons of the prophets and they were being taught by a true son of the prophet also and that meant that the Lord's hand for blessing for some time was on the place or that God had some great thing to do when he was sending such laborers out into the vineyard.

And if you look at the end of this chapter itself you'll see that there were a hundred people in the school at Gilgal because when the man brought bread in verse 43 chapter 4 verse 43 Elisha's servant said what should we set this before a hundred men?

[13:27] Now that tells us that there were a hundred sons of the prophets learning the word of God in the school at Gilgal. And I just noticed these things really by the way because it is important to remind us that that was and is how the word of God should be learned and taught.

The sons of the prophets should gather and they should have fellowship and be taught by a prophet of the Lord and so be ready to share the things of God with others.

Now then let's move to what takes place at these places. If we turn to Jericho and to Gilgal we'll find certain lessons brought clearly before us.

And the first one is this the destructiveness of sin. How prone we are to underestimate that. Not even to think about it but the utter destructiveness of sin.

Now that comes through in Jericho. If you leave back to chapter 2 and verse 19 read that verse carefully. Chapter 2 and verse 19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha Behold I pray thee the situation of this city is pleasant as my Lord seeth but the water is not and the ground is barren.

[14:58] Now Jericho was situated in a very pleasant place and understand that is still clearly visible today. It's situated in a fertile plain in the midst of a blaze of colour and it was in that way at this time.

But there was something affecting the actual city itself and that was its water supply. The water we're told was not it was nothing and that means it was bad it was polluted it was foul and the result was that it made the land barren.

Now that also was an interesting word it means to miscarry. The land was supposed to be fruitful within the city itself but within the city it brought forth nothing.

There was just a miscarriage on the part of the land. There was no yield no yield of fruit no yield of anything that was good because the water was not and the water was bad and that drove the people of Jericho not to despair thankfully but to the Elisha to the man of God and they poured out their case to himself.

Now what is that a picture of? Well it's a vivid picture of this the way in which sin defiles the world. Now in many ways you could say that this world is a pleasant land.

[16:21] The world is still in many respects a beautiful place. Although it itself is marred by sin still there are great signs of its glory and of its majesty.

When you look around you as the psalmist often did at the hills which the Lord made the everlasting hills and the green and the beauty of the oceans and everything that there is in the world around us we are constrained to say that it is the glory of the Lord that has created all this.

It did not come from nothing. It didn't come or it didn't occur from the random clash of atoms or anything. It came forth from the hand of the God of glory and the God of power.

And of course it was given to man. The heavens belong to the Lord but the earth he has given to man. And he gave earth to the man to subdue it.

Subdue it he says and have dominion over it. And so you and I are placed in the world to subdue the earth and to make it redound even more to the glory of God.

[17:25] In whatever way we organize it or use it however we live in it or to whatever use we put it we are to make sure that it reflects the glory of God himself.

And so man reproduces man goes into families man writes man paints man builds man creates death violence destruction pollution and dirt that is the result.

It doesn't matter what man puts his hand to to make this world yield something he does it badly he does it badly and why because there is a problem at the source of the world itself.

And what is at the source of the world man man man is at the heart of it it is man speaking in one sense that makes the world tick it is man who is to subject the world and to use it and he pollutes it and why does he pollute it well you just go back one step further because he himself is polluted where is he polluted is it in the periphery it's in the heart he's polluted on the inside you're polluted on the inside and that is why outside of Christ everything you touch or everything you do is barren or you miscarry your whole life is a miscarriage in the sense that to God you are yielding thorns and thistles and not the spiritual fruit of love joy peace long suffering gentleness meekness goodness and faith what you yield is and it's to make the world do good but the sadness is that right

throughout the world runs a stream and it's called life your life and mine and at the heart of that stream at its fountain is a pollution and a pollution of the first degree and the Lord himself traces back every evil to that very place now I'll just quote you some verses from the gospel according to Mark and these are very important verses Mark chapter 7 and verse 18 now listen to what the Lord says and he speaks to the disciples and says are you also without understanding he says do you not perceive that whatever thing from without entering into the man it cannot defile him because it enters not into his heart but entereth into the belly now he's talking there about food and drink as such it entereth into the belly and goes out into the draught but he says that which cometh out of the man that's what defiles the man for from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts adulteries fornications murders thefts covetousness or greed wickedness deceitfulness lasciviousness that's physical uncleanness an evil eye blasphemy pride foolishness vanity all these evil things come from within and defile the man and not only do they defile the man they defile the world they defile the world as well in other words the pulse beating right at the very heart of the world is an evil pulse and the pulse beating at the heart of your own soul is one that is opposed to

[21:07] God you want your own way you do not want the ways of God you have no relish for divine truth no love for the father no love for the son no love for the word that's the pulse that ticks in here and it characterizes your whole life it is one of alienation from God one of rebellion and one of lostness no my friend would that you had the sense of the men of Jericho to recognize the dirt of the water supply to see that your soul is miscarrying miscarrying gravely before God and to go to the New Testament Elisha Joshua or Jesus and to plead with him to put the thing right at the source to put it right at the source and I'll come to that in a moment unless it's right at the source it will never be right at all sin spoils sin mars because sin is destructive and how destructive sin is it will kill you it will deceive you it will ruin you and it will send you to hell itself that is how destructive this principle of godliness is in your soul it's not something to play with it's not like a little cut or a little disease or an infection it is deadly it destroys that is in its nature destroys utterly and absolutely now the same thing is taught in Gilgal but with additional lessons now at

Gilgal Elisha was teaching the sons of the prophets and it was a time of famine and maybe that means that god's judgment had returned back upon the land and Elisha is teaching the sons of the prophets now who knows what he was teaching at the time for all we know he may have been teaching regarding sin and judgment the judgment that came in the form of a famine that may well have been the subject of what he was saying but he breaks off and he tells his servant go he says

and set on a pot or seeth the pot of pottage seeth pottage and the servant sends out one of the sons of the prophets and he gathers some wild vegetables and he goes to this gourd and he gathers a lap full of them and he thinks that it's a safe thing to eat and he shreds it up he cuts it and he puts it into the pottage and it's only when the pottage is seethed and when it is ready and the people taste of it or perhaps even when they've eaten quite a bit of it that they recognize that there is something unwholesome and unhealthy in the pottage in fact something that has the power to kill them man of

God they cry out there is death in this pot and Elisha quickly calls for flour when he gets the flour he scatters it and the pot is made whole now there again you see the same thing sin enters and it has the power to kill and it has the power to destroy but the Lord doesn't repeat himself just for the sake of repeating himself whenever a thing is added there is something else additional that we have to learn what is it here well first of all that sin is deceitful my friend if it wasn't it wouldn't be so much of a problem but it belongs to sin to hide itself or shall we say it belongs to the devil to hide it he clothes it he makes it plausible he makes it attractive he makes it seductive he makes it alluring and he disguises it very often as righteousness we're told that the devil himself sometimes appears as an angel of light and his ministers masquerade as angels of light also how important that we understand them that we recognize them that we learn to taste and to discern what is right from what is wrong sin passes itself off as something that is good for you and that won't harm you and how often we see that how often we see weakness passing itself off as meekness there's a big difference between the two and a person who has no courage for the fight will look at his own weakness and he'll call it meekness that's because sin easily wears a garment that looks like the garment of righteousness now your conscience will usually tell you unless you're killing your conscience what you're doing but meekness or weakness can be passed off as meekness and how about this how often human wisdom is passed off as divine wisdom when the word of

God says deal with this like this and some person comes along thinking that all wisdom begins and ends with himself and he says well this is really the best way to do the thing and it sounds so plausible and it looks so attractive but it's the devil and how do you know him because he doesn't conform to the word of God the devil will present it reasonable to you attractive to you profitable to you he does that with every single sin as though it's something that you must have and you must do or life won't be the same or you won't enjoy it or what have you he passes it off as something that you must do and something that is wise for you to do or how often human worship or will worship as the apostle calls it is passed off as divine worship God tells us how to worship God tells us what to offer him in his own assembly and we come along or the devil comes along and says is this not just as good is this not just as attractive is this not just as

God glorifying and he passes the thing off or more to the point how often he passes off worldliness as Christian liberty how often he does that how often he makes a thing which is festering in sin which has sin behind it which is being ruled by the world and governed by the world how often he makes it look as an innocent kind of pleasure or amusement that you can partake of with no harm to your soul at all how often he does that and people use the most foolish kind of reasonings and arguments in respect to these things are people wearing blinkers or what people talk about things like dancing as much as to say well all you're doing is moving your body well that's no great flash of revelation we all know that we all know that that's what it is but does it not matter the context in which you do it or what you are suggesting by the movements or the messages that you are giving off do these things not come into it it's sometimes impossible for me to believe the way that people argue about these sometimes

[28 : 13] I think the world understands that better than some of the people who profess the dances which are held are they not all about attraction stimulation is that not what it is or what it means maybe I've missed the boat but as far as I'm concerned that is perfectly plain and perfectly clear and I haven't met one person who has been copiously anointed by the spirit of God who does not realize it and see it in that way that they recognize him who is in it they recognize him who is there and they flee from it as a thing that is designed to ensnare them and to bring them back into the ways of the world and into the path of sin watch for worldliness masquerading as Christian liberty it's in a whole load of areas Freudian psychology masquerading as biblical counseling how many books today that you read which are meant to guide you and to counsel you are based on things like the subconscious things which

Freud came up with which were never heard before Freud and here you have Christians bringing these wild gourds professing people and shredding them into the pottage that they're giving out to the people of God and some people don't recognize it's wrong until their stomach gives them pain they've lost their taste but thankfully some recognize it down here before it brings them to utter death and to destruction all these things are wild vegetables they have poison in them and the people of God learn to flee them and very often it's only in the taste that the truth comes out no my friends let me put a question to you when the pottage of the gospel that the sons of the prophets served to you is served how do you taste it how do you taste it do you relish it is it sweet or are you detecting wild gourds in the thing is there something in it that should have been left out some that looks like the truth but has actually marred the truth or hindered it from coming to you the people of God have taste buds that discern these things or more to the point how do you yourself taste to other people how do you taste to other people is it true that

Christians once found delight in your company is it true that the Lord's people often enjoy to sit with you and talk with you but know that they can't taste the very words which you speak because a wild gourd has come into your life sin worldliness something has come in and it's made you unattractive to eat or to partake with you have lost your own taste or even you unconverted people you give a thought today as to what you taste like to the Lord or what you taste like to the people of God you taste of what you eat essentially you who soak yourselves in the world that is how you taste is it any wonder if the Lord will spew you out of his mouth on the day of judgment as he spewed the lukewarm laudicean church out do you not think that when you spend your days festering and wallowing in your sins do you not think that the Lord will judge you for that he will judge it because he desires to taste every one of us he will taste every soul and if he tastes the fruit that he desires good and well but if he tastes wild gourds it will be spewed out of his mouth how many sins perhaps are in your life today that weren't there a month ago perhaps you told yourself well I'm not that bad I'm in control I'm in control and one day I'll yield myself to the Lord perhaps even five years ago you listened to the gospel and you listened to it with great urgency and you still thought you were in control of your own life and you were mapping it out for yourself and you knew that come a certain point you would be wholehearted the Lord's but where are you now is that the case now my friend when I say sin is deceptive I mean it it doesn't play with you and you are never and I repeat never in control of it it is always in control of you always and that goes for every sin if the Lord has not broken its power in your life it is absolutely in control of you so don't you talk to me about freedom and the world talks a lot about freedom no person who is not a Christian can ever know what freedom is never you are an utter bondage to the sins which will one day break you and destroy you and mock you and mock you in hell itself don't talk about freedom no one serving sin is in any degree of freedom at all sin is deceptive watch where it is watch how it works watch out for it all the time and then again

Gilgal tells us this that sin is infectious it gets in at the source there and it pollutes the whole water supply in Jericho it is carelessly shred in by a son of the prophet into the stew and its juices penetrate the whole pottage so that it becomes deadly to eat now the infectious nature of sin is always warned against in the Bible for example in Ecclesiastes the dead fly causes the appointment of the apothecary or the chemist to stink the dead fly causes the ointment to stink its influence throughout it or again in the song of songs in the third chapter or the second chapter 17th verse take us the little foxes that spoil the vines the little foxes and the church was very conscious of them and I think myself that it's not

[34 : 29] Christ speaking there but the church the church is praying there to the Lord take the little foxes that have spoiled the vines take them and get rid of them that I would be fruitful notice the idea of fruit the song of Solomon is full of the idea of fruit her vineyard is not producing correctly because little foxes have got in and they have marred it but perhaps the best known example of the infectious nature of sin is this a little leaven leavens the whole lump a little leaven leavens the whole lump now that comes up twice or maybe three times but certainly twice in the New Testament and I want to take the two examples before you just to notice because first of all the leaven refers to a sin in the life and then it refers to a sin in the head and in both cases the leaven can leaven the whole lump that of course speaks about the leaven in bread which causes the bread to rise the power of the yeast goes right through the bread well that's the way that sin is it comes in deceitfully it comes in unnoticed and it spreads and spreads until its power eventually completely subsumes the person to itself now first of all in the epistle to the

Corinthians in chapter 5 and verse 6 now Paul says this to the Corinthian church your glorying is not good do you not know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new lump now what that is referring to is this it refers to the immoral person in Corinth who had taken his father's wife now that of course was obviously a step mother and the church did nothing about that they thought that the best thing to do is just as it were to leave it be and not to punish the person but the apostle says you are glorying in that but you ought not to glory in it do you realize it is that a sin unrepented of will wreak havoc for that man himself and it will wreak havoc for yourselves as a whole for the church purge out there for the old leaven he says I am judging as though present with you in spirit that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when you are gathered together and that's as a quote when you are gathered together and my spirit deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus now these are difficult words but what it's saying is this put that person outside of the church it means to put him out by way of discipline or excommunication put him out and that's called a giving over to Satan deliver him unto Satan the reason for that is because the world is where Christ is ruling sorry the church is where Christ is ruling but outside in the world is where the wicked one has his way put him out why for the destruction of his flesh that means that he is to undergo a period of chastisement so that his flesh will be destroyed or that his old nature would be put down that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord

Jesus your glorying is not good do you not know he says that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump and that's true of the man himself what would be the case if a sin came into your life a sin of this kind perhaps or something less and too cold of you so that you never repented of it and that you were never moved or encouraged by anyone to repent of it but you sat there and festered as it were in it well my friend whatever masters you is your master and the apostle is saying deal with it for his sake because that leaven will leaven him completely if he does not repent of it and if you do not move him to repent of what he has done he will he will fester in that sin and he says the same is true of yourselves you cannot he says be tolerating that in your midst you should mutually admonish one another and the sins of the sins that break out in that way are to be dealt with or else the leaven will leaven the whole lump these are the statements of the apostle sin comes in and sin is infectious now he quotes the same thing in Galatians chapter 5 and verse 9 and he says it to the Galatians in another context they had left or they had changed the gospel a bit in this kind of way they changed it to teach something like this that you first of all started out by faith but once you grew a little bit then you had to go back to the laws and the ceremonies that were kept in the Old Testament so they began in the spirit as Paul says but they were trying to continue with the flesh that was due to the false teachers who were saying to them you've got to do this and you've got to do that and that is a never present danger Satan will attempt to put you back to some kind of ritual or law keeping in the place of grace repentance and faith these great watch words Satan wants to get rid of and he wants to throw you back onto doing this and doing that a little incense here some flowers there do this say that say it at the right time say it in the right place and that's it you're home and dry now once Satan can get the church onto that kind of thing he has deceived them and Paul says do you not know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump you are keeping days you're observing months and sacred days and he says these things are leaven that will put you back into the yoke of bondage look at the

[40 : 52] Roman Catholic church that is how it fell by going back to forms and to rituals and it lost the gospel and do we not all have to be careful about that if you began in the spirit continue in the spirit my friend there is nothing that the Lord desires but to come to him in repentance and faith keep these things remember that he is pleased with a broken and with a contrite heart and never try and that's difficult but so never try and substitute it with some ritual or rigmarole he will always be pleased with the broken and the contrite heart now when I say sin is infectious I mean it and let every one of us take it to heart I never sin in isolation and never do you and that even refers to your private sin maybe you sin within four walls in a way in which nobody else in here knows about and you think that that is your domain and that it affects no one else it does because it affects you and you affect others it is like that not one sin is isolated it is infectious in its very nature and therefore my friends watch and guard yourself against the sins which so easily beset us now before

I leave this let me just urge one or two things on you in the first place ask the Lord every day for the Holy Spirit to help you discern what is sinful from what is not and what is true from what is false because he alone can give you that discernment some people want to choose strong meat and the

apostle tells us that strong meat belongs to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil the Holy Spirit can give you taste buds and without the Spirit your taste is wrong test the spirits whether they be of God if anybody comes to you with a doctrine or a teaching or a practice to the word and to the testimony if they agree not with the word and the testimony it is because there is no light in them take everything to the word and the testimony let this be your rule book let it be your guidebook and let nothing come in your way between you and it the word and the testimony and learn to taste what is good in the second place sometimes when you lose your taste it is only a sickness that will tell you that something is wrong perhaps many of these were eating some time before they recognized that there was poison in their system you could be taking some kind of pottage perhaps even on your television set there is a pottage served up and it's got gourds in it and you think it's quite innocent or you think it won't really harm you even if you're detecting that there's a powerful influence of whether it's adultery or blasphemy or something in this but you think it's not going to do you harm the wild gourds are in there maybe you can't taste them anymore but if you don't detect pains and recognize them they will kill you oh thou man of god there is death in the pot death do we understand what sin does lust when it is conceived brings forth sin sin when it is finished brings forth death when it is finished with you it will kill you it brings forth death so then we're to watch sin it's deceptiveness and it's infectious nature but then there's the cure and just very briefly look at the cure

Elisha takes salt puts it into the water and he takes flour and puts it into the pot salt in the bible cast your mind back it symbolizes purity and preservation and flour or meal what again is wholesome healthy and pure so Elisha takes salt and meal and casts them into the very heart of the problem and what is that well it is nothing but the gospel and the power of the gospel and the purity of the gospel that's what he puts in now it looks so insufficient here's Elisha asking for some salt in a new vessel I'm sure many people perhaps were laughing and saying well what good is that going to do and some people are like that with the gospel and maybe you're like that with the gospel and you're saying well do you seriously suppose by standing in a pulpit and telling us stories from the past in the old testament or telling us about things that Jesus of Nazareth did that it's going to change me or to change anyone's life well my friends it will do exactly that the people of Jericho mocked when the ram's horn was blown but when the ram's horn was blown puny instrument as it was down came the walls and so when the gospel is preached strongholds came down and strongholds can still come down through the preaching of the gospel because the telling of these very things and the wielding of them in the hand of the Holy Spirit can change your life and the life of every person present here every single one you lose your faith in that sometimes I may doubt it sometimes with you but I tell you and God has told us and we have seen it for ourselves and for others that it is the power of God and to salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek and I am thankful to God that I don't stand here speaking the wisdom of men but speaking the wisdom of God

I'm scattering salt and may God please some salt to fall in a polluted spring to change it and to change it right at the heart because what you need my friend is a heart transplant or heart surgery not tinkering at the edges not some kind of clinic what you need is the gospel to change your heart to change your life and to change your soul and it can do that it seems insignificant but it's very powerful it's the foolishness of God but it's much wiser than men and as Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 10 verses 4 and 5 the weapons of our warfare are not carnal not fleshly weapons but they are mighty through God through the pulling down of strongholds and Satan has a citadel in your heart but the Lord can take it down and you'll notice that Elisha applies this right to the source puts it into the heart puts it into the stew and he puts it into the source of the spring right where the water is coming out the gospel cleans inside out it doesn't cling outside in chipping away reformation it cleans inside out it's real and once the inside is cleansed it permeates right out through the outside the gospel alone can do it but the gospel can do it believe in the

[48 : 23] Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved your life and soul might be pretty dirty in here tonight and maybe you know it maybe you know it maybe you feel yourself beyond redemption Elisha of the New Testament is offering you the flour and the salt believe and it is scattered and you will be a new man and a new woman if you're in the grip of the foulest sin a clinic or a society or an organization might not break it the Lord will break it just like that how often we've seen drunks as drunk or as alcoholic as could be turned by the power of God just like that and the power and dominion of that sin broken the Lord is able to do that still can I just conclude here by just saying a word about the man from Baal Shilisha after the famine he brought the first fruits it was a better time

and he brought twenty loaves of barley and full ears of corn in verse 42 now they were tithes and the tithes used to go to the priests but it's interesting he didn't feel he could give the tithes to the priests because the church had become so corrupt in Israel the priests were serving

Baal now you could in some respects refer to that as an unestablished church but it was not one where they feel they could bring their tithes they brought it in to the man of God and to the true sons of the prophets and what happened the Lord took that bread through Elisha and multiplied it multiplied it my friends I began by saying open your mouth wide and the Lord will fill it we can't say that enough how much bread there is in God's house and to spare and yet our stomachs have become so small our mouths so restricted will we not open them God has plenty to give plenty to give ask him and he'll fill your mouth may he bless his word let us pray our gracious God teach us the destructiveness of sin its deceitfulness and how infectious it is and help us to guard our lives jealousy by the power of the Holy

Spirit we pray for those who are caught in its grip and in its dominion that thou would scatter the salt of the gospel into their hearts and break that dominion that they might be free and that they might have life and have it abundantly we ask thee to multiply grace to us and help us to live upon the feast of fat things and upon the wine on the lees well refined for Christ's sake Amen