

Wednesday, October 12, 2022 ◻ Read 2Kings 4:38–44

Questions from the Scripture text: Who goes where in v38? What does he find in the land there? Who were there? What were they doing? What does Elisha tell whom to do for whom? Where does the servant go in v39? What does he gather? What else does he find, and what does he gather from it? Where does he put them? What cautionary info does the end of the verse add? What do they do with the stew (v40)? And what are the sons of the prophets doing? To whom do they cry out? What do they say? For what does Elisha ask in v41? What does he do with it? Then what does he say? With what result? Who comes from where in v42? What two things does he bring? What does Elisha say to do with it? How does the servant answer (v43a)? Whose speech does Elisha now specifically add (v43b)? What does Yahweh say? What was the result (v44)? According to what?

What is God showing in these two “feeding” miracles? 2Kings 4:38–44 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these seven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God’s mercy overrules both His servants’ folly and lack of faith.**

As we continue in the section of 2Kings where the LORD is showing the power of His Word by recording twice as many miracles through Elisha as through Elijah. Now the focus of the blessing shifts to the sons of the prophets. God is going to bless His servants! This is exactly as we would expect from God. What is perhaps surprising is that in these two mercy miracles, God displays that His grace overcomes His servants’ folly and lack of faith.

God’s mercy overrules His servants’ folly, v38–41. In time of famine, we sympathize with wanting to make the stew stretch. What we don’t appreciate is slicing a lapful of gourds from unidentified vine into the stew.

Now, the Lord could have overruled the folly and made it safe and nutritious from the start. It’s not like the flour adds that quality or that the Lord would need it to. But he allows us to feel the folly through the intensity of the cry, “death in the pot!”

And He makes the miracle and its mercy more memorable with the flour-sprinkling. It adds drama and visuals to the moment so that those sons of the prophets (and careful students of the Word) will have the incident ingrained in their memories. God’s mercy overrules His servants’ folly!

God’s mercy overrules His servants’ lack of faith. v42–44. Well, the seminary of the faithful has had stew in time of famine. What about bread? There’s a miracle here in both the source of the bread and the stretching of the bread. Where does it come from? A man from “Baal Shalisha.” Not an auspicious place name. Also, it’s time of famine, and this man’s “firstfruits” includes twenty loaves of barley and a knapsack of ripened grain.

This is great wealth while the land is under chastening. And this wealthy man, from the Baali-ish place, does what with his firstfruits? Brings it to the man of God. This is faith. He not only knows that he owes God the first and best, but he trusts God that what remains will be enough, and he is willing to give up the wealth that it might have brought. That’s a miracle!

By contrast, there’s the faithlessness of the servant. Elisha tells the servant to feed the loaves to “the people,” but the servant doesn’t think there’s enough to feed the hundred that are there. Even more, he voices his unbelief by questioning the command. The Word of Yahweh responds not with punishment but promise. Not only will there be enough, but there will be leftovers!

Of course, the key to God’s grace is the One Who not only fed 100 on 20 loaves with leftovers but fed 5000 on five loaves and two fish, with 12 baskets of leftovers. This is not mercy for those who are wise enough or have enough faith. It’s mercy that overrules our folly and lack of faith!

What are examples of your own foolishness or lack of faith? How can you still hope to obtain mercy?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for when we are zealous to serve, but foolish in not doing it according to knowledge. Forgive us for when we doubt Your provision or power and even question Your instructions. Thank You for making Christ our wisdom and righteousness. Make us to be like Him we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP109D “I Am Very Poor and Needy” or TPH551 “We Plow the Fields”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Second Kings, chapter 4, verses 38 through 44, these are God's words and the light shall return to Gilgall. And there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him and he said to the servants, put on the large pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.

So one went out into the field together, herbs and found a wild vine and gathered from it. A lap full of wild gourds and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though. They did not know what they were, Then they served it to the men to eat not happened.

As they were eating the stew that they cried out and said, man of God, there's death in the pot, They could not eat it. So he said then bring some flour and he put it into the pot and said serve it to the people that they may eat. And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

Then a man came from Bayelsa Lisa and brought them in of God bread of the first fruits, 20 loaves of barley bread. A newly ripened grain in his knapsack and he said, and he said, give it to the people that they may eat. But his servant said watch, I set this before 100 men.

He said, give it to the people that they may eat for Thus says, Yahweh. They shall eat and have some left over. So, we set up before them and they ate, and they had some left over, according to the Word of y'all. So far the reading of God's inspired and Aaron tort.

So, we continue in the section of Second Kings in which the double miracles of Elisha over against or compared to the miracles of lights up are recorded for us. The vast majority of them reported for us. And these two miracles concern, especially the feeding of the sun's, the prophets, which is a good reminder, that the Lord's

power in his word and his mercy is not just through the prophets.

But two the prophets, those of us who end up teaching and preaching. And shepherding must remember that. God's Word also shepherds us instructs us. As us the good, the miracle of giving us faith and growing our faith. We hope of course that you boys will be husbands and fathers.

And when you are We hope of course that you will lead your families and worship and minister the words to them. But do not forget that. You also are an object of God's, merciful power and powerful mercy, as he works in your family by the word that it's intended for you as well.

And there's a little bit of a picture of that Here for us and has attending to the particular needs of the sons of the prophets, through these two food miracles, there's a famine in the land. That's not just a description of the current agriculture and economical state in Israel.

The feminine. The land is tied to the covenant with the Lord. And the people's unfaithfulness and need for repentance. So that's giving you a background. Both of the current food situation economic situation and the current spiritual situation into which these miracles come. But the two unique features of these two feeding miracles are that in the first.

God's mercy is overruling. It has servants folly or foolishness as God. God's mercy is overruling his servants folly and then the second God's mercy is overruling. His servants lack of faith. Well, in the first, God's mercy is overruling his servants folly. One of the things that believers sometimes, do when the Lord, when they have confidence in the Lord's, mercy to them and forgiveness.

And in the Lord, Jesus is that they do not treat God's providence in creation with the wisdom that they ought to that. God is the one who has given us intelligence and wisdom. And God is the one who has made things observable and the expects us to live according to knowledge.

So the Elisha says to put on the big pot and boil stew for the sons of the prophets. The problem is, What are you gonna put in the stew? And so he goes out and he gets not just those things that he knows are good for us to but he finds a unidentified vine with unidentified gourds and he collects himself, a lap full of those boards.

And slices them into the pot. This is very foolish. It would have been providentially just for that to be the end of the School of the Prophets at Gilgal, when they all died of poisoned stew. When Elisha says bring some flour and throw it in the pot, he has not giving us the biblical recipe for healing poisonous stew.

You guys laugh. There are people who handle the Bible this way. There are people who say, now, this is more reliable than science. Oh, it's more reliable than scientists and that. Yeah, depending on who it is. You have to have wisdom about man, too. And not just about observable data and what to do with it.

But science itself. Rightly understood is treating this world as reliable in observable data and the increase of knowledge and wisdom. And now how to relate to it. It was very unscientific of the man to slice the unidentified gourds into the stew. When Elisha however tells them to sprinkle flower into heal it.

We also know by observing the way God ordinarily works, that this is not how poisonous to his healed. So, what's the point? The point is that the Lord sometimes gives physical actions to, we sometimes joins physical actions to things that he does in order to drive at home to our memory.

And so for those men who who ate the yields to that day, the site of them throwing the flower into this. This dew and the smell of the Hello flower dust. And the texture of the extra flower, clumps and their second bowl, etc. Those those things would all drive home to them.

We ought to have died of our foolishness, but God was merciful to us anyway and he performed a miracle on this two. So that's the point of the flower and the point of the passage ought to come home to us because even more vividly now, because we can have a visual image of the flower dust and the pudding of the flower in the stew.

And we can even have a, a mental image of the clumpiness of flower that you put into already boiling water and so forth. And and so it comes home to us. I am a fool and I do foolish things but God and His mercy is overruling my folly for good.

Even if he kills me, that's not necessarily bad. If I go home that to be with Jesus, it's bad for me to be foolish to be wasteful, but God deals with me and accordance with a mercy that is overruling my folly. And what a great comfort that is to believe us.

And that would have been driven home to for the rest of their lives as they remembered the flower plus poisonous gourd, stew, that they ate that one day by Gilgal In the second feeding miracle. You have God not overruling his servants folly but his Oh god. Overruling his servant's faithlessness or their lack of faith or weakness of faith.

Now, part of the miracle is that there's a guy from a place called Baal Salisha, which I'm translate if I'm translating it correctly, correctly means something like triple bail or triple bowel. Is a guy who's coming from bow. Salissa. And this is the guy who not only God has given a harvest, the first fruits of which includes 20 loaves of brought barley, and a sack full of ripened grain.

But God has also given this guy, the heart to seek out the prophet a life and the sons of the prophets with his first fruits. So there's already something of a miracle and they're ought to have been praised to God that he has done this and that man's well on that man's field first of all.

And then also in that men's heart. But when Elisha tells his servant to give it to the people that they may eat the servant says, what. So I set this before 100 men and suddenly, those of us who grew up reading, the Bible are doing math. And we're saying all five loaves and two fish feeds, five thousand men, 20 loaves, but maybe without the two fish.

So we'll cut, you know, a few thousand on this. It's still feet like 13 to 15,000 men but of course that was a miracle, right? And which the Lord Jesus showed not just his divine power. And the testimony that his words were true by the works that um, that the father attested, his son by and the spirit attested to son by in the Lord, Jesus himself attested himself by because he's fully God and fully man.

But it was also a reminder that when Jesus tells you to do something, you do it and you trust him with what the results are. And so this servant responds with a lack of faith and Elisha comes. And he, Of course, he is already the prophet of God and he's the master.

And that's the servant and the servants are just do what he says. But he comes as God's Word often does when we lack faith and when our faith is weak, what does God's Word often do? What does God often do? He brings us back to his word and he adds to us a reminder from his word.

And so to the original instruction, give it to the people that they may eat. Elisha now adds something in a form that is much more encouraging and commanding to faith. Thus says, he always and not only is it going to be enough for the hundred but it's going to be enough for the hundred with some leftover, this is give it to the

people.

They may eat for thus says Yahweh. They shall eat and have some leftover. And he sets up before them and they eat, and have some leftover, according to the Word of Yahweh and we often are doubting and we need to be told We need to be reminded. This is what God's Word says to do.

And we by God's grace, follow what he says to do. And not surprisingly at all. He is faithful. Why is it not surprising? Because he is always faithful. And then he gives us to be able to remember that has mercy. His power doesn't just operate. When your faith is strong enough to believe him, it often meets our lack of faith with a fresh reminder, from his word.

And his power often overrules, the weakness of our faith operates, within the weakness of our faith or our faithlessness. And so just a few verses here. But what a blessed portion of the spurt's teaching to us that God's mercy in his power overrules, both His servants folly and his servants like a faith.

Here's the God of sovereign, over ruling power, and the operates. According to his grace, not according to our wisdom or the strength of our faith. Let's spray Our Father, you know, our foolishness and our sin is not hidden from you. And so we're grateful that you don't act according to our wisdom or the strength of our faith.

But according to your grace and yet, oh Lord, you are honored by our acting wisely and you are honored by our believing you. And so we pray that your spirit would give us wisdom and we pray that your spirit would give us faith, but we're so grateful to you that you act in a way that is consistent with your character consistent with the love, in which you gave us Christ consistent with his perfect righteousness and our behalf and his fully atoning sacrifice.

And so, we bless your name for this and we ask that your spirit would give us wisdom and faith to remember this too, than to live by that faith for. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen