

“Death in the Pot”

2 Kings 4:38-41

Elisha performed sixteen miracles in the Bible (depending on what you count as a miracle). We will look at one of these miracles in this sermon.

I. The DEARTH in the land (v.38)

- A dearth is a severe famine so bad that people starve to death. “Dearth” is an old English word denoting “death in the earth.” (Remove the “r” and you have “death”—Remove the “d” and you have “earth.”)
- A. God’s WARNING. In Deuteronomy 28 God pronounced some blessings for Israel if they would obey Him and come curses if they did not obey His commandments (see Dt. 28:14-19, 23-24, 42). Leviticus 26 also warns of the consequences of disobedience (see Lev. 26:18-20).
- B. Israel’s WAYWARDNESS. Israel had departed from the Lord and served Baal under the wicked reigns of Jeroboam, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jeroham. God, true to His Word, sent a severe famine into the land because of Israel’s sin.
 - “*The sons of the prophets*” were not exempted from the effects of God’s judgment for Israel’s disobedience. They suffered the effects of the famine also. Often God’s chastisement of a backslider will effect those in his own family or church.
- C. America’s WANING. There is a “dearth” in America today. It is a dearth of hearing the Word of God.
 1. We have more preachers in this country than anywhere else in the world. But most of them are not preaching the Word of God. They are preaching a prosperity gospel; worldly philosophies; pop psychology; home economics; how to feel good about yourself (self-esteem).
 2. The prophet Amos prophesied, “*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” (Amos 8:11).

II. The **DIRECTION** for the stew (v. 38)

- A. The STUDENTS— “...and the sons of the prophets were sitting...” What do you suppose they were doing? Playing monopoly? Hardly. “The sons of the prophets” were the seminary students of that day. They were in Bible class learning the Word, listening intently to the prophet.
- B. The SEETHING. It was time for a lunch break. Elisha says to get a pot and start cooking. The word “seethe” means to boil up.
- ➡ What is needed today is the church to boil for the Lord!

III. The **DISCERNMENT** that was lacking (Vs. 39)

- A. The SEARCH. Since there was a famine in the land, pickin’s were slim for preparing food to feed these young “preacher boys.” One man in the group goes out to scrounge up some ingredients for the stew.
1. Here is where the problem begins. The young man went out to gather “herbs” (Heb. 'owrah / o-raw' meaning luminousness, bright, light.).
- ➡ While looking for herbs he finds “*a wild vine.*” Maybe he could not find any herbs. The absence of herbs pictures the absence of light in Israel. It was a DARK TIME as the light faded in Israel under the evil rule of it’s wicked kings.
2. He did not know the difference between what was edible and poisonous. So he picked the wild gourds (like squash; cucumber) off the wild vine and shredded them into the pot.

Some Bible scholars believe he found a poisonous gourd called citrallus colocynthus. If eaten it would cause severe stomach cramps, nausea, and possibly result in death. In small amounts you might not die, but you might think you were dying—and might even want die.

B. The SPOILING.

- ➡ I'm not sure if he found any edible herbs or not. Even if he had, when he mixed in the poisonous gourds, it tainted anything good he may have put in to the pot.
- 1. It doesn't matter how many GOOD things you put in the POT ... everything will be contaminated by the poisonous GOURD. The poison affects the whole pot. MORAL: A little leaven, leavens the whole lump!
 - ➡ It only takes one sin to keep a person out of heaven. There are no SCALES at Heaven's gate, to balance the good and the bad. All the good is spoiled and tainted by the sin. That is why every person needs salvation in Christ. Only He can remove your sins.
- 2. Notice where he found this poisonous "wild vine" and "wild gourds"— IN THE FIELD — "The field" is a type of the world in the Bible. What's the application? The world is full of poisonous ideas and philosophies that may look harmless and even resemble the truth. But they will poison your soul.

C. The SINCERITY. This man was **sincere**.

- 1. He thought he was doing the right thing. He thought the food he gathered was good food. But it nearly sent all his buddies gagging to the emergency room to get their stomach's pumped! His intentions were good, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions.
 - ➡ ILLUS: Washing my mom's car with a SOS Brillo pad!
- 2. It is not enough to be sincere. A person can be sincere in what they believe, but be sincerely wrong. We must apply the Word of Truth to what we hear and read. *"Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good."* We must be like the Bereans of Acts 17:11 who, *"searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

IV. The DEATH in the pot (v. 40)

- A. The COMMON source. These young men all eat from the same pot. We all get our spiritual nourishment from the same place.
- B. The CRY of alarm! As soon as someone took a taste, they realized there were poisonous gourds in the pot. He cried out, *“There is death in the pot!”*
 - ➔ Oh, for discerning Christians who when they hear something false, will cry out, *“There is death in the pot!”*
 - 1. Today, there is *“death in the pot”* from all the heretical teachings and doctrines of men being propagated in the world. The cults are growing faster than Bible believing churches.
 - 2. The passage this week of Initiative 502— legalized marijuana and Referendum 74—Same sex marriage— Bad news and bad laws—POISONOUS WILD GOURDS. Proponents claim the legalizing of the sale of “pot” will reduce illegal drug traffic and bring needed tax revenues into the State Treasury (1 Tim. 6:10).
 - ➔ Nothing good will come of these laws no matter how you try to justify it. Supporters don’t see the danger of “pot” and legitimatizing the practice of Sodomy in our state. It is *“death in the pot,”* no matter how you slice it.
 - ➔ *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”* (Isa. 5:20).

V. The DELIVERANCE in the meal (v. 41).

- A. THE PROPHET’S CALL—The prophets cried out to the man of God, for only God has the antidote to the poison of sin. Elisha called for meal (flour) and threw it into the pot. God miraculously uses the flour to neutralize the poison. This was the “hour of flour!”
- B. THE PRESCRIPTION’S CURE.
 - ➔ The pictures are clear. The world is full of poisonous ideas and solutions to life. To the undiscerning ear and eye, they sound and look good, but they are full of death and misery.

- **The meal typifies Christ.** Meal is flour made of ground wheat. It is baked into bread. It was used in the second of five offerings mentioned in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 2), and typified the Lord Jesus Christ— *“The Bread of Life.”*
- Meal made into bread also pictures the Word of God (Mt. 4:4).
 1. Only when Christ is added to the mix of our life can there be healing from the deadly effects of the “wild gourds” that threaten our spiritual well being.
 2. Only God’s Word which reveals Jesus Christ is the antidote to the death in the pot. Only Jesus Christ can give life and remove the spiritual famine of the world or nourish our souls in the midst of a drought.

SUMMATION: Note the last part of verse 41, *“Pour it out for the people that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.”*

1. In order to live, they had to believe God, and **by faith** eat of the healed stew in order to be delivered from the poisonous stew.
2. No neutral position. Either one feeds on Jesus Christ or he must starve and die as he attempts to live off the poison pottage of the world.

➤ Have you partaken of *“the Bread of Life”* that alone can neutralize the sin in your life?

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