

Kings and Prophets 14-03-07b

We're in 2nd Kings chapter 4, verses 38 through 41, looking at death in the pot. And this is more than just a happy outcome for a single meal for some guys. There's a reason why this story is included in scripture.

There's a reason why it takes place in a time of famine. This could have happened any time, right? It didn't have to be a famine going on. Somebody could have just been making a meal.

The prophets could have already had this meal underway. Elisha and Gehazi could have pulled into Gilgal and said, hmm, I wonder where those sons of the prophets are? And walk around a corner and look down a street, and here's all the sons of the prophets all rolling in the street, clutching their abdomens saying, oh, we've got some bad gourds. There's a reason why this story is constructed the way it is, right? All scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine and reproof and correction and instruction.

So we're looking at this story and we're trying to not only understand it as a historical fact, which it is, but the reasons for which this particular episode was included in scripture, in this place, at this time, with this prophet, having already seen what we've already seen. Remember, the book of Kings in Hebrew is one book. So just a few pages earlier, just a few rolls of the scroll earlier, was Elijah and the miraculous multiplication of the flour and the oil for the widow and her son.

And coincidentally, Elijah as well. So, flour returns in the context of a famine and in the context of beneficial provision. But here, this isn't, now you have flour and oil that you can bake bread and get through the famine.

That's one aspect of what God can do for us in a time of spiritual scarcity. If you are hungry for the truth of God, and I can look around and see most of you all know this from experience, if you are hungry for the truth of the word of God, God will provide. Many of us have been scattered in far off places, but there will be a way.

There will be a church, there will be a fellowship, there will be a source of tapes, there will be a book, there will be a radio broadcast, there will be something that God will provide to sustain us and to feed us in what looks like a time of famine. And today, in general terms, I sense that there is a famine for the word of God because there are so many gourd stews being served. There are so many adulterated, amalgamated, synthesized, syncretized gospels being preached.

And if you go over to Corinthians, when Paul says, This is the gospel I delivered to you. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be delivered.

Neither is there salvation in any other. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be delivered, saved. Without faith it is impossible to please him.

He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Faith is the evidence of things not seen.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me. In this study of the kings and prophets of the Old Testament, as we've come to this section and seen Elijah and Elisha, and the equivalence that has been assigned to them, even in the lips of the Lord Jesus himself, Elijah represents the Old Testament law, the Old Testament provision of God for his people, the Old Covenant, the first fruits of faith.

Paul talks about this, we saw it in Ephesians, we who were the first to hope in Christ, right? That's the Old Testament. And so when Elijah makes provision for the widow in the time of famine, there's just enough flour, and there's just enough oil, right? There's not an abundance, there's not a 55-gallon drum of oil that's just, you know, artesian well gushing forth, flowing down the street, everybody in the village gets some. There's not limitless barrels and buckets and baskets of flour.

She's got a small container, but as she uses it for her daily needs, it just never runs out. As she uses the oil for her daily needs, for her and her family and the prophet, it never runs out. And for those individuals within the nation of Israel, even though the nation could often be in that gilgal sense, on the downside of the role, they're apostate, apathetic, indifferent, disobedient, Baal-worshipping, Molech-worshipping, Dagon-worshipping, embracing the gods of the land, compromising with every form of evil, and then discipline strikes when they cry out to the Lord because of the covenant, even though they don't deserve it, God in grace delivers them.

Why does He deliver them? Because their crying out qualifies them for deliverance? No. Because their crying out invokes a clause in the covenant. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, I will hear from heaven, I will deliver.

Remember in the dedication of the temple, Solomon reiterates this well-known feature of the covenant that the people have with God. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, then will I hear from heaven, I will heal their land. God does it.

It's grace, undeserved, unmerited. If we wait till we deserve it, this is the beautiful part of that song, the Come Ye Sinners. Remember it says, Nor of fitness fondly dream.

A lot of people dream of fitness in other ways. But if you tarry till you're better, you will never come at all. If you're waiting until you're fit, if you're ready till you think that God is going to bless you because you deserve it, it's never going to happen.

And sometimes we tarry and we dally and we say, well, the Lord doesn't want to mess with me. I spent over a year one time with a friend of mine pleading over the course of time. This person

was a believer, knew there was a God in heaven, had been in church, had gotten away, had had some bad things happen in their life, had made some rather glaring, invisible mistakes, and now did not want to reestablish or renew or come back to God and make any sort of an attempt.

And their excuse was, well, he's just not going to want me now. I'm past it. I'm too far gone.

And all of us are too far gone. There is none that do with righteousness, no, not one in this sense. And there's no point in waiting.

All of us are needy. All of us are in the famine. All of us need God's supernatural intervention.

But we look to God and in His grace and in His mercy and in His fidelity to His own promises and His own covenants, He blesses and He restores and He saves. For us, we rest in Christ Jesus and we claim the merits of Christ. In Him, we have all of these things.

Well, when Elisha says in verse 41, bring some flour, this is significant. The antidote, and this isn't a physical antidote, this didn't physically, this is kind of like Jacob, you know, stripping the bark off the sticks and throwing them in the water and all the offspring of the goats and sheep came up speckled. It has nothing to do with the sticks.

It has everything to do with faith in God and a symbolic expression of faith in God. This is why, by the way, any particular ritual that you choose to observe, if you understand the ritual, there's not a thing in the world wrong with it. If you want to do water baptism, if you understand the significance of that ritual and you're not investing it with any magical difference-making power, get water baptized.

If you want to observe the Lord's table and you want to eat a cracker and drink the Kool-Aid or get some unleavened bread and have whatever is red in the cup there, it isn't the elements, it isn't the circumstance, it isn't the situation. It is entirely your understanding and what you choose to see in it. It is not necessary.

In this age, you know my view, there are no rituals in this age. We don't observe days. Every day is alike.

We don't observe feasts. We don't observe Sabbaths. We don't do sacrifices.

We don't take vows. We don't do any of the ritualistic things that were external manifestations and external signs and symbols of the Old Testament covenant expression. We have all things in Christ.

In Him, it's done. It is truly finished. And because of that, all we do is ensure that we remain in the center of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship. His blood keeps on cleansing us. If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse.

These are the mechanics. This is the daily grist of what we do. This is the reality.

This is what makes it go. You get a little toy car. When I was little, batteries and stuff, it was hardly any such thing.

If you had a toy and you wanted it to do stuff, you wound it up. I had a little tin robot, one of these made in Japan, turn it inside out, and there's beer can labels. But it was a little robot.

And it had a little whoring flint or something in there, and his eyes would spark, and his arms would go like this. Well, all he did was stand there until you reached in the back, took the key, click, clickety, clickety, click, like winding a clock, set him down, flash, flash, go, go, wave, wave. He runs down and stops.

And he's not going to go again until you turn the key and re-energize the mainspring. The mainspring of your Christian life, the mainspring of our spiritual lives is steadfastly, aggressively pursuing the active in Him status. Don't let sin accumulate.

Don't get discouraged and say, aw shucks, God doesn't want me anymore. God never wanted you for what you are. God never wanted us for what we are.

God wants us for what we are in Christ, in Him. Once you're in Him, we partake of everything that God loves. We partake of everything that the Lord Jesus Christ has achieved, and it's all of grace.

In Him we have all things. So, you know, this is really kind of dumb for us to sit around saying, well, toe in the dirt, aw shucks, hang my head, I'm too ashamed. Get over yourself.

We need to get back in Him and we need to get moving. There's a reason the Lord Jesus died for us. There's a reason God the Father wrapped you and me up as a gift and gave us to the Lord Jesus Christ as His body, as His bride, as His possession, as His victory, triumph, celebratory possession.

That's us. And to waste time in navel-gazing doesn't accomplish anything. We've got to get with it.

We've got to get over it, get past it. It is arrogant to be embarrassed and ashamed. It is arrogant to make an issue out of our paltry failures in comparison to the victories of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Put some flour in the pot, let's eat and get on with it. It is the flour, it is the ground grain that is ours through the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why Elisha puts it in the pot.

Elisha solves the problem. Not Gehazi, not a son of the prophet, it's Elisha who puts the flour in the pot and suddenly the whole wild gourd issue is moot, it's gone. Doesn't matter how much it was in there, doesn't matter what kind of a manure pile it grew out of, doesn't matter.

All that matters is Elisha has healed the pot. Serve it to the people that they may eat. Serve it to the people that they may eat because what is the important thing? Get the nourishment.

Elisha has put on the stew, somebody goofed up the stew, Elisha fixed it. Serve it, let's everybody eat. Did he say we're going to have a little kangaroo court here and we're going to cast lots until we find out who put the bad gourds in the pot.

We're going to take him and give him 40 stripes minus one and put him outside the camp and we're going to have to slay a goat, sprinkle him with the blood and send him in the wilderness and he's... None of that. Did anybody make any issue out of which guy went? They did not know it, he did not know it. It doesn't matter.

There's no further issue of the guy that got the gourds. It's forgotten. Elisha puts the flour in the pot, the stew is good, let's eat it and drive on.

That's what we're going to do in this passage now because in the second section here we have another advance on the food in the famine theme. And this is our thread. I mentioned earlier the scarlet thread through the Bible.

They're talking about the atoning work of Christ as it is foreshadowed and the adumbrations and the anticipations that you find. Well, our theme here, the thread through this section of Kings and our prophets that are recorded in the Kings is food in the famine. What's going on? Provision in the time of need.

So, verse 42. Then came a man from Baal Shalisha. Baal Shalisha.

I'll come back to this name in a minute. No accidents in Scripture. Shunim, not an accident.

Gilgal, not an accident. Baal Shalisha, not an accident. But a man came from Baal Shalisha and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley bread and newly ripened grain in his knapsack.

And he said, Give it to the people that they may eat. But his servant said, What shall I set this before one hundred men? He said again, Give it to the people that they may eat. For thus says the Lord, They shall eat and have some left over.

So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over according to the word of the Lord. Well, all kinds of little lights start blinking and wheels start spinning, don't they? We have seen this type of thing happen elsewhere, have we not? Let's take it as it is presented. A man came from Baal Shalisha.

Shalisha derives from the Hebrew number three. Hebrew number three. Baal means Lord.

Remember Baal Zibub, Lord of the Flies? Baal in the Canaanite mythology, when you said I worship Baal, it's kind of like saying I worship God, capital G. It just meant Lord, capital L. In their Semitic languages. So Baal Shalisha, this is the name of where he's from. It's a real place.

It's mentioned elsewhere. It's mentioned back in 1 Samuel chapter 9. Remember when Saul, when we first see Saul, do you remember what he's doing? Before he's king, he's just a tall guy with a servant. What's he doing? Lost dad's donkeys.

Where are they? He's roaming the land, trying to find these asses. Right? The asses of Kish. Where are they? And he passes through the land of Shalisha.

It's one of the places mentioned that he goes through. Interestingly, we just saw that Shunem has a connection to Saul as well. Gilgal, Gilgal.

Why do we keep having these back references to Saul? Well, what is Saul emblematic of, say, in contradistinction to David? Or even his own son, Jonathan. Here's a man from Baal Shalisha and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits. Thrice great Lord.

And great isn't really in here. Shalisha just means threefold. If you look it up in Strongs or something, I think it says like thrice great.

But there's not a word great here. It's just threefold Lord. They say the Trinity is not in the Old Testament.

One wonders. This man is from Baal Shalisha. Now, what's going on? Tell me, what's the big picture here? What's going on in the land? Famine.

This guy not only has got newly ripened grain and 20 loaves of barley bread, but what's he doing with it? What's he doing with it? Behold, there was a man from Baal Shalisha that had newly ripened grain and 20 loaves of barley bread, and he did put them in his barns and saved them to help tide his family through the famine. Is that what he did? This is the first fruits. 1 Kings 17, Elijah, widows of Zarephath.

I'm sending you from Brook Cherith. Go to Zarephath. There's a woman there.

She's going to take care of you. Elijah goes. Hi there, lady.

What are you doing? I'm mixing this oil and flour. I'm going to make a little cake, feed it to me and my son, and then we're going to fall over and die. Right? He says what? What's Elijah's response? Make me a cake first.

Give me the first fruits of the little dab that you've got. Counterintuitive, wouldn't you say? Doesn't really make sense from a human perspective, but if your spiritual priorities are straight, and this lady's are, and she recognizes this is the man of God, what does it take to render the first bit of that meal to Elijah? What do we call that quality? Without which it is impossible to please God. What do we call it? You can say it.

Faith, right? Faith. It takes faith to render the first fruits in a time of great scarcity. The widow does it.

This man does it. The famine is on. We saw the famine introduced with the seven sneezes.

There's been a famine in Gilgal. There's a famine here. There's going to be a famine in the land all the way down through chapter 8. This man has managed to scratch out of the ground in a time of famine a crop of barley.

He has threshed and winnowed and ground some of the barley into bread, which he wants to deliver as first fruits. Now, where does bread of the first fruits go? Where is it supposed to go according to the law? Leviticus 23, verse 20. The priest shall waive the sheaf with the bread of the first fruits as a waive offering before the Lord with the two lambs.

They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. Numbers 18, 13. Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the Lord, you priests, it shall be yours.

Whatever first ripe grain, ripe produce from the land is brought to the Lord shall be yours, oh priests. Everyone who is clean in your priestly house may eat of it. Deuteronomy 18, verses 4 and 5. The first fruits of your grain and your new wine and your oil and of the fleece of your sheep you shall give him, the priest.

For the Lord your God has chosen him out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of the Lord him and his sons forever. Now, Baal Shalisha, is this in the northern kingdom or the southern kingdom? Where was Saul looking for donkeys? Northern kingdom. Saul is in the southern part of the northern kingdom.

He's not down in the hills of Judea looking for the animals. He's up in the northern kingdom and he goes through Shalisha. So where is Shalisha? Northern kingdom.

Where is the man from Baal Shalisha from? Northern kingdom. He wants to render the bread of the first fruits so by law, where would he take it? Down to Jerusalem, right? But this guy is from Baal Shalisha. He is by all reckonings, by every implication of scripture, a very godly man.

God has blessed him with a crop in a time of famine. He's got grain in a sack, he's got bread of the first fruits and he has the intention of serving the Lord, honoring the Lord, pleasing the Lord with the first fruits of his crop. And he's a smart man.

Now, he could take it all the way down to Jerusalem, make a long journey, deliver it to the priests and come back. But what does he do instead? He comes to Elisha because he's not just observing the letter of the law, like the Lord Jesus with the disciples in the field. The letter kills, it is the spirit that gives life.

And he says, you know, there is someone who is fulfilling the Deuteronomy 18.5 principle here. Has the Lord God chosen Elisha out of all your tribes to stand to minister in the name of the Lord? And are there not sons of the prophets here with him? And the guy says, you know, in my locality, I can interpret the law and I'll give this to God's obviously chosen man. I don't know what's going on with the priesthood down in Jerusalem, but I know Elisha is God's man.

And I know that the purpose of the first fruits is to honor God with your increase, with the first fruits. God has blessed me. And do you know what this stuff is worth in a time of famine? If he had 20 loaves of bread and this sack of grain, you know what he could sell that stuff for? This is probably worth thousands of dollars at the time.

And he says, I am making an offering of this and nothing will dissuade me, and I'm going to make an offering of it near at hand. I'm finding the closest man of God, the genuine man of God, the man I have no doubt is in the service of God, has been chosen out of all the tribes to stand and minister in the name of the Lord, and I'm going to give it to him. If he doesn't want it, he'll tell me to take it on down to Jerusalem, but I'm going to check with him first.

He's my local prophet. And so he goes there, and he gives these things. It's astonishing, the perspicacity of this man from Triune Lord.

That's the name of his town, the town of the Triune Lord. And what literally a godsend for this community and for the prophet. He says, and so the man comes and brings the man of God the bread of the first fruits, 20 loaves of barley bread and newly ripened grain in his knapsack.

Then it says, and he said, this is he, Elisha. He, the man of God, said, give it to the people that they may eat. Very close parallel with the Lord Jesus.

Five loaves, two fishes. You've got two different kinds of food here. You've got the baked bread and you've got the raw grain.

You've got two different kinds. They're both significant. We've talked about the flour.

We've talked about the grain. Both are at hand. Some of this can be used by people who can thresh and winnow and grind and bake for themselves.

Others, kind of like Paul or the author of Hebrews says later, you need milk and not solid food, so here's some bread. The people that Jesus talked to on the hillside weren't ready to metabolize their own advanced doctrines, so the Lord gave them bread. This will get you going.

This will get you started. This will orient you to source and meaning and purpose and priorities. Give it to the people that they may eat, for thus says the Lord.

God has spoken to Elisha at the point that he receives this gift because God is pleased with this gift. Do you think God knows the name of the man from Baal Shalisha? I promise you he does. He's another one.

He's sitting out there in his yard. What did Elisha look like? What happened when you brought that stuff down? What were you thinking? Had you really thought you might go to Jerusalem? How did that whole thing come about? People will be talking to this guy for decades, centuries, finding out all of the details. What was it like living in northern? What did you think about the whole governmental thing? How did you keep your mind together with all this corruption and

culture rot and spiritual apostasy and all the horrible things going on? Then here comes the famine.

What were you thinking? How did it go with your family? How was it that you ended up with this great crop in the midst of a famine? The guy is going to be able to tell that story and glorify God in the telling. Elisha says, Thus says the Lord, Why would God say this? Why isn't the provision exactly perfect? Why isn't this like the lady with the jars inside the door, and she and her sons fill them up, and just when the last pot is full, the jug runs out? Perfect provision. Just enough.

She has enough to pay off her debts and to live on, and she uses the last of it just as the famine ends. The woman with the widow of Zarephath got her flour and her oil, runs out just as the rain comes. Perfect provision.

Here, the same idea is being turned again. We don't have the oil coming in here. We've got pre-baked bread.

We've got raw grain, but this is bread of the first fruits. This is consecrated bread. This is bread given to God, designated for the priest, the man who stands and represents God's name, and in this case, that man is Elisha, who represents prophetically whom? The Lord Jesus Christ, who is both prophet and priest, after the order of Melchizedek, and king, right? So this, in a sense, foreshadows in Elisha, in bringing the priestly gift to the prophet, he's a prophet-priest.

There's a three-fold thing going on here. Elisha, and a questioning person might say, well, where's the third part? Prophet-priest? What other part would there be? Well, when the Lord Jesus comes, it's fulfilled. Prophet-priest and king.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There are these three-fold elements, these strong triangular shapes in the patterns of God's word. So he said it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.

Why is there some left over? This is the new feature that we haven't had before. Nobody's talked about anything being left over before. Was there any stew left over in the previous episode? Any flour left over in Zarephath? What's the significance of that which is left over? Well, we've got the benefit of hindsight, don't we? We've got the benefit of having studied the feeding of the 5,000, the feeding of the 4,000, and Jesus' questioning of the disciples in the boat, where he specifically recalls those two events, and says, how much was left over when we fed the 5,000? How many baskets of fragments did you take up when we fed the 4,000? Do you not yet understand? There's significance in the leftovers.

Who is being fed here? His servant, the servant of the man of God, Gehazi, says, you're kidding me. I'm going to set this before 100 men? There's 20 loaves of bread, so this is five guys to a loaf, right? There's a knapsack that's got newly ripened grain. You know what the benefit of newly ripened grain is? Newly ripened grain is green.

Newly ripened grain, this isn't what you, you know, you want it to dry, you want it to mature,

you want it to be ready to thresh and to winnow. Newly ripened grain is like green bananas. You know, if you're making banana bread, what kind of banana do you want? You want the ones that you've got to bake them because you can't stand to look at them otherwise, right? Green bananas don't make good bread.

Some people won't eat a green banana, you know, it makes them run, fleeing in terror. Personally, I like a banana a little on the green side. When it starts getting kind of soft, black, the whole flavor and aroma changes, it gets that kind of transparent, translucent look to it, and that's so much.

This is newly ripened grain. This is green grain. You know what this is? This is planting grain.

This is what you plant for the next year's crop. It's the first fruits. So he's taken some of this and he's dried it, he's probably cooked it so that he could make the bread.

You know, you've got to kind of roast the grain and then you can make the flour and make the bread and so on. So he sets some of the bread and then there's also some grain. So these guys, they're not going to be able to do a lot of that.

What are you going to do? Boil the grain and make cream of wheat or poi or something out of it? I don't know what you would make. No, it wouldn't be poi, it would be gruel. Wheatmeal, wheat germ, something like that.

And he's just got a knapsack full. This is not a giant gunny sack. This is a small, like a saddlebag full.

It's the loaves of bread we're talking about. He's got 20 loaves of barley bread, and this is supposed to feed 100 guys. They might each get a snack and then they're going to be done.

By the way, these loaves, this is not your Wonder Bread long loaf where you can make sandwiches for the family on a couple of days. This is the tortillas. This is the flat pita bread looking things.

So one tortilla split between five guys. That's what we're talking about. These are like the flat bread that was stacked up in the Holy of Holies.

White flour tortillas. So Ghazi says, you're kidding, right? These guys are going to probably tear me up and have me be what they're dipping, he that dippeth the sop with me. Am I going to set this before 100 men? He said again, give it to the people.

Because this is Ghazi you're talking to. He's got to tell them twice. Give it to the people that they may eat.

For thus says the Lord, they shall eat and have some left over. And so as he starts breaking the bread, he has to break it. How do we know this? 20 loaves, 100 guys.

Nobody gets a whole loaf, right? Has to be broken. And as the bread is broken, it multiplies exactly like what happens 700 years later, 800 years later in the life of the Lord on two different occasions. He set it before them.

They ate and had some left over. What does the left over signify? It should have been gone. It should have been consumed.

God has provided this. You're supposed to eat it. But they're sated.

They've had enough. They're full. Their appetite is whetted.

Initially, their appetite is sated. And they want no more. And there's still bread.

God knows how much bread they ought to eat. And they stop. They stop short.

Well, it's just bread. I mean, there's no sauce. There's no spice.

Maybe I'll go get a gourd. See if I can sandwich a gourd in here. Maybe that would spruce it up a little bit.

He set it before them. They ate and had some left over. So what is the new thing coming out here? These, remember, are the sons of the prophets.

This hundred men were right in context with the previous story. It's the same guys. They have seen that the provision of God is good.

They've seen that the flour that comes from God is good. This is flour that's been baked into bread. And this is the source from which the flour comes.

You've got both ends of the equation. You've got the raw grain. And you've got the finished bread being offered, being given.

And they only take a little bit. Did you take any for tomorrow? Did you think to save any for the next meal? Why is there some left over? Every guy should have eaten. And if he had any left over, he should have kept it or kept eating.

But there's scraps. There's left overs. Gehazi is collecting a basket of fragments, as it were.

What does it tell you? The reason there's a famine in the land is even in the quote-unquote spiritual leadership, there is a lack of enthusiasm. There is a lack of appreciation. There is a lack of asking and seeking and knocking.

You give them a little bit, that's all they need. You and I cannot afford to be on a diet when it comes to the Word of God. Oh, sorry, I'm on a diet.

I'm only going to eat this little dab. You cannot undernourish your soul and expect to be healthy. You can't fast spiritually and expect to thrive and expect to grow and have strength

when you need it.

We need to not just hear the Word of God taught, not just read it, not just memorize it. What does it mean? How should I act? Should I be talking the way I talk? Should I be valuing what I value? Should I be investing my time the way I'm investing my time? Should I be directing my efforts toward the goals that I am pursuing? Should I be associating with the people with whom I associate? Does it make a difference? If you take the Word of God and it doesn't make a difference, that's leftovers. You didn't eat it.

You didn't imbibe it. You didn't turn it into energy and production and action. It's leftovers.

That's the problem. That's the reason there's a famine in the land. This is what God is calling their attention to.

Elisha says, look, if you're hungry, I've got the food. But you've got to be hungry. I can provide the food.

You can lead a horse to water. You can't make him drink. You can give a prophet bread, but you can't make him eat.

Right? The Lord can give us the truth of His Word, but He won't make us apply it. He won't make us give it thought, reflect on it, think about what difference it ought to be making. That's all on us.

That's why there's least and greatest in the kingdom. That's why there are many who will be outside in the darkness with the fornicators and the liars and the dogs and the failures. There's no excuse for us to be failures.

We know better. We've got wonderful bread of heaven given to us out of God's Word, but God can only go so far in supplying it. We have got to take it and consume it.

It's got to become part of us. It has to work itself out in energy and in action. And if it doesn't, who's to blame? You should have given me a more eloquent pastor.

You should have given me a clearer Bible. It was too hard. I got confused.

Why couldn't it be Aesop fables? Why did it have to be so enmeshed? Why did we have to dig? No. The Word is not in heaven that you've got to try to fly up there with the wings of an angel. It's not down in hell that you've got to descend to the journey to the center of the earth.

The Word is near you. It is in your heart. It is on your lips.

It's right here. Ask and it shall be given. Seek and you shall find.

Knock and it will be opened to you. If you ask, God is not going to give you a rock or a snake or a scorpion. We're His children.

We are body and bride of Christ. If you want the truth, God will give you all the truth you will possibly ever need. But you've got to take it.

We have to take it. Look at these guys. There's a hundred of them.

And out of twenty loaves of bread, they're scraps. It's pathetic. It's pathetic.

You're the leaders of Israel. At such time as you should be teachers, you have need that one teach you again the first principles of the doctrines of Christ. That's what it says over in Hebrews.

Don't let that be the new name that we're given in glory. Brian and I were talking on the break about, you know, do our names here really mean anything? They mean something among us. But Jesus is going to give us a new name if we qualify.

To the overcomer, I will give him a new name. What's that new name going to be? I don't want my new name to be Blockhead. I don't want my new name to be Almost Got There.

I don't want my new name to be... How dark is it out there? What is our name going to mean? Biblical names mean something. They're all inspired. The new name that the Lord Jesus gives us is going to mean something.

People say, well, is my name written there? I know my name's written in heaven. I want to know what's the new name going to be. What is it going to distill? What is it going to reflect about the relationship between myself and the Lord Jesus and through him to God the Father? What is that new name going to be? People always like to have a good nickname.

Rocky or whatever it might be. Something that for a man speaks manliness. Something admirable.

Something catchy. Something that you're proud of. What is our new name going to be? Well, what do you do with the bread? What do we do with what is supplied? There is no escaping.

There is no dodging. There is no deferring. There is no delegating.

There is no handing off the responsibility for the bread. The bread has been handed to us. What do we do with it? When you think about these hundred guys and this sanctified bread of the first fruits, the bread of priests is being given to them.

This is like David going to Nob and eating the bread. It's priestly bread. Once again, David, where do you get your prophet, priest, king? David, son of David, eats the priestly bread.

Priests don't do too well at Nob. But the picture there of David, and it's a picture for us. So, this is here for a reason.

It's a part of the famine fundamentals. This is the famine bread theme. And it's being turned.

You see it in 1 Kings 17. You see it in 2 Kings 3. You see it in 2 Kings 4. And it is for us. These things are written for our instruction.

So, this week, in these days, in these hours, we want to be noshers. We want to be chewers. We want to be bread eaters.

Don't let there be anything left over. Eat. Feed me till I want no more.

Remember that, bread of heaven, bread of heaven? Feed me till I want no more. Well, I don't ever want to not want more. Do you? Do you ever want to be sated? Okay, I want no more.

Bread of heaven, are you kidding? Drive the truck into my driveway. Get the dolly, bring it in. That's what our attitude should be.

Well, we'll pick up in chapter 5, the famous, famous story of Naaman the leper, coming up chapter 5 next time. And in it and with it, the long-promised Gehazi special. Let's close here in order of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the grace that you have made available to us. It is incomprehensible that in our condition and with our lack of value and lack of resource and lack of everything, that you would look down from heaven and have compassion on us, raise us up, place us in Christ and grant us these incredible privileges that eventually raise us above the angels and into your very presence.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will make these truths live and breathe in our souls. They will motivate us and encourage us in the hours and the days ahead so that we will be those who take full advantage of your provision. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.