

1  **Poison in the Pot**

2 Kings 4:38-41

2  **THE STORY**

The reason for famine  
The reminder of the Father  
The refreshment of food  
The recipe of faith  
The recipe for failure  
The remedy of flour

3  **2 Kings 4:38-39**

*And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. <sup>39</sup>And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not.*

4  **2 Kings 4:40-41**

*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. <sup>41</sup>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.*

– The stories about Elisha are not in chronological order, but are grouped by similar subject matter, lessons taught, etc.

5  **THE REASON FOR FAMINE**

6  **Previous blight**

- They'd already had a famine from the 3-1/2 years of drought experienced during the ministry of Elijah.
- There were at least two famines during the days of Elisha.
  - "The famine" – refers most likely to the 7-year famine referred to in chapter 8.
  - The context here is Israel – in the northern kingdom.

7  **Playing the odds**

- The main reason for the famine, however, is that Israel had started adding in other gods to their worship.
- Most people then were polytheistic. If one God was good, wouldn't two be better?

8  **Practicing religion**

- ... instead of being passionate for God
- Confused rituals for relationship
- Confused busy-ness for intimacy

9  **Pals with the ungodly**

- They intermingled and intermarried with other nations.
  - The Law provided for the taking of war brides if they became converts to worship only Jehovah.
  - But instead of converting others, God's people began to add other gods to their worship.
- Bad company corrupts good morals.

10  **Practical object lesson**

- God withdrew His blessing.
  - "Why don't I just take my hands off of you and let you see what the other gods can do?"
  - Israel should have gotten the message long before now – during the famine of Elijah's day. But history repeats itself when you don't learn from its lessons.

11  **Personal questions**

- Are you experiencing a famine?
  - Is there a famine in the area of your spiritual relationship?
    - You know you're hungry because deep inside your soul seems empty. You lack joy and peace. The spiritual life is not an adventure but a struggle. You feel like you are going through the motions when you pray but you're not really making contact with God.
    - "But how can that be when I go to church, listen to KLTU, KCBI, and The Word every day, and I do my Bible study?"

12  **Personal questions (continued)**

- Is there a famine in the area of your finances?
  - Perhaps God is wanting you to see just how much you can accomplish on your own while violating His principles.
  - There are 7 principles of life which if you violate can cause a lack of funds.
  - Proverbs 9:1 – *“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.”*

### 13 **Personal questions (continued)**

- Is there a famine in the area of your marriage?
  - Marriage was made for joy, companionship, childbearing, completion.
  - Does your marriage lack joy?
  - Do you feel like your marriage partner should “fill the gap” in your life but instead there seems to be a widening gap in your life instead?
  - Do you feel like you’re drifting apart rather than growing closer together?
  - Instead of loving communication, does there seem to be meaningless routine chatter or caustic and bitter words?

### 14 **THE REMINDER OF THE FATHER**

#### 15 **Gilgal was a REMINDER**

- Two memorials set up here
  - IN THE RIVER (buried—Joshua 4:8-9)—A reminder that:
    - The old life was past.
    - Their fears and their own methods had kept them out of the promised land for 40 years.
    - A lack of faith in God’s plan causes death.
    - God alone provides your every need (the manna, the water, the daily provision).
    - God guides.
    - God loves you even when you are rebelling against Him (unconditional acceptance).

#### 16 **Gilgal was a reminder (continued)**

- ON THE BANK OF THE NEW SIDE – Joshua 4:19-24 – A reminder that:
  - **God Specializes in the Impossible**
  - **God is a God of Miracles.**
    - He alone can hold back the waters.
    - He alone can make you cross through on dry land.
    - He alone can do it long enough for 2-3 million people to march through.
    - Only God can save you. Only God can truly bless you. Only God can save your marriage. Only God can fix your finances. Only God can refresh and revive your soul. Only God. Only God. Only God.

### 17 **THE REFRESHMENT OF FOOD**

#### 18 **Looking for food? Follow the preachers.**

- Other places were experiencing famine
- But at Gilgal there there was food!
  - Miraculously supplied twice in this chapter
  - God takes care of His own
- Real famine today -- Amos 8:11 – *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:”*

#### 19 **Did they have food?**

- We know from this story that they had “meal.”
  - So they had managed to gather some grain and grind it.
- But they’re in the middle of a 7-year famine (8:1).
- Grew what they could—not much. Gathered what they could find—not much.
- Relied on God for the rest.

### 20 **THE RECIPE OF FAITH**

#### 21 **The challenge of hospitality**

- It is lecture day at the school of the prophets.
- There is no famine of the Word of God here – but there is a shortage of food.
- The students are hungry and Elisha is the host.
  - It is his job to feed the students.
  - He tells his servant to put on a pot of stew.;
    - In time of famine, this is going to be a thin stew with a few boiled vegetables.
    - But they are to be content with what God provides.

22  **God's prophet gives the recipe**

- Elisha gave instructions to his servant (Gehazi?) to make stew (4:38).
- Recipe (write this down....):
  - Fill the pot with water
  - Put it over the fire
  - Wait patiently and prayerfully
  - God will bless it
  - We will eat it
    - This will be followed by another miraculous meal in a few days. (The message of Gilgall)

23  **C.H. Spurgeon**

- “Faith, always does as much as she can; if she cannot fill the pot, she can put it on the fire, at any rate. If she cannot find meat for the pottage, she pours in the water, lights the fire, and prays and waits. Some have not this faith nowadays; and until we have it, we cannot expect the blessing.”

24  **C.H. Spurgeon (2)**

- *Thus saith, the Lord, “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation.” Why? Because “thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left.”*
- Few will regard such a summons as this. The feeble faith of our time finds it difficult to enlarge the tent, even after the increase has come, and the people are there to fill it. Great faith would enlarge the tent, and expect the Lord to keep his promise, and multiply us with men as with a flock.


25  **C.H. Spurgeon (3)**

- The Church, of God greatly needs, not foolish confidence in herself, which would lead her to be Quixotic, but simple confidence in God, which would enable her to be apostolic, for she would go forth believing that God would be with her, and great things would be accomplished by her.
- She would open her mouth wide, expecting that God would fill it, and fill it he would. Faith does what she can, and waits for her Lord to do what *he* can. Brother, what is your faith doing? Are you putting a great pot on the fire in expectation of a blessing?

26  **THE RECIPE FOR FAILURE**

27  **Too many cooks in the kitchen**


- Not everyone shared Elisha's faith or visionary cooking technique
- Some young preacher decided to help out the senior pastor a little bit. Added unknown wild gourd.
  - Something new
  - Something experimental
  - Something different to break the monotony
  - Some OOMPH

28  **The unhealthy gourd**

- Wild vines – These are vines that like to do their OWN THING.
- Wild gourds – Wild Israeli cucumber.
  - Long as your finger and just a bit bigger around
  - When ripe, it bursts easily and squirts its juices and seeds.
  - If it is already split a little bit, its insides dry to a white powder and the powder absorbs bacteria.
  - Eating this causes colic and violent vomiting.

29  ***Citrillus colocynthis***

- Lemon-sized fruit
- Other names:
  - Bitter apple, bitter cucumber, egusi, vine of Sodom
- Yellowish with green spots; extremely bitter
- Causes “violent, sharp pain in the bowels with dangerous inflammation.”
- Used for ancient abortions

30  **Where are the gourds today?**

- Ritualism (Psalm 51:16-17)
  - Delicate and dainty in appearance
- Philosophy and Tradition (Colossians 2:8)
- Relativism (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- Situational ethics (Judges 17:6; 21:25)
- “Science falsely so called” (1 Timothy 6:20)
- Comparing ourselves to others (2 Corinthians 10:12)
- Works (Titus 3:5; Galatians 2:21)

31  **Quantity matters**

- A lap full
  - It only took one man to bring in enough poison to poison everyone.
  - Fathers / husbands – beware your influence / use your influence!
  - Churches -- take care when finding teachers / preachers!
- Who’d they call when they got in trouble?
  - The man who brought in the poison – NO.
  - They called the “pastor.”

32  **Don’t miss the lesson here!**

- Add religion to relationship and you have poison.
- Substitute routine or ritual for relationship and you have poison.
- Substitute possessions and savings for being in God’s will and you have poison.
- Substitute performance and perfection for opening your heart to God and you will have poison.

33  **Don’t miss the lesson here! (2)**

- Substitute parties, drinking, drugs, driving fast for the real joy that comes from a real relationship with Christ and you will have poison.
- Substitute expectations for how your spouse should act and perform for growing together in Christ and you will have poison.

34  **Beware poison in the pot**

- Some say “You take 1 step and God will take 2.” This is poison in the pot. The fact of the matter is God doesn’t need your help to save you (only your willingness). If He needed our help, He’d ask for it.
  - He doesn’t ask our help to be saved.
  - He doesn’t ask our help to keep us saved.
  - You’re arrogant if you think you contribute something to the process.

35  **God will fill your life with blessing!**

- Follow God in faith and He will fill your life with blessing.
  - You don’t have to DO a list of things to get God to bless you.
  - Ephesians 1:3 – *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”*
  - You should DO things BECAUSE you’re blessed (not to BE blessed)!
- Quit filling your life with the gourds of fleshly pleasure, entertainment, and substitutes.

36  **The problem was the additives!**


- The problem of additives started at the “*tree of knowledge of good and evil*”
  - The very name of that tree implies a constant questioning of whether what God gave was enough
  - It implies our own decision-making
    - Asking, “*What’s wrong with that?*” instead of, “*What has God said?*”
- The “*tree of life*” was enough!

37  **The problem was the additives! (2)**

- Financial problems
  - Credit
  - Get-rich quick schemes
  - Substituting worldly possessions for real satisfaction that comes from God
  - Deception of mothers working outside the home
  - Wrong investments

38  **The problem was the additives! (3)**

- Marital problems
  - Demanding expectations rather than gratefulness
  - Activities together instead of spiritual fellowship
  - Emphasis on physical relationship rather than spiritual

39  **The problem was the additives! (4)**

- Spiritual


- Trying to impress God with “busy-ness” and religious activity but not really growing closer to Him
- Talking religiously but not putting His principles into practice
- Substituting head knowledge for heart relationship
- Substituting ritual prayer for two-way communication

40  **The problem is the additives!**

- Jesus said, “*Come unto me and I will give you rest.*”
  - But if you aren’t experiencing rest in your soul, your spiritual life, your marriage, your finances, it is because you’ve added something of your own to the pot.
    - You contaminate faith by trying to perform religiously.
    - You contaminate marriage by putting expectations on your spouse.
    - You contaminate your finances by viewing money wrongly and getting it by wrong methods.

41  **The message of Gilgal**

- “I AM GOD. KNOW THIS: IT IS ME AND ONLY ME FOREVER!”
  - God is enough
  - God is all that matters
  - God is all that is worth living for
  - God is the only worthy object of worship
  - God is the One we need to introduce to others
- The real solution is in the Tree of Life.

42  **The questions**

- The wrong questions
  - “What’s wrong with that?”
  - “What do I think is right?”
- The right questions:
  - “Jesus is always with me. Is He having a good time in my life?”
  - “Is Jesus having fun in what I’m doing and with my getting to know Him?”

43  **THE REMEDY OF FLOUR**

44  **The Need for the Antidote**

- Verse 41 – “*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.*”
  - It would be better if the poison had never gotten into the pot.
  - It would be better if people were not poisoned by religion and did not understand God’s grace.
  - The ministry of this church includes identifying those who are poisoned and giving them the antidote.

45  **Flour in the pot**

- Makes things thicker.
  - Give “potent truth” to “thicken” – allows truth to override the poison.
- Comes by much effort.
- Pictures the “bruised corn” that refers to Christ in the Gospels

46  **Flour in the pot (2)**

- You need to fill your life with the TRUTH of God’s Word!
  - People seek out preachers because they act and sound religious. Because these people lack knowledge, they allow themselves to be poisoned.
  - God spoke through the prophet Micah and said, “*My people perish for lack of knowledge*”.