



Handout for week of 7/23/18 John 6: 1-21 & 2 Kgs. 4: 42-44

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2 Kings. 42: And there came a man from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of G-d bread of the first-fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and fresh ears of corn in his sack. And he said: 'Give unto the people, that they may eat.' 43 And his servant said: 'How should I set this before a hundred men?' But he said: 'Give the people, that they may eat; for thus saith HaShem: They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.' 44 So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of HaShem.

COMMENTARY:

(vs. 43a) "What, shall I set this before a hundred men?" The attendant was confused and confined, limited by his unbelief, but his unbelief was caused by measuring his own ability to feed so many rather than by who and what God was and always is. Measuring our ability or capability or success in any aspect

of the ministry (or whatever God may call us to do) by the puniness of ourselves must automatically confine us, resulting in confusion and defeat. We must learn to take whatever God has given us and then, trusting in the will and power of God, use it knowing that God is able to multiply it super abundantly above all that we can ask or think if He desires to do so.

So the issue here was not the small number of loaves, but the ability to see beyond the loaves to the Almighty. It was an issue of having the wrong perspective, a perspective which measures our ability by who and what we are and have rather than by who and what God is to us. The key lesson of the passage is that God's wants us to learn to measure life by God's infiniteness which is without measure.

The Confidence of the Prophet (vs. 43b)

Here Elisha repeats his former instruction, "Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have left over.'" As the statement, "for thus says the Lord" indicates, Elisha was given direct revelation from the Lord that He was going to multiply the loaves. It was a promise from the Lord to Elisha, but only, it appears after Elisha exercised faith in the Lord, trusting Him to perform this miracle.

Elisha wanted to demonstrate what God was to these prophets in their ministries so that they might learn to measure their lives, their work, and their challenges, not by the size of the problems or their own resources, but by the greatness of their God.

For us today, the words, "thus says the Lord," stand as an illustration and a picture of our need to know and understand the principles and promises of the Word and then count upon them for the provision of God. Elisha was teaching these prophets (and us) what God will always be to us if we will adopt the disposition of faith in the Word and the promises of God that Elisha had toward the Word of the Lord.

The Consequence of Obedience (vs. 44)

"So he set before them." First let us note that the attendant was obedient to God and the command and believed in the promise of God. This is foundational. Until God's people learn the moral necessity to both believe and obey the Scriptures, there is going to be a spiritual famine, confusion, and confinement in our lives and our ministries.

Second, "They ate and had some left over." God's provision is always more than enough for our real needs, not our greed, but for the real needs of our lives.

Finally note the words "according to the word of the Lord." The point is, it happened just as God promised. God's Word is tried and true. God is faithful to His Word. We can count on the Lord.