

# Miracles of Elisha, Message 3

by Ed Miller

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*The message of the man who looks like Jesus is that our message is a person, Jesus, and that He is the message of life and life more abundantly.*

**Duration:** 1:09:09

**Scripture:** 2 Kings 4:42

**Topics:** "Surrender To God", "Supernatural Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the characteristics of a person who surrenders to God and has a passion for Him. The sermon is based on four stories from the Bible: the widow and her oil, the woman of Shunem and her son, the stew made to feed the sons of the prophets, and the multiplication of loaves. The main message of these stories is that when someone fully surrenders to God, they will experience a supernatural walk and ministry. Their ministry will be a blessing to those who accept it and a curse to those who reject it. The sermon emphasizes the unique and distinct nature of this message compared to others.

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## Transcript

Well, good morning. It is so good to worship the Lord. Let me share with you just one paragraph before we look into the Word and continue our little series.

In terms of the bread-breaking, in terms of the ministry that we just celebrated, in one of my meditations, I've been studying the Lamb of God. Not just tracing the expression Lamb through a concordance, but asking the Lord to minister in my heart what it means that He was the Lamb. And one of the principles that I love to apply as I study the Word is that the picture is only a picture and the reality is infinitely greater than the picture.

And in the Old Testament, the Lamb, the animal Lamb, was the picture. And in the picture, continually, daily, for thousands of years, the fire consumed the Lamb. In the reality, which is infinitely greater, the Lamb consumed the fire.

The fuel of God's anger is sin. And when the fuel was gone, the fire went out. What a glorious salvation we have when the Lamb consumed the fire for us.

As we come to the study of God's Word, there's a principle of Bible study that's absolutely indispensable. And that is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. We need to trust the Lord.

Only the Lord can open up His Word. As we've said many times, this book is like our Savior. It has a divine side and it has a human side.

And by the gifts God's given us, we can study the human side. But only by revelation can we have the divine side. I suppose that we've all learned through the years what Jesus meant in Matthew 26 when He said, the flesh is weak.

We've all, I think we can testify, in some areas of our life, the flesh is weak. But the context of that great statement in Matthew 26, verses 40 and 41, the context of that was in terms of the most spiritual event that ever took place on this globe. The Garden of Gethsemane and the cross.

And in the most spiritual time that ever took place on the earth, the disciples fell asleep. And our Lord Jesus said, couldn't you stay awake one hour? And then He pointed out, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. It takes a miracle of God in spiritual things to have us stay awake one hour.

And so let's just trust the Lord that we won't be leaning on the flesh as He opens Himself and His word. Because the flesh is weak at all times, but especially when it comes to spiritual things. And so let's trust Him together.

Our Father, we thank You that You have not left us on our own when it comes to seeing and perceiving and hearing Your voice, understanding Your revelation. But You have put Your Holy Spirit in our heart, and He discloses the Son of God. And so we just pray that our hearts might be open and our spirits might be very alive.

Quicken us this morning, we pray. Deliver us from the flesh and all of its subtle forms. And enable us to stay awake, hear Your voice, see Your face.

We ask in the matchless name of our Lord Jesus. Amen. If you'd open your Bibles, please, to 2 Kings chapter 4. We continue our look at the wonderful life and ministry of God's servant, Elisha.

The man who looked like Jesus. And when you go through the record, you see how much he looked like Jesus. He went on to his own, and his own received him not.

He turned to the Gentiles. He was a friend to the needy. He cleansed the leper.

He multiplied loaves. He raised the dead. Through his death, he gave life to others.

And on and on, he wept over Jerusalem. Elisha is a picture of someone who looks like Jesus. And the message that he had is the message that exactly resembles the New Covenant.

The Gospel. And so we study Elisha in order that God can teach us in picture form, in the story. It's so easy to see a principle when God puts it in a redemptive history and fossilizes it in an inspired story.

Then we remember the story. We remember the truth of God. In our first two messages, we concentrated on the man that looks like Jesus.

And for this morning and this evening, Lord willing, we'll look at the message that the man that looks like Jesus proclaims and shares with others. Let me just mention in a very brief review. I'm not going to spend a lot of time reviewing.

Just give you the highlights. In our first lesson, we looked at the man and how God prepares a man to look like Jesus. And man is generic.

You women don't think I'm not talking to you as well. A person to look like the Lord Jesus. And the principles illustrated in I Kings 19 and II Kings chapters 1 and 2 and 3 are these.

Number one, a person that looks like Jesus must respond to the grace of God. When God comes and visits you and puts His mantle on your shoulder, you need to recognize who it is and the privilege that is yours. And you must respond as Elisha responded in an unquestioning, free will, joyful surrender to that grace that was put upon you.

And then the second principle we looked at was the desire that God planted in his heart. After eight or nine or ten years of service and pouring himself out to Elijah, Elijah laid before him a blank check. And said in effect, ask anything.

What do you want in the whole wide world? And without hesitation, he said the double portion. I want God to pour out on me everything that He is so that I can be His representative on the earth. So others can look at me and see God's heart toward them.

That was his desire. That's the making of a person who looks like Jesus. One who responds to the grace of God.

One who has a passion to receive everything that God longs to give. And then the third principle that we looked at before he picked the mantle up in his hand. He had to have focus.

He couldn't be distracted. He had to have not only eyes up here, but eyes here. To see beyond in spiritual things, reality.

And in fully developed form, he had to keep his eyes on the Lord. Then God enabled him to pick up the mantle. It's one thing to have God's mantle on you.

It's another thing now to begin living. We then looked last evening at the summary. If someone really does that and surrenders and has a passion that God give him everything and is focused on the Lord, what will that man look like? What will his ministry look like? And last evening we saw in those first four miracles a summary.

That man will be a person who will walk and God will open the way before him. Illustrated by the opening of the Jordan River. He will have a supernatural walk.

He'll not only have a supernatural walk, he'll have a supernatural ministry. For those who are open and say yes, it will be a ministry of blessing. For those who say no and reject, it will be a ministry of cursing.

For those who know the Lord and need to be restored, it will be a ministry of restoration. He will be available. That's what we looked at so far.

Now this morning, I would like to look at the first overview of the message. Here's a man that looks like Jesus. What is the message that he embraces? If you're following the handout sheet that I gave as a guide, you'll see that this message will embrace four stories and they're right in order.

The story of the widow and her oil. The story of the woman of Shunem and her son. The story of the stew that was made to feed the sons of the prophets.

And the story of the multiplication of loaves. In this message this morning, God Helping, I want to look at the very heart of the message. There are other characteristics of the message, but this is the chief characteristic of the message that we have.

This is the main direction. This is the heart of it all. This is what distinguishes our message from the message of the 7,000 that have not bowed the knee.

And from the sons of the prophets. This is a unique message. A distinct message.

And this is the chief characteristic of it. Now here's how I'd like to look at the material. First I want to show you how these four stories illustrate the main point.

And we'll stick to the main point. And then I'd like to show you briefly how Elisha relates to that. How the messenger relates to the message.

And with those two, that will be how we'll look at it. In story number one, let me briefly give the four stories. And what they have in common, which will focus on the main message.

And then we'll try to break it down. In the first story, there are two parts. Chapter 4, verse 2. Elisha said to her, what shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house? And she said, your maidservant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.

See, that's how the story begins. How does the story end? Verse 6. And when the vessels were full, she said to her son, bring me yet another vessel. And he said, there's not one vessel more.

And the oil stopped. And she came and told the man of God. And he said, go sell the oil, pay your debt, and you and your sons can live upon the rags.

Now, the story ends not with one jar of oil in the house, but the room filled with jars of oil. Begins with one, and it ends with many. I hold that a moment and look at story two.

The second story is the woman of Shunem and her son. And this also has two parts. In part one, you have the supernatural birth of a son.

Verse 14. And so he said, what then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, truly she has no son. Her husband is old.

And he said, call her. And when he called her, she stood in the doorway. And then he said, at this season next year, you will embrace a son.

And she said, no, my lord, oh man of God, do not lie to your maidservant. The woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha said to her. It was a dream come true for this woman.

She thought she'd never have a child. And then God gave her this miracle child. In part two of the story, the child is weaned.

Look at chapter 4, 18. And when the child was grown, the day came he went out to his father, to the reaper. Don't be misled by that expression, when the child was grown.

At first I thought the child was grown means a grown-up child. Maybe nine years old, or ten years old, or eleven years old, or maybe even a teenager. But that word, the child is grown, was a very common word that referred to weaning.

When the child was weaned, when you go through the record and you see the mother holding this child on her lap, and the mother carrying this child upstairs to lay the child on the prophet's bed, you realize this wasn't a teenager. The mother wasn't carrying a teenager. But it was a child that was just weaned when it was grown.

In those days after the weaning, the father took a prominent part in the family. And the child would be carried with the father so he could learn the father business and the family business and so on. And so probably this is a two- or three-year-old baby boy.

And what happens? Verse 19, And he said to his father, My head, my head. And he said to his servant, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then he died.

The baby that was supernaturally born died. And the second part of the story then, verse 32, When Elisha came to the house, behold, the lad was dead and laid on his bed. And he entered and shut the door behind them both and prayed to the Lord.

Verse 36, He called Gehazi and said, Call the Shunammite. And so he called her, and when she came, he said, Take up your son. She went in and fell at his feet, bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son and went out.

Part two, you have a resurrection of a child who was supernaturally born. You see, there's an advance. In the beginning, you had a wonderful beginning, a supernaturally born child.

But it's a more wonderful ending. It's the resurrection of the one who was supernaturally born. And just so as in the first story, we went from, I'm not going to call it bad, We went from one degree to another, from one jar to many jars.

Now we go from a great birth to a resurrection. It's an advance in the story. The third and fourth story should be linked together.

Because God presents a truth centered around hunger and eating and feeding. And of course, physical food represents spiritual food. And there's spiritual hunger and so on.

And once again, you have an advance from story three to story four. In the third story, there's a famine. And a stew is made to satisfy hungry prophets.

The sons of the prophets, the Bible students. Someone inadvertently, when they were gathering for that stew, gathered up a poison gourd. You read about it in verse 40, chapter 4. They poured it out for the men to eat.

And as they were eating the stew, they cried out and said, Oh man of God, there's death in the pot. And they were unable to eat. And as you could have guessed, the man of God was there.

And God, through him, did a wonderful miracle. Verse 41, bring meal. And he threw it into the pot and said, pour it out for the people that they may eat.

And then there was no harm in the pot. In this miracle, once again, we see a move from death to life. There's death in the pot.

And then the pot was healed. The next story advances on that. Chapter 4, verses 42 to 44, a man comes to the prophet with a tithe of his harvest.

It's not much, it's about 20 biscuits and a few stalks of wheat. And more than a hundred men need to be fed from that little supply. Verse 43, his attendant said, what will I set before a hundred men? He said, give it to the people that they may eat.

For thus says the Lord, they shall eat and have some left over. And so it came to pass, verse 44, he said it before them. They ate and had some left over according to the word of the Lord.

And so once again, you have a move from death in the pot. And now the multitudes are being fed. You see how these stories are linked together.

Let me summarize the four miracles in the words of our Lord Jesus from John chapter 10. The gospel of John chapter 10, I came that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. Each of these stories starts with life and then moves to life more abundantly.

Those are not two different things. It's the same thing. Abundant life is life appropriated.

It's life laid hold of. The story of the woman and her son moves from one jar of oil to many jars of oil. The story of the widow and her son moves from a supernatural birth to a resurrection of that one that was supernaturally born.

And the last moves from death in the pot now healed life in the pot to many people being fed. And so we have that same thing. Now I told you this morning I wanted to introduce the message of the man who looks like Jesus in terms of the main point, the heart of the message, the core of the message.

There are many things about the message and we'll look at some more this evening. Many characteristics of the true message of the man that looks like Jesus. But there is one all-inclusive thing that makes our message distinctive.

The message we embrace. The message we hold. The message we preach.

The message of the gospel. The message of grace. The message of the new covenant.

Whatever you want to call it. With all of its characteristics there is none more foundational, more cardinal, more vital than this. Our message is a person.

He has a name. His name is Jesus. It's the message of life and life more abundantly.

Now, you'll miss it completely if you did what I did for years. I thought life was one thing and abundant life was something else. And I used to teach, and some of you dear people probably heard me teach it.

I went with the light I had. I apologize. Forgive me for saying that.

Because I used to teach that all Christians have life. But not all Christians have abundant life. I don't teach that anymore.

Say, why don't you teach that anymore? Because life is a person. And his name is Jesus. And all Christians have life.

Abundant life is also a person. And his name is Jesus. All Christians have abundant life.

Every Christian has abundant life. Every Christian has life because it's the Lord Jesus. He's the fullness of life.

Colossians 1:19. It was the Father's good pleasure that in Him should all fullness dwell. Fullness of life is in Christ.

Colossians 2, 3. In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They're in Him. John 1, 16.

For of His fullness we have all received. And grace upon grace. Oh, what a tremendous passage that is.

All Christians have life. All Christians have abundant life. That's the message Elisha proclaimed.

That's the message that is now engraved on your Joshua t-shirts. That's exactly the point. Entering the life that is Christ.

That's the message that we have. That's why John 11, 25 was printed on your t-shirt. I am the resurrection and the life.

That's the heart of our message. It's a person. That's the essence of it.

That's the core of it. That's the sum and substance. Whatever else we preach, we preach Jesus.

We preach Him as life and abundant life. Now, though it's true that every Christian has life, every Christian has abundant life, it's also true that not every Christian is enjoying Christ in His fullness. That's another thing altogether.

But that's different from saying you don't have it. No matter how dull you are this morning, if you have Christ, you have life and you have abundant life. No matter how lazy you are this morning, you have life, you have abundant life.

Got to be careful here, but I don't want you to miss it. No matter how backslidden you might be this morning, you have Christ, you have life, you have abundant life. That's our message.

That's the message of the man that looks like Jesus. Now, let's go back, look at the stories, and one by one, of course, we've got to skip over so much. But let's pick up the heart of each story, and may God give us grace.

Chapter 4, verse 1. A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, Your servant, my husband, is dead. And you know that your servant feared the Lord, and the creditors come to take my two children, to be slaves. Elisha said to her, Tell me, what shall I do for you? Tell me, what do

you have in the house? And she said, Your maid servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.

Then he said, Go borrow vessels at large for yourself from all your neighbors, even empty vessels. Do not get a few. And you shall go in and shut the door behind you, you and your sons, and pour out into all these vessels and set aside what's full.

So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons. And they were bringing vessels to her, and she poured. And when the vessels were full, she said to her son, Bring me another vessel.

And he said to her, There's not one vessel more. And the oil stopped. Then she came and told the man of God, and he said, Go sell the oil, pay your debt, and you and your sons can live on the rest.

I told you last evening that the story of the four kings and the trenches introduced the principle that God would advance in the next story. The principle that we shared last night from the story of the trenches is this, that God is always ready to give as much as we are prepared to receive. You see, that was taught in the trenches when God, by His grace, led His people into the deepest wilderness in order to satisfy their thirst.

They were to fill the valley with trenches. That was the command. Fill the valley with trenches.

Not one or two trenches. Not eight or nine trenches. Fill the valley with trenches.

God would provide for the army and for the animals as much water as the trenches could hold. If they were lazy and they only dug two trenches, that's all the provision they would get. If there were a thousand trenches, a thousand trenches would have been filled.

God is prepared to give as much as you are prepared to receive. Well, the story of the widow and her oil teaches that same principle. God told her to go out and borrow vessels, not a few.

If she had two vessels, two vessels would be filled with oil. If she borrowed four, four would be filled with oil. If she borrowed six, then six.

If she had sixty vessels, sixty would have been full. But we read in verse six, the oil stopped. Why did the oil stop? Because the empty vessels stopped.

God is prepared to give as much as we are prepared to receive. Up to this point, the lesson of the trenches and the lesson of the vessels are the same. God will give as much as you are prepared to receive.

But let me show you at least two ways that the story of the widow goes beyond the story of the trenches. In at least these two ways, number one, in the story of the oil, the woman and her sons ended up with what they started with. They ended up with what they had in the first place.

They started off with oil. They ended up with oil. They started off with life and they ended up with life more abundantly.

When the story began and the widow began to pour out her need to the man who looked like Jesus, it was a tremendous need, a terrible need. They were a believing family, a Christian family. And evidently, the husband had enrolled in the Bible school, the school of the sons of the prophets.

He probably thought that I'm being prepared for some future ministry. What he didn't know that what he thought was preparation was his life's work. That was his mission field, the Bible school.

And for some reason, God called the man home. And then according to the record, evidently, the woman sold everything in the house that was sellable, that she could have a price on, and she sold it all. And then she went out and borrowed money.

And after a while, it all piled up and her provider was gone and there was nothing else to sell. And now the creditors were coming to the door. In that day, there was no law for filing bankruptcy.

You couldn't file bankruptcy and then start all over again. If you owed a debt, you paid the debt. If you couldn't pay the debt, they'd take your kids as slaves.

And under one set of laws, they would work for seven years. They'd have to work for at least seven years. But then there was another.

They always had the hitch, you know. And they could claim the same debt after the seven years and get them for another seven years. And so this was what she was facing.

My children are about to be taken. My husband is dead. We have no means of provision.

I have nothing in the house else to sell. I've sold everything. I've borrowed too much money.

I can't pay it. And they're coming to take my kids. Talk about a situation.

Talk about a problem. And so the man of God, with the light of God and the wisdom of God, God's not only dealing with this widow. He's writing a Bible.

And He asks this heart-searching question. And I'm going to ask it to you too. Chapter 4, verse 2. Tell me, what do you have in the house? Oh, think about that question.

Tell me, what do you have in the house? And she said, nothing. Oh, except one jar of oil. But that one jar of oil to her looked like nothing.

And so she said, nothing, only one jar of oil. Now, imagine with me that this was all finished. She had borrowed the vessels.

She went in. She shut the door. Her sons came in.

They brought her jar after jar after jar. And she filled all these jars. What if the prophet asked her the same question at the end that he asked her at the beginning? Now tell me, what do you have in the house? Do you think she'd say nothing? Just a jar of oil? What an amazing thing.

She would say, everywhere you look, I see jars and jugs and vessels. They're just filled with oil. What do you have in your house? And her answer would be, I have the living God providing all of my needs.

You see the point I'm making? That one jar that she began with became for her the inexhaustible source of all her supply. She already had it at the beginning. She didn't know she had it until God engineered her life and reduced her to emptiness and brought situations in where she was helpless.

But all along, she had everything that she needed. Some situation in your life that is likened to this. Man, you don't know what I'm going through, what's come up.

I have a question for you. What do you have in your house? Are you a believer? Then this is your house. This is your temple.

What do you have in your house? Say, nothing. Just the Lord. Brothers and sisters, in the Lord.

Let God burn that in your heart. What do you have in your house? What do you have in your house? And the real answer is, I have Him. I have the Lord.

I have the inexhaustible source of the supply to every need that I have this moment that I will have in the future and that I will have for all the ages of eternity. I have Him. See, the widow didn't realize it at first until distress came and discouragement came and lack came, and it looked to her like her sons were going into bondage.

The reality is, you have Christ. Circumstances what they may be to the contrary notwithstanding, you have Christ in your house. Look with me please at the second way this story advances on that principle.

God is prepared to give as much as you are prepared to receive. Not only do you discover that you already have everything He can ever give. When you got saved, you got the Lord, He has no more to give you except the eyes to see what you already have.

That's all He can ever give you. He's already given His Son. But when will I discover that I already have all that I need? God not only provides through His prophet and His word, but I think it's instructive that He said, go to your neighbors and borrow vessels, not a few.

What can I get from my neighbors? What can I get from you? What can you get from me? Well, the real answer is nothing but an empty vessel. That's all I can give you is an empty vessel. When it's all done, it's no big deal.

I've just given you an empty vessel. But did you notice that God's oil was in proportion to the empty vessels that she gathered from the neighbors? If I'm not open to receive your empty vessel, I'm not open to receive God's oil. If you're not open to receive my empty vessel, you're not open to receive God's oil.

If the Lord could burn this into our hearts, how He desires to use each of us in the life of His neighbor. How God wants to use Christian brother and Christian sister. I need your vessel if I'm going to get God's oil.

And you need my vessel if God's going to give you His oil. I don't know if this is the case, but in my imagination, I imagine they borrowed vessels of every size and shape and color. Some weird looking vessel.

All kinds of vessels. We read that some of those vessels paid off an immediate debt. And some of the oil that came from some of those vessels wasn't used for ten years later.

This weekend at Joshua, God may allow me to borrow one of your weird vessels. And God may not use that vessel to pour oil out to me for five or ten years down the road. Don't be afraid to go to your brother and sister and borrow their vessel.

We need one another. And some day, God will pour from that vessel the oil you need for that moment. This woman needed the body.

She needed her brothers and sisters. She needed her neighbors. And may I suggest, don't just hear that la la la.

God's oil depends on that. God's oil depends on that. You already have in your heart everything you need.

You have Christ. Now go to your neighbors and get the vessels and God will fill those. Before I leave this story, what's the transition between life and abundant life? Between having in my heart... I know He's in my heart, but it seems like nothing.

It doesn't seem like enough. It doesn't seem like it will answer the situation. It doesn't seem adequate.

It's not sufficient. What's the transition between life and life more abundantly? After I've received the vessels. After I'm open to the Lord.

And I think the answer is in verse 4. "...of the Most High." I speak as a fool. If I were God and writing this, I would say, go out and borrow vessels, not a few. And when you've got all the vessels, I would say, now go out and invite your neighbors to the front lawn.

I'm going to show them a miracle that's going to blow them away. And I'd have all the neighbors gathered around as I poured the vessels so they could behold the glory of God. God says, no, no, no.

This is a private thing. I want you to go in and shut the door. And shut the door.

I've experienced this over and over in my life as I study my commentaries. Empty vessels. But oh, the oil that God has given me through those empty vessels.

Not in reading. Not in study. But after it was all over.

When I went alone and shut the door. You've got to get alone with the Lord. That's when He's going to meet you.

That's when you're going to know the fullness of what you have in your house. That's when God is going to supply your need. It's not enough just to gather the empty vessels.

You need to go in and shut the door. And of course, like the door of Noah's ark, it not only shuts you in to the Lord, it shuts out the world. God doesn't want the world.

There'd be people that would discourage. A bill was sharing with me something that he got from Benny Hinn, I think it was, on this issue. You go in and shut the door so no one can embarrass you about what you're about to do.

Trusting the Lord. Pouring vessels. That looks silly.

We don't want the unbeliever in there. We don't want the skeptic in there. We don't want those that would discourage in there.

Go in. Shut the door. Before I leave this story, I want to just encourage you in my own heart that let's not dishonor the Lord by not being prepared to receive all that He wants to give.

He's ready to give all that we're prepared to receive. Borrow vessels. Not a few.

Go to the one that you think is the weirdest person you ever met, and that Christian has nothing to give me. They are so strange and squirrely. Grab their vessel.

Oh, what amazing oil God will pour out of that vessel. Don't dishonor the Lord. Philippians 4.19 doesn't say, My God shall supply all of your bare essentials.

It doesn't say that. All your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. That's what He wants to do.

Did you know how important it was for the widow to discover the secret of what she had in the house? If she didn't discover that secret, her children would have gone off into bondage. Parents, you better discover that secret. Not only for yourself, but for the sake of your kids.

Because if you don't discover the secret, your children go off into bondage. Oh, may God help us with this. I spent so much time on the oil here.

Let's move on. Time's almost gone. We've got three more stories here.

Let me just touch the principles of each one. The second story. 2 Kings 4, verses 8-37 show the supernatural birth of this child.

Let me get right to the heart of the story. I do encourage you to read this on your own time and meditate seriously on these things before the Lord. This story also takes us from life to life more abundant or from Christ with the little c to Christ in all caps.

In verses 8-17, we have the miracle of the birth and then from 18-37, the miracle that follows, the resurrection. Now, although this child was conceived by a special promise of the Lord, what good is that if he's dead? The dead boy needed a resurrection. There might be somebody here this weekend who can testify to that.

I know I'm saved. I know I'm born again. I know I received the Lord into my heart so many years ago.

He saved me. I'm supernaturally alive. How come I'm so dead? How come I'm so dead? Well, you need a supernatural birth, but then you need a supernatural resurrection.

That's part of the abundant life. It's one thing to be supernaturally born. Another thing to have Christ supernaturally sustaining that new birth by the power of His resurrection.

Now, there are so many instructive things that we've got to pass by. Let me home in on the man that looks like Jesus in terms of this miracle. How does the message of the resurrection life relate to the messenger of the resurrection life? In other words, if God's going to use me to help somebody else who has been supernaturally born come to a place of resurrection life, what's my part in that as the man who looks like Jesus? Let me home in on that by calling attention to two great principles of life.

The first is in verse 32. When Elisha came into the house, behold, the lad was dead and laid on his bed. And so he entered in, shut the door behind them, and prayed to the Lord.

This miracle, like the first one, also takes place behind closed doors. This time it's not the woman who's behind the closed door. It's not the woman who's the shut in.

It's the man of God who's the shut in. The prophet who needs to go behind closed doors. See, it's easy for me to stand up here and tell you, these are closet principles.

Get alone with the Lord. Go in and shut the door. I better listen to my own teaching.

I better go in behind closed doors too as a messenger of the grace of God. Elisha shut the door. And according to this passage, that means many things, but at least these three things.

Number one, it meant that he was shut in with the Lord in terms of his ministry in the place of rejection. You say, what do you mean the place of rejection? See, we just sort of read this la, la, la. Do you know in those days what it meant for a Jew to be in the presence of a corpse? That was unclean.

That was verboten. That was forbidden. You say, well, here's a man of God and he's right in the same room with a corpse.

Same room. Look at verse 34. And he went up and he lay on the child, and he put his mouth on the child, and his hands, his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him.

If anyone was inclined in this day in any way to the legal side, you know what they would have said about this man of God? He's not a man of God. He can't be a man of God. What's he doing in the room with a dead person? That's unclean.

He's ceremonially unclean. And he's stretched out all over this child. He's laying on top of the corpse.

Elisha went into the presence of the Lord and shut the door. And he was not afraid to identify with this dead person. Marvelous, marvelous thing.

The second thing that was true when he shut the door, he was not only shut in with the Lord, but you get this beautiful picture of the man of God ministering now, trying to bring this one who is born by God, now to bring him to life. Supernatural life. And we see that the man of God not only is in the place of rejection, and I don't care how the world looks at it, and if the sons of the prophets think I'm unclean, I don't care.

I'm in there with the Lord and with my ministry. Notice how he persevered in his ministry. Did you notice what happened when he stretched himself on the child for the first time? Verse 34, the flesh of the child became warm.

See, many would quit right there and say, ah, it's done. His flesh is warm. I've had a great ministry.

Praise God. May I word it this way in the light of the text? Just because someone begins to warm up to your ministry, don't think the work is completed. Just because someone begins to warm up to your message, you can fall short on that.

The job is not done when people warm up to our message. It's only done when they sneeze seven times. That's how you know.

You know, through the years, I felt like many people have warmed up to the message. I was sharing the message of Christ and they started warming up. And I walked away.

I thought the work was done. And they just went right back into their desks. Verse 35, he returned and he walked in the house once back and forth, and then he went up and stretched himself on Him again.

What's that walking back and forth? I think he's just praying. I think he's just prevailing with the Lord. And after this person begins to warm up and we get so happy that he's warm.

He's warm, but he's not on his feet. He's warm, but he's not alive. And the man of God kept praying and he walked and he just poured it out to the Lord.

He's got a dead person up there. You say, where is the dead person? Well, there's only one place that the man of God can minister. And that's the place of his rest.

That dead boy was laid on his bed. That's the place where he was resting. And that's where ministry takes place.

In the place of rest. And this corpse was then put in that place of rest. And then did you notice how the messenger of pure grace as the oil was poured out, now this man is pouring out his life for this dead person.

That's what's illustrated by this identification, this prophet, this man of God laying on the corpse. He's saying to the dead person, my eyes for your eyes. My breath for your breath.

My hands for your hands. He's just dying. He's giving himself.

He's pouring himself out into the life of that corpse. He's not afraid to touch a corpse. He's not afraid to identify with a corpse.

He's not afraid to be in close contact. The others might look at him and say, oh, you shouldn't be doing that. What are you doing touching that guy? He's so dirty.

He's so unclean. He's corrupted. No, I love him.

That's the man of God. That's the one that looks like Jesus. I'm going to touch him.

I'm going to identify with him. I'm going to stretch out. I'm going to pour out my life.

And then when he starts warming up, I'm not done pouring out. I'm going to keep in contact with that dead person until he comes to life again. What a great thing.

Now, all of that is with the door shut. It's nobody's business how you pour out your life for somebody else. That's not to be proclaimed.

Oh, you know, I go down to Skid Row or I work with these and I do that and here's how I'm giving myself to this. That's behind closed doors. That's between you and the Lord and the corpse.

That's it. But that's part of this ministry that he has. The message is Christ.

What do you have in your house? It's Him. You have the Lord. You have life.

You have life more abundantly. But in order to communicate that, there comes the pouring out of the life of the man of God. It's not just standing on some podium and waving from a distance and having a platform

ministry.

It's drawing near to those that are dead and corrupted and messed up. And you draw near. And you contact them.

And you love them. And you pour out your life for them. That's what's happening here.

In contrast to that, look at verse 31. Gehazi passed before them and laid the staff on the lad's face, but there was no sound or response. And he returned to him and met him and said, the lad has not awakened.

No, and he won't awake either. For years, that's the method I took. I tried to lay the prophet's staff on the face of the dead.

I'd read this book or that book or hear this tape or that tape or get this blessing or that blessing. And I thought if I took his staff and laid it on that person, then there would be life. And so I just kept laying everybody else's staff on the dead.

No, it's not until you pour out your own life. That's when God gives life. Praise God for all the vessels that we get.

But it's not going to come by just touching somebody with something you got somewhere else. And Gehazi illustrates that. So that's the chief characteristic of our message.

It's Christ. And that's sort of the chief way it's demonstrated. It's by the pouring out of the life of the man that looks like Jesus.

Let me wrap it up. The last two stories. The background of both of these stories, verse 38-44, is the same.

One is the poisoned stew. The other is the multiplication of loaves. It was a time of famine.

There was hunger. They needed to be fed. We see in verse 38, it started with a spiritual feeding because they were at the feet of Elisha.

He was teaching them the Word of God. He's teaching. This is a picture of receiving the Word of God.

And God gives us this wonderful object lesson. Let me give you the principle right away so I don't lose it in my rambling. The principle is this.

When somebody is hungry, there needs to be a man of God who has a word from God to put into the stew. Because if you don't have a word from God, you die. What you eat is poison.

If all you're getting this weekend is what I've gathered, you're in trouble. There's got to be a Word from Heaven. There's got to be a Word from God.

And this man of God had the Word from God to put in the meal. And when you have a Word from God, then the whole stew is okay. I used to be so afraid.

Certain brothers or sisters, and I felt like, well, they didn't thoroughly study that. They got a poison gourd and they threw it in the stew. I don't want to hear it.

Don't tell me that. You've met Christians. Some of us have some strange ideas.

And some actually come up in the platform and teach. And they give those strange ideas. And you say, oh my, we're going to get poisoned.

And somebody got a gourd and threw it in the stew. I'm not afraid of anything you put in the stew if somebody has a Word from God. Because if the Word from God gets in the stew, they didn't take out the poison gourd.

The poison gourd became good because there was a Word from God to purify. And I'm not afraid what goes into the stew if somebody has a revelation of the Lord. And that's the illustration that you have here in the poison stew.

Let's move on to the last story and then we'll be done. Verse 42, a man came from Baal-shalish, ha, something, and brought the man of God bread from the firstfruits, 20 loaves of barley, fresh years of grain in his sack. And he said, Give to the people that they may eat.

Now, if you're going to get to the heart of this, you need to understand the law of God. And the law of God was that you would bring your tithe. This takes place after a seven-year famine.

And so this firstfruits is really precious. The law of God said the tithe would be brought to the temple and given to the priests. This was completely radical what took place here.

He was not supposed to give his tithe to the prophet. But he saw evidently, who is this guy? We don't even know who he is. He's a nobody from somewhere that you can't even pronounce.

And he's a guy, somehow he saw hungry people. And I'm suggesting this, that God is going to feed the hungry. And usually that food will come from a strange source.

He feeds His people in secret places. And God will raise up somebody somewhere who will go against the grain and against the tithe and say, I'm going to provide because they are eating. They are feeding.

And the man of God is not afraid to be radical and take that provision. And God multiplies it. And everybody is satisfied.

The point, brothers and sisters, all these illustrations, all these principles, don't get snowed. The message of the man that looks like Jesus is Christ. It's Jesus.

It's life and abundant life. What do you have in your house? You have Him. You have Him.

How are you going to communicate it? You're going to pour yourself out for those that need resurrection. You're going to identify with them behind shut doors, behind closed doors. How is God going to provide? I don't know.

Somebody somewhere. God is going to meet the need. And He's going to feed the hungry.

You say, well, we're not getting it where I go or I'm not hearing it or it's so rare in these days. You hungry? God will feed you. How much? How prepared are you? He is ready to provide as much as you're prepared to receive.

May God help us. Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word.

And again, not what we think it might mean, but what You've inspired it to mean. Work in every heart.  
Teach us what we have in our house.

We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

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