

Elijah and Elisha 07 ~ Keswick Conference 1970

by Harold Wildish

The sermon emphasizes the importance of feeding one's soul with God's Word for spiritual growth and victory.

Duration: 53:11

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:38, Psalm 23:5, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 5:15-16, 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Topics: "Keswick"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story from the book of 2 Kings, chapter 4, where there is a problem with the food being prepared. The preacher emphasizes the importance of both the quality and quantity of the food that God's children need. He highlights the need for Christ to be the essential component in our spiritual food supply. The preacher also mentions the simplicity of the secret to victory in the Christian life, which includes reading the Bible before breakfast as a way to feed our souls.

Transcript

Now, I think you know where to turn to, the second book of Kings, chapter four, for our scripture reading. Two Kings, chapter four, verse thirty-eight. As many of you know, these are little picture panels in scripture.

History, but it's His story, and we are trying to learn from these pictures some of the lessons so vital to Christian victory in the New Testament. I know some of you are jotting down the headings of these little panel pictures. Chapter one, man of God.

Chapter two, take the mantle. Chapter three, dig the ditches. Chapter four, pour the oil.

In the middle of chapter four, watch your days. Last night, shut the door. Now, over this panel that we are going to read, you can put something that perhaps is not quoted in it, but you'll quickly see the reason for this title.

Protect your food. Did you get that? Protect your food. Now, let's read together from verse thirty-eight.

Two Kings four, 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 sieve potash for the sons of the prophets. One went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered

thereof wild goods his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of potage, for they knew them not.

So they poured out for the men to eat, and it came to pass as they were eating of the potage, that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot, and they could not eat thereof. But he said, Then bring me meals, 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. And there came a man from Baal, Shalasha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof.

And he said, Give unto the people that they may eat. And his servant said, What? should I set this before a hundred men? And he said again, Give the people that that they may eat. For thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.

So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof according to the word of the Lord. God will rest to our hearts the reading of his word for his namesake. Now just our little quiet moment of prayer.

Loving Lord and Master, wilt thou be our teacher and our guide? Speak to us through the sacred page, letting the Spirit of God illuminate it and lead us to it? Maybe there's just an important lesson that we need to learn, and wilt thou teach us this lesson? I know it's all out there circumstances, and we pray that during the moment we may be blessed and helped by thee. For thy dear namesake. Amen.

Now with this portion open in front of you, I want you to notice that the prophet is back at Gilgal. You remember how in chapter two we saw the two men Elijah and Anisha starting off from Gilgal, which I think if you are very careful in your study you will find was one of the mountain strongholds, the old royal towns of Canaan. And they started and came down to Bethel, and down from Bethel to Jericho, and down from Jericho to Jordan stream, and they passed through the water, and there they were parted.

Elijah went to heaven, and Anisha, the mantle in his hand, goes back to face Jordan, to face the problems of Jericho, to minister amongst the difficult people of Bethel, and here he's back at Gilgal. Now it seems that there was a school of the prophets there, and it was at least a hundred strong. That is, a hundred in the church fellowship.

And in these little congregations, these assemblies, these Sunday schools, call them what you like, where the prophets gathered the sons of the prophets together, taught them all they knew of the things of the Lord. They're about to have a nice little time together, but there's a lot of dirt in the land, a drought, a scarcity of food, and as they break their session, perhaps they've had a meeting, Elisha says, set on the great pot, verse 38, and seize potage for the sons of the prophets. It's time for a break, it's lunchtime, and so they get the great fire burning, and the pot is set on, but something's wrong, and I think you will find, as we study this, that we are going to have to face the quality, are you listening to that word? The quality of the food that God's children need.

As we turn a little later to the second panel story, we see a man arriving, and this man, in verse 42, arrives and brings to the man of God a great big load of food. He has bread, twenty loaves of barley, full ears of corn, and he gives it to the prophet, and the prophet turns to his servant and says, we can all sit down now and have a good feed, and the servant said, well, look, do you think you could put that amount before a hundred hungry men? Oh yes, it'll be enough, and there'll be plenty to spare, and there was. And, here, it's not the quality of the food, it's the quantity of the food.

Are you interested in food? I tell you once, the quality and the quantity of the food supply of God's people. I must just stop here for a moment and tell you something. I've been through a good many Keswick weeks.

That is, I've worked with lovely servants abroad in Midwest Keswick, and Southland Keswick, and different parts of North America, Europe, in the West Indies. I told you we've just come from one in Barbados. I had the joy of working with Paul Smith of Toronto, and we had a well-launching of the keep down there in Barbados in January.

About 350 to 400 in the Bible readings in the morning, and about 900 people at night listening eagerly to the Word in the exhibition shed. And, we sort of felt that, quietly and steadily, the teachings of God's Word were making an impact upon the Church of Jesus Christ in that city of Bridgetown, that big, bustling Barbadian capital. But, you know, at the end of a week, people come to me and they ask questions, and sometimes I'm almost amazed they've sat through a week of Keswick meetings and still they haven't got the secret of victory.

And, sometimes, it's so absurdly simple that I feel that we preachers confuse people. In all our theology of the message of Keswick, in all our lovely addresses that we try to get and give, they miss the simplicity of the secret of victory. For instance, a young man came to me, an eager young Christian, must have been in his twenties.

Oh, he said, I want to be a victorious Christian if there's a possibility of being a strong and beautiful Christian all my life, he said, and there are secrets that can show me how to be this, for the glory of God, I want it. But, the more he talked, the more he was confused, and at last I said to him, I'm going to ask you one or two things. Do you read your Bible before you eat your breakfast? No, you don't.

Do you eat breakfast every morning? Oh, yes, yes. Have a cup of coffee and a few rolls and a bit of porridge, and push a poached egg and toast, or a bit of bacon down my throat, go out to the busy rush of day, you know. You go out into the rush of the day without feeding your soul? Yes, you go out without food.

Your soul needs food just as much as your body. Now, you may think this old story of mine's awfully silly, but listen, it's an illustration of some scripture, 1 Peter, chapter 2, verse 2 and verse 11. You needn't turn to it for a moment, I'll quote it, it'll become very clear in a moment.

But look, against verse 2 I put in my Bible the word feed, and against verse 11 I put the word starve. It says, As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. And in verse 11 it says, I beseech you, as pilgrims and strangers abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul.

Feed, starve, just as simple as that. Now, I walk down the street here, and I turn to the right, and I come to an old-fashioned big wood-framed house. This is just an old illustration, and I knock at the door.

Who's there? All of a sudden the door opens, and there's a great big mountain of a man, you know the sort of man, a 300-pounder. And he's looking at me, what do you want? And I said, now listen, I heard that there was in this house a gentleman called Mr. Good, and I've come to see him. Does he live here? Yes, he lives here.

Are you Mr. Good? Me? He said, no, I'm Mr. Bad. I feel like saying, yes sir, you look like it. Could I see Mr. Good? He looks at me, he says, yes, come on in.

And I go in, and down the passage, and he throws open the door, and I walk in, and there's a big bed, and lying on the bed there's a little, tiny, skimpy, skin-and-bone fellow, you know, like this, lying on the bed. And I say, are you Mr. Good? He says, yes. And I said, but tell me, aren't you master of this house? You were born in it, you live here, don't you? Yes, but he's so strong, and I'm so weak.

It's an awful situation. And I would do good, evil is present with me. Mr. Good wants to run the house, but Mr. Bad, oh dear, what a great, big, brute of a fellow he is.

Have you ever seen Christians like this? Yet, strangely enough, the answer's so simple that it's simply pathetic. Mr. Bad comes down in the morning, and he comes down to the breakfast table. Where's my breakfast? No breakfast for you today, sir.

Goes out to his job, comes back, and starving he isn't, really, but where's my lunch? No lunch for you today, sir. Suffer, I'll die if I don't get some food. It'll take months for him to die, don't worry about him.

But no supper for you today, Mr. Bad. And so, not only one day, two days, three days, but we're keeping him on starvation diet, cutting off his food supply, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. And the flesh, with all its eagerness for food, it wants to know this, and wants to see this, and wants to feed on that.

Its supply is being cut off. Till at last, poor fellow, with hanging flesh, he says, oh, I think I'm too ill to go to work today, I'm going to bed. That's him.

And all the time you've been starving, Mr. Bad, you have been feeding Mr. Good. You go in the morning with a nice tray, and you say, come on, jump up, Mr. Good, there's a lovely breakfast for you here today. Oh, we said a breakfast, yes, manna, angel's food, the small, white, round thing that came down on the desert sand to feed God's people when they came out of Egypt, had to be gathered every morning.

And now, for you today, we are going to ask you to read Mark's Gospel, Chapter 5, and Luke's Gospel, Chapter 5. Two lovely dishes of manna for you. You'll judge upon the lovely Lord Jesus, who came down to be a man amongst us. Lunchtime, Mr. Bad.

Come on, sit up. Lunch, what's for lunch? Well, we've got some, what do you think we've got for you today for lunch? We've got some roast lamb, lamb roast with fire, etc. We've got Psalm 22 for you to read.

My God, my God, why didst thou forsake me? And it closes with the words, He hath done this! It's finished! And then we want you to read Matthew 27, that wonderful story of the cross, and just feast your soul upon the Christ of Calvary. Summertime. Up, Mr. Good, come along.

We've got a wonderful supper for you today. We're going to give you a great story in Genesis 24 of the cross, going out to meet Rebecca brought by Eliezer across the desert sand. You just feast on these things, day after day.

We are feasting, Mr. Good, on the word of God, on Christ, the manna, Christ, the old corn, Christ in resurrection, looking stronger, looking fine. And after a few days he gets up, he says, man, I feel magnificent, I'm just wonderful. Um, where's Mr. Bad? We've got him in bed.

And the tables have been turned simply on the food supply. You can't get away from it. I'm just a plain, simple, old missionary, but I see people growing and blowing.

I see people waning and being defeated. And nearly always I can put it on the food supply that is coming through eye-gate or ear-gate to the mind and to the heart and to the inner life. And that's why whenever they come to me, I take their Bible and I say, let's have a look at your Bible, and I look at their Bible.

And I say, how long have you had this Bible? Oh, 15 years, my mother gave it to me. 15 years, oh dear, you ought to have worn your Bible out in about five or six years. No, no, that's not good enough.

No, you can tell, you can very often tell by just asking a person for their Bible and saying, how long have you had it? And you can see the marks on the Bible as to whether their food is right. Just as simple as that. You can go through Keswick week after Keswick week and spend hundreds of dollars going to Canadian Keswick and New Jersey Keswick and Southland Keswick and Dallas and come to all these meetings, and there will be nothing as a result if your food supply isn't right.

You can know all the doctrines of the Holy Spirit, but if you neglect that book, you'll be a poor, weak child of God. This is a very important subject, although it's not an easy subject to handle. Now, these people love the Lord.

Look at this verse. Elisha came, verse 38, to Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. The meeting is in progress.

They've come hungry, they really love the Lord, they want to learn more about the Lord. But you know, the spiritual can only stand so much. We must turn aside for a meal, and so the prophet says to his servants, set on the great pot, seed the pottage for the sons of the prophets.

And I tell you, soup can be awfully thin for a hundred men, especially in time of dearth, and everyone went out to look for something to try and make the soup a little bit thicker. And I suppose they put grass in, and anything they could in times of drought and dearth, to try and thicken up the soup. And one man stumbles on a vine, and this vine is growing great big goods like this, and he doesn't know really whether they're vegetable marrows or pumpkins.

It's a new kind of thing, but they're so desperate, he just gets his whole lap full. And he comes toward the great big pot, and he begins to slice it into the pot, and you just imagine how it would thicken things up, and sort of satisfy the appetite of a hundred men as they dip into this pot. Instead of getting dishwater out, they would get something like real wholesome thick soup, pottage.

It was very enthusiastic of him to bring that haul of unknown, untested food in, and throw it into the pot. But you know, the moment they took out of that pot, they said, there's death in the pot. Whether they tasted it, or whether they smelt it, the men immediately were aware of the fact, and that's why God's given us our five senses as a warning.

We can smell something and say, it's bad, I don't like it. We taste it, and we say, no, I wouldn't touch that or eat that. And so they detected that something was wrong.

The quality of the food was not right. Now, what is the quality of the food that the child of God should richly enjoy? I don't know if you're as distressed about this as I am as I move around. Do you know, in many of the remote islands of the West Indies where I preach, I'm not meeting the higher critics down there.

I'm not meeting the scholar who comes along and doubts God's Word. Quite frankly, in the Amazon jungles, I never met a modernist. They don't bother to go down there.

They don't bother to leave civilization and try and reach Indian tribes I've never met. Well, I've never met a modernist down there, a man who doubted God's Word. As I've gone through Guyana and the villages again and again, I've never heard a doubt about the story of the Bible, the creation of man, the inspiration of Scripture, the great Bible stories.

It's when I come to your loved land, I find that everywhere there are doubts, and I can't get away from it. In many of the churches of your land, there is dead in the pot. It used to be that out there they doubted.

The infidel got up, he scorned, he laughed, he sneered, he argued, but today it's in the pulpit that should be sacred with this word that the Word of God is being doubted. From the lips of men who should be ministers of Christ, there is a doubt and an explaining away of things. And we are living in solemn days because the result is that instead of the pure Word of God feeding the people of God, there's death in the pot.

Now, this wasn't always so. I wonder if you will believe me when I tell you this. When I was a boy, my father was a wholesome businessman in the church, and one day he said to my big brother and myself, he said, look, he said, I don't think I'll live to see it, but you will.

He said, you know, the Bible seems to suggest as the age comes to a close, there's going to be apostasy, a turning away from the truth. And he said, I think it will reach its flood tide when our Lord is going to come back. He said, you mustn't be taken by surprise, but he said, listen boys, do you know? He said, in that wonderful old city temple just off Holborn in the heart of the city of London where Joseph Parker used to thunder out the gospel, one of the great preaching centers of London, crowds flocked to listen to old Joseph Parker.

He said, there's a man who's come there and taken Parker's place. And he said, you know, R.J. Campbell has been over to the German schools, the higher critical schools of Germany, and he's trying to bring this new theology, and he's trying to introduce it to those congregations. And he said, what's starting like a trickle in London you will see going to a flood.

My old dad lived to 87 and died, and has been in heaven long since. He never saw it, but I watched that trickle grow to a flood. Today, it's a sad fact, you can go around old London town in England, in Great Britain, which is no longer great, sadly.

And it's perhaps because she's giving up her Christian faith that she's becoming weaker. Yes, you can go around, and you have to pit out a center here, and you say, let's go and hear Martin Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel, or let's go down to such and such a place and hear a Baptist minister in the East London Tabernacle. And it's one and twos you pick out to get the truth of God, because the others, there's death in the pot.

These are solemn days, solemn days for us to live. I wonder if you have detected if there's death in the pot. There is death in the pot.

I don't know. I'm not blaming the people in the pew. I'm blaming largely the colleges that are teaching the young men today to stand up with uncertain voice, and instead of saying, thus saith the Lord, and basing their whole teaching upon the word of God, in the power of the Spirit, preach the word of God, and let God use it to do His work.

Sadly, out of college today, they are coming, unfitted for this task, with sort of reservations and doubts in their mind. And instead of taking this book and standing there and saying, I'm going to feed you with the word of God, I'm going to give you the word of God, thus saith the Lord all the time. Well, sometimes you can go and listen and you come away hungry, but sometimes you come away more than hungry.

You come away with a bit of poison in the food that supposedly has been given to you. Now, what is the answer to this? Look very carefully at verse 41, and he said, Then bring me meal, bring me meal. And he cast it into the pot, poured out for the people that they may eat, and there was no harm in the pot.

Meal, fine flour meal. Oh, what things happen in the Bible at the time of the evening meal offering, as they brought the offering to God, and the fine flour is mingled in the offering with the lamb morning and evening. What amazing things happen.

This is a picture of Christ. I wish I had time to turn aside to it, but I'll simply say this. If any of you want one of the loveliest and yet the deepest and most satisfying studies in the world, take five pictures of Calvary that you get in Leviticus 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. You get the five offerings, and God starts with the burnt offering, and then it's the meal offering, and then it's the peace offering, and then it's the sin offering, and then it's the Christmas offering, and God comes out to show us Calvary, and all that his Son did upon the cross.

Oh, I know you've got to start here at the Christmas offering, and you will move in this direction in your appreciation of that work upon the cross. Look, if I put my fingers up, can I divide those fingers? Yes, if I could do it physically, I can put those two together. Don't think I can do this.

I put those two together, and these two and these two are divided by the middle one, and the middle one is the peace offering, and on that cross, Jesus, as the one mediator between God and man, made peace by the blood of his cross. He bridged the gulf between the claims of God and the vile state of sinful man. God comes out and says, I'm going to give you pictures not only of a peace offering.

Jesus died to win peace, but on the cross, he was the great burnt offering, the meal offering, the sin offering, the Christmas offering, and as I approach this cross from this side, I say, yes, that's how I found it out. Harold Wildish was a little sinner. Harold Wildish used to steal apples out of the orchard of the old farmer who lived near him.

Harold Wildish trespassed. He actually told a lie once to Darling Sweet Mother. Oh, what a little sinner he is.

Think of his boyish sins, and one day I saw it, only thirteen years of age. I saw Jesus dying on the cross, and he was wounded for my transgressions, and that night I said, thank you, Lord Jesus, and he saved me by his grace, and I knew that Jesus had died for me, for my sins. But I tell you, it was some years afterwards, when I was seventeen and a half years of age, that I began to realize that Jesus not only died for my sins, but on the cross he was made sick for me.

That God dealt with my human nature, my Adam nature, which is beyond repair, is essentially and basically sinful, twenty-four hours a day, can never be cured, can never be patched up, can never be given the veneer of religion, can never stand before God, can never serve God, but on that cross God dealt with my sins. Then I began to realize that Jesus not only went to the cross to meet my need, and to bridge the gulf between my need and the Holy God, but he went to the cross to satisfy the great eternal heart of his Father God. And I tell you, that meal offering, that fine flower without any roughness in it,

speaks of the spotless, perfect humanity of the Word made flesh who tabernacled amongst us, who when he died offered himself on the cross, the just one dying for us, the unjust, to bring us to God.

And as those consuming fires of Calvary sought for him, he offered himself to be the burnt offering, the sweet savor offering, everything consumed, and bringing a sweet savor to God. And I tell you, Christian, it's when you realize what this means to God that you will realize the depth of Calvary's work. May I say it in a moment by an illustration? Dear old couple out here, they have a son, he's about thirty years of age, he's a naughty boy, he's a prodigal, and one day he breaks into his father's little safe drawer, and he steals two thousand dollars, he leaves behind broken hearts, and mother and dad sob, and weary months go by, years go by, and the evening of life he comes back again, still rather a naughty boy, but he's coming back home, he's coming back as a man now, he's coming to bend the knee in mother and father's presence, coming to look into their faces and sob and say, oh I've done wrong, could you ever forgive me? They put their arms around him, and they welcome him back into the home, and just like a boy coming home.

And I go around to see them, and I say to them, did I hear that your boy's come home? They said, oh yes, he's come home. Say, is he any better? Oh yes, we feel that he's changed. Um, tell me now, what's he going to do? Oh, we're welcoming him to the home, everything we have is his, he's just back home with us, we don't know what the future holds, but what is ours is his, and he's welcome here to eat and feed and sleep.

But listen, didn't he steal \$2,000 from you when he went away? Yes, it is. Aren't you going to demand it back again? Oh no, no, but listen, righteousness, right is right, aren't you going to demand it back again? Oh no, no, no, Mr. Wildish, no. No, what \$2,000? We've forgotten all about that, we've written all that off.

You have? Oh yes, you see Mr. Wildish, he's home again. Last night he kissed us. Last night he was sitting at the supper table.

Last night he went out and he got some things in off the garden for Dad and is willing to help Mom wash up in the kitchen. He's back again. I wonder if you'll get this, I wonder if you'll get this, God made a man and gave him a companion, sweet partner in life, and he said, have dominion over it all and walk in fellowship with me, and we'll commune together and my great eternal purposes will be wrought out.

But because of Adam and Eve's fallen sin, you look round the world today of a lost race to God, lost to God, a prodigal race. And, for 6,000 years at least, the human race has robbed God of that which he wanted, their love, their companionship, their fellowship, their communion. And it wasn't till Jesus came, God manifest in flesh, to be the head of a new race, to bring many sons to glory, that God found his satisfaction.

You ever gone through the Gospels and ever tried to enter into it? Heaven is opening, a voice is speaking, this is my beloved Son, in whom I find all my delights, my satisfaction, I'm well pleased. And Jesus was making up to God as he walked in life in happy communion with his Father, all that Adam's race had brought to God. On the cross, when he brought his life at the age of thirty-three, bruised and beaten and stricken and nailed to the cross, he cried, Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing.

Then he offered himself without spot to God to be the great burnt offering, the great sweet savor offering, and he brought complete satisfaction to God. God has taken the one who offered himself out of death and put him back on the throne, and he's your Savior, your Lord, your great High Priest, your Advocate, your

soon-coming Master and King. And, let me say this, that meal offering speaks of his spotless humanity that was offered to God when he bore your sins upon the cross.

And, if you bring to any teaching that you hear in the world Christ, you put the meal in the pot. I have met some of the sweetest cultists in the world. They come tapping at our door in Jamaica.

I always ask them in. I always make them a tome. I always sit them down in a chair, and I say, well, now let's talk about it.

And I begin to talk about the Lord. And they try to get on which day you should keep, or they try to get on certain things about the Millennial Kingdom and the 144,000, and I say, now listen, what do you think about Jesus? Who was he? Whose son was he? What do you think of Christ? And I try to throw the meal in the pot. And I say to every Sunday school teacher and women's Bible class leader and pastor, if you will make Jesus Christ your Lord central in your ministry, in all the confusion today that's around us, this awful confusion, this death in the pot of Christendom today, you can't go wrong in your ministry for Christ.

You say, well, it's not as easy as that. No, I know there are problems. I don't want it to appear too easy.

But whoever you meet, whether they're being led astray by any of the modern cults, and they abound, and if you want mere religions, you can find one for every day of the year, and you can study them and study them, and you'll get no satisfaction if you will bring this one central thing to the whole position of the feeding of people, supposedly spiritual food, in Christendom today. Is the meal in the pot? Is Christ right there central in the food supply of God's people? If it is, helpfully they can take of the pot, enjoy it, and prosper. And that's what happened in this case.

Now, look just for the moment, closing at the second thing. It's not now the quality, it's the quantity. Verse 42, There came a man from Baal, Shalisha, and he brought the man of God.

He brought Elisha bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, four kilos of corn in the husk, and he said, Give unto the people that they may eat. And his servant said, What shall I set before a hundred men? This is not enough. He said, Give the people that they may eat, for thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt eat, and leave thereof.

So they set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof according to the word of the Lord. Now, may I say this, that every one of those things in that picture, in verse 42, is a picture of Christ. He is the living bread, he is the barley in the full year, he is the corn, the old corn of the land, and this precious food has been brought for the man of God, and immediately this unselfish man of God says, Gather them all together and let's enjoy it, we've got good food.

There's a dearth in the land round Gilgal, but over there in this other district they seem to have good crops, and they've sent this for me, set it before them. And do you know, they feasted and feasted, and everyone was satisfied. And I'm going to say something that some of you won't understand.

It is a very little of Christ that will bring satisfaction to a lot of people. Do you believe that? A Bible class, a Sunday school class, a sacred pulpit, any ministry that God gives you, if you bring a little of Christ, you will be surprised how he will satisfy the need of a very big number. Whereas the soup, the thin soup with the death in the pot, brought no satisfaction at all.

It is Christ that satisfies. And so, in closing, I'm going to turn you to the New Testament, to Acts chapter 20. It's wonderfully up to date.

Better read it and believe it. Acts 20. Paul is in his missionary journey, and he's moving along the coast.

He's reached Miletus, and he's sent for those elders of the church at Ephesus to come down and meet him on the sea coast. He looks into their faces, and he says, verse 27, For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.

Bishops, elders, presbyters, I think they're all the same word in the New Testament, in my judgment, to feed the church of God. This is your task. Oh, listen, listen, anyone who has responsibility amongst God's people, and many of you older ones have, see to it that you feed the flock of God.

They want food. Remember the two points? The two points? It is the quality of that food and the quantity of that food that will make the people of God. The quality must be right.

It must have Christ central, and if Christ is central, a little of Christ will satisfy. We're living in the desperate days when, perhaps, all these teachings from the New Testament are needed so badly. Feed the flock of God over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers.

He purchased it with his blood. I know that after my departing, grievous wolves will enter among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw disciples after them.

Wherefore, watch and remember that for the space of three years I ceased not to warn you, every one day and night with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified. See that the food supply is right, and all will be well for the sheep of his pasture.

You know, the other day we had a young man who was being set apart to the work of the Lord in Jamaica. I'm glad to say there are numbers of young Jamaicans who are being set apart to the work of the Lord. Would you believe me when I tell you we've got young Jamaicans in Hong Kong, young Jamaicans in Peru, in Columbia, in Haiti, in British Honduras, in other countries.

They've gone forth from their island home because they feel their responsibility and the calling of God to make Christ known in other lands. And as we were setting apart this young man, I was asked to give him a message. And looking into his face, I said to him, I cannot do better than charge you as Paul charged Timothy.

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead and the quick that is appearing in kingdom. Preach the word. I said, take this book, soak yourself in it, read it until you feel you know it and it knows you, until you are part of it and it's part of you.

Because I said, I know this, but if that book holds its rightful place in your ministry, you will go out to make Christ known. You will not be turned aside. You will stand and say, thou saith the Lord, and you will stand and preach Christ.

And if you preach Christ wherever you go, God will honor this ministry. And I say it to you, get up in the morning and say, another new day, a new adventure. I have the Holy Spirit of God.

I know I belong to the Lord Jesus. I'm at his disposal. I'm just a channel of blessing.

But Lord, how can I bring Christ into people? How can I bring that lovely Lord to people? They're confused. They're stormtossed. They believe all sorts of doubtful things.

They're running after heresies. They're dabbling of this, that, and the other. Oh, how can I bring them to this one central thing that Christ is all, and all is in Christ? How can I feed them with my lovely Lord and Savior? And with this ministry, it'll work in the kitchen, in the nursery, in the schoolhouse, in the hospital, in the home.

Well, you say, but they don't listen to me. They don't want it. They don't? You're quite right.

But you'll meet one. No use for it. Meet two.

Wonder if you're fanatical. Meet number three. Ah, you can't bother about that.

Too occupied with material things. Meet number four. All of a sudden, you'll meet a soul who needs Christ, who wants Christ.

And you can feed them with the living Lord. You can't go wrong in this ministry. All that every day, we looked, we prayed, we said, Lord, lead me to some soul today, and let me minister Christ to them.

Shall we bow in prayer? Lord, in this moment, we think over these two pictures. The quality and the quantity of the food supply. Oh, Lord, how big and lovely and nice those gourds looked.

How enthusiastically this young man finding them sliced them into the big pot. But there was debt in the pot. And the only correction was the meal thrown in that could make it worthwhile.

Teach us that Christ, our lovely Lord Jesus, is absolutely essential in the food supply. Morning, noon, and night, he is the manna, he is the lamb roast with fire, he is the old corn of the land, Christ in resurrection, that we can feast on. And feasting on this bountiful supply, we can be suppliers of others.

And as the hundred men, and as we lay them before a hundred men, it will be sufficient to meet their need. Write these truths upon our hearts and bless us as we separate and give us a good day. For our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen. Now, dear friends, I would love to stay and talk. Oh, you want me to say a word? They haven't arrived.

Are they? Oh, how interesting. Just heard from Mr. Caldwell that the books have arrived from Chicago, so if you want to pick up some, have a look at them. I remind you, three books.

The Glorious Secret on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, the Mastery of Love, the story of David and Jonathan's love story unfolded, and the last one that was given here three years ago, was it? The School of Faith, the boys and girls that went to the old school long ago. Now, I won't be able to stay and talk with folks. I have to go, and I'd ask your prayers for this downtown, to one of these precious ladies' luncheons that they put on.

I don't know whether they're going to show hats, or dresses, or how to cook, or how to powder your nose, but I have to sit amongst three or four hundred ladies there, and then speak to them after the luncheon, and it's an evangelistic opportunity, and I ask your prayers as I go down just now. Bless you.

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