

Studies in the Psalms 05 Handfuls From God

by Neil Fraser

The sermon explores the significance of the offerings in Leviticus and their connection to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, as well as the promise of a glorious future described in Psalm 72.

Duration: 46:00

Scripture: Leviticus 2:1, Numbers 12:3, 1 Kings 17:10, Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 14:20, John 3:17, 2 Corinthians 7:8

Topics: "Godly Provision", "Faith And Trust"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on their 45 years of full-time service for the Lord, emphasizing that they have never asked people for money. They highlight the idea that accumulating riches is detrimental and that God often uses the poor to meet their needs. The speaker then references the story of Elijah and the widow, where God miraculously provides for her through a handful of corn and a little oil. They connect this story to Psalm 72, which describes the glory and blessing that will come upon the earth during the millennial reign of the king's son. The sermon concludes with the assurance that God will sustain and provide for His people until the day He sends rain upon the earth.

Transcript

Psalms number 72, responsibly, gives the king thy judgment, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness. They shall fear thee as long as the sun throughout all generations.

In his day shall the righteous flourish. An abundance of peace as long as the moon endures. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before him. All nations shall serve him. He shall spare the poor and needy and shall save the souls of the needy.

And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba. There also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised. His name shall endure forever.

His name shall be continued as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed.

And blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. Amen.

David or anybody else won't need to pray anymore when those days come. Now you'll notice that this closes the second division of the Psalms with the usual doxology, Amen and Amen. You'll remember that I indicated that even from earliest times, the Jews divided the Psalms according to the first five books of Moses.

They noticed this Amen and Amen occurring here and there in the Psalms, and when they noted each division, they seemed to see a similarity between the first of these, Psalm 1 to 41, to the book of Genesis, where God is revealed in creative glory and in covenant with men. And then they noticed that from Psalms 42 to 72, the word redemption occurs quite frequently, and seems to answer to the second book of the Bible. You remember the second book is the book of Exodus.

There we have the exodus of the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt until they set out to cross the wilderness and enter the land. We know, of course, that that exodus was never fully successful, and it was never fully accomplished. It failed because of the failure of the people of Israel in keeping up their end of the covenant.

Of the 600,000 men, grown-ups who left the land of Egypt, all but two perished in the wilderness, and a new generation whom they said would die, God brought in. So the exodus was never fully successful, inasmuch as the majority of those who came out of Egypt did not enter the land. Nor was it fully complete, for even those who were brought into the land did not fully possess all that God had intended for.

When you come to the closing days of Joshua, he said, there remaineth yet much land to be possessed. And he who succeeded Moses died, knowing that they had not fully come into the possession of their inheritance. There were Canaanites who were never driven out from the land of Canaan, so that it was incomplete.

But the second division of the Psalms draws attention to the final completion of the exodus of the children of Israel. And I read to you this morning, you read to me, the glorious time when Messiah shall be reigning over the earth, and Israel will be dwelling safely, the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. And when Israel is dwelling unafraid in their own land, that exodus will be complete.

Now the book of Exodus ends with the glory of the Lord filling the house that man had made. The tabernacle, the glory of the Lord filled the house. It was as if God were just waiting till man would complete the structure, as indeed he was, to rush in and fill it with his glory.

And the last of the millennia of the Exodus Psalms, which we read, show the Lord coming in, in the fullness of his glory, into that land over which the king's son is going to reign in glory and beauty. That is the setting of Psalms number 72. Now I'm going to ask you please to notice verse 60, and then to read other two verses elsewhere in the Old Testament.

There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains. The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of their cities shall flourish like grass of the earth. I want you to notice please that expression, a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains.

And now we'll read the first book of Kings chapter 17. 1 Kings chapter 17, verse 10. And so he arose and went to Zarephath, or Sarepta as it's called in Luke, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold the widow woman was there gathering of sticks.

And he called to her and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in the vessel that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruz.

And behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat and die. And Elijah said unto her, fear not, go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son, for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruz of oil fail, until, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. So she went and did according to the saying of Elijah, and she and he and her house did eat many days, and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruz of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

Notice in this connection, please, a handful of meal in a barrel. And now turn to Leviticus chapter two. Leviticus, second chapter.

And when any will offer a meat or meal offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be a fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereof, and he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, and he shall take thereout his handful, his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof, and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord. May he add his blessing to his work. Now here you have three things.

You've got a handful of flour on a fire, and a handful of corn on a mountain, and a handful of meal in a barrel. Now there's the subject point. A handful of flour on a fire, a handful of corn on a mountain, and a handful of meal in a barrel.

And you know the word handful in each case is different in the Hebrew language. For instance, the handful in Leviticus is that kind of a handful, a compressed handful, that. But the handful of the widow woman was that kind of a handful, considerably less, because it was the handful of the open palm.

Whereas the word handful in Psalm 72 is in the plural, handfuls, and it's the hand of God. Now as the mighty redeemer Boaz let fall some handfuls on purpose for Ruth Maglina, let's ask the Lord this morning that he might let some handfuls on purpose fall for us from these portions of his holy word. And again the word for handfuls in Ruth is different in the Hebrew from the other three which I gave you.

That's the tremendously interesting things about the word of God, which all of us may discover with a good concord. First of all then, I want to speak of the one that you have your Bible open to now, that is a handful of flour on a fire. Now this is one of the five offerings as given to Israel for the worship of the Lord.

There was that burnt offering, an offering which was given holy to God, burnt holy to the Lord, the burnt offering. The second was the meal offering, part of which was taken out and given to the Lord, and part of which became the food of that priest, the offering. The third was the peace offering, again an offering in which God had his part and man his part.

These first three rather draw attention to, or shall I say emphasize the value of the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Whereas the other two, the sin offering and the trespass offering, rather emphasize the guilt of the offerer. The first three, the value of the offering, and the other two, the guilt of the offerer.

Now it is sometimes stated that the first three are sweet favor offerings, and the other two are non-sweet favor offerings. But I think if you read your Bible carefully, and the law of the offerings, that can hardly be substantiated. As a matter of fact, all the offerings were sweet favor to God, inasmuch as all portrayed the perfect work of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Look and see that for yourself. Now, the main ingredient was fine flour. This, by the way, was a bloodless offering.

There was no offering of life in regard to this offering. It emphasizes the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect life that he lived, short of his atoning sacrifice. Now you'll find, of course, there are sufferings indicated in the offering, because this offering had to be baconed in the fire.

It was the action of the fire upon it, and it represents the sufferings of Jesus Christ our Lord in his life, and including the sufferings of Gethsemane, short of the atoning blood which he shed at Calvary. The burnt offering shows that redemptive character of the work of Christ, and the sacrifice of Christ offered holy to God. This is the other, and you'll notice that it was fine flour.

I'd like to emphasize the adjective. It was fine flour. No grit, no unevenness, all smoothness, all symmetry in the offering, and it portrays Jesus Christ our Lord in the perfection of his life on earth.

There was no unevenness in the character and life of Jesus Christ. You and I do not exhibit the fine flour of an even character. Not the best of us.

Sometimes in our desire for generosity, we become altogether wasteful. Sometimes in our desire for economy, we become nigglerly. The Lord Jesus wasn't like that.

He fed 5,000 people and showed the generosity of his spirit. But he said, gather up the fragments that nothing be lost, that we might see his perfect economy. Moses was the meekest man on earth, but there were times when Moses showed the coarseness of the flour.

When he lost his temper with the children of Israel, even the beloved John didn't show the fine flour of an even disposition. He had to be rebuked with his brother for desiring judgment to fall upon a people that had not received his Lord. Even the beloved apostle Paul did not show perfect evenness.

He had to recall a hasty word spoken to a high priest. The apostle Paul once wrote a letter and was sorry afterwards he wrote it. Then he changed his mind again and said he wasn't sorry.

But the Lord Jesus showed perfect symmetry, perfect evenness in all he did. Amen. Now the two leading adjuncts to this offering was frankincense.

First of all, frankincense. Now this depicts to us the fragrance, oil and frankincense. These were the two leading adjuncts.

Shall we take the oil first? If you read the second chapter of Ruth, you'll find three descriptive words used of the oil. You'll find it is spoken as the offering mingled with oil. And then it speaks of oil poured on the offering.

And then it speaks of anointed with oil. Mingled, poured, anointed. And if you read the opening chapters of Luke, I just discovered this one day, if you read the opening chapters of Luke in regard to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, of which the oil is a type, you'll find, I think, those three things.

You'll find that in his conception, that which was conceived really, the power of the Holy, the Holy One will overshadow thee, the power of the Holy Ghost will come upon thee, and that thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of the Highest. It was a perfect mingling of the divine in the human womb of Mary. And then later on in his baptism, in Luke chapter three, we have the pouring of the oil.

For at his baptism, the Spirit of God came down in effulgence, in effusion, in the form of a dove, and we read, rested upon him. The dove never rested when Moses sent it out from the ark. Moses sent out a dove from Noah, thank you, Noah sent out the dove, but the dove never found any place for its feet, and came back, no place to rest.

He sent the dove out the second time, you recall, and the dove evidently had some dealings with an olive tree, but it came back with the olive leaf in its mouth, but it never rested. He sent it out the third time, and it never came back, because it found a place to rest. Now God had sent out his Spirit in the world before Israel, but there wasn't a man upon whom the Spirit of God could abide in complacency.

And then when God took the olive tree, Israel, to himself, there was never a man in Israel upon whom the Spirit of God could remain in complacency. For when the Spirit of God came down the third time, he found a man upon whom he could rest. Amen? And so we read that when he was baptized, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God came down like a dove, and abode upon him.

The Spirit in fullness, the pouring. And then when he began his public ministry, he said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me. He hath anointed me.

It represents the work of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in the power of the Holy Ghost, that life lived before God. And then there was frankincense, the fragrance of that life of Christ as it went up to God. Oh, how fragrant that life was to him.

And then you'll notice, if you read further down this chapter, that it says there was one thing that must be present--salt. Salt must always be present in that meal offering. Now, if the fragrance was the life of Christ as it went up to God in pleasure, the salt was the ministry of Christ as it went out to men in profit.

Let me say that again. The fragrance, the frankincense, was the fragrance of the life of Christ as it went up in pleasure to God. The salt was the ministry of Christ as it went out in profit to men.

The apostle later wrote, let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Salt is a pungent thing. Salt is a preservative.

Salt is strong. And the words of Jesus Christ were ever accompanied by the saltiness of appointed application. When he began his ministry, people wondered at the gracious words that were proceeding out of his mouth.

But he turned and said to those leaders of Israel, I want you to remember, there were many lepers in Israel in the days of Elijah the prophet, but not one of them was cleansed. Elisha the prophet. And many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, but to not one of them in Israel was Elijah sent, but to a Gentile.

And that was the pungency of the ministry of Christ. And the Jews didn't like it. And they rushed him to the brow of the hill to throw him over.

Again, our Lord spoke in one of his parables about the great feast. All were invited to come. And when he got through, all the multitude began to follow him.

And he turned to them and said to them, if you don't come after me and forsake all that you've got, you can't be my disciple. And he caused them all to turn and walk away, most of them. And then it says there were to be two things absent from the meal offering.

One of them was honey. You'll notice that if you read further down. There was to be no honey.

Now, honey is natural sweetness, natural sweetness, but the Lord Jesus Christ never allowed his natural sweetness to interfere with his ministry or with his words. Once Mary came and stood outside with her son and Jesus was in the house. And somebody came in and said, my mother and my brother stand without.

I want to save you. Jesus didn't say, oh, I can't deny my mother anything. I love her.

He said, who is my mother and who are my brothers? He that does the will of God is same as my mother and my brother. And he never allowed natural sweetness to interfere with the program of God. I think Barnabas did.

It was so desirous to take his relatives on the second missionary journey. And Paul was one. And he insisted on it.

And Paul and Barnabas part company. And they are never seen again united in service. Now, without going into the proprietary of that or who was right, I may say both were wrong.

Both were wrong when each insisted on his opinion and desire. However, there's always a danger that natural sweetness, affection for relatives and the like, comes in sometimes and interferes in the program of the Lord. Now, there was to be no leaven present.

And leaven is a turgid thing. Leaven inflates. Leaven swells things.

And there was to be no leaven. Now, when the offerer brought his offering, he took his hand and he lifted up as much as he could squeeze in his compressed handful. And that was laid upon the fire and burned.

And I've no doubt he might have said someday, I wish I had a bigger hand that God might get more. And I wish for you, my friends, this morning, and I wish for myself, I wish we had a bigger hand to grasp divine things. Amen.

I wish we had a bigger hand to grasp the significance of these offerings of Leviticus. I have heard men trying to give us exposition of these things, and I cringed inwardly. Because there are things there about these offerings.

They're flaying, they're cutting up in pieces, they're baking in the pan and the like. And to apply those to the sufferings of Christ with dry eyes and an unsanctified heart and an unemotional spirit is to me looking into the sacred ark of God. Do you know that? It's like looking into the sacred ark of God.

No man should ever tackle the offerings unless he can do so with a stricken heart and deep emotion. But we might well pray for a bigger hand to grasp divine things. Now the second that was, I'm taking them in this order, a handful of corn on the top of a mountain.

Now you couldn't get that naturally. Corn wouldn't grow well on the top of a mountain. But here the language is such in the 72nd Psalm that everything, every line of the psalm tells out a glory and a fullness and a blessing upon the earth that is indescribable.

It seems to challenge the psalmist to describe the blessing that will be upon the earth during the millennial reign of the king's son. This is written about Solomon superficially. The king is David and the king's son is Solomon superficially.

But you only have to read the language to see that it goes away beyond Solomon. It couldn't describe the reign of Solomon, but it describes him of whom Solomon in his peaceful reign speaks, the prince of peace. And describes the time when he will be on the throne, when he'll purge out everything that offends, and when the earth, largely released from the bondage of creation under which it is groaning now, shall be in great measure released.

The scabs and the blotch and the blight taken away from the fields of grain, the weeds, everything that spoils under the earth, blossoming like a rose. And when it speaks of the fertility of the land in this psalm, read it at your leisure, you'll thrill to the time when the knowledge of the Lord will be covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. When there will be peace on earth and goodwill to men.

When nobody will need to say, know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest. What a day! And when it describes the corn, it says the corn, a handful of corn, the corn will shake like the very trees of Lebanon on the top of the mountain. Think of that.

And that's the day that we are tending towards, and it might not be too far away. Amen? A glorious day, dear friends. Now, meantime, as my first handful took us back to Calvary, and my second handful took us forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and glorious reign to earth, I want the third handful to be for us as we stand between the cross and the coming.

A handful of meal in a barrel. And notice, it was that kind of a handful. A handful of the open palm.

Here was Elijah, and God said to him, want you to go by the brook. I command the ravens to feed thee. I think Elijah might have said to the Lord, oh Lord, please, no, no, not ravens.

I'm a Jew. If you'd rather, I'd rather not, if you don't mind. Have doves bring it to me.

A dove's a clean bird, according to Jewish law. Please, not ravens. They're unclean.

God says, I have commanded the ravens to feed thee. And then after a while, when the brook dried up, no more water for him, God says, I want you to go to Sidon, a Gentile country. I have commanded a widow woman to sustain thee.

And again, he might have said, Lord, if you don't mind, I'd rather not. A Gentile? A Gentile woman? A Gentile woman in time of famine? A Gentile woman who's a widow in time of famine? A Gentile woman in time of famine with a hand like that? And that's all she's got left? I'd rather not, thank you. God said, I'm sending you there.

Don't be too sure that God never uses the unsaved to meet his people's needs. I don't believe it. Amen? You're not sure.

But if you disagree with me, you're wrong. That's what I tell the students when I teach in the When the apostle Paul was wrecked on the island of Malta, the Bible says, the barbarous people showed us no little kindness. And it says, moreover, and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary for the journey.

And Paul didn't say, I'd never take anything from the Gentiles. Thank you. Don't be too sure God never uses the Gentiles to meet his people's needs.

History shows it's not so. God commands the ravens to feed us sometimes. We don't go asking the ravens, but he sometimes does it.

And sometimes he meets our need by widows with a little hand in times of famine. If I may have heard something this morning, dear friends, let me tell you. I was into full-time service for the work of the Lord in 1925.

A long time ago. That's 45 years ago. And during those 45 years, I've never asked people for money.

But most of my supply has come from the poor of the flock and not from the rich. Am I right? Now, dear friends, the rich are a cancer that hold on you and eat you away when you accumulate them and keep them and lay them up on earth. And you die and you go to heaven empty-handed.

And it's the widow with the little hand in time of famine that God uses to meet your need. So Elijah comes in and he sees this woman. He sees a woman throwing water.

He said, Would you mind giving me a drink? She said, Yes, I'll get you some water. And so she went. And as she was going, he called and said, And by the way, would you make me a cake first? And she turned and did you notice what she said? A Gentile woman? As the Lord, thy God liveth, as Jehovah, thy God liveth.

I haven't got a cake. I've only got that much meal in a barrel. And I'm going to use it today for the last time before my son and I die.

Think of that. And he says, Nevertheless, make me a cake first. And if he had stopped there, if he had stopped at that point, I think he would have been one of the most, well, I don't know how to describe it.

Unkind man ever lived. But he didn't stop there. It is for thus saith the Lord, the barrel of meal shall not fail until the Lord has sent redemption in Israel.

And to her credit, she went and took the last meal she had and gave it. And the Bible says, And the barrel of meal wasted not, sustained her and her son and her household until the famine was over. And that was the Lord God of Elijah.

Did you ever look at that word Elijah? It begins and ends with the name of God and I is in between. El Elohim, Jah Jehovah. Jehovah is God on both sides of you and you in between.

Amen. And when you've got that friend, you know what you've got? You've got provision right to the end of the journey. Blessed be his name.

Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Why, he's right here. Have you ever scraped the bottom of the barrel? She was scraping the bottom of the barrel. And we sometimes say that.

But when you've got the Lord God of Elijah, he'll see to it that the barrel of meal shall not waste until redemption comes to Israel. And we're waiting for that now. Blessed be his name.

He'll see us right through to the end of the journey. Shall we pray? Gracious God, our Father, we thank you for thy holy word. How satisfactory it is always, meeting our widest and deepest need.

We thank thee for him who was indeed the fine flower. And we pray this morning we may have bigger heads to grasp it better as the days go by. And then, Father, we thank thee as we look forward to the glad day when he shall reign from shore to shore.

And when the earth shall blossom again, and man will dwell unafraid. We pray today for the peace of Jerusalem. We pray for the gathering of Israel.

We pray for the soon return of Christ to catch his bride home in the air, and then to come and reign with them for that glorious time. Meantime, Father, while we wait, help us to lay hold of the Lord God of Elijah, and remember he's with us even to the scraping of the barrel. We pray in his name.

Amen. I wonder if we might have time to sing Jesus shall reign. Jesus shall reign.

For ere the sun doth his successive journeys run, his kingdom stretch from shore to shore. The moon shall wax. Thank you.

Two hundred and ninety-nine. Stand, please, while we sing, and let Jesus Christ, on his head many crowns. We thank thee that in that day we shall have a small part in doing him honor on earth as we have been doing him honor in heaven.

Parcels with thy blessing. May the fragrance of Christ remain with us today.

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