

Death in the Pot - Miracle

by Peter Brandon

The sermon teaches us about the importance of dying to the sin principle, the law principle, and the system of this world, and the need to roll away the reproach of Egypt in order to experience ultimate victory and life.

Duration: 27:12

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:38

Topics: "Identity in Christ", "Spiritual Purification"

Description

Peter Brandon delivers a powerful sermon on the miracle of Elisha and the poisonous pottage, emphasizing the spiritual lessons behind the events in 2 Kings 4. He illustrates how the wild gourds represent the dangers of living in the flesh and the importance of purifying our lives with the 'fine flour' of Christ. Brandon challenges the congregation to examine what they are contributing to their spiritual lives, warning that if they bring in worldly influences, they will find death in the pot. He encourages believers to embrace their identity in Christ, celebrating the victory of the cross and the transformation it brings. Ultimately, the message calls for a commitment to live in the power of the resurrection, ensuring that there is no harm in the pot.

Transcript

Now we're going to turn to the scriptures, we're going into the Old Testament. I want to share with you some thoughts from the second book of Kings, chapter 4. We shall read from verse 38. And Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land, or a famine in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him, and he said unto his servant, Set on a great pot, or set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof the wild gourds his lap full, and came and shed them into the pot of pottage, 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 pottage that they cried out and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot, and they could not eat thereof. And he said, Then bring meal, or literally bring flour, and he cast it into the pot, and he said, Pour out for thee people, that they may eat.

And there was no harm in the pot. Can I repeat that? And there was no harm in the pot. The miracles of Elijah were nationalistic.

They were for the nation. The miracles of Elijah were domestic. They were for the people in the nation.

The miracles of Elijah were twofold in comparison with the miracles of Elijah. He asked for a double portion of power, and therefore if you read the miracles of Elijah, you will find that he worked twice as many miracles as Elijah. The miracles of Elijah were, as we have seen, nationalistic.

They were really voices for the nation. The miracles of Elijah were domestic. They were voices to the individual people and to the community.

Now we will notice that all the miracles in the Old or the New Testament have a spiritual lesson. Trent says that the parables of the Lord Jesus were miracles in words, whilst the miracles of the Lord Jesus were parables in deeds. And that simply means behind every miracle there is a deep spiritual lesson.

Now this miracle can be divided into two. First of all, there is the poisonous pottage, and secondly, there is the purifying of the pottage. Now let's look at this poisonous pottage.

Note please the place where the miracle was wrought. Elijah came again to Gilgal. Now whenever we read of Gilgal in the Old Testament, always stop and always think.

It is one of the most dramatic places that we have in scripture, especially Gilgal. Now why? Those of you who will remember your Old Testament history will remember the occasion when the children of Israel crossed over Jordan, and when they crossed over Jordan to go into the promised land, they took 12 stones from the Jordan and they erected them where? In Gilgal. Therefore Gilgal is very much associated with death.

Why? Because the Jordan is the river of death. Again, you will remember that Gilgal was the place of the double circumcision. When they rolled away the reproach of Egypt, you will remember that one particular generation of Israelites went actually through the wilderness without being circumcised.

And therefore before they eventually went right into the land, Joshua made sure that they were circumcised. So as to roll away the reproach of Egypt. Again you will remember in the book of Joshua in particular where we have the wars of the Lord, and that's the only book where we find in scripture the wars of the Lord.

Now why? Because they were all won supernaturally. And every time they scored a notable victory over the enemy in the book of Joshua, they always came back to Gilgal and celebrated it. Now can you now see the picture building up? Number one, the place of death.

Number two, the place where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Number three, the place of ultimate victory, Gilgal. Beloved, it's a great moment when as believers we come to the cross and we not only see that Christ died for our sins, but we have died in him.

Do we see that? We're going to see two young people baptised and it will take them tonight just about five minutes to get baptised, but it will take them a lifetime to live it out. There is nothing secret about the water. In fact what is water? Just tap water.

Nothing holy about it, but it's the symbol behind it. And as they are plunged into that water, it will be a picture to us all that they have died in Christ. Secondly, we shall see them going completely under the water and that will be a picture that they have been buried with Christ, referring to the finality of their death.

And when they come up out of that water, it will be a picture that they are now new creatures. In fact they were new creatures the moment that they were saved, but now they are going to say to the world they're going to walk in the energy and the power of the resurrection of Christ. What a symbol.

And when we come to Gilgal, it's always that place of death where we see our Jordan, where the stones were taken out of the water and they were put at Gilgal and it shows to us that we have completely died. Now a believer has died in three ways. Now note this.

He has died to the sin principle once and forever. Sin has not died, but we have died to sin. Secondly, he has died to the whole principle of the law.

He's no longer under it. He's serving the Lord now in the principle of faith and love. And thirdly, hallelujah, he has died to the system of this world.

I wish believers would realize that. That every single believer, although he is in the world and should be involved with people in the world, has been dragged out of its system. That's Gilgal.

And beloved, shall we build the stones there and shall we look back to a place where we have accepted that death and said with the Apostle Paul, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. What an assembly we would be if we had a Gilgal experience, but more. At Gilgal they came to that place and they remembered once and for all when the reproach of Egypt was rolled away.

When all that interrupted their fellowship with God, the food of Egypt, the system of Egypt was once and for all rolled away. Beloved, could I ask a question? Some of you elder brethren, come on now. As he rolled away the reproach of Egypt from your life, are you by your habits leading our young people in the wrong direction? Face up to it.

Is there something that you're doing that could cause a young brother to stumble? Let's face this. All of us need to be challenged here. You see, once the world is in the church, you will never see the blessing of God.

Let's roll away the principle and the system of this ugly world, and let's be linked with a man in the glory, and then we shall see God moving in power. And whenever they came back to Gilgal, it was always to celebrate a victory. What does that mean? Once we get the cross right in our lives, once the system of the cross has been built right into the structure of a believer's life, so that he lives a sacrificial life, we shall constantly come back to Calvary and celebrate it together.

You see, when we sit around the Lord's table, and I want to say this carefully, it's not a dirge, brethren. It's not bereavement. Sometimes, you know, we can dwell on the physical sufferings of Christ to such an extent that we can lose the real meaning of Calvary.

That on that cross, the sufferings that really caused him to go into deep suffering were the facts that he died for our sin. That's the fact. And that he dealt with sin once and for all.

And there is in the cross that which sobers us. But there is in the cross ultimate victory. When he said, it is finished.

And as our brother beautifully read, he tasted death for every man. And that means no believer will taste death. He may go through the article of it, but his death has already been tasted.

That's Gilgal, where we celebrate the victory. Where we worship him as we have been doing so this morning, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But more, you will notice, it was not only at Gilgal, but please note now, the time of this particular experience and miracle.

It was a time of death, you will notice. There was famine in the land. Now, whenever you read of famine in the Old Testament, it was always the result of sin.

Now, can I repeat that? Whenever you read of famine in the Old Testament, without one single exception, it is always the result of sin. You remember when David had a three and a half years famine, and he sought the Lord to find out the reason and the cause for the famine. And the Lord told him, it was a sin that had no relationship with him, but was 21 years old.

It was a sin in connection with Saul and his evil treatment of the Gibeonites. But there was a reason. And therefore, now we see this time of death, this time of famine, and beloved, let's face it, we have a famine.

If I left you without warning you, I would be a traitor. We have not dealt with the famine in this local church, this famine among us, and all over the land. It's a time of death.

And in that time of death, I want you to notice there was a time of death. One went out to gather the vine, and he gathered the wild vine. Notice it's called the gourd here, but it was the wild vine.

And anything that was wild was never actually offered to the Lord. Anything that was uncultivated was never offered on a Levitical sacrifice. And this was wild.

You will notice in Isaiah 5 that the Lord planted a vineyard and hedged it, watered it, matured it. But when he came to look for grapes, it only bore wild grapes, uncultivated grapes. And therefore, this man goes out, and he gathers wild vine.

He gathers from the gourds, and he takes that which was so easy to gather. And what does he do? He throws it in the pot, and he puts in death. Doesn't this remind us, dear friends, of the words of Romans 8? If we live after the flesh, we shall die.

If I am living on a fleshly plane, you say, what do you mean by that, Brother Brandon? If the flesh is activating my life when I come together, I can't produce that which is cultivated, only wild. If husband and wife are not enjoying together, and there are wild scenes in the home sometimes, I bring that into the local church. If there is anything in my business that's not absolutely honest and straight, if there's anything devious in my business life, it's wild, and I bring that into the local church.

You see, this man gathered up the gourds, and it was wild. And he threw that into the pot. Beloved, could I say this carefully? Our theology may be perfect.

Our expression's good. Our manifestation of praise may be excellent. But if I am living in the realm of the flesh, it's worthless to the Lord.

Notice what he says. They that worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth. This man gathered something that was wild.

Could we ask the question, what have we been gathering? Is it something that's wild or cultivated? Let's ask the question. And then all of a sudden, as they were eating of this potage, of this soup, suddenly one wise man cried out, listen, oh man of God, there's death in the park. Oh, they didn't like it.

They couldn't say lovely message, but how wise. On one occasion, and I shall never forget this, just at the beginning of the war, we went away on holiday at Canvey Island. And there in the field were these lovely mushrooms, and we gathered them.

And my mother was cooking a good old-fashioned English breakfast, egg and bacon with the mushrooms. And the smell was tantalizing. And we were just going to have this great pan of mushrooms.

And our saliva glands were all doing overtime, when all of a sudden the postman came in, and he said, you going to eat those? Oh yes, my mother said. You will be dead, he said. Twenty minutes afterwards, he says, you have some of the mushrooms there that are deadly poisonous.

We didn't like it. We missed a good fryer. But how wise.

Sooner be alive than a corpse. And that's it. You see, this man had gathered these wild gourds, whether he did it intentionally or not, we're not told.

But in they go, and then someone that had a delicate taste, tasted that soup, and he let out the warning, the alarm. Oh man of God, there's death in the park. Beloved, could I give a word of warning? There's still death in the park.

We're not out of the wood. There are still things in this local church that are wrong and must be rectified. Now see how the apostle Paul exposes things.

When he writes to the Corinthians, he was telling them that there was death in the pot, and he went through that particular church one by one and dealt with it. When he writes to the Colossians, he tells them there's death in the pot, and he dealt with all the false intellectualism. When he writes to the particular churches in Asia Minor, and now I'm referring to Peter, he points out those things that are wrong.

That's the man of God. Now beloved, this is what I feel the Lord wants us to do. He doesn't want us to point the finger at the other brother.

Now I want to say this delicately, and I want to say this lovingly. One of the big problems has been gossip, and may I say this with all the tenderness that God has given to me. If you have gossiped and you have not been broken, get broken today.

Now there are one or two who have said things they should never have said. Not only here, all over Brisbane, and it's caused serious trouble. Now beloved, let's deal with the death in our own lives.

Let's not look at my brother or my sister. Let's go over our homes. If there's anything in my home that's not really of God, let's put it up.

Forgive me being rather sharp there, but we must do. Let's go over our lives personally, and if there's anything there that's not right, let's deal with it. Let's go over the businesses, and if there's anything in the business that's not absolutely transparent, brethren and sisters deal with it.

So that there's no death in the pot. Now see the contrast. He says bring flour.

What a contrast. Can you see that pot boiling? Can you see their little soup bowls that would be quite crude? Can you see these little soup spoons that they would have in those days made of wood? Can you see them all about to eat, and there's one man saying, look there's death in the pot, and they see that pot

boiling, and then the mighty prophet, he takes some flour, white, pure, wholesome, and even, and he throws it in the pot. Doesn't that speak of the purity of our Lord? Isn't it lovely to turn from ourselves to him who is altogether lovely? You know every time I think of the absolute perfection of Christ, beloved, it always touches my spirit.

To think that there came into this imperfect world of ours, someone who was infinitely perfect, without the trace of Adam's sin, a man unique in origin, and when God looked on him, he did not look upon Christ for sin. He looked in Christ to see that there would be the development of everything that was perfect, and he found it. He found exquisite loveliness in himself.

All that corresponded with his own morality and goodness, he found in Jesus Christ. The fine flour, what a picture. Now look at it.

The prophet takes that fine flour, and he throws it into the boiling pot of death, and that's what our brother shared with us. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. And when he went right down into death, he showed us practically what involvement really meant.

He became totally one with our sins, so that he became a gigantic, massive sin offering for the sins of the whole world. And into death he went. What a sad people we would be if we thought that he was still in death.

But you see, he went into death, and praise God, he was brought out of death with mighty powers. And there lives a man at God's right hand, and I believe this is exquisitely wonderful, who has already tasted death for every man, and holds in his hands the keys of life and death. And then he said, pour out.

And we see those men taking the pottage, and they're sharing it, they're drinking it, they're partaking of it. And haven't we done that this morning? Haven't we eaten his flesh and drunk his blood? You say, what do you mean by that, brother Brandon, that the wine is changed into blood? No, we don't believe that. The bread is changed into his body? No.

But we as Christians have been so thoroughly identified with his death, that we have died in Christ. We have been buried with him, we have been raised with him, we are seated with him, we have been able by faith to appropriate all that he has done for us on the cross. Isn't that wonderful? And now the closing lesson.

It's not only a lesson of purification, identification, appropriation, but it's a lesson of contribution. It's what you put in the pot, you get out. Can I say that? It's what you put in the pot, you get out.

Can I say this carefully? Oh, that I should be jagged after a meeting like this would be a sin in itself. But can I put this to you? Dear sister, if you put a lot of gossiping in, there'd be death in the pot. Dear brother, if you put fleshly activity in, there'd be death in the pot.

Dear friends, if you put the world in, there'd be death in the pot. Could I say this to the young people with great care? If you put lust in, and immorality in, there'd be death in the pot. But if you put Christ in, there'd be life in the pot.

There'd be no harm in the pot. Beloved, let's stop and ask this question. In the last six months, what have I been putting into the pot? What have I put in the pot? And it's what you put in, you get out.

May it be that we shall all put Christ in, and there be no harm in the pot. Amen.

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