A Pig Pot

Alex Schneider · 2 Kings 4:38 · January 13, 2026



2 Kings 4:38

> 38 And Elisha came again to Gilgal. And there was a famine in the land;
> and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. And he said to his
> servant, Set on the great pot, and boil pottage for the sons of the
> prophets.

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> *“And there was a famine in the land. And the sons of the prophets were sitting before Elisha. And he said to his servant, ‘Put on the big pot’”* (**2 Kings 4:38**).

Famine—empty larders, growling stomachs, ever smaller food rations. People eat what they can get. Against this background, Elisha's request to put on a large pot seems completely incomprehensible. Shouldn't we start with a little?

Elisha shows faith—and it is rewarded. The reverse conclusion is very sobering and shameful for us: we may not experience an answer to prayer or see any miracles from God because we don't expect anything from Him and, therefore, don't ask for

anything. Our expectations are far too small for a great God. James once wrote: "*You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives*" (**James 4:2-3**).

This principle - that we can expect a lot from the Lord, and that He also responds accordingly—is often found in Scripture:

- "*Let it be done to you according to your faith*" (**Matthew 9:29**), the Lord Jesus once said to two blind men who were healed! He implied that the reality they experienced depended on their faith.
- He also said to the Roman centurion, who had great faith in the Lord: "*As you have believed, so let it be done for you*" (**Matthew 8:13**).
- The paralyzed friend who was let down through the roof by his four friends was also healed because "*Jesus saw their faith*" (**Matthew 9:2**).
- An interesting incident is also found with Elisha: "*A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, 'Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves.' So 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 but a jar of oil.' Then he said, 'Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones'*" (**2 Kings 4:1-4**). Elisha did not say to the woman: "Get a few vessels, but be careful not to borrow too many because that could be embarrassing." Faith can never demand too much credit in "God's bank." Those who trust the Lord will never bring an empty vessel to Him that He cannot fill. When we have this conviction of faith, we honor Him. And He will acknowledge it, as He did in the case of the widow. "*Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it*" (**Psalm 81:10**).
- Another example in Elisha's life: "*Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Jehoash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, 'O my father, my father! The chariots of Israel and their*

horsemen!’ And Elisha said to him, ‘Take a bow and some arrows.’ So he took himself a bow and some arrows. Then he said to the king of Israel, ‘Put your hand on the bow.’ So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. And he said, ‘Open the east window.’ And he opened it. Then Elisha said, ‘Shoot!’ And he shot. And he said, ‘The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.’ Then he said, ‘Take the arrows.’ So he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, ‘Strike the ground.’ So he struck three times and stopped. And the man of God was angry with him and said, ‘You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it. But now you will strike Syria only three times’” (**2 Kings 13:14-19**). The arrows mean: Salvation for Israel. Elisha does not tell the king how often he should strike the ground. Faith is therefore required here. King Joash strikes the ground only three times—Elisha rebukes him for asking God for so little. If he had expected more from the Lord, the enemies would have been destroyed. Two counter-examples: Abraham prayed to the Lord six times until he had “bargained down” fifty righteous people to ten. Elijah even prayed seven times until God finally opened the heavens.

The Lord rewards courage of faith. Perhaps that is why we see so few answers to prayer, experience so little progress, and experience so little of God's greatness: we simply do not ask Him for it enough.

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