

A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said.

⁴³ *“How can I set this before a hundred men?” his servant asked.*

But Elisha answered, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat and have some left over.’” ⁴⁴ *Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD. (2 Kings 4:42-44 NIV2011)*

There Will Be Enough

If you are having people over, you want to make sure there will be enough. Whether spoken or not spoken, real or not real, it feels like there’s a social obligation to have enough. You can tell him that it’s not a big a deal. You can assure her it’s not something they need to worry about. They will. It’s engrained into our minds. You want to make sure there will be enough. This last week when I was able to get together with my friends, we spent plenty of time in the weeks and months before going over plans to make sure that there would be enough. When we have potlucks—we always know there will be—but you can still hear someone wonder, “I sure hope there will be enough.” Even when you know people coming over will bring a drink, side, or dessert to share, you have extra planned because you want to make sure there will be enough. Not having enough isn’t an option.

So we can understand the servant’s hesitation in 2 Kings 4. Famine had been in the land. Food was scarce. Budgets were tight. Things weren’t available. It’s not hard to imagine conversations of needing to cut back and questions like, “Will there be enough?”

Then there was. The Lord provides. A man brings Elisha twenty loaves of bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. Even when things were tight God’s people continue to bring their offerings first. They trust God will continue to provide.

For Elisha’s servant, things are looking up. It was going to be okay. There was enough. That is, until Elisha says: **“Give it to the people to eat.”** Wait, what? The servant hesitates. It doesn’t seem like he wants to hoard the food. I don’t think it’s necessarily greed either. It’s a reasonable concern. He did the math. He looked at the budget. He sees the cold hard facts and simply could not see how this was going to work out. **“How can I set this before a hundred men?”** he asks. In other words, how will there be enough?

Again, we can understand the servant’s hesitation. We question, check over, and wonder whether or not there is or will be enough because we remember times when

things were pretty tight. You didn't have much. We remember when it was a little too close for comfort. There are other times when it sure doesn't seem like there is enough. The paychecks aren't stretching as far as they used to while the bills continue to grow. The market is as unpredictable as the weather that we need for things to prosper and grow. It's more than financial. You see the responsibilities you have with the growing list of to-do's and need-to-have-done's while the number of hours in the day remain the same and the energy level decreases. The daily grind grinds you down. It's baffling how even when it doesn't seem like much is going on it still wears you out. You might wonder if you have enough patience and stability to keep down the rising annoyance, frustration, anxiety, depression, and everything else life throws at you. We know we are finite creatures that have our personal limits. So we wonder, we question, we check over, will there be enough?

Yes. That's Elisha's response. Will there be enough food? Elisha answers, **“Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the Lords say: ‘They will eat and have some left-over’** (v. 43). That's it. And what happens? They do. And there is. No surprises here; the Lord said there would be. The Lord doesn't just make promises, he shows it. He will do it again too. When more than 5000 people gather to listen to Jesus they need to eat. Philip didn't have to be a math genius to figure this one out. There's no way the numbers were going to add up. But when Jesus takes the afternoon snack from the boy and distributes it, what happens? There's more than enough. He continues to do this today. Your God is consistent. He does not change. He opens his hand and satisfies the desires of every living thing. That includes the flowers of the field, the beasts in the wild, the animals on the ranch, the good, the wicked, the believers and unbelievers. Therefore, it cannot be because we have earned it or deserved it. No, it's because he is our good and merciful Father in heaven who cares for us that he provides.

And still we wonder, will there be enough? How often does that thought come up while thinking about you give for your offerings? Have you told yourself: “If I increase my offering even a fraction of a percent, I don't know if there will be enough for the rest of my expenses, my bills, my responsibilities, my hobbies?” Or do you look at it the other way: “I hope there will be enough left over after paying for all of that so I can give something to church.” Left overs make a fine meal for us; God is never fine with them. God calls us to give to him first not out of coercion or obligation but an act of faith that God will do as he says. Have you forgotten that God assures us that when we give to him first—you choose in your heart what you will give to him first before anything else—that he will rip open the flood gates of heaven to bless us? That promise is as sure as his promise to provide what we need for our daily life.

Will there be enough? We ask that when it comes to our ministry planning for our church and school. Will there be enough volunteers, man power, finances, offerings, energy, enthusiasm, desire to carry out the work.

Will there be enough? That question is bound to come up when we look at our time in the day and the energy to carry out all the callings God gives you as husband, wife, mom, dad, child of God, friend, your occupation, citizen.

Will there be enough? It's a question that can keep you up at night. But it's not just because we want to be good stewards and good managers of God's gifts. It's not only because we want to be realistic with the facts that we see and the numbers we know. No, a big part of the struggle is that we don't always agree with what God has decided is enough. It's not that we want to be greedy. We just would like a little bit more. It would be nice to have a little more right now. It's not that we are unthankful. At the same time, it would be great if it was a little more convenient or I was able to enjoy what they have.

But then when what God says is enough doesn't line up with what we think is enough we struggle to trust him and his promises. Instead he seems more like a tyrannical dictator who demands too much from our offerings, from our time, with our energy while not giving us enough with which to work. Or he seems like such a tiny God who needs to rely on us to keep the church doors open, the animals alive, the people okay and is indebted to us for all the hard work and good effort that we put in. But that's not all. We also fail to carry out what he has called each of us to do: love and serve our neighbor. Instead, we turn inwards thinking that we need to look out for ourselves first. Instead of serving others, we think we need to focus more on serving ourselves. We are so busy worrying about whether or not we have enough that we fail to look up and see that he gives more than enough.

Yes, God calls us to be good managers of His gifts. Sometimes we need to cut back. Other times we have to say, "No." He's given us our reason to use. At the same time, be honest with yourself. Where is your heart? Is it relying on your own understanding or resting on God's promises?

God is not a tyrannical dictator who likes to make your life miserable. He is your Father in heaven who does not change like shifting shadows but gives us every good and perfect gift from above (James 1:17). He's not a tiny God who needs us as if he is some beggar on the streets. He is the one who spoke and the world came to be. He's the one who multiplies crackers of bread and tiny fish to feed thousands. He's our Shepherd so that we lack nothing (Psalm 23). He knows what we need before we do and then gives it. He has every right to pull his giving hand away from our changing hearts that can so quickly shift from thankfulness to discontent, trusting to doubting, self-less to selfish. We have done more than enough to deserve it. Yet, he doesn't.

Instead he provides us with the greatest gift in his own Son. He does not spare Jesus but gives him up for you. He doesn't hold back with his Son; He dumps the world's sins on him—including all that you have or will commit. He punishes Jesus for our lack-of-trust hearts and forsakes him. The perfect servant of all came not to be served but to serve and to give up his life as the price for you. The blood he pours out is more than enough to pay for all your sins. The apostle Paul then asks in Romans, "Since the Father did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). So will there be enough? He's already given you the greatest gift in Jesus. He gives you forgiveness and life with him. It would make no sense that he would short us on the other gifts. If you have any doubt, look into the empty tomb. Jesus lives. That means God is on your side.

With God on our side we know that there will be more than enough. And he gives us more than enough because he chooses to work through us to provide for others. Again, your God is consistent. He does not change. That's what he did with Elisha. From a man simply bringing his first fruit offering of twenty loaves of bread the Lord feeds 100 men. Look at Jesus. It was a boy's quick snack for when his stomach would start growling in the afternoon. God could have easily made the food appear. Instead, he works through people to provide for his people. He's still doing the same through you. Sometimes it's with meals that we share. It's the offerings you give. Other times it's the friendly ear that patiently listens while someone spills it all out and you help shoulder their burdens. It's the reassurance that everything will be okay with a loving hug. It's the encouraging word spoken into their ears. It's your prayers you speak on their behalf to God. At the time it may not seem all that extraordinary, but for the one who receives that love and care it can feel pretty miraculous. That's who you get to be. Serving the Lord isn't just what you do for the church. It's loving your neighbor; that is, every single human being you meet. And then grace upon grace, when we serve our neighbor we are also serving him. God works through you to give what your neighbor needs. Don't worry. When it comes to time, energy, resources, there will be enough. Amen.