***2 Kings 4:38-41 And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.” 39So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were. 40Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it. 41So he said, “Then bring some flour.” And he put it into the pot, and said, “Serve it to the people, that they may eat.” And there was nothing harmful in the pot.***

Fellowship and gathering is so important to God’s people. We can lie to ourselves and say that we get just as much from being on a fishing boat, or watching Facebook, or walking in the mountains – to be sure, times of silence and solitude are needed – times to hear the voice of God – but Fellowship is how the church was designed by Jesus. If Jesus designed church to be done together, every follower of Jesus must seek to do it the way Jesus designed it.

Years ago, I had a boss who loved to say – when all you have in your toolbox is a hammer, everything begins to look like a nail. A screw is designed as a screw, a staple as a staple, and a nail as a nail… a hammer was designed for a nail, and a nail for a hammer. A church is meant to be done together, in fellowship… don’t disrespect God’s design by forsaking fellowship. .

Verse 38 starts - *And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land.* Gilgal is located at the northern end of the Dead Sea, not far from Jericho. 2 Kings 3 indicates that Elisha is returning from the southern end, about 31 miles away. There is famine in the land.

There is a famine of fellowship in our land right now. Facebook is not fellowship. Instagram in not interconnectedness. Twitter is not togetherness. There is a famine in good old fellowship in our world today. We wonder why we feel alone? It’s because we isolate ourselves – visiting is fellowship, a phone call is fellowship, standing still and speaking is fellowship – church is fellowship, peeling a potato, trunk or treat, stirring the stew is fellowship. If you’re starving for true fellowship… walk over to the looking glass and have a talk with the person looking back. It’s easy to blame someone else… but we all know where the real blame lies.

Verse 38 continues *Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.”* The prophets had gathered in fellowship. Elisha says put on the large pot and make some stew.

Verse 39 *So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced them into the pot of stew, though they did not know what they were.* It occurred to me that all the prophets were waiting to be served, not looking to serve… they were all looking to be consumers, and not contributors. Fellowship is about contribution, not consumption – how might we serve, not be served. What happens? The poison of the world, a wild vine, unknown gourds that a group may well have recognized as poison, are introduced. Jesus, the True Vine, gives life when we abide in Him. The world is a poison vine, filled with pretty gourds, consumed without knowing the effect.

Verse 40 *Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it.* When the world is introduced, the fruit of a wild vine is carried in, death is the result. Be it in church, in marriage, or any other relationship between man and God – introduce the world and relationship with God suffers.

Verse 41 *So he said, “Then bring some flour.” And he put it into the pot, and said, “Serve it to the people, that they may eat.” And there was nothing harmful in the pot.* Elisha doesn’t throw out the stew, disperse the fellowship, or look for a different gathering to attend where the wild vine hasn’t been introduced. In John 12:24, Jesus compares Himself to a grain of wheat - *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.* Unless we die to ourselves and begin to serve others, not looking to consume, but give, not looking to be served, but to serve, we remain alone – we continue in a famine of fellowship. Elisha says, “Bring flour” – Perhaps flour made from many grains of wheat and were ground into this purifying ingredient. Once the flour is added, the poison is gone. When the world poisons, only Jesus can cure. Without Him, we can be in a world full of people, and be starving for connection.

A famine of fellowship, a world starving for the Bread of Life… what are each of us doing to feed the famished? This weekend, we had a great time of fellowship. It didn’t happen by accident. Fellowship never happens by accident. If there is something to consume, there was first someone who contributed. Someone looked in the mirror and said, “I want music in the church – here I am Lord, send me.” “I want a children’s ministry – here I am Lord, send me.” “I want a trip to hike – here I am Lord, send me.” There is a famine of fellowship in this community – what can each of us contribute from the riches God has given to feed a fellowship starved world?