

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday August 16, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



LESSONS FROM ELISHA'S SERVANT

“Gehazi’s + Trouble”

2 Kings 5:15-27 (focus vv. 20-27)

“¹⁵ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, “Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.”¹⁶ But he said, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused. ¹⁷ So Naaman said, “Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. ¹⁸ Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing.” ¹⁹ Then he said to him, “Go in peace.” So he departed from him a short distance. ²⁰ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, “Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him.” ²¹ So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, “Is all well?” ²² And he said, “All is well. My master has sent me, saying, ‘Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.’” ²³ So Naaman said, “Please, take two talents.” And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him. ²⁴ When he came to ^[d]the citadel, he took them from their hand, and stored them away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. ²⁵ Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, “Where did you go, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant did not go anywhere.” ²⁶ Then he said to him, “Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your

descendants forever.” And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.” -2 Kings 5:15-27 (NKJV)

We have been in our study on the life of Elisha for a while now. We’ve been looking at this amazing prophet of God and how God used him to turn the hearts of His people back to God. I’ve been giving you these background talking points each week as kind of a review, but also to help trace Elisha’s steps and ministry. Let me give you several highlight of where we have been in our study of the Elisha...

Some Background Information on The Prophet Elisha:

1. **Elisha was born and raised in the town of Abel-Meholah, located in Israel** - This town is where Elijah found Elisha plowing the fields. 1 Kings 19:16 tell us the was from Abel-Meholah, *“...And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.”* The name “Abel-Meholah” means “Meadow of Dancing” which some believe reflects something of Elisha’s personality (*which was one of compassion, mercy and joy*) (v.19) Remember that Elijah had been more firey and stern as a prophet, Elisha was characterized as being somewhat kinder, more joyful, full of compassion and mercy, which we shall see in our study of his life.



2. **Elisha was the son of a farmer in Abel-Meholah named Shaphat, and was himself a farmer when God called him** – This seems significant as a part of his calling. Much like Jesus’s disciples were fishermen, called by Jesus to be “fishers of men;” Elisha was called by God to not longer cultivate the ground, but now to cultivate the hearts of man to receive God’s word... especially concerning salvation.
3. **Elisha was a disciple of the Prophet Elijah, and Elisha’s prophetic ministry actually began at Elijah’s Hill when his mantle fell to Elisha as Elijah was carried to heaven in a whirlwind** – You can read about this in 2 Kings 2. The prophets mantle was a cloak or robe that Old Testament prophets of God were known and identified by wearing. Some

theologians see the prophet's "mantle" as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and God's anointing on their life. When Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah it symbolized that Elijah's ministry has passed to him, further evidenced when Elisha struck the Jordan River with the mantle and parted the waters.

4. **Elisha's ministry was primarily to the northern divided kingdom of Israel at a time when God's people had turned from God to worship the pagan god Baal -**
5. **The name Elisha means "God is Salvation" and gives us an idea of the purpose of Elisha's ministry – Elisha would go throughout the northern kingdom of Israel, drawing God's people back to Him and reminding them of His salvation. Known as a "prophet of miracles," each of his miracles were pictures of God's salvation.**

INTRODUCTION

The past few weeks we have been in the 5th chapter of 2 Kings, looking at what may be one of Elisha's most note-worthy and impactful miracles, the healing of the Syrian Commander, Naaman, of leprosy. We have been reminded that "leprosy" is often used as a symbol of "sin" in the Bible, and Naaman's story is a moving one as God intervenes in his life by healing his leprosy and saving him. Remember Naaman's words that reflected his profession of faith in 2 Kings 5:15, "*Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel.*"

The story we are going to focus on in tonight's study is sort of a follow up to Naaman's miraculous healing and conversion... a sort of "rest of the story" story that involves Elisha and his servant, Gehazi. If you have your Bible this evening, we are going to be looking at 2 Kings 5:20-27... but I want to back up a bit and catch the story in context, so look with beginning in verse 15 **(READ: 2 Kings 5:15-27)**

"¹⁵ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, 'Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.'¹⁶ But he said, 'As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.' And he urged him to take it, but he refused. ¹⁷ So Naaman said, 'Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. ¹⁸ Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing.' ¹⁹ Then he said to him, 'Go in peace.' So he departed from him a short distance. ²⁰ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, 'Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him.' ²¹ So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, 'Is all well?' ²² And he said, 'All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.' ²³ So Naaman said, 'Please, take two talents.' And he urged him, and bound two talents

of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him. ²⁴ When he came to ^[d]the citadel, he took them from their hand, and stored them away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. ²⁵ Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, “Where did you go, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant did not go anywhere.” ²⁶ Then he said to him, “Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever.” And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.” -2 Kings 5:15-27 (NKJV)

The Bible gives us so many figures to learn from. Some of them are great men of God, while some of them are unnamed people whose lives bring very precious lessons to us.

One such person we can learn from is a man named Gehazi. This man appears for a short time in the Bible, but his appearance brings important lessons to all Christians the world over.

Who is Gehazi and what can we learn from him? Let's talk about that.

WHO IS GEHAZI?

Gehazi is known as the servant of the great prophet Elisha. Every prophet had those who assisted and perhaps understudied to them, just as Elisha had for Elijah. We don't know for certain, but perhaps Gehazi had as his ambition one day being a great prophet like Elisha. Yet his story is a sad one, a story that really may touch and teach each of us that ambition and dreams can be sidetracked, ransacked and even destroyed when we give into temptation and sin. Gehazi is mentioned in the Bible multiple times, in the book of 2 Kings, as the servant of Elisha the prophet.

3 Places Gehazi Show Up in the Bible: (by name)

- (1) Gehazi is featured in the story of the Shunammite woman's dead child whom Elisha raised to life in 2 Kings 4:18–37**
- (2) Gehazi appears in the story of the king of Israel restoring the Shunammite woman's stolen property to her in 2 Kings 8:1–6.**
- (3) The most well-known story about Gehazi concerns a sin he committed, the cover-up, and the punishment that followed in 2 Kings 5:15–27**

Observation & Question: *These remind us of Gehazi's importance really to the life of Elisha (as his servant) and the part he played in some powerful moments in Elisha's work. How have we had fortunate opportunity to see things and be a part of things as Christians today that others may not have? Do we even squander or miss the privilege we have been given by God's grace? How?*

There are at least two significant things about Gehazi that need to be remember and that are particularly revealed in our passage

2 Things to Remember About Gehazi:

(1) **Gehazi was a servant who saw great things happen** - Gehazi is the servant of the prophet Elisha. He was first mentioned in 2 Kings 4:12, where Elisha would command him to do something.

- Gehazi saw many miracles take place.
- He witnessed a childless woman (and her old husband) have a child (verse 17).
- When the woman's child, a boy, died, he saw him live again (verses 35-37).
- Gehazi saw miracles other than that. He saw a poisonous pot of stew be purified and made safe to eat (verses 38-41).
- He also a hundred people satisfy themselves with but a few portions of food, with much leftover (see verses 42-44).
- These accounts would make us think that Gehazi was very fortunate to have witnessed with his own eyes things that no normal man can do without God. It must have been very exciting and hair-raising to see a dead boy back to life, something poisonous become edible, and a hundred people have their fill from a little amount of food.

What is our responsibility when we have been blessed to see the things of God, to hear the things of God, to know the things of God?

What happens when we have seen these things and do nothing with them?

Luke 16:19-31 – The Rich Man and Lazarus, ¹⁹ “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and ¹⁹lived sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with ²¹the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ ²⁵ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’ ²⁷ “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ ²⁹ Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead,

they will repent.’³¹ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

Matthew 12:38-39 – The Scribes and Pharisees Ask for a Sign, *“³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”³⁹ But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”*

Matthew 16:1-4 – The Pharisees and Sadducees Seek a Sign, *“Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.² He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’; ³ and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. ⁴ A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And He left them and departed.”*

1 Timothy 4:12-14, Take Heed to Your Ministry, *“¹² Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.¹³ Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.”*

Luke 14:48, Jesus said, *“⁴⁸ ... For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”*

3 Principles to Remember: **concerning the things we have been blessed to see, hear and know from God and the things of God*

1. When God shows us things we should pay attention, listen, and learn –
2. When God blesses us in His providence to have opportunity that others don’t we should not take that fore-granted –
3. The things we have been blessed to see and know, we will be held accountable for – We will be held accountable for what we have done with the things God has blessed us with and shown us in our life.

(2) Gehazi gave place to greed which became his downfall – In 2 Kings 5, we read how a leper was healed of his leprosy. Naaman, the Syrian commander considered as a mighty man of valor despite his being a leper, went to Israel in search for healing. He was later directed towards Elisha, who would give him instructions that he needed to follow for his healing. Naaman was healed after following Elisha's instructions. In his happiness, he urged Elisha to receive the gifts he had brought, but Elisha did not budge in his refusal. Gehazi, however, had something else in mind: he wanted to receive Naaman's gifts.

- We read from verses 20 to 25 how Gehazi hatched a devious plan of action to acquire Naaman's gifts. Upon returning home, he even lied to Elisha in an attempt to keep the silver and garments he had acquired through deceit.
- In verses 26 and 27, we read the consequences of his deceit: he was rebuked by Elisha, and he had Naaman's leprosy cling to him (and his descendants).
- To some God's judgement and discipline in Gehazi's life seems too harsh and heavy handed, but perhaps we don't realize the gravity of the sin of covetousness, greed and materialism which is really idolatry (Remember idolatry was already the sin of Israel and God's prophet were fiercely preaching and standing against it... this put Gehazi as a servant to the prophet Elisha at risk)

Observation & Question: The Bible not only gives us portraits of God's grace, as with the healing of Naaman, but it also gives us striking, clear, and up-front portraits of man's sinfulness and perversion. It's never a pretty picture, but it is a necessary one if we are to see our sickness and helplessness and turn in repentance to the grace of God. These portraits in Scripture, like Gehazi's, serve as instructions and warnings to turn us to God and a life of godliness and away from a life of ungodliness (cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11, 12). What are your thoughts concerning God's punishment (judgement) on Gehazi? What do you think God might have reacted to Gehazi's sin in such a harsh way? What do you think this says to us?

This story of Gehazi is a sad story, but it is one which happens thousands of times every day, and in the lives of believers to one degree or another. It is a story that stands in strong contrast with the preceding passage where we saw Naaman healed of leprosy as he turned to God in simple faith. But here we see Gehazi struck with leprosy because he turned away from God to blur the truth of the free nature of salvation.

In one story, leprosy portrays sin in its universal scope as it falls upon all men. But in the story of Gehazi we see the specific sin of greed (covetousness and materialism) and the way it destroys the ministries of men and their capacity to serve the Lord.

In the story of Gehazi we see the process and consequences of greed or covetousness which always hinders godliness and godly service. It is the picture of religious hypocrisy, of failure to progress spiritually, of false values that destroy a man's pursuit of righteousness, of human rationalization that seeks to find good reasons for a bad thing, of rebellion and insubordination to authority, of unfaithfulness or disloyalty, and of the process of regression or the downward spiral of sin (chain sinning).

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM GEHAZI

And so, dear friends, what can we learn from Gehazi? Here are a few things that we need to keep in mind.

Some things to remember from Gehazi:

- (1) **We can see God move and yet no humility in the life of the individual** - Truth be told, spiritual gifts and character are not one and the same. We can see miracles and move in anointings, but if we are not careful our hearts could grow corrupted. Gehazi saw amazing miracles happen before his eyes, but instead of being humbled by them he grew more corrupted.
- (2) **Serving God has its benefits - and challenges** - While serving God surely has its benefits, it also brings many challenges to us. Some of these challenges come in the form of doubt, unbelief, and temptations. Gehazi failed to wake up the dead child (2 Kings 4:31). He probably didn't believe that such a small amount of food would satisfy a hundred men (or perhaps wanted the food for himself; see 2 Kings 4:43). He was tempted by silver and clothing and gave in to his greed (see 2 Kings 20-25). As such, we must be careful with our hearts and minds. Just because we're serving God doesn't mean we're safe from such things.
- (3) **Consequences follow our every choice, even if we serve God** - Gehazi's greed was met with unpleasant consequences. We cannot expect to be exempted from the consequences of our sin, even if we spend all that we are to serve ministers or the church. Sin is sin, and must be repented of and renounced. Service to the church will not atone for our sins. Only Christ does that.