

Gehazi: A story of Greed

Went not mine heart with thee? (2 Kings 5:20-27)

We're all probably familiar with this account of Naaman the leper being healed by God through Elisha the prophet. As we will see the events after takes a serious turn, which I believe, will be a valuable lesson for us all!

"But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, [as] the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." (2 Kings 5:20).

Let's say that Gehazi would be a type of lukewarm or worldly Christian, and Elisha would be a type of Christ. Gehazi's name means "valley of vision" and Elisha's name means "God is salvation." As we read in verse 20 Gehazi was thinking about going after Naaman to get something from him, but why would he want to do this? Well, let's look at chapter five verse sixteen.

"But he said,(that is Elisha) [As] the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take [it]; but he refused."

Surely, Gehazi was present at this time with Elisha and heard what he had said? So, we see again in verse 20 that he reasons within himself to go and get something from Naaman, notice not for the Lord or for his master Elisha, but for himself! He said that Elisha spared Naaman in not receiving something from him.

The word spared in Hebrew means "to keep back or withhold." Gehazi believed Elisha should have received something from Naaman. Do you see covetousness working here? Do you see how the servant thinks he knows better than his Master? He believes, as the servant of Elisha that he has the right to make a decision even if it's against the masters word. Many, many Christians today are doing this very thing--doing and plotting things that are totally against God's word.

The word Lord is Jehovah it literally means the Existing One and Gehazi says, "As the LORD liveth" or "As the Existing One lives," he will run after Naaman and receive something. In saying this he was literally saying "as the LORD is alive and always existing" he will go and receive something. In other words, nothing will stop him or get in his way of doing this act based on the premise that the LORD will never stop existing! Pretty strong vow don't you think? Gehazi was so determined to get what he wanted--it was a premeditated act it was not something he was seduced into doing--and in so doing he vows a vow that was forbidden.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7)

And goes against basic Christian practice.

"[Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have." (Hebrews 13:5)

So here at the end of verse 20 we see him run after him. This word run can also be translated "run speedily" he did not just casually go after him he "ran speedily after him" how shameful. It's indicative of running after the world and the things therein.

"An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief." (Proverbs 6:18)

"Their feet [are] swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery [are] in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Romans 3:15-18)

"Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

Gehazi was supposed to be following the Lord. He was supposed to be a servant of Elisha. He was to be about learning the ways of God; not the ways of the world. How is your discipleship coming? So Gehazi follows after Naaman. Follows means pursued or chased he literally chased him down to get what he wanted. Why do we, as followers of our Lord Jesus,

follow men? Why do we chase after them? Oh, we must run to the miracle crusades, promise keeper rallies, and the new prophet in town to find out the latest from the throne room of God. As if we are less than they? As if we do not have God's ear? We are "Pro-testants" not Catholics. We do not need the pope or a Protestant pope. Gehazi ran to man and not to God for the things he wanted don't let this be said of you!

"So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw [him] running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, [Is] all well? And he said, All [is] well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments." (5:21,22).

As Naaman turns to Gehazi so to will the world turn to you if you're after it. Naaman, at this point, thinks there is something wrong he says is all well this is shalom-- peace. In verse 22 Gehazi's response is all is well how can it be with him? Is he not convicted? No, he is aware of what he's doing. At this point he could have turned back and so can you if you are on the edge of making a mistake.

Perhaps God is using this message right now to turn you back, if so, do it; he will receive you! Please note, at this point to validate his claim he sets forth a series of lies. Lie one, my master hath sent me. Don't bring Jesus into your plots and don't include him in your lies. The devil is a liar not Jesus Christ!

"Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

Lie two, behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets, including others? Remember misery loves company. Now he gets to what he wants by telling lie three, give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. Three lies to help his cause, and please note, he is supposed to be a servant of the man of God! We as Christians need to

evaluate our actions and motives in service to our Lord Jesus. Can we be caught in lies?

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." (Colossians 3:9)

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny [him], being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." (Titus 1:16)

He asks for a talent of silver and two changes of garments. A talent was a round weight of money it was equal to about \$2176! He was not asking much was he? But what about Christian ministries that are asking for a certain dollar amounts, "I need one million dollars or God is going to call me home"! or asking for \$1,000 donations from people, but I ask you what about free will giving to the Lord?

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

"And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid [them] upon two of his servants; and they bare [them] before him." (5:23)

In verse 23 Naaman says, be content. The word content means to agree or be willing. Do you see how generous the innocent party is? Do you see how Gehazi plays a game with him? Notice he urged him. Gehazi is trying to act humble as if he did not want that much he is a LIAR!

"And when he came to the tower, he took [them] from their hand, and bestowed [them] in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed." (5:24)

Note, in verse 24 how he bestows them in the tower also translated stronghold who in the world is he hiding them from? Does not our Lord Jesus see everything? Does he not know his master is a prophet? What are the things hidden in your heart that you're keeping from the Lord?

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:20,21)

"But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence [comest thou], Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither." (5:25)

Do you see the boldness of Gehazi that after his theft he's not repentant at all, and even goes before his master? So it is with us, after doing something we know to be wrong, we go into prayer. But the Master knows what's in your heart. Notice Elisha confronts him right away--so to bring him to repentance--so also Jesus will confront you on matters in your heart. We must repent of the things in our life that offend him.

Gehazi puts forth lie four, thy servant went no whither. Instead of repenting he tries to cover it up with more lying. Hear what the Scripture says to this.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Revelation 21:27)

"And he said unto him, Went not mine heart [with thee], when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? [Is it] a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?" (5:26)

The word heart means the mind or the conscience. Elisha is saying, not that his heart went with him, but his conscience, his feelings, his way of thinking! Do you get it? In other words, Gehazi should have been filled with the thinking of Elisha, he should have remembered what Elisha had taught him. Beloved, it's important to keep in mind the words of our Lord and the teaching of the Bible.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:11)

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed [thereto] according to thy word." (Psalm 119:9)

Elisha asks Gehazi a series of questions [Is it] a time to receive money, and to receive garments. Money and garments are first on the list of the things he received. Elisha is trying to convict him; he's trying to bring the things of sin to Gehazi's attention. No, it's not a time to receive these things if you are in service to Christ. You're not to do the things Gehazi did.

The most important thing is that we be about the work of Jesus and keeping ourselves separate from the world. He then continues to ask him and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? In other words, will you become wealthy at someone else's expense? That's being a pimp.

"The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper [as white] as snow." (5:27)

Elisha gives this stinging prophecy to Gehazi as to the perpetual leprosy that will be imposed upon him and to his seed for ever. Someone will say "but that is cruel" or "why would God allow this?" notice in all of Gehazi's plots he had chances given to him to repent and he did not. Even to the end when asked by Elisha about the money and garments he refused to acknowledge his fault.

We find many men and women with leprosy. Even now, today, there is leprosy--sin is there not? What is implied is that the generations of the sons of Gehazi had, did have, and will continue to have leprosy to this day. There will be consequences in your wrong actions, and devastating results that can be far reaching. What do we learn from this message?

We are to be working for Christ, and not allowing ourselves to get involved in the world. Stop the lying and the cover up. We must be credible people in our witness for our Lord. Understand nothing you do as a Christian will go unnoticed by the Lord Jesus; all your thoughts and intentions He knows very well. Before you act think about what it is you are going to do; it could very well have long lasting effects. God loves you and desires to see all His children walk in truth.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John 1:4)

God bless you, and keep you, go to Him in truth!

Amen