

## Sunday, September 21, 2025 – GEHAZI THE SELF SERVANT – Pastor John Henry Raskin

This reflection explores the biblical story of Naaman's healing and Gehazi's failure, (2 Kings 5:16-27) drawing lessons on faith, integrity, and God's grace. It highlights the contrast between humility and greed, emphasizing the spiritual implications of choices under both the Old and New Covenants.

- **Naaman's healing and humility:** Naaman, a Syrian general, was healed of leprosy by following the prophet Elisha's instructions, humbling himself and rejecting idolatry and worshiping the God of Israel.
- **Elisha's refusal of payment:** Elisha refused Naaman's gifts, demonstrating that God's grace and miracles cannot be bought, signifying Elisha's faith and God's generosity.
- **Naaman's new faith practice:** Naaman requested soil from Israel to worship God properly and sought Elisha's absolution for participating in his master's idolatrous worship, which Elisha granted, showing grace in complex social contexts.
- **Witnessing faith in ungodly environments:** The story encourages Christians to be gracious witnesses in non-Christian settings, reflecting God's grace through actions rather than confrontation.
- **Gehazi's greed and deceit:** Gehazi, Elisha's servant, dishonestly obtained gifts from Naaman, lying to both Naaman and Elisha, which led to a divine curse of leprosy on him and his descendants.
- **Violation of Old and New Covenants:** Gehazi's actions broke Old Testament laws against covetousness, stealing, and lying, and also violated New Testament teachings on honesty, integrity, and the rejection of greed in favor of simple trust in God's provision.
- **Consequences of greed:** Gehazi's love of money caused spiritual and physical ruin, serving as a caution against valuing material gain over faithfulness and truth.
- **Call to integrity and faithfulness:** The story urges believers to maintain integrity, trust in God's provision, and live as testimonies of grace, avoiding compromise and embracing humility and repentance.

### 1 Timothy 9-10

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

### Proverbs 20:7

The righteous man walks in his integrity;  
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### Psalms 51:10

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And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

## **GEHAZI THE SELF SERVANT**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week, we dove into the Old Testament account in 2 Kings about how the great and prideful Syrian General Naaman was healed of his leprosy when he humbled himself under the mighty hand of God by following the instructions given him by the prophet Elisha.

A key part of that story was that when Naaman was healed, in humility and gratitude he offered Elisha a huge reward in silver and gold.

Today, we are going to continue in the same chapter 5 of 2 Kings and discover more of that story.

It is my hope that here we will uncover some timeless truths that apply to our own relationship with God and others both within and outside of the family of God that is the Body of Christ.

Today we will reflect on the actions of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the prophet, and consider how his poor choices violated both the Old and New Covenants with God and for which there were grave consequences.

Through this reflection, let us seek wisdom for our own lives, that we may remain steadfast in integrity and obedience.

As we ended our message last week, Naaman had offered Elisha gifts of gold and silver in gratitude for his miraculous healing. This was Elisha's response.

**2 Kings 5:16**

**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.**

Elisha's refusal of payment for his healing honors God's grace, making clear that God's gifts cannot be bought.

God's mighty work in Naaman to heal him of his leprosy had facilitated a change in him on the inside as well as the outside by creating in him a certainty of faith in the God of Israel.

The next verses show us just how deep and honest Naaman's conversion is when he tells Elisha this...

### **2 Kings 5:17**

**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.**

While this seems a curious request, remember that Naaman had only known idolatry before his sudden healing and conversion to faith in Yahweh, much like the conversion that we experienced when we turned from our idols and became new creations when we received Christ.

Naaman was going to use the two mule-loads of the soil of Israel to return home and build an altar to sacrifice to Yahweh, the one true God of Israel.

His understanding and belief being that he could only truly worship the Lord on holy ground, specifically soil from Israel because he had come to understand that there was no God in all the earth but the God of Israel.

And then he goes further, seeking counsel and absolution from his new spiritual advisor Elisha when he says...

### **2 Kings 5:18-19**

**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.**

Apparently, Elisha gives him the absolution that he seeks when he says go in peace.

Here is another one of those curious and wonderful moments in the Bible that reminds us of something that we may be facing in our own lives.

I suspect that there are some of you that may work in an environment that is by its nature not godly and with people who are not Christians.

Unfortunately, there are many Christians that feel that they are being persecuted in such environments when they confront those who do not believe and receive resistance...

...but perhaps the role of a true witness of Christ in an ungodly environment is simply to be gracious and merciful and a noticeable example of what Christ has done in them much like the Israelite slave girl who took pity on Naaman.

We must realize that Naaman was going back to his role in Syria as a General and close aide to the King.

Perhaps Elisha understood that Naaman would be a great witness to Yahweh in Syria by returning healed by the God of Israel and letting it be known that the Prophet of the Lord would accept no payment.

The whole story of Naaman's conversion reminds me of this scripture in Acts 3 when the Lord uses Peter and John to heal the crippled beggar...

**6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.**

Now we come to the sad part of 2 Kings 5. The story of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha...

As we mentioned last week, Elisha had been the servant of the Prophet Elijah and was faithful to his master and learned at his feet and became an even greater prophet if such were possible than Elijah.

The Bible shows us that Elisha did twice as many miracles as Elijah.

Elisha's Servant Gehazi was with Elisha when he performed a number of these miracles and is the only servant of Elisha that the Bible mentions by name.

Gehazi was with Elisha when he raised a dead child to life, and it was Gehazi's eyes that were opened to see the glorious armies of the Lord

surrounding Israel's enemies when he feared that they were greatly outnumbered.

We have reason to believe then, that Gehazi was being groomed to be to Elisha what Elisha was to Elijah, a great prophet and his successor.

Unfortunately, through a lapse of integrity it was not to be so.

Let's just read the whole sad story and then talk about it...

### **2 Kings 5:20-27**

**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 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.**

A recap...

Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, thinks his master foolish for accepting no payment from, as he says disdainfully, “this Syrian”, and runs after Naaman and lies, saying that Elisha has sent him to request silver and clothing for two young prophets.

Naaman, eager to give, provides even more than Gehazi asks. Gehazi hides the gifts and lies again to Elisha about what he did.

As a result, Elisha pronounces God’s judgment: “Naaman’s leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever”. Gehazi leaves Elisha’s presence, his skin as leprous as snow.

I wonder if any of you have seen the movie Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, where Indiana teams up with his father to track down the legendary holy grail.

However, when they arrive at the spot where this treasure lies, their enemy, Walter Donovan, holds them at gunpoint and seeks the grail for himself.

The ancient knight Templar who has guarded the grail for centuries warns Donovan to choose wisely.

Without hesitating however, the greedy Donovan lunges for the shiniest gold and bejeweled chalice he can find.

Confident that he has discovered the glorious treasure, which is rumored to impart eternal life and youth to those who drink from it, he quickly fills it with water from his canteen and drinks.

For a moment, nothing seems to change. Then Donovan begins to age rapidly and violently, dying before everyone.

That is when the ancient knight states without emotion, “He chose poorly.”

Gehazi chose poorly.

Let's look at the cautionary tale of Gehazi from both new and old covenant perspectives.

Under the Old Covenant, God’s law emphasized honesty, faithfulness, and reverence for God’s name.

The Ten Commandments declare, “You shall not covet”, “You shall not steal” and “You shall not give false testimony”.

Gehazi’s actions violated these commands in several ways:

He coveted what was not his.

He lied to both Naaman and to Elisha

He stole by deceit, taking the payment that Elisha had refused.

In so doing, he dishonored God’s purpose, making God’s grace appear for sale, contrary to God’s desire.

The Old Covenant called for a life set apart, marked by trust in God’s provision and obedience to His commands.



Gehazi's actions showed a heart that trusted in material gain over God's sufficiency.

The New Covenant, established through Jesus Christ, calls us to an even higher standard.

Jesus teaches, "No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve both God and money".

He also warns us to "Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one"

Gehazi's behavior violated the spirit of the New Covenant in these ways:

He was not honest or transparent, failing the call to integrity that Jesus gave us.

He allowed greed to rule his heart, contrary to Jesus' teaching to seek first God's kingdom.

He misrepresented the gospel of grace, suggesting that God's blessings can be bought, while the New Testament declares, "You have received freely, freely give".

This scripture, Paul's warning to his disciple Timothy, sums it up neatly...

### **1 Timothy 9-10**

**But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.**

**10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**

In Gehazi's case the love of money caused his entire legacy... To him and also to his children, to be one of a dreaded disease... leprosy.

Gehazi's story is a warning and a call.

It reminds us that the God of both covenants seeks integrity and truth in our inward being.

Whether under the covenant of law or grace, God desires our hearts, and for our outward actions to reflect our faith.

If you remember last week, we said that sin is spiritual leprosy.

Naaman was healed of his spiritual leprosy, in his case pride, by God's grace.

He humbled himself and in so doing he chose wisely and was blessed.

Gehazi, whose sin was greed, indulged his greed and doubled down by lying. In so doing he brought upon himself a curse and became a leper.

Gehazi may have felt justified to take the payment in that he saw Naaman as an enemy of Israel and didn't want him to get something for nothing from the God of Israel.

He may have felt that he was doing God a favor.

If that was the case, he was misrepresenting God's grace.

God's ways are not man's ways.

It is our fallen human nature for us to do what seems right to us and then expect God to honor it.

Some scholars think that Gehazi was going to use the money and the changes of clothing to actually bless the sons of the prophets, although he had certainly lied about the need.

It is very common for people to think that their religious end justifies the dubious means by which they finance it.

However, as followers of Christ, we are called to integrity in all things—trusting God’s provision, speaking truth, and reflecting the free grace we have received.

The Apostle Paul writes, “I strive always to keep my conscience clear before both God and man”

Let us do likewise, rejecting compromise and choosing faithfulness.

### **Proverbs 20:7**

**The righteous man walks in his integrity;  
His children are blessed after him.**

Sadly, Gehazi’s duplicitousness caused his curse to adhere to his children and their children as well.

May the example of Gehazi turn our hearts toward humility and repentance.

Let us remember that God’s grace is not for sale, and our lives are to be lived as a testimony to His faithfulness and love.

May we walk in the light of Christ, upholding the integrity that honors our Lord, both under the Old Covenant’s commands and the New Covenant’s call to love, truth, and grace.

In the words of a humble man after God's own heart, the shepherd-King David, let us make this our prayer in a world where sin is crouching at the door...

**Psalms 51:10**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

Let's pray...