

Forgotten Lives

Gehazi

2 Kings 5:20-27

August 16, 2026

HDBC

Today we are back in the ***Forgotten Lives*** series and will consider a man who was in a strategic place where he had an opportunity to make a positive impact on the people around him and for the Kingdom. But made a tragic error in judgment and will forever be associated with it.

There are some mistakes that are made that are so egregious that the people will always be associated with them.

Benedict Arnold will always be associated with treason.

Aaron Burr will always be known as the killer of Alexander Hamilton.

Lee Harvey Oswald, for assassinating John F. Kennedy.

In the Bible . . .

Cain is associated with the murder of his brother, Abel.

Delilah is associated with deception of her husband, Samson.

Judas Iscariot will always be associated with betrayal.

But there are others who are associated with bad decisions. **Gehazi is one such man.** His story is found in 2 Kings 4-8. He is overshadowed by the great prophet, Elisha. Yet, we can learn from his bad decision and the results that flowed from it. Here is some context.

During the time of Israel's divided kingdom there were a number of prophets whom God called to be His spokesmen to the people and to the leaders. Two of the most prominent ones have similar names. This has caused a lot of confusion.

The first prophet was named Elijah.

The second was Elisha

Elijah

Raised a widow's son from death to life

Predicted a severe drought over Israel

Faced the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel

Experienced severe depression and was encouraged by God

Confronted Ahab over his taking of Naboth's vineyard

Went to heaven in a chariot of fire in a whirlwind

Elisha

Widows oil multiplies as she pours it into other jars

Resurrection of dead son

Naaman is healed after dipping in Jordan river

Iron axe head floats up from bottom of a river

Gehazi

Was a servant to Elisha. He was Elisha's right-hand man. He was with the man of God and assisted him in his ministry. He was able to hear Elisha's words, see Elisha's actions, and most importantly, witness the power of God working in the lives of people. He had a front-row seat to some of the greatest miracles ever witnessed on the earth.

But made a very bad decision. Led to a severe judgment from the Lord.

The story is found in 2 Kings 5

Naaman was captain in neighboring army. Valiant Warrior. Great leader.

He had leprosy. Heard about Elisha from servant girl. Went to Elisha to

seek healing. Told by messenger to immerse 7 times in Jordan river.

Balked at first. Then obeyed. Healed. **Offered money and gifts to Elisha.**

Elisha refused. Naaman departed for home.

This is where Gehazi enters the story. READ 2 KINGS 5:20-27

When he saw what Naaman offered as a gift, and that Elisha had rejected the offer, the wheels began turning in his mind. Verse 20 clearly indicates his intention. **Naaman wanted to give gifts.** Elisha refused. Not Gehazi.

He saw an opportunity and was determined to find a way to take advantage of it. Note six things:

1. He made a bad decision. (20)

He made a decision. We never act outwardly until we decide inwardly. We never sin with our eyes, ears, words, hands, feet until we first **decide to sin** with our minds. That is where it all starts. And that is where it must be stopped.

2. He pursued a selfish goal. (21)

He had to hustle to catch up with the traveling Naaman, but it was worth the effort. It is amazing how much effort we will sometimes put into sin. That could not have been an easy trip. But he made it. Sometimes sin comes knocking on our door. Sometimes we are guilty of running after it. Once he had decided what he would do, he pursued it. **Pursuit is not wrong, unless you are pursuing the wrong thing.**

3. He used deception to get what he wanted. (22-24)

In order to carry out his plan, he had to lie. He told Naaman that a couple of young prophets had surprised Elisha with a visit and that they needed money and clothing. He further brought Elisha into the situation by claiming that he was actually sent on this mission by Elisha.

Naaman was more than glad to give money and clothing to Gehazi. It actually made him feel better. He was able to reward Elisha for the healing.

4. He concealed his sin from his master. (25)

When confronted by Elisha he immediately denied it all. He had been nowhere. He was given an opportunity to confess and repent. He passed on the chance.

5. He paid a high price for his sin. (26-27)

His selfish and deceptive action costs him dearly. The price he paid was extremely high. He was condemned with the disease of leprosy for the

rest of his life. No chance of healing. Not only impacted Gehazi, but all of his descendants.

Takeaways:

1. Serve faithfully wherever God has placed you.

Gehazi was called to be the assistant to one of the great prophets of the Old Testament era. He was called to serve in the shadows, to assist behind the scenes, to be a key player in the background. Most of us will have a similar calling. Serve where God plants you!

2. Be wary of emotional traps.

What would cause a faithful servant to act as he did? We know that the primary sin involved here is greed. But I believe there were some contributing factors that opened the door for this temptation.

Here was a man who had lived in the shadow of one of the greatest men of God in the O.T. Witnessed miracles. Seen God work. He was close to God. What could have led him to do this thing? **I have a theory that I want to share with you.**

He felt unappreciated, unsuccessful and unnoticed - He lived in the shadow of one who always seemed to succeed where he seemed to fail. There may have been a **growing bitterness** in Gehazi that manifested itself in this action.

Fill in a few more details. It seems that Gehazi was not only relegated to second fiddle, but when given the opportunity to shine, it just never worked out.

Godly couple kept Elisha in their home when he was in the area. Built room for him. Elisha wanted to bless them but they refused to take anything. Gehazi pointed out that they were childless. They would love a son. Elisha prayed and told them they would have a son. They did. Some years later he died. She found Elisha and scolded him for her

suffering, saying that she never asked for a son.

Elisha sent Gehazi ahead and told him to lay his staff on the boy, indicating that he would be healed. Gehazi obeyed, but the boy was not healed until Elisha showed up and did his thing. Ouch! That must have made Gehazi feel like a failure.

Famine in the land. Elisha told Gehazi to make stew for young prophets. He did. One of the young men gathered a poisonous plant and added it to the stew. It was an accident but the men began to get sick. Elisha took some meal and through it into the pot and it was suddenly ok.

Ouch! Once more Gehazi was upstaged by his boss.

When Naaman came to ask for healing, Elisha sent out his servant, presumably, Gehazi. He told Naaman to go dip in the Jordan River. Naaman was furious that Elisha had not come out to meet him in person. Once again, Gehazi is brushed aside as being unimportant.

Gehazi felt unappreciated, unsuccessful and unnoticed. I think bitterness had begun to take root in his life. He may very well have begun to resent Elisha for his success while he himself seemed to fail time and time again.

3. Recognize the power of greed.

It seems to me that Gehazi had plenty of opportunities to recognize that he was being sucked into this particular temptation. Rather than remembering the destructive power of greed, he rationalized.

4. Choose integrity over selfish gain.

Remember that integrity leads you to do the right thing when no one is seeing and no one knows. Of course, God always knows. This is why the ***fear of the Lord*** is a key to maintaining integrity.

5. Determine your response before temptation knocks.

This is very important. Answer the question of **what you will do with temptation** before it comes knocking on your door. Decide ahead of time what you will do.

That is the key to winning in sports. They go over every possible situation and decide ahead of time how they will respond to it.

That is the key to victory on the battlefield. Anticipate all the possible situations and decide ahead of time how they will respond.

This is the key to overcoming temptation.

Poet Carl Sandburg (1878–1967)

There is an eagle in me that wants to soar, and there is a hippopotamus in me that wants to wallow in the mud.