

Forgetting The Power Of God

Text : **II Kings 5: 15-27**

S#1.

INTRODUCTION :

A. In our last lesson we observed the power of God at work.

S#2.

1. A little Israeli girl was captured and enslaved by the Syrians.
2. She was a true believer in God so she told her master about the power of God.
3. The girl had conducted herself in such a way that her master listened to her.
4. Her master (Naaman) had leprosy, an incurable degenerative disease.

B. Her master was an extremely powerful man, so he dared go into enemy territory.

1. He took a letter from the king of Syria to the king of Israel requesting to be cured.
2. The king of Israel panicked, but Elisha the prophet requested Naaman be sent to him.
3. The Syrian commander was prideful and did not want to obey the prophet.
4. His servants persuaded him to obey and he was healed of his leprosy.

C. After Naaman was healed he was very impressed with God and very grateful.

1. He returned to the prophet with a desire to reward him, but Elisha refused money.
2. Naaman professed faith in God and asked for soil to take home to establish an altar.
3. Naaman recognized the power of God to know what he was doing in Syria.
4. He asked for indulgence for the time he was required to bow in the idol's temple.

D. This lesson start where the last one left off.

II Kings 5: 15-27

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23 Naaman said, "Be pleased to take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags with two changes of clothes and gave them to

two of his servants; and they carried *them* before him. **24** When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and deposited them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. **25** But he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere."

26 Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you*, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants? **27** Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper as *white* as snow."

I. Gehazi had great potential, but never lived up to it.**S#3.****A. He was the assistant to the greatest living prophet on earth.****S#4.**

1. Elisha worked at least 16 notable miracles that are recorded.
2. Through Elisha he got to know great men, even to the king. (**II King. 8: 4**)

B. If selected from among the student prophets, he was one of the best.

1. Elisha had confidence enough to confer with him about the ministry. Vs. **14**
2. Elisha would send Gehazi to represent him doing great works. (**Raising the son**)

C. It wasn't specified, but Gehazi was in line to be the successor of Elisha.

1. Joshua was the servant of Moses and succeeded him. (**Exod. 24: 13, 33:11**)
2. Elisha served Elijah before he was taken up. (**I Kings 19 , II Kings 2**)

D. Greed caused Gehazi to forfeited a great future.**II. Over time Gehazi began to harden his heart.****S#5.****A. He started off with compassion for the Shunammite woman. (**II Kings 4: 14**)**

1. She had no son and her husband was old.
 - a. Possibly he could not give her a son.
 - b. He would die soon and leave her with no one to care for her.
2. He advocate for her before the king. (**II King 8: 5**)
 - a. She had taken her family abroad to escape the famine.
 - b. When she came back, someone else had taken her land.

B. By the time her child was grown (**4:18) Gehazi's heart had hardened.**

1. The prophet (church leader) had to deal with a steady stream of problems.
2. There were few prophets and many villages.

C. When the Shunammite woman came to them, she was in obvious distress.

1. She had great faith, we'll see more than Gehazi.
 - a. She left the boy's body unattended and sought the man of God. **S#6.**
 - b. **II Kings 4: 26** – "Please run now to meet her and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?' " And she answered, "It is well."

*** Note :** **If your world suddenly came crashing down around you, name five people you would feel confident to call ?** **S#7.**

*** If other people made that kind of list, who would call you ?** **S#8.**

2. Though she was in great distress, Gehazi did not want to be bothered with her.

a. **II King 4: 27 – When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, “Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me.”** **S#9.**

b. Gehazi had known her for years so he knew her action were not normal.

D. This is a problem with which all church leaders must deal.

1. The prophet (church leaders) had to deal with a steady stream of problems.
 - a. We serve the members of the church. (**II Cor. 11:28**)
 - b. We deal with people in the community seeking assistance from the church.
 - c. Most of the calls are from those who just scam churches.
2. While dealing with the scam artists, the church leader must keep his heart soft.

III. Gehazi lost his awe of God.

S#10.

A. Gehazi’s ministry had become more a vocation than an avocation.

S#11.

1. Gehazi was around holy things so long they began to be mundane.
 - a. Elisha routinely performed miracles. (**Just another day at the office.**)
 - b. He was part of the regular routine of sacrifices ... probably daily.
2. This is why many companies have a “non-fraternization” clause for supervisors.
 - a. Supervisors are not allowed to socialize with those they supervise.
 - b. “Familiarity breed contempt.”

B. Couples drift away from each other for this very reason.

1. Once the new wears of and passions are satisfied, there is no more awe.
2. In premarital counseling every couple is admonished to work at keeping the relationship vibrant, but most don’t until they get in trouble.

C. This is a problem which ALL long-term Christians must battle

1. We come to the same services for so many years they become routine.
 - a. We sing the same songs; set on the same pew.
 - b. We seldom change the way we do anything.

2. We go home from church without the enthusiasm we used to feel.
 - a. We feel good that we worshipped, but we're not made to feel good by it.
 - b. The excitement of being in the presence of God is lost in the routine.
3. God is not as interested in how far we've come as He is in how we're progressing.

IV. When we lose our excitement for God we become ineffective in his service. S#12.

A. God stopped working through Gehazi.

1. Elisha sent Gehazi ahead with his staff to lay on the face of the child.
 - a. Most likely Gehazi was much younger than Elisha so he could go faster.
 - b. Elisha would not have sent him if he did not expect it to work.
2. Gehazi followed his instructions to the letter.
 - a. God did not use him to heal the lad.
 - b. The power was from God, not the staff so it was God who withheld healing.
3. Remember **Psa. 139** ... God knows the thoughts of every man's heart.

B. When we lose our zeal for God we lose our ability to be used by God.

1. It requires a positive attitude to be able to accomplish a positive result.
2. **James 1: 5-8** ... A double-minded man will not be granted anything from God.
3. Once we begin to feel that we cannot accomplish anything for God, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

C. A congregation / a Christian can do everything right and fail if they have cancer of the attitude. S#13.

V. Once one loses his zeal of God the world begins to look better and better. S#14.

A. Gehazi got to the point that just serving God was no longer a reward within itself.

1. Elisha viewed himself as the servant of an awesome God. (*Serve from devotion*)
2. Gehazi viewed himself as an employee of God. (*Serve to receive*)
3. The difference was a devoted heart, the proper motivation.

B. The god of this world begins diverting one's vision to the things he offers. S#15.

1. If we do not keep our hearts focused on God and our zeal growing, Satan moves in.
II Cor. 4: 4 – ... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel ... S#16.

2. This is the reason the scriptures repeatedly admonish us to stay focused.
 - a. **Col. 3: 1-3** Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking **S#17.**
the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on
earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 - b. The setting of one's mind is a conscious act.
 - c. It is an act that must be made over and over.
3. Satan will ply us with all manner of gifts ... distract with things of this world.
 - a. **I John 2: 15** – Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone **S#18.**
loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (*Choose one*)
 - b. Keeping our minds set requires constant spiritual discipline.
- C. Our Lord made it clear that our loyalty can never be divided.
 1. **Luke 16: 13** – No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one **S#19.**
and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise
the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.
 2. Compare : **Rom. 8: 6-7**

VI. Like yeast in the dough, covetousness will quietly take over one's life. **S#20.**

- A. As Gehazi stagnated in his relationship with God, covetousness grew within.
 1. He began to have negative thoughts about his mentor. (*Covetous will do anything*)
 - a. **II Kings 5: 20a** – But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, thought, **S#21.**
“Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean,
by not receiving from his hands what he brought. ...”
 - b. It was there; we weren't asking; he was foolish for not taking what was offered.
 2. Most of us have been in circumstances where we felt almost obligated to
take advantage of a situation which presented itself.
 - a. Achan saw that gold just lying in the rubble of Jericho and couldn't resist. **Josh 7**
 - b. Abraham was disciplined not to accept from the king of Sodom. **Gen. 14**
- * *This sin overtakes me every time I go to a buffet restaurant ... eat way too much.*
3. The covetousness that ate away at Gehazi's heart resulted in leprosy eating his body.
- B. Covetousness is one of Satan's favorite lies.
 1. **John 8: 44** – he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
 2. Satan always promises more than he delivers.
 - a. Eve ... “You will be like God.”
 - b. Gehazi ... Money, clothes, olive groves, vineyards, sheep, oxen, servants.

C. We have an epidemic of covetousness in America leaving destruction in its wake.

1. Debt is at an all-time high. **S#22.**
 - a. People want more than they can afford ... and they want it NOW.
 - b. They sacrifice their future in order to have more NOW. (*Why not? Everyone is?*)
2. People want to be more, better, different than they are.
 - a. Record amounts spent on cosmetics, plastic surgery, instant diet medications.
 - b. We must be better dressed than others. *People are killed for jackets, shoes, etc.*
3. Covetousness causes people to be jobless.
 - a. Won't take a job unless it pays more than they are worth.
 - b. People are constantly looking for a better job that pays more with less work.
4. This attitude of discontentment spills over into families causing divorces.
 - a. People can't be satisfied because they are always looking for more and better.
 - b. They want a spouse that looks better, earns more, makes them feel better, etc.

D. Covetousness produces dishonesty.**S#23.**

1. Gehazi lied both the gain what he wanted and to hide what he had done.
 - * *Every lie breeds another and then another and*
2. Ananias and Sapphira lied because of covetousness ... they wanted to keep.
3. This is tax season and many will lie to cheat on their taxes.

ILL. : *Letter to IRS. Enclosed please find a check in the amount of \$3000. Several years ago I cheated on my taxes and it has been bothering me ever since. P.S. If it continues to bother me I will send the balance later.*

CONCLUSION :**A. Long-term Christianity has many dangers. We must :**

1. never lose our awe of God ... His glory and His power.
2. guard against stagnation and loss of spiritual desire.
3. keep our zeal from languoring so we don't become ineffective in God's service.
4. We must trust God and learn to be satisfied with what He gives us.

B. Just because we made a commitment to Christ years ago does not mean that we have a permanent relationship. Satan works to destroy it.* **Wife : Do you love me?****Husband : I told you I did 30 yrs ago. If I change my mind, I'll let you know. S#24.**

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Public Reading

II Kings 4: 8-37

8 Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food. **9** She said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually. **10** Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be, when he comes to us, *that* he can turn in there."

11 One day he came there and turned in to the upper chamber and rested. **12** Then he said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." And when he had called her, she stood before him. **13** He said to him, "Say now to her, 'Behold, you have been careful for us with all this care; what can I do for you? Would you be spoken for to the king or to the captain of the army?' " And she answered, "I live among my own people." **14** So he said, "What then is to be done for her?" And Gehazi answered, "Truly she has no son and her husband is old." **15** He said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. **16** Then he said, "At this season next year you will embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant." **17** The woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her.

18 When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers. **19** He said to his father, "My head, my head." And he said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." **20** When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and *then* died. **21** She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* behind him and went out. **22** Then she called to her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and return." **23** He said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath." And she said, "*It will be well.*" **24** Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, "Drive and go forward; do not slow down the

pace for me unless I tell you.” ²⁵ So she went and came to the man of God to Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, “Behold, there is the Shunammite. ²⁶ “Please run now to meet her and say to her, ‘Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?’ ” And she answered, “It is well.” ²⁷ When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, “Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me.” ²⁸ Then she said, “Did I ask for a son from my lord? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me’?”

²⁹ Then he said to Gehazi, “Gird up your loins and take my staff in your hand, and go your way; if you meet any man, do not salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him; and lay my staff on the lad’s face.” ³⁰ The mother of the lad said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” And he arose and followed her. ³¹ Then Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff on the lad’s face, but there was no sound or response. So he returned to meet him and told him, “The lad has not awakened.”

³² When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed. ³³ So he entered and shut the door behind them both and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴ And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵ Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes. ³⁶ He called Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite.” So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, “Take up your son.” ³⁷ Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out.