Study of Elisha - Part 7

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[0:00] Seeking the Lord's blessing, we'll turn to the first portion of scripture we read, the second book of Kings, chapter 5.

And we'll read the words of Elisha in the last verse of the chapter. Verse 27, the leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever.
And he went out from his presence, a leper as white as snow. He went out from his presence, a leper as white as snow.
Now on more than one occasion, I've pointed out the remarkable similarity between the ministry of Elisha and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.
And these similarities include the nature of their ministry, their name, which means the same thing. The fact that they both multiplied bread or multiplied food.
[1:35] They both raised from the dead. And they both healed lepers. Now there's another remarkable similarity here.

Because just as one of the Lord's apostles, Judas Iscariot, was a man found full of covetousness and was banished from the Lord's presence.
So Elisha's servant Gehazi is found much the same way. He is betrayed, Elisha himself, in his own home by those closest to him. He is betrayed by Gehazi, who is found to be a servant full of covetousness, who loves the things of the world and not the things of God.
So you find the covetous disciple appearing close to Elisha, just as you find him appearing close to Jesus. And it's not wrong to say really that Gehazi is in many ways the Judas Iscariot of the Old Testament.
Now whether or not I made this clear, I don't know, but it's worth again pointing out when we trace these similarities between Elisha and Christ. It is not just some kind of game that we are playing with the scriptures.
[2:49] There was a purpose behind these similarities. Just as there is a purpose behind the similarities between Joseph's life and the life of our Lord. Joseph descends into a humiliation and he ascends to a great exaltation.

That parallels the Lord's life almost at every turn, the descent into humiliation and the ascent to exaltation. These things were taught in the Old Testament to prepare the Jews for Christ when he would come.
So that if they were spiritually exercised, they would recognize the life of the Lord as the life of one that corresponded to the Old Testament messiahs.
Elisha and Joseph were Old Testament messiahs. And the spiritually praying would recognize Christ in his life and ministry by comparing him to his predecessors.
And perhaps that is one reason why people such as Nathaniel and the disciples as a whole recognized and saw the glory of Christ when they saw his life and saw it foreshadowed in the Old Testament.
[3:56] And it's also an encouragement to our own faith, to our own belief when we see many hundreds of years before Christ lived, his life almost foreshadowed in great detail in the lives of these great patriarchs and these great prophets.

That is God's revealing of himself. God's proof, as it were, of his own existence, of his own truthfulness, of his glory and of his power. So these analogies themselves have a purpose.
Now I want to look with you at the character of this man Gehazi. And although we've met him a couple of times and passed over him, it is only at this point that his character is actually revealed in the Bible.

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And there are many people like that. They can be in the church of Christ for a long, long time and you perhaps never suspect that things are not right in their souls at all. Many years perhaps elapse before the real truth concerning them comes to the fore.
And that is the way it is with Gehazi. Paul tells Timothy that some men's sins are open beforehand. Other men's sins are made manifest afterwards.
[5:08] Some people die and perhaps the whole truth does not come to the fore. But very often God causes it to be that those who are unhealthy break out and their sin and disease is seen in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that is the way it is with this man Gehazi. And of course it's the test that brings it all out. After all, it was a test that brought it out with Judas. I don't know if you've ever noticed that what really caused Judas to commit the final act of treachery was when Mary broke the bottle of spikenard on the head and feet of the Lord or and poured it over the head and feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Why, he said, was this not sold and the money given to the poor? And the Gospels tell us he said that not because he cared for the poor but because he had the bag.
He was the treasurer amongst the apostles. And he used to take money from that bag. And he couldn't believe the prodigal waste of such so many thousands of pounds in that ointment being poured over a savior whom he had long since begun to despise anyway because he wasn't doing things the way he wanted them to be done.
And it was at that moment when he saw the waste of money and the money slipping out of his own fingers that he went out and he consulted with the chief priests how to put this man to death.
[6:37] You'll notice how his character is finally revealed. After three long years the event comes and the test comes that shows us what this man is like. And very often there's a test like that in your own life and mine.

You can call it the crux of your life. Perhaps the pivot around which your life turns. And the truth of the matter comes out and here you are naked, opened and exposed before everyone.
Well that is how it is with Gehazi. And this is the test and it's a test that he fails miserably. Now the narrative here is fairly straightforward.
But I just want to briefly recap it just so that it's clear in our minds. Now it's a sad end to what was a glorious event, the cleansing of Naaman the leper.
His renewal and his rebirth. What a sad appendix this makes to that history. Now when Naaman is getting ready to go, he is so full of gratitude that he urges Elisha to take some kind of reward of him.
[7:44] Now in verse 15, Naaman returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him. And he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.

Now therefore I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. Now that language, and as it goes on, that language clearly reveals that what he wants to do is give some kind of gift or some kind of token to Elisha in gratitude for his own cure that he's now been washed in the river of the Jordan.
Now it was no small amount that the man had. If you look back at verse 5, you'll find the wealth that Naaman took with him from Syria. We're told halfway through verse 5 that Naaman departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment.
Now just to give you an idea of what kind of sum of money we're talking about, you have ten talents of silver. One talent of silver would be worth approximately ten thousand pounds.
And here you have ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment. That would have made anybody a very wealthy man indeed.
[9:13] Now Elisha refuses that gift. He refuses it. And perhaps there are many reasons for refusing it. He probably just did not want that sum anyway in the first place.

He was a man of God. He was called to what he was doing and he had no need and no concern to have such a great accumulation as that. But there is another aspect to it as well.
And that's this, that he's concerned to take nothing of Naaman. After all, he didn't say, well, I'll take two or three pieces of gold and I'll take one change of raiment because I could do with it.
He doesn't say any of that. He flatly refuses it all. And that's in spite of the fact that on other occasions, for example in chapter 4, he receives the tithes that the man from Baal Shalisha had brought to him.
He accepts them. Now what's the reason? Why the difference? Why does he answer here that he will certainly not accept these gifts that Naaman is giving him?

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[10:13] Well, the reason is this, and you could call it perhaps a principle of mission, and I think I've spoken about it in this pulpit not too long ago.

You find it in Paul. Whenever Paul is dealing with those who are newly converted or those among whom he is working who are heathen, he does not accept tithes or money from them.
He adamantly refuses it. And he explains himself. He does not wish the gospel to be evil spoken of. Whenever the gospel goes out into new territory, uncharted territory, the missionary labors to support himself.
When a church is established and when people are brought to a firm faith in God, then the church is meant to uphold those who preach. That is Paul's own doctrine. But the planter must not do that, because obviously the planter will be open to some kind of suspicion.
This is why you're doing it, or this is your whole reason for coming into our midst. So that's how you find Paul working, and that's how you find Elisha working here. He refuses it.
[11:27] Why? Because Naaman is a Syrian. He's going back to Syria, and there are no other believers known there to Elisha, probably none known to Naaman. Naaman is to be a great, powerful witness as commander-in-chief of the Syrian army, of the power of God.

Elisha doesn't want to compromise that or to hazard it in any way. He says, in effect, no, go. Go the way you are. I'll take nothing from your hand. The Lord cured you and return with your presence back to Syria.
And you'll notice how he speaks later on to Gehazi in verse 26. And this confirms really what I'm saying. When Gehazi came back to Elisha, Elisha said this, verse 26, Went not my heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?
Now listen to this. Is it a time to receive money and to receive garments and olive yards and vineyards and sheep and oxen? The key words are, is it a time?
You, Gehazi, should have known that it is not the time for such a thing as that. And you brought the cause of the Lord into disrepute by what you have done. So Elisha sends him away and doesn't take a gift from him.
[12:47] Now, Gehazi can hardly believe what his master has done. And he says, my master has spared this Syrian. He says, I'm going after him and I'm going to take something off him.

And so Gehazi does that. He gets ready his own chariot. Or he makes preparation. And out he goes to follow Naaman. And he catches up.
Or Naaman turns around and sees him approaching. And Naaman, as the newborn child of God, the minute he sees the servant of God there, he stops, he turns around and he says, is everything well?
Is all well? He has the childlike concern for all things belonging to the Lord's kingdom. A beautiful thing. But here comes Gehazi. And Gehazi says, yes, everything he says is all right.
And then he spins his story. It's a clever story and we'll come back to it in a moment. But he spins the story. He says, two young men from the sons of the prophets have come to my master.
[13:47] And my master has nothing to give them. And Gehazi says, well, give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments. Now, that's nothing to Naaman.

Naaman is very ready and he's very willing to give that. And in fact, Naaman urges him and he says, take two talents of silver. You're doubling the thousands. Take two talents of silver. And the silver is loaded into bags.
And two servants are sent along with Gehazi to carry this load back to Samaria. And Gehazi can hardly believe how well everything's gone. There are the two servants in front of him with two bags of silver.
And as they come to the hill, it's called a tower here in verse 24, but the word probably means the hill. Perhaps the hill that just overlooks Samaria. He stops them there.
He takes the silver off them and he hides the silver in a place he's carefully prepared. And then he goes back quite the thing into the presence of Elisha.
[14:50] But Elisha turns to him and he says, literally, whence Gehazi? Where Gehazi? It's a very brief question in the Hebrew.

And Gehazi feels that the eyes are going through him like a flame of fire. And he says, I didn't go anywhere. And Elisha says, do you not realize that I went with you where you were?
Is it a time for everything you did, for oxen, vineyards, to receive changes of clothing and silver? The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your seed forever.

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And the chapter ends in the solemn words that Gehazi went out of his presence, a leper as white as snow. So, my friends, this man is a fearful man.
And he's fearful because he's not on his own. There are many like him. There always have been and there always will be. What kind of man was he?
[15:49] Well, he was outwardly religious. But inwardly he was covetous and he was a liar. He was religious, but he was a greedy liar.

At bottom, down underneath it all, that's what he was. And it came out. And because of that, he had the mark of sin etched into his body for life.
Now, first, he's a religious man. Now, this is important. There's no doubt that he was a religious man. Like Judas Iscariot, I'm sure he was chosen because he looked outwardly the part.
He was an able man. He belonged to the sons of the prophets. He would have. Elisha would have chosen him personally as the one he thought most likely to succeed himself and to do great good in the kingdom of God upon the earth.
He could speak well. He could think very quickly. Even when the... You'll remember when Elisha was staying with the widow woman. And Elisha says, what shall we do for this woman?
[16:58] He has. He just comes out like that quick as a flash. There is no child. This is her great need. He's quick. He's a quick thinker. And he's a man, I'm sure, that the sons of the prophet themselves were elevating and saying that this man is very worthy to be a successor to Elisha.

And so he becomes Elisha's personal servant. That was a period of tutoring. Just as Elisha followed Elijah for eight years, so Gehazi was put into the tutelage and into the training of Elisha, the man of God.
So he would be religious. And I'm sure, my friends, that that tells us just how wrong we can be about people. How wrong we can be.
We make our estimations of this man and that one. And we say, oh, well, what a fine person that is. And deep down the person is rotten and corroding with greed or lying or something of that kind.
Elisha himself got it wrong. Maybe gradually he was suspecting it. But how far Gehazi was from a true man of God.
[18:09] Now, he was religious in his lips. Now, look at this very carefully. Look at verse 20 and listen to what Gehazi says. Now, he's only speaking to himself.

He's not speaking out loud. But I'm sure he uses the kind of words that he would use normally in speaking to people. Verse 20. Now, here you are with the expression, as the Lord liveth.
Now, that was an oath. It was the form of an oath. And you find Elisha using it himself in verse 16. When Elisha is refusing the gifts, he says, as the Lord liveth, I will receive none.
Now, Gehazi, like many a hypocrite, has learned to speak just the way the Lord's people speak. He uses the same form of words. And he uses this oath.
Now, as I said, this is something he's saying to himself. But I have no doubt that he used it from day to day in his own speech. As the Lord liveth. And you would think, listening to this man, that he was one of the Lords.
[19:27] He knew how to pick up phrases. And he would put them in his pocket. And he would use them. And he spoke just like a person who feared the Lord. And who reverenced the true God of Israel.

His religion was in his lips. He could speak the language of Canaan. But there's more, my friend, to Christianity than speaking the language of Canaan. And not only that, but there are certain religious acts.
Which he seems to perform enthusiastically. That's the only way I can put it. Because that's the way it seems to me to come across in chapter 4 and verse 31.
You remember when the woman's son died. The Shunammite woman. Her young son died. He had some kind of sunstroke. And he died at noon.
And Elisha sent Gehazi with his rod. Up to the bedroom of that child. And we're told in chapter 4.
[20:33] And in verse 31. That Gehazi passed on before them. That is, Gehazi was even quicker than Elisha and the woman. He was at this house.

And he was going quickly there. And he laid the staff upon the face of the child. But there was neither voice nor hearing. And when he went again to meet him, he told him, saying, the child is not awaked.

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Now, it gives you the impression of somebody who's really quick to do this act himself. It's a religious act. And connected with it, there's the stretching out of the rod. And there is some idea in Gehazi's mind of power and glory.
He's got the rod now in his own hand. And what a thrilling thought that is for him. He is going to be seen at the house of this woman as the man of God. And he's going to stretch out the rod.
And you can almost imagine the ceremony and the pause before he takes the rod. And he stretches it out and touches the child. But nothing happens. We'll see in a moment why.
[21:35] He looks like a man who is almost too willing to do the deed that's been asked him. Who is associated with it. He's quick and eager. Too quick and eager to do that.

Now, my friends. Paul speaks. And it's a solemn thing. He speaks to Timothy about a religion that exists in form but not in power.
And interestingly, he tells us that it will be a real mark of the last days. That in the days when men shall be covetous. When men shall have itching ears listening to the gospel.
Wanting to be scratched just the way they want it. When men will be lovers of themselves more than lovers of God. And he's talking about professing people there.
Loving themselves more than loving God. He sums up their description by saying that they have the form of godliness. But that they deny the power thereof.
[22:36] They have its form in the words they use. The expressions. And they have its form in certain acts. Religious acts which they perform.

But in the lips. Which use the right phrases. And in the life. There is no power. Power. The power of God is absent.
The power of God that would really sanctify that heart. The power of God that would make that man a true child of God. The power of God that would have power with men.
And prevail with men. Was absent. It was external. It was lip religion. It wasn't inward. And it wasn't heartfelt.
And that's the way it is with Gehazi. Here he goes following the man of God everywhere. And he looks and sounds like a man of God. But he's nothing of the sort. Take for example his lips.
[23:36] Take his words. You find. For example. Look at this little indicator. And there are some things that just reveal certain things about a person. In verse 20 again.

Gehazi the servant of Elisha. The man of God said. Behold my master. Has spared Naaman. This Syrian.
Now. What comes through in that expression. But contempt. Contempt. Naaman has just been born again. As the child of God.
The angels of God are rejoicing in heaven. The Lord himself. We're told. Rejoices over Jerusalem. And there is rejoicing in the Trinity itself. At the salvation of a soul.
Brought into the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. From death to life. Elisha is glad. But. Gehazi sees him as Assyrian. That's what he is.
[24:33] To him. He is Assyrian. That tells us that for him. His religion is a nationalistic thing. Or it's a patriotic thing. In fact. Better. A non-converted Jew.

Than a converted Syrian. As far as Gehazi is concerned. This man is first and foremost a Syrian. Whatever else has happened to him. And because of that. Money should be got off him.
His gifts should have been taken. And his gifts should have been used. And this Gehazi. Well if Gehazi was going to speak about it. I'm sure he would say. Why are these not. Gifts not taken. And distributed.
Amongst the sons of the prophets. Or distributed amongst the poor. Better still. Just like Judas said in public. When he couldn't even keep inside. The bad feelings that he had. Judas couldn't contain himself.
And I'm sure that's the kind of thought here. He's not really concerned. For the sons of the prophets. Or the poor. He's just concerned. About himself. And Naaman is just Assyria.
[25:33] That's the spirit of the elder brother. In the parable of the prodigal son. Remember when the prodigal son came home. The elder brother says to his father. This your son.

Has wasted his substance. Doesn't call him his brother at all. This your son. He just looks at this man. Where he was. And what was true of him.
And he has written him off because of that. His background has indicted. Validated him. It doesn't matter what's happened to him now. It's where he came from. That matters to him.

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Hey my friend. It's sad to say. You meet that kind of thing. In the professing church of Christ still. There are some people who evaluate others. According to where they came from. What their background was.
What their job was. Or how much of the gospel they heard. When they were children. It seems as though if you come from another place. Or another kind of job. Or what you would call.
[26:26] Perhaps a lower strata of society. It's to be written off. Or it's not worth the same. That reveals a lot. About a person. The expression. This Syria.

Tells us a lot. About Gehazi. Ah my friends. How do you feel. When a person professes Christ. How do you feel. When a soul is turned. From death to life.
Is that the kind of thing you look at. Or are you rejoicing. Because a soul. Is brought. Into the kingdom of heaven. These things. Tell a lot. About the kind of hearts we have.
The kind of people we are. And then again. With respect to his lips. He can lie. Just as easily. As he can take an oath. Oh yes. He's learned to say. As the Lord liveth. And as the Lord liveth.
And I'm sure he's picked up. Many another phrase. And many another piece of knowledge. From Elisha. But he can lie. Just as easily. And when something is concerned. To do with himself. He can lie.
[27:22] Through his teeth. Very very easily. My friends. Can the same fountain. Produce sweet water. And bitter water. Does James not say.

That if a man professes God. And does not learn. To bridle his tongue. That man's religion. Is vain. Profitless. It is worth nothing. His lying lips.
Reveal. That he is a double minded man. He's unstable. In all his ways. So let that man think. Let him not think. That he will receive anything. From the Lord. His lying lips.
Show his true heart. I'll come back. To the whole question. Of lying. Just in a moment. He's a double minded man. And he's unstable.
In all his ways. There's no power. In his lips. In fact. There is deceit there. You even take his action. This religious act.
[28:16] That. All he does. So impressively. Down comes the rod. On the face. There's no life. Nothing happens to the boy. Why? Because God doesn't honor him.

There's no power. In his own soul. So why should any power. Be in the rod. That his hand holds. God. Doesn't. Honor him. At all. Now I've heard some people saying that.
Elisha sent Gehazi. With the rod. Just to preserve the body. As it were. To put a kind of. Circle around and say. No one come near this body.
And no one take it away. Until my master comes. But if you notice Gehazi's words. That's not at all. What Gehazi went to do. At the end of verse 31. We're told this.
The last sentence. Of verse 31. Wherefore. He went again. To meet him. That's Gehazi. Went to meet Elisha. And he told him saying. The child is not awake.
[29:14] That tells us what he went for. And it tells us what he expected. And. He's full of disappointment. His religious act.

Wasn't. Accompanied. With power. Ah my friend. Should it not fill our hearts with fear. That we might live. Outwardly.
With a form. And inwardly. Have just. No. Power. In our lives. No spiritual strength. Depth. Or reality. In our souls.
At all. So. With religion. It's just a veneer. It's a veneer. Underneath it. The truth. Comes out. Now. What is the truth? Well.
In the first place. He's. Greedy. He's covetous. And in fact. Elisha tells us. What kind of thing. Is going on. In his heart. In verse 26.
[30:09] Elisha says to him. Is it a time. To receive money. And garments. And olive yards. And vineyards. And sheep. And oxen. I believe there. That Elisha. From the hand of God.

Has had an insight. Into what's going on. In Gehazi's heart. Gehazi's looked at the silver. And the gold. And all he can think of. Is oxen. Vineyards. Sheep. Servants. Made servants.
That's the way a covetous man's heart works. He's forever translating. These things. Into what he's going to do. What am I going to do next? What's my next project? What can I do next.
For myself? What can I build next. For myself? What's my next investment? What's my next sum? Me. Myself. And I. The unholy trinity.

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That is what occupies the heart. Of the covetous man. Now. Now. You know what covetousness is. Covetousness. Is just having.
[31:05] A non-healthy. Relation. Or a non-healthy love. For the riches. Of this world. Now. We usually think of it. As associated with money.

But. Money. Isn't really a thing. In itself. It's only. Something that you use. Which gives you power. To acquire. What you want. Nobody wants the little.
Pieces of. Of. Metal. That you're given. That's not what matters. What matters. Is the purchasing power. That that gives you. Now. A covetous person.
Is one who desires that. Because of the purchasing power. That this. Thing. Gives him. Now. A poor person.
Can be covetous. Some people think. That only rich people. Are covetous. But that's not the case. Covetousness. Is the desire. For these things. And that can exist.
[32:00] In the heart of a poor man. Just as it can exist. In the heart of a rich man. You could be here. With nothing. And you're saying. Oh good. He's going to speak. About covetousness. Because I'm convinced. That person is covetous.

And you're here. Poor. But covetous. And covetous. To the core. Why? Because you would give. Anything. For that thing. That that person has got. And in what respect.
Then are you better. Than that person. In terms of covetousness. None at all. You can be covetous. And poor. Now. It might be useful.
To strip down covetousness. A little bit more. And ask. Well. What's inside it? What constitutes covetousness? Well. I think. First. That this is in it.
There's a desire. For power. A desire. For power. Because. Money. Makes wealth. And your possession. Of things.
[32:54] Or the amount. That you have. Or the size. Of what you have. To your mind. Gives you some kind of sway. Power. And influence. Over people. Now the covetous heart.

Things like that. The covetous heart. Wants to exalt. Itself. It wants people. To think. A lot. Of you. Because you have sway.
Then. And you have power. Over people. And the covetous man. Wants that. He wants power. Over people. Connected with that. Desire for power. There's the desire.
To be admired. You want people. To admire you. And to think. That you're very successful. You're powerful. You're influential.
Because your estate. Has grown. In this kind of way. There is that in it. The desire. For people. To say. Well. He must be a very able. Or a very clever.
[33:46] Man. Or what have you. The desire. To be admired. And there's no denying. That that goes along with it. You can look at yourself. And say. Well. Do you admire. Or think highly. Of this person.

Because of. What he has. The multitude. Of his possessions. Somehow. That seems to make you. Look up to the person. He acquires a status. That perhaps. He doesn't deserve. At all.
But the fact. That he has. These things. Gives him some kind. Of status. The sheer power. Which wealth brings. Look at all these. So called. Stars. Stars.
In the public eye today. Whether they be sport. Or stars. Or stars. Or stars in music. Or what have you. They have great. Enormous wealth. And people admire them.
And elevate them. On account of the power. And influence. That that wealth. Has given to them. And of course. Along with that. And right deep down. At the heart of it.
[34:38] There is just plain. Selfishness. Selfishness. Selfishness. And what is that? Well. Selfishness. Is just this.

That you are prepared. To put your own wants. Before the needs of others. Even before the needs. Of the kingdom of God. Itself.
That is selfish. Selfish means. Your wants. Before others. Before God. And before. Your fellow man.
Now that's the crux. Of the matter. A covetous person. Will look after himself. First. Number one. And whatever. He thinks he needs. To put himself. On a par. With somebody else. Or above somebody else. Then he'll get that. It doesn't matter. That he might be. Harming the need.
[35:36] Or the right. Of someone else. Or the kingdom of God. He will make sure. That he looks after. Number one. And that's why you very often. Find a covetous person.

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Prepared to lie. He's prepared to cheat. He's prepared to swindle. A covetous person. Doesn't usually. Tell the truth. About what he has.
Exactly. Because if he tells the truth. Often about it. Then maybe he can't acquire. The thing that he wants. So he doesn't tell the truth. He's prepared to lie.
To cheat. And to deceive. Because what he wants. Takes priority. Does that cut close to the bone? If it does.
It's because the word of God. Does precisely that. It does precisely that. The Lord says. Take heed. And beware. Of covetousness.
[36:32] And you'll notice that covetousness. In the New Testament. Is called idolatry. Why? Well. Because the root of all idolatry. Is just having. Affection.

For yourself. And putting the things. That will better yourself. Above God. And your obedience. To the Lord. So you're prepared.
To break the commandments. Whether it's truth telling. Or what have you. In order to acquire. To get power. And to get influence. Now my friends. You remember. What Christ said.
Beware of covetousness. It was in the second portion. We read. In Luke chapter 12. Now that's an interesting. Few verses.
For this reason. When Christ says. Beware of covetousness. What caused him to say that? Well it was a man. In the congregation. Christ was preaching. At the time. And someone in the congregation.
[37:27] Had said. Of course he wasn't preaching. In a synagogue. Where all the reverence. And awe was attached to it. He was preaching outside. So people were. Coming back and responding. People think that church services.

Could be like that. They can't. Discern the difference. Between Christ preaching. In a synagogue. And Christ speaking. In the street. There is a big difference. Between the two things. In any case. This person comes back. And he says. Tell my brother.
To divide the inheritance. With me. Now. We have no idea. About the rights or wrongs. Of that person's claim. Obviously. His brother.
Just wasn't giving to him. The portion of goods. That belonged to him. And he looks on Christ. As a teacher sent from God. And he says. Tell my brother. To divide the inheritance. With me.
And the Lord says. Who made me a judge. Or a divider. Over you. In other words. I haven't come in here. To judge you. In your civil matters. That's not my mission.
[38:22] That's not my prerogative. But he says. I'll tell you this. Take heed and beware of covetousness. I might not judge your case. But I'll judge your heart. And I'm telling you.

He says. That you are covetous. And what's the mark of his covetousness? That he breaks into a sermon. In order to get this dispute sorted out. Now. The dispute might be all right.
In the sense that he might be owed some money. But the fact that he breaks into the middle. Of a sermon. Tells us. That it's more important to him. To get his money. Than it is to listen. To what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying.
And that's what tells the truth. About the man. And if you're in here. Sitting. Thinking about your business. When the word of God is preached. It's the mark of your covetous heart.
That is covetousness. These are the ways. In which covetousness. Reveals itself in the soul. Take heed. And beware. Of covetousness.
[39:21] Now. All these things are so important. I've said that. You can break the commandments. Because of your love for money. That's an important thing.

How many people in business today. Lie very easily. Have you noticed that? But the more covetous a person becomes. The more concerned. Learned to acquire business.
The more easily he lies. He'll say anything. To get your custom. In business. We must be honest. In our dealings. We must be true. We mustn't pretend.
This. That. Or the next thing. Covetousness. Produces lying. And that's why it reveals. Idolatry. You are worshipping self. And you are putting the things of the world. Before the things of God.
How many might be robbing God. To feed themselves. Malachi says. Are you robbing God? How many people won't give to the Lord's cause.
[40:17] Because they have just that little extra thing. That they want to get for themselves. Hardly a need. But just a want. Just a want. Well.

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Leaving that there. You could perhaps. Say one more thing. Well. He didn't ask for all that much. You could say. He said. Give me a talent of silver.
And two changes of garments. After all. There was ten talents of silver. As well as pieces of gold. And ten changes of rain. Well.
There wasn't all that much. But just notice something. What he asks for. Is worth. Many thousands of pounds. In the second place. Gehazi is a clever man.
You're going to see that in a minute. He's very clever. He said. Two prophets have come. Can you give me one talent of silver? He almost suspects. Or he's almost urging Naaman. To say. No. Take two.
[41:12] And sure enough. That's what happens. Naaman says. Take two. And Gehazi says. Oh no. No. That's probably too much. We're told that Naaman had to urge him. To take the two. Whereas he probably planned it that way. In the first place.

Why say two prophets. And ask for one talent of silver. And then again. You'll notice this. He's not allowed to ask for too much. In case he arouses the suspicion of the man. He has to make the story plausible.
Unplausible. He makes it. Covetousness. Now in the second place. This man is a liar. Now that is a grave sin.
And I'll tell you. It is a sin rampant. In today's society. Lying. People seem to think. That they can be as dishonest.
As they like. And that God's wrath. Will not touch them for it. A lying spirit. Is an abomination. To the Lord. Lying.
[42:11] And people lie. So easily. As I said. It's no surprise. Here you see. In the same heart. Lying and covetousness. Just as our society. Is getting more and more covetousness.

So people are lying. More and more easily. Now. It's almost. Remarkable. Just how quickly. This man can lie. He's an accomplished liar.
I mean. Notice. The story. That he comes out with. About these two men. Sons of the prophets. He's got it all worked out. The number that he needs. Where they've come from. Their occupation. The one most likely. To pull at the heart strings. Of Naaman. He's got the story. All worked out. And he avoids implicating. Elisha directly. He doesn't want to do that. He's too clever for that. He says. Elisha doesn't want it. For himself. But Elisha wants to give the thing. To the sons of the prophets. Noticing. He's playing on Naaman's affections. For the Lord's people. Naaman is just newborn.
[43:07] As I said. A child of God. And he loves. Ardently. And with a great. Passionate heat. Everything to do with the Lord's cause. Would that. That would stay in the Lord's people. Would that it would stay.

That passionate love. Naaman had it here. Naaman had it here. And Gehazi knows it. So he uses that. As a. As a lever. For the whole thing. The sons of the prophets.
And. You'll notice again. Along with the clever story. He's got the actions. To go with it. Naaman says. Take two. And he says. Oh no. Two is too much. We're told in verse 23.
Specifically. That. Naaman had to urge him. To take. The two talents of silver. All along. His covetousness. Is wanting it. So he lies easily.
Why does he lie easily? Because he lies all the time. He lies all the time. Look here. For example. He lies twice. When he goes back into Elisha.
[44:04] In verse 25. Elisha says. Where have you come from Gehazi? And Gehazi says. I've been nowhere. I've been nowhere. He says. Just like that. Doesn't have to think about it.

Or anything. But the lie just comes to his mouth. Like that. One lie. Breeds another. You never lie on its own. Really. You always have to lie. To cover a lie. And then you have to lie.
To cover that lie. And so on. Until you dig a pit. For yourself in hell. With your lying. How many situations. Have you lied. Your way out of even this week? How many of you in school.
People who are in school. Lie. Continually. To your teachers. Or lie. Continually. To your parents. Not realizing. That you're forming habits. Of a lifetime. You're putting these things.
Deep down into your soul. You're staining your soul. With these practices. Lying. And you think. It doesn't matter. It matters. The Lord sees.
[45:01] And the Lord knows. And the lying lip. Is an abomination. To the Lord. And it's a sad thing. To see a man like this. And as I said.

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He's a quick thinker. He's an able man. And he's a gifted man. But he's yielded his life. To sin. There's nothing as sad. As that in the world. If the Lord gives you.
Five talents. My friend. You'd better. Multiply them. And you'd better. Not bury them. In the ground. The more able. The Lord has made you. The more you had better.
Yield yourself. To his service. Stop the lying path. Stop the covetous path. And seek the true riches. Which is a knowledge of God.
In the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what makes a person rich. And the child of God. When he comes to Christ. Knows that. And he says.
[45:57] I know. Have found my wealth. It is to know my Lord. And it is to have fellowship with him. That is wealth. And that is riches. And we would not trade that.

For anything. That this world can give. What will it profit us. If we gain the whole world. And lose our own soul. What my friend. Will that profit you.
Far better. To lose the world. To gain the Lord. For that is everlasting riches. The unsearchable riches. Of Christ. Now.
I think it's right to say. There are two things. That makes this man's sin. Worse. First is. That he misrepresents. The people of God.
In order to get his own way. Now. You can say. What you like. Sometimes. About the church of Christ. And about the people of God.
[46:52] But those who love the Lord. Are the apple of his eye. And if they are misrepresented. That is a grievous sin. Before God.

We write in Psalm 15. That the man who loves the Lord. And who dwells with him. Will not take up an evil report. And spread it. The person who loves the Lord.
If he hears an evil report. Will keep it. He won't spread it. This man. Doesn't care.
If he misrepresents. Elisha. To Naaman. And for that matter. If he misrepresents. The sons of the prophets. To Naaman. Naaman makes his way home.
Thinking. That the sons of the prophets. Have been given. These talents of silver. And the garments. Now I believe. That the Lord protected. His own child. Naaman could have thought.
[47:47] Pretty dimly. Perhaps of the whole thing. But. God kept his heart. And God watched over him. He preserves the simple. He preserves those who trust in him. But no credit to Gehazi for that.

Gehazi looks after. Number one. And he doesn't care. What people say about the church. As a result. No. That is grievous. In the sight of the Lord.
Watch. How you represent. God's people. In the sight. Of others. And then again. He uses the ministry. As a cloak.
For his own. Sinful life. Naaman is a person. To use an expression. Has worn the cloth. And has lived a life. Of avarice.
Covetousness. Adultery. Or what have you. But to use the ministry. As a cloak. For a sinful life. Is another sin. Of the deepest die.
[48:43] In the sight of God. Read 2nd Peter. If you want to hear about that. Or read the epistle of Jude. Where it speaks of those. Who prostitute the ministry. Or who use the name of God.

Or the name of the church of God. In order to further. Their own ends. Gehazi did that. And it blackened. His sin. Now.
Here you have a liar. And a covetous person. What comes of him? Well. In a way. Sin brings.
Its own. Punishment. I want to look at this. Lastly. Just very briefly. He comes to the hill. And he hides his money. And he. Puts it in a place. Where nobody knows about it.
And then he goes to Elisha. Now I wonder if. His mind is working. The way the mind of covetous. Lying people work. You're always looking for someone. To find you out. Or someone to discover you.
[49:38] Did anyone see me do that? Did anyone hear me? Did anyone pick up what I said today? That it's not consistent with what I said yesterday? All the time it's going. And he's trying to cover his tracks.

But Elisha just turns round. And everything's been shown to Elisha. As if in a vision. Or as in a dream. He's seen it all. Whence Gehazi? I've been nowhere. Did not my heart go with you?
The leprosy of Naaman. Shall cleave to you. And to your seed. Forever. Forever. And out he went.
A leper. As white as snow. What does that tell us? Well.

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There's one or two things to notice briefly. First of all. This is the outward man. Conforming now. To the inward man. First of all. Gehazi.
Is as it were. Rotten on the inside. But appears good on the outside. Now the outside. Wears the mark of the inside. Same as true of Naaman. His heart was made new.
[50:34] He became a child. In God's kingdom. And the outward was conformed. He lost his leprosy. The Gentile came in. And was cleansed. And the Jew.

Went out. Defiled. What a remarkable turn around. The professing Christian. Was cast out. And the ignorant man. Was received in. And blessed.
Of the Lord. This outward leprosy. Was just a sign. To Gehazi. And to everyone else. Of the inward leprosy. Of his soul. He was inwardly.
A leper. As white. As snow. And then again. It tells us this. That one day. That will be visible. To everybody. Everywhere.
One day. Now as I said. Some men's sins. Are visible. Beforehand. Others. Afterwards. You might escape. Out of this world. With people thinking. What a great man. Or what a great woman.
[51:29] You were. But a day of reckoning. Comes. Comes. When the books. Are opened. And the book of life. And in the books. The deeds are revealed. And every soul. Is summoned. One after another.

Into the presence. Of the Lord. In front of a public gallery. It is the day. Of judgment. When souls. Are brought out of hell. And souls. Are brought out of heaven.
And they all assemble. Before the judgment seat. Of God. Visibly. And openly. And God. Pronounces. A swift judgment. Upon all. Then. The leprosy.
Is seen. And the leprosy. Is exposed. It is as though. On that day. God's law. Will say. Where did you come from? What was your life like? And there's no hiding place.
Then. The word. In 2nd Corinthians 5. Verse. Verse 10. Tells us that. The inside. Is going to be exposed. In the out. It's a picture. Of ripping something up. So that the inside.
[52:25] Is made evident. That's the day of judgment. The outside. Is torn aside. And out comes. The inward parts. Here is the heart. This is what the man was like. And there's nothing there.

But filth. And squalor. A leper. In covetousness. And in lying. One day. That will all. Be seen. One day.
The truth. Will be told. And the judgment. Will be meted out. And just as you were. A leper. So you will be a leper. Forever. And you'll be marked as that. You'll be cast into hell.
With your leprosy. Consuming you. Consuming you. Openly. Visibly. And outwardly. There's no hiding place. In hell. There's no veneer.
To draw over your life. In hell. It is just. Revealed. Sin. Loathsomeness. And corruption. Not only that. But Gehazi is given.
[53:20] A solemn reminder. That his sins. Have a powerful influence. On his children. Because the leprosy of Naaman. Shall cleave to you. And to your seed.

Forever. Ah my friend. If you persist. In going your own way. Go your own way.
But are you going to bring your children with you? Are you teaching them your own covetousness? Are you teaching them how to lie? Are you teaching them how to live carelessly?
Or recklessly? It's not a fearful thought. That your leprosy. Will cleave to your own seed forever. For the Lord visits. The iniquities of the fathers.
Upon the children. And to the third and fourth generation. The fact of the matter is. You never sin. On your own. No man is an island. And especially.
[54:15] The effects. And the consequences. Of your ungodly life. Will be seen. In the life of your children. Noticeably so. Except the Lord has mercy. Upon them.

How you should train your children. To live godly lives. Put your children to the word. Put them to family worship. Teach them amusements. And pastimes.
That don't degrade the scriptures. Or trivialize the name of God. Show them how to live life to the full. To enjoy the creation of God. But in their hearts.
To remember. That for all these things. God will bring them into judgment. Rejoice so young man in thy youth. And follow the ways of thine heart. But know that for all these things. God shall bring thee into judgment.
All thy works. And all thy ways. Don't let your leprosy. Cleave to your seed. Is he seeing the bottle? Is he seeing a shoddy lifestyle?

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[55:13] A near religious walk? Don't let your leprosy. Cleave to your seed. And I wonder if in the last place. That there's an element of prophecy here. And I just want to close with that.

Because Christ says in his own ministry. That many lepers were cleansed. He says in the days of Naaman. There were many lepers in Israel.
In the days of Naaman. But not one was cleansed. Except Naaman the Syrian. And Christ there is saying that. He uses it in the context.
Of unbelievers from the Gentile world. Coming in. When the Jews themselves. Are still disbelieving. I wonder if there's a prophecy in all this.
That the Jews had everything. But they became lepers. What does snow? Whereas the Gentiles in darkness. Have come to a knowledge.
[56:07] Of the Lord Jesus Christ. In great numbers. Look at the children of Abraham today. What are they? Well. They're like Yehazi. Lepers. White as snow.

But praise the Lord. That the day will come. When that leprosy. Will be removed. And they will press into. The kingdom of heaven. Do that. My friend also. Let us pray.
O Lord. Teach us thy ways. And may we not love the world. And may we not have covetous hearts. Or keep us. From that covetousness.
Which is idolatry. And even if we acquire. The things of this world. May we not set our hearts upon them. And may we never put them.
Before the needs of others. And before the cause of Christ itself. Let us give our portion. And our tithe to thyself. And may nothing come before that.
[57:05] For Christ's sake. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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