

Intro

- ~ The best of God's people can fall. We've all heard of those saints who we looked up to and respected had fallen in their race. No saint or Christian leader is exempt from falling to finish well. We can all list the names of people who for whatever reason stopped running the race and ran after other things
- ~ There's no guarantee a child of God will finish well.
- ~ While our salvations is guaranteed there's no guarantee we'll finish well
- ~ We can only wonder how a Ravi Zacarias who was greatly used by God didn't end well
- ~ 1 Kings 13 speaks of a man of God who obeyed but God didn't finish well
- ~ Paul likened the Christian life to a race (1 Cor 9:27)
- ~ We read about a prophet's helper names Gehazi who didn't end well and we see at least one reason – greed

Outline

Elisha refuses Naaman's Gift (v15-19)

Gehazi runs after Naaman's Gift (v20-24)

Gehazi lies about Naaman's Gift (v25-27)

Text

V15 – Elisha refuses Naaman's Gift (v15-19)

- ~ Naaman expresses his gratitude
- ~ We see Naaman's conversion in v15-19
- ~ Naaman left the Jordan River and went back to Elisha's house. He could have received his healing and went back to Damascus but he went to give thanks
- ~ Naaman expresses his thankfulness in two ways
 - 1 He wants to give a gift to Elisha. This wasn't wrong for Naaman to do
 - 2 He wants to build an altar to the Lord back home so he can worship the Lord there
- ~ He now knows there's a true God and He's in Israel
- ~ He wants Elisha to take a gift of appreciation
- ~ BKC - The man of God had not performed his miracle for reward but at the word of the Lord and he did not want anyone to think otherwise. The false prophets could easily be bought, but not Elisha.

V16 – Elisha refuses Naaman's gifts

- ~ Elisha refuses Naaman's gift
- ~ Perhaps Elisha doesn't want the perception that Naaman was healed for money
- ~ Elisha doesn't want his integrity to be compromised by taking money from Naaman
- ~ On this occasion Elisha doesn't receive a gift from Naaman whereas in 2 Kings 4:42,43 he accepts a gift of food from a man from Baal-Shalisha to feed the prophets
- ~ In the time of the apostle Paul false teachers would do ministry out of love for money
- ~ Peter reminds the shepherd not to do ministry for money's sake

V17 – Naaman's desire to worship God

- ~ Elisha having refused Naaman's gift asks for enough dirt to take back and build an altar to the Lord
- ~ Many polytheists believed that no god could be worshiped except in its own land or on an altar built with the dirt of that land.
- Naaman proposed to worship only Yahweh Himself (the LORD), but superstition shaped his thinking. In the course of his official duties, however, he would have to give token respect to the god of his master the king

V18 – Naaman's intention

- ~ Naaman asks the Lord to pardon him for having to go with the King of Syria to worship at the house of Rimmon
- ~ This was probably part of his job to with the King of Syria to the house of Rimmon
- ~ The House of Rimmon
- ~ The god of Damascus was Hadad-Rimmon, a god of rain and thunder, here shortened to Rimmon. It was Naaman's duty to participate in this official worship with the king and probably other officials of state.

~ The commander was not prepared to risk his life, as Daniel's three friends would (Dan. 3:12), by refusing to bow before an idol. But one must remember that Naaman was not an Israelite with the advantage of knowledge of the revealed Word of God. Perhaps his responsibility therefore was not as great as an Israelite's would have been.

V19 – Naaman's departure

~ Elisha doesn't seem to say anything either way about Naaman's request for forgiveness for having to go with the King to the house of Rimmon

~ Go in peace seems to be benediction for his journey

V20-24 Gehazi runs after Naaman's Gift (v20-24)

~ Gehazi is greedy

~ Gehazi must have been present when Naaman offered Elisha a gift because he doesn't think it's right for Elisha to turn down the gift

~ He recognized God through Elisha has healed Naaman

~ Gehazi determines he "will run after" Naaman and take a gift from him

~ Here we see Gehazi's greed

V21 – Gehazi goes for a run

~ Gehazi didn't go for a fitness run but for greed run

~ Naaman sees Gehazi running after him

~ Naaman shows some concern as if everything is ok

V22-24 – Gehazi's Greed

~ Gehazi's greed now manifests itself

~ We start to see one sin begetting another sin – he lies

~ We don't read about any sons of the prophets showing up

~ Maybe there's a chance Gehazi wanted to use Naaman's gift for the sons of the prophets but we know there's something wrong with Gehazi's motives because he takes the back to his house and doesn't say anything to Elisha

V25,26 – Gehazi lies about Naaman's Gift (v25-27)

~ Elisha knows because the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good (Prov 15:3)

~ The Lord showed Elisha what had happened

~ Gehazi is guilty and is busted

~ Elisha asks Gehazi where he had gone and Gehazi lies to cover up

~ Just as Elisha knows what Gehazi did the Lord knows and sees all things

V26 – It was a time for blessing

~ Elisha knows where Gehazi went and what he did

~ Shortly thereafter Gehazi returned to Elisha. He did not realize that God had revealed his whereabouts to his master. So to cover one lie he told another

~ Gehazi has compromised Elisha's ministry

~ We must remember all that we do affects the word of God and the Lord Himself

~ When Christians don't act Christian-like it's a stain on the name of Christ

~ Christianity has been given a black eye because of failing Christians

~ By taking the money, Gehazi robbed God of His glory, contradicted the word of the prophet, and gave the impression that salvation involved money and good works.

~ There's the chance that Gehazi's failed integrity may come back on and reflect on Elisha

~ How we live as Christians puts the Lord's reputation at risk

~ The Psalmist prayed "lead me in paths of righteousness for your name's sake" in Psalm 23:3

~ I think of that so often at my job that I'm a witness and representative for Christ because most of the folks know I'm also a minister. So the pressure is on to act right, speak right and live right in a way that glorifies God and doesn't bring repute on the name of Christ

~ Elisha tells Gehazi it's not a time to receive blessing but does so by means of asking Gehazi in the form of a question. Is it a time to receive blessings and the answer in this occasion is NO

~ Eccles 3:6, there's a time to get and a time to lose

~ Acts 20:33-35 (Paul speaking to the Ephesian elders) *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

~ While bible doesn't condemn wealth it condemns the lust and greed for wealth

Examples of not giving to greed in ministry – the bible is filled with examples of God's men not coveting wealth

~ Numb 16:15 (to the rebels in the wilderness Moses said) *And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.*

~ 1Sa_12:3-5 (Samuel said to those who wanted a king to rule over them like the nations) *Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.*

1Sa 12:4,5 *And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. 5 And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.*

~ 1Co_9:7- 19 *Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? 12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto 18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. 19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

~ 2Co_7:2 *Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.*

~ 2Co_11:8,9 *I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. 9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

~ 2Co_12:14 *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. 16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.*

~ 1Pe_5:1-3 *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

Old Testament examples of not coveting

~ Is 56:11 *the watchmen over Israel who are serving as shepherds are greedy dogs which never have enough*

~ Jer 6:13 *Israel was given over to covertness*

~ Mal 3:11 *the false prophets prophesy for money*

~ The elder isn't given to greed (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:11)

~ The deacon isn't given to greed (1 Tim 3:8)

~ Paul counseled Titus concerning the Cretians in Titus 1:9-13 *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. 12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. 13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;*

V27 – The Penalty of Greed (FB Meyer)

- ~ Gehazi pays the price and is disciplined and not only did he receive a gift from Naaman but he also receives Naaman's leprosy
- ~ His leprosy is so bad that its referred to as white as snow
- ~ This was a severe judgment, but as a man in ministry Gehazi was under a stricter judgment. When he allowed himself to covet what Naaman had, he thought only in terms of the money Naaman possessed. God allowed him to keep the riches, but also gave him the other thing Naaman had - severe leprosy. (Guzik)
- ~ "We see here a pagan who by an act of faith is cured of leprosy and an Israelite who by an act of dishonor is cursed with it." (Dilday)
- ~ FB Meyer, "Gehazi is the sad counterpart of Judas. Like the traitor..." He was in the sense that Judas cared more about money (Jn 12:6). Judas also acted as if he was concerned for the poor
- ~ His decision would affect his posterity also

Practical Points

Naaman – the converted life and the life of gratitude

- ~ Returns to give thanks
- ~ The wise men brought their gifts to Jesus and his parents
- ~ In Luke 17:16 only one of the ten lepers returned to give thanks to Jesus for healing him of leprosy
- ~ Eph 5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*
- ~ Col 3:17 *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*
- ~ 1 Tim 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, giving of thanks, be made for all men
- ~ Heb 13:15 *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*
- ~ When Jesus partook of the Lord's Supper with his disciples he took the cup and gave thanks (Matt 26:27)
- ~ He gave thanks that his blood would bring forgiveness of sins
- ~ We express our thanks by worshiping him and serving him

Elisha – the contented life

- ~ Remains steadfast
- ~ Uncompromising and maintaining integrity (reputation is what people think we are-integrity is what wife knows)
- ~ 1 Tim 6:6-10 *But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
- ~ 1 Pet 5:8-10 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Gehazi – the covetous life, the compromised life

- Runs after compromise
- ~ Gehazi is like Lot's wife who turned back to look at the wicked city of Sodom & Gomorrah. Her heart was there

Lessons from Gehazi

- 1 Past obedience doesn't guarantee future obedience
- 2 Guard our heart from discontentment
- 3 Honesty is the best policy – when we sin confess it and don't cover it up because one sin so often can beget another sin
- 4 Be conscious of our Christian example to those around us. Maintain our integrity

*At the end of Paul's life he said he fought a good fight, finished his course and kept the faith (2 Tim 4:7)