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The Life of Gehasis - Being a Servant of Jesus Christ



Prayer class for each day of a week with theme:

"BEING THE SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST"

To do this, we look at the life of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha

Foreword

In Mark 10. 35 - 45 we are told how James and John asked the Lord to be allowed to sit at His right hand and at His left hand in glory. When the other disciples heard this, they became unwilling, for each naturally wanted to get one of those seats. The Lord calls them together and tries to pass on something basic to them: Unlike worldly power relationships, it is not supposed to be like this among disciples, but whoever wants to be great is supposed to be a servant. Jesus modeled it for them, "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many* ."

Even on the night before his crucifixion, he again proves that he has come to serve:"*Ye call me Teacher and Lord, and ye say rightly, for I am. If I then, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also owe it to yourselves to wash one another's feet. For I have left you an example, that ye also should do as I have done unto you.*" (Cf. John 13:4 - 17)

None of the disciples had volunteered for this menial task. So the room was full of proud hearts and dirty feet. The disciples were willing to fight for a throne, but not for a towel. Sadly, that hasn't changed much to this day.

This is tragic. For on the one hand, one of the main goals in the life of a Christian is to be conformed to the image of the Son (Jesus Christ), which means nothing other than to serve meekly and humbly in selflessness. On the other hand, unbelievers might know that we are Jesus' disciples by the love we have for one another. But if love for one another is not present? When pride guides us and prevents us from serving one another in love?

This week we want to give some thought to the topic of being servants of Jesus Christ. To do this, we will look at the life of Gehasis, the servant of Elisha.

In the explanations, two or three points are made each day. Surely all of these are important. Nevertheless, let God address you on the point that is important to you. Think about it and leave other things from the declarations in the background.

Neither let the explanations take away from your time for prayer and personal reflection.

The Lord bless you

Devotional
Saturday, 2 Kings 4:8 - 17

Elisha, in his travels between Samaria, Jezreel, and other towns, regularly passed by Sunem, where a wealthy woman lived. That this woman was very godly we see in the fact that she wants to be a blessing to Elisha.

Obviously Elisha had been enjoying the hospitality of this couple for some time when one day he wants to reciprocate. Through Gehazi, he has the woman ask what he can do for her.

We would like to focus on the servant Gehazi in what follows, and consider some basic thoughts on the subject of "serving".

Before you read on, consider:

- what you imagine a servant to be
- what aspects of servanthood you recognize in the passage you read
- whether you yourself are a servant

Serving one another, being a servant, is a central theme in the Bible. As you could read in the preface, the Lord's goal was to make his disciples servants.

In Romans 8:29 we read, **"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."** Being conformed to Jesus means, among other things, being a servant!

We live in a very ME-centered world. You do something for yourself, with yourself, or out of yourself. Contrast that with Phil. 2:3 - 4. Don't we want to start looking for ways to give instead of always thinking about what we might get? John Wesley put it this way, "Do good to all men in every possible way, and while you can."

In 2 Cor. 8. 1 - 6 Paul gives a tremendous testimony to the churches in Macedonia. Consider if these verses apply to your life as well. Where specifically do you want to change and become a giver?

When Leonard Bernstein, a famous orchestra conductor was once asked what the most difficult instrument was, he said, "The second violin. I can get a lot of first violinists, but to find one who is enthusiastic about playing second violin, second French horn or second flute is really a problem. And yet, if no one plays second fiddle, we have no harmony."

Are you willing to play second fiddle? Instead of being in the spotlight, are you willing to work behind the scenes, to serve without getting credit for it?

Gehazi, as we will see later this week, was always in the shadow of the great prophet Elisha. He played second fiddle and left first to the prophet.

In today's Bible passage, we see Gehazi working in the background. He mediates between the woman and the prophet. Gehazi, moreover, apparently observed that the woman had no son and probably never would have one. What is amazing is that he (unlike Sarah, compare Gen. 18:12 - 14) reckoned that God could work this miracle through his master, the prophet Elisha.

Do you see the need and want around you? Are you willing to be a blessing there in selfless service?

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Sunday, 2 Kings 4:18 - 28

Soon after the miraculous birth of the boy, the faith of the pious woman was tested: The boy died on her knees. In her reflections, she immediately came to Elisha. She had her husband send her a servant and a donkey, apparently without telling him that the boy had died, because she feared that her husband would not then let her go.

The man questioned the necessity of going to the prophet. From this we can surmise that his spiritual interests were rather superficial and oriented toward ceremonies (with "It is neither the new moon nor the Sabbath," the man said that there was no occasion for a religious feast after all.)

What are your spiritual interests?

Do you seek out fellowship because that's "just what you do" as a Christian, or because it's a genuine need for you?

Think about Gal. 4, 10+11 and Hebr. 10, 24, 25

When the Shunemite came to Elisha, she was pushed away by Gehazi. The prophet's servant evidently thought it presumptuous of the woman to molest the prophet. We encounter here a problem that servants often seem to have: The problem of overprotection and possessiveness. A servant is in danger of getting a narrow circle of vision, and overlooking the needs of others that are not directly related to his ministry.

This is how Joshua, Moses' servant, felt when Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp. Joshua wanted Moses to restrain them from doing so, after all, his master, Moses, whom he served as a man of God, was ordained to prophesy. (Cf. Deut. 11:24 - 30)

The disciples of the Lord also had this problem. Cf. Luke 18:15).

Do you know this problem in your life?

Or how do you react when someone suddenly disputes your ministry? For example, if someone builds a good relationship with your young person and pastors them?

The woman's behavior is typical of her situation: she doesn't report why she came, but how she feels in light of what happened.

Can you tell from what the young sharers tell you what is really on their minds

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Monday, 2 Kings 4:29 - 37

How must Gehazi have felt after these events?

Wasn't he constantly being passed over?

First of all, there is the boy's mother. She obviously believes from the outset that Gehazi is incapable of calling her son back to life. So she clings to the prophet, ignoring the servant and placing trust in him.

Do you also know such situations? Are you sometimes ignored in the Jungschi team? Or by the parents of the boys? Or maybe you are sometimes ignored by other people yourself!

Think about where you are ignored

Consider where you encounter this problem in your service to the Lord and try to see it as an opportunity to practice humility

So Gehazi set out to go to the house of the Shunemite, as Elisha had commanded him. On the way there, Gehazi greeted no one, nor did he return any greeting. The reason for this "unfriendliness" was that much time was always lost in such ceremonies of greeting. Perhaps the prophet intended that the failure of Gehazi to raise the boy should not have been attributed to tardiness!

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Tuesday, 2 Kings 4:38 - 41

Once again Gehazi* experiences a very similar situation. Again he has done exactly as he was told. And again he has failed. That he couldn't call the dead boy back to life we can understand, that would be a huge miracle. But now he can't even cook a stew. Doesn't that make Gehasi feel inferior and embarrassed?

You see, he was always outdone by the Prophet, even though he had done everything he was told to do.

Try to deal honestly with your thoughts in similar situations. Also reflect on Hebrews 6:10.

But this passage of Scripture shows us another very beautiful thought. The whole situation enabled Elisha to give illustrative lessons to the prophet's disciples and to Gehazi.

At this time the people were experiencing a very different famine. It had turned away from the living God and His commandment to embrace the religion of Baal. The people were spiritually starving.

Elisha took flour - of which there was hardly much at the time of a famine - and put it into the pot. Thereupon the food was edible. Elisha was thereby saying nothing different to the prophet's disciples than the Lord also said to His disciples in Matthew 5:13 - 16.

Real servants, as Jesus Christ was in a perfect way, have a tremendous impact. Jesus changed the world like no other man ever did. Without armies to lead, without books to write, without economic interests, money or power. Jesus came to serve. When we serve, we are salt and light to the world.

You are the salt of the earth: salt is a preservative and a very special spice. Als is amazingly useful. Think for a moment about all the practical, positive aspects of salt and try to interpret them for a life as a servant of Jesus Christ.

But if the salt has become insipid ...

This is a very serious sentence. What if the characteristic of a Christian is no longer visible and expressed in life? Humanism, worldliness, reasoning, and materialism have become very much ingrained in the thinking of most Christians.

Wolfgang Bühne once wrote, "A Christianity has become established that is neither attractive nor credible."

Do you want to be salt consciously?

You are the light of the world ...

Light also has qualities that can tell us a few things regarding "being a servant". Svindoll says, "Don't try to show how bright and radiant you are, just shine!"

Do you find other qualities of light that can make the character of a servant more understandable to you?

* Verse 38 speaks of the servant of Elisha. Whether this was really Gehazi is not clear, but it does not matter for our reflections on "being a servant of Jesus Christ."

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Wednesday, 2 Kings 4:42 - 44

Do you know those feelings? For the life of you, you can't imagine how you are going to cope with this or that. You've had your faith taken away by failures!

The Lord said to Paul that His power comes to perfection in weakness (2Co 12:9). Human strength often just gets in the way of God's action.

Joseph, too, only ever came to success through failure. Consider his life when you get a chance (Genesis 37ff)

But what strikes me as positive about Gehazi again and again, and again here, is his obedience. Even when he cannot muster the faith, he obeys the prophet. This brings us to a central idea: **The obedience of a servant**.

Serving and obeying go together like Siamese twins. Merely knowing how a servant should be does not make the servant. The necessary quality that makes anything genuine is obedience.

How about you there?

Are you ready to obey? Do you obey the Lord?

It is always encouraging, isn't it, that Jesus Himself modeled for us all that He requires of us? Thus we read of His obedience, obedience unto death on the cross (Philippians 2:8). He knew the joy set before Him and endured the cross (Heb. 12:2).

It is not always easy to obey. Sometimes we are treated unjustly or passed over. Obedience often requires Christ-like selflessness. Being a servant is not an easy task. But God sees our every service, and He will not let anything be forgotten or unrewarded.

Ponder Galatians 6:9 and 1 Cor. 3:12 - 14.

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Thursday, 2 Kings 5:9 - 14

Obviously there were still some people in the land who defied the Baal cult instituted by Jeroboam and served the true God. This man probably saw the prophetic schools as a substitute for legal worship and brought the firstfruits there. This enabled him to fulfill the commandment (Deut. 18:4), even though there were no practicing Levites and priests.

We want to deal with Gehazi again. After all the failures he's had so far, he can't seem to muster up the faith It was obvious that those 20 barley loaves would never be enough.

From today's passage we can learn a very important lesson: Again we see Gehazi doing exactly what he was told to do. And again he is treated unjustly.

He is caught in the crossfire and has to face the wrath of Naaman. Understand, Gehazi had not made up this message, he merely delivered it.

Do you know situations where you are unfairly caught in the crossfire?

How do you handle it?

We recognize here in Naaman a proud man. As the commander of the army of the king of Syria, he was accustomed to have everyone treat him with respect and deference.

That the Prophet so completely overlooked his high dignity and treasures and did not even come out to him hurt his pride. But it was necessary for Naaman to be brought down from his high place to appear in the right position - as a poor leper - before God.

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Friday, 2 Kings 5:15 - 24

Naaman had humbled himself and obeyed the prophet's instruction. After being immersed seven times (seven again represents a work of God), he experienced a tremendous miracle: his flesh was not simply clean again, but like that of a young boy.

Furthermore, he was the only one who became ready from leprosy in those days (Compare Luke 4:27).

Not like many we might help, Naaman returned to thank Elisha and Gehazi. The gifts he brought were about 340 kg of silver and for about 1.7 million francs of gold, plus sehn ceremonial clothes. However, Elisha does not want to accept the gifts. He does not want anyone to ever say that he did this miracle for the sake of money. Besides, he is aware that it is not he who deserves the glory, but only the living God.

How do you handle being honored?

Do you like to put yourself in the spotlight after a parole?

PS: Beware, however, any refusal to show love to you can also be an expression of your pride.

Unlike Elisha, who did absolutely the right thing here, Gehazi now fails. Humanly speaking, we can understand him very well after all the failures he had to take. Gehazi had learned to give, to obey, to play second fiddle. But he had not learned to forget and look away from himself. All the heaviness he endured over and over again stirred his thoughts, and now he saw the opportunity had come to finally get a proper reward for it.

A servant of Jesus Christ must be able to forget. Can you forgive and forget when someone has been guilty of you?

Can you also forget whom you have done good to, or do you keep a record of it and feed your pride? Read 1 Cor. 13:4 - 7 and Matthew 6:1 - 4.

Is it even possible to forget in the sense of "lose all memory"?

Perhaps by now you have given some thought to Joseph. Joseph would have had every reason to nurse his wounds and spurn his past. But Joseph was a man who could forget. He named his first son **"Manasseh",** which means **"forget"**. (Joseph could very well still remember Jacob and his brothers, but no pain or anger came up in him at these memories.)

Paul, too, was ready to forget. Both the harm that had been done to him (2 Cor. 11:23 - 33, it's about servants!) and the good he had done (Philippians 3, notice verse 13).

Once again, let's turn our thoughts to Gehazi. Did you notice how quickly Gehazi went from one insincerity to another? In verse 20, Gehazi uses the same words as Elisha in verse 16: As the Lord lives. Gehazi's intentions are not good, however, and so he takes God's name in vain here In verse 22, Gehazi hypocrites and lies. His request looks very selfless. Later, in front of Elisha (verse 25), Gehazi lies again. But perhaps the most tragic thing about his misbehavior is that he gave a false image of the living God to a Gentile far from God, Naaman.

Understand, your misconduct detracts from the glory of God and makes it difficult for unbelievers to know the true God.

Does the character of God show in your life?

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Saturday, 2 Kings 5:25 - 27

Did you notice what Elisha refers to in pronouncing judgment on Gehazi? He is not referring to his lies, nor to his deceit, he is referring to the time. "Is it time then to take silver and to take garments ..."

The Lord knows when it is time to reward His servants. I want to encourage you to wait patiently.

Consider where you expect reward and recognition for your actions. Do you know what reward God has promised you?

Read Romans 6:23 and Revelation 21:1 - 7.

How do you feel about Gehazi's punishment? Isn't this punishment too harsh?

Gehazi's punishment was so severe because his sin had far-reaching consequences, for the story was probably spread everywhere among the Israelites and Arameans.

Furthermore, the terrible fact that someone can live for years in the presence of believing people without ever personally choosing God himself is made clear here. Much like Judas Iscariot revealed himself to be an "unbeliever" at the end of time with our Lord, this one also happens to Gehazi.

In punishing Gehazi with leprosy, God showed what was really in Gehazi's heart.

Read Galatians 2:16 and James 2:14 - 20

Despite the tragic outcome of Gehazi's story, let us not be discouraged. We may learn many things through his life. It is definitely worthwhile to be a servant of Jesus Christ.

Make your thoughts on Hebrews 4:15, 1 Corinthians 11:31 + 32, and 1 John 1:9.

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