



In 2 Kings 5–6, we learn of both the miracles that come when follow God and simply obey, like Naaman, and the curses that we bring on ourselves when we disobey, like Gehazi. We learn that God can bring the word of a servant girl to the ear of a king and use it to change a man's life. And we see that God can do all things, even make iron float. As we continue to study the life of the prophet Elisha, we must remember all the less-known people whom God used for His glory, and how God dealt with all of them according to their choices. We must each choose: will we trust God or our worldly understanding?

1. Context

a. Elisha, the prophet of Israel

i. Elisha was God's prophet to Israel in that time.

ii. Elisha's miracles

1. In **2 Kings 2:12–14**, the Red Sea parted.

2. In **2 Kings 2:19–22**, the waters of Jericho were healed.

3. In **2 Kings 4:1–7**, the widow's oil was multiplied.

4. In **2 Kings 4:32–37**, the Shunammite's son was raised to life.

5. In **2 Kings 4:338–41**, the prophets' food is made edible.

6. In **2 Kings 4:42–44**, the food is multiplied enough to feed 100 men.

7. In **2 Kings 5:9–14**, the Syrian commander, Naaman, was healed of leprosy (known today as Hanson's Disease).

iii. Other than Jesus, Elisha performed more miracles than anyone else in the Bible.

b. Principles from chapter 5

i. We should want God's best even for people who have given us their worst.

1. The Syrians had raided Israel and captured a young Israelite girl to be the servant of Naaman's wife.

2. The young girl told the wife that Naaman should go to Elisha the prophet to be healed of his leprosy.

3. This girl had the good character to wish good on those who had wronged her.

ii. Unmet expectations of God can lead to unnecessary frustrations in us.

1. Naaman listened to the slave girl and went to Israel to see Elisha the prophet.

2. Elisha did not even come to see Naaman face-to-face; he sent a messenger.
 3. Elisha did not wave his hands at Naaman and heal him, as Naaman expected.
 4. Elisha asked Naaman to dip in the Jordan seven times.
 5. **Isaiah 55:8** – *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.*”
 6. **DISCUSS:** How has God taught you to trust Him and His ways, even when you do not understand?
- iii. Sometimes the simplest things that God asks us to do are the hardest.
 1. Naaman initially struggled with simple obedience, until his servants helped him gain perspective.
 2. Often, we want God to show us the next seven steps rather than obey the simple one step God has commanded us to do.
2. **2 Kings 5:14–19** – *“So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, ‘Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.’ But he said, ‘As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.’ And he urged him to take it, but he refused. So Naaman said, ‘Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing.’ Then he said to him, ‘Go in peace.’ So he departed from him a short distance.”*
 - a. God healed Naaman’s leprosy.
 - b. Naaman returned to the man of God, Elisha, to thank him.
 - i. Naaman tried to pay Elisha, but Elisha refused.
 1. Elisha did not want Naaman to think he was motivated by greed rather than a desire to see God glorified.
 2. **DISCUSS:** Whose glory was Elisha focused on? Whose glory are you focused on?
 - ii. Naaman sought to take Israelite soil to worship God since he could not give Elisha anything that he would accept.
 1. There was an ancient belief that said certain deities reigned over specific geographical regions, and that they could only be worshipped upon the soil of their region.

2. Naaman did not quite understand that our God is king over the whole earth.
3. **John 4:19–24** – *“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’”*
4. We can worship God and read His Word anywhere. We should be allowing God to move in our lives within and without church.

c. Naaman’s apology

- i. Naaman realized Rimmon was a false god, but he knew his lord the king would ask him to come to the temple of Rimmon with him.
 1. Rimmon was a Syrian storm god comparable to the Canaanite god Baal.
- ii. Naaman said of the king, *“he leans on my hand.”*
 1. This expression simply meant that Naaman was the king’s right-hand man.
- iii. Naaman was asking in advance that God would forgive him for the outward compromise of bowing to Rimmon.

d. Elisha’s response

- i. Elisha said, *“Go in peace,”* expressing neither approval nor disapproval.
 1. Sometimes the best thing to do is leave room for the Holy Spirit to convict someone.
 2. **DISCUSS:** When has God convicted you of something that you previously had justified to yourself?

3. **2 Kings 5:20–27** – *“But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, ‘Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him.’ So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, ‘Is all well?’ And he said, ‘All is well. My master has sent me, saying, “Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.”’ So Naaman said, ‘Please, take two talents.’ And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver*

in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him. When he came to the citadel, he took them from their hand, and stored them away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, 'Where did you go, Gehazi?' And he said, 'Your servant did not go anywhere.' Then he said to him, 'Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever.' And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow."

a. Gehazi's scheme

- i. Gehazi said to himself, "If Elisha will not profit from the miracle, I will."
- ii. Gehazi lied to gain some riches from Naaman.
 1. Naaman responded by giving Gehazi more than he had asked for, giving him two talents of silver.
 2. Two talents of silver equated to roughly 150 pounds.
 3. Two of Naaman's servants carried 75 pounds of silver each to Gehazi's house.

b. Elisha's rebuke

- i. Elisha asked Gehazi a proving question, and Gehazi denied that he had left to go anywhere.
- ii. The Spirit of the Lord is inescapable.
 1. In verse 26, Elisha told Gehazi that though he was not physically with Gehazi when he sinned, Elisha's "*heart*" was with him.
 2. The NIV and NLT use the word "*spirit*" instead of "*heart*."
- iii. God sees everything.
 1. God sees every tear you cry.
 2. God sees every "hidden" sin.
 3. Even in our sin, God pursues us.
 4. When David tried to hide from God, he was broken (**Psalm 32:3**).
 5. God is slow to anger, abounding in mercy (**Psalm 103:8**).
 6. **1 John 1:9** – "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"
 7. **DISCUSS:** How has God's constant presence been a help to you, both in feeling His comfort and in repenting of sin?

c. The greed of Gehazi

- i. The grip of greed destroys.
 1. Gehazi allowed greed to make him a thief and a liar.
 2. **DISCUSS:** How can one sin quickly lead to another? Have you experienced this effect of sin?

3. **DISCUSS:** How has greed manifested in your life before? How have you learned to be watchful against this temptation?
 4. **Proverbs 15:27a** – *“The greedy bring ruin to their households.”*
 5. **Luke 12:15** – Jesus said, *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”*
 6. **1 Corinthians 6:10** says the greedy will not inherit God’s kingdom.
- ii. Gehazi’s greed ended in a curse.
1. Gehazi coveted Naaman’s wealth, so Elisha gave him Naaman’s leprosy.
 2. **DISCUSS:** Gehazi was more focused on what he could take from Naaman than on the wonder that God had done for Naaman. In what areas do you need a change of perspective? In what areas has God already changed your perspective?
 3. Sometimes people ask if gambling is okay, and you must ask yourself if that habit is fanning in you a heart of greed.
 4. The question of life is not how to attain more, but how to honor God with what we have. Possessions are not bad, but we must not let them become gods.
 5. **DISCUSS:** What are some ways God has helped you to properly manage the funds He has entrusted to you?
4. **2 Kings 6:1–7** – *“And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, ‘See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell.’ So he answered, ‘Go.’ Then one said, ‘Please consent to go with your servants.’ And he answered, ‘I will go.’ So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water; and he cried out and said, ‘Alas, master! For it was borrowed.’ So the man of God said, ‘Where did it fall?’ And he showed him the place. So he cut off a stick, and threw it in there; and he made the iron float.”*
- a. When iron floats
- i. A student lost an iron ax head in the Jordan, so Elisha threw a stick into the water and the ax head floated up.
 - ii. This is like when the waters of Marah were bitter and undrinkable, so Moses threw a stick into the waters to heal them (**Exodus 15**).
 1. The tools and methods are not important. God can use anything for His miracles.
 2. Charles Spurgeon said, “God can do all things, even make iron swim.”

3. If God can make iron swim, He can soften a hard heart.
4. **Jeremiah 18:6** says that God is the Potter, and we are the clay. Let Him mold you.
5. **DISCUSS**: When have you seen God radically soften a person's heart?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)