

# Elisha's Greedy Servant

2 Kings 5:15-27

## **MEMORY VERSE**

2 KINGS 5:26

“...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?”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A 20 - 25 piece puzzle or a picture, poster board, glue, and scissors.

As many “Keys to Living in the Spirit” templates as the number of children in your class, crayons or markers, scissors, yarn or pipe cleaners.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Body Language**

Have you ever heard the phrase, “Actions speak louder than words”? Sometimes we can say something, but our “body language” is saying something else. Often times our expressions will represent what is in our hearts.

As an example, raise your arms, make fists, shake your arms, and make an angry face. Ask the children to guess what you are feeling. They should guess anger. Show them that they guessed without you even saying a word.

Pick volunteers to come up and display an emotion. See if the rest of the class can guess the emotion that is being displayed. Some examples of feelings might be: sorrow, anger, jealousy, greed, pity, happiness or joy. After a while, have the children gather in a circle and ask them how Jesus can make a difference in these feelings. We will learn in today's lesson that Elisha's servant has some greed in his heart. Even though he tries not to let it show, Elisha still knew that it was there.

## **LESSON TIME!**

Last week we were introduced to Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army. Remember Naaman had a serious problem. He was a leper. King Ben-hadad of Syria sent Naaman to the King of Israel with money and gifts hoping Naaman would be healed. The King of Israel was upset because he knew he had no ability to help Naaman -he thought the Syrian king was trying to find an excuse to fight. Elisha heard about the King of Israel's problem and sent the King a message not to worry. Naaman would learn that there was a true prophet of God in Israel.

When Naaman met Elisha, he treated him like an ordinary person. Elisha did not even bother to come out of his house to meet Naaman, but simply relayed a message to have him dip seven times in the Jordan River, and he would be healed. This made Naaman very angry for as commander of the Syrian army, Naaman was well respected.

Naaman felt such a simple request, "to wash in the Jordan River," was beneath a man of his position. However, his wise servants urged him to do as Elisha requested. Naaman responded in faith and obedience to God and dipped seven times in the Jordan River. He was completely healed!

Grateful his deadly disease had been cured, Naaman wasted no time in returning to Elisha's house in Samaria, a 25 mile trip from the Jordan River. He desired to show his appreciation by bestowing the gifts King Ben-hadad had sent with him. How would Elisha respond?

### 2 KINGS 5:15-16

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.

Naaman came to Elisha with a different attitude; he was healed, humble, and a believer in the mighty God of Israel and he was humble. He had a heart of gratitude and desired to reward Elisha richly for this blessing.

Elisha refused to accept any reward for his ministry. It was not Elisha who had healed Naaman; it was God. God wanted Naaman to understand His work of healing was freely given by grace. **God's grace is a free gift.**

### 2 KINGS 5:17-19

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.

Not only was Naaman's body healed, but his heart was healed as well. With a heart of humility and faith, he now was filled with an attitude of worship for the one true God. The worship of idols had brought him nothing, but the God of Israel gave him everything. He now had a new life and a new hope.

Since Elisha would not take anything, Naaman asked him to give as much earth as he could carry back to Damascus on two mules. Naaman wanted to make an altar to the Lord, believing that he needed dirt from Israel in order to worship the God of Israel. (Many who worshipped idols in that day believed that no god could be worshipped except in its own land or on an altar built with the dirt from that land.)

Back home, Naaman would have to fulfill his official duties, which included helping the king get down and up as he bowed, worshipping the god Rimmon. Because of his faith in the one true God of Israel, Naaman asks Elisha that he be granted forgiveness for bowing down to this idol. He did not intend to worship other gods. His request for pardon shows the differences between Naaman and the Israelites who were continually worshipping many idols. Elisha encouraged him to go in peace.

## **Puzzle Partners**

Bring with you a 20 - 25 piece puzzle. If you do not have one, the children can make one by pasting a large picture to a piece of poster board. Cut the board into 20 - 25 pieces so that every child can have one piece.

You should keep two or more extra pieces hidden (do not let the children know). Have the class join together in putting the puzzle together in the center of the room. After they have put the puzzle together, they will notice that a few pieces are gone. Ask the children if they think the puzzle is complete?

Explain that when we choose to walk in sin or disobedience, it affects us and others. God has a plan for our lives. He desires to make our lives a beautiful picture. If we do not obey His plans for us, it is like holding back some pieces to the beautiful picture that He wants to make. Let's choose to obey Jesus in everything.

## 2 KINGS 5:20-24

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.

When Naaman saw Gehazi running towards him, he stopped his chariot to find out if anything was wrong. Naaman was concerned for Elisha and was eager to help in anyway he could. Gehazi lies to Naaman hoping to receive a talent (approx. \$2000) in silver and two suits of clothes. Wow, what a request! That was a lot of money. But Naaman reveals his generous heart and gives Gehazi \$4000 and two expensive robes.

Gehazi really made out, receiving more than he had hoped for. Naaman even sent two servants back with Gehazi to help him carry the gifts to his house. But Gehazi stopped them at the hill where Elisha lived and sent the servants away; then quickly, he hid the money in his house.

All throughout the Bible, we see displays of God's loving character. We also see the sad state of sinful man—his pride and selfishness. While Elisha had displayed a beautiful picture of God's loving grace by not accepting any payment for the work God had done, Gehazi, his servant displayed selfishness and greed.

As Elisha demonstrated, true service is motivated by love and devotion to God and seeks no personal gain. Gehazi had a heart filled with greed, desiring to capitalize on God's work. He carefully plotted his scheme to get money from Naaman.

## 2 KINGS 5:25-27

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.

God revealed Gehazi's deceit to Elisha. Elisha did not waste any time in confronting Gehazi. Elisha gave Gehazi an opportunity to confess his sin. In order to cover one lie, Gehazi told another. Elisha reveals to Gehazi that he is aware of his scheme: "Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?"

Many false prophets of that time were selfishly profiting from their position, bringing contempt on the prophetic office and sadly misrepresenting God. Gehazi was no better. A true servant of the Lord would not take personal rewards from people in return for blessings that God had given them.

The leprosy of Naaman had been removed from him by his humble obedience and trust in God, but now leprosy would cling to Gehazi for his lack of obedience and trust in God. He had misrepresented and dishonored God. The consequences were severe, he and his family would suffer the same fate. He left Elisha's house with his skin and his hair as white as snow.

As a servant of God, Gehazi had been given an awesome privilege. With that privilege came responsibility. Gehazi paid dearly for tainting God's beautiful picture of His grace, mercy, and love. God does not want His work to be smeared with our selfishness.



Naaman's gift of healing was free; he did not earn it; he received it by faith. As Naaman's leprosy was cleansed when he responded to God in simple faith; so our sins are cleansed when we by simple faith embrace the work that Jesus did for us on the cross. God's grace, mercy and love are free and freely given. If you have not already, receive God's free gift of grace, today—be washed and cleansed of your sins through faith in Jesus Christ. **God's grace is a free gift.**

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to freely receive the grace of God through His Son, Jesus. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.