

Kings and Prophets 14-03-21b

We pick up our study now, we're in 2 Kings 5, verses 20 and following. Because after Naaman comes with all of this loot and Elisha utterly refuses it, he understands and he wants no hint, no part of in any way diminishing the glory of God or taking credit himself, even having the appearance. He and Naaman could have a long talk and Naaman could say, I understand that this is all of God and I just want you to have this because I'm, you know.

Elisha says, No, I don't care how you cast it, how you pitch it, how you offer it. For me to take of this gift would spoil what God has done. It is of God.

The picture is, God gives to you on this occasion of salvation and regeneration. He's been physically regenerated. He's like a little child.

This is how Jesus said, this is how you come to God and how you come to the kingdom is as a little child. A little child doesn't pay you, doesn't give you some big gift. They can make you a Crayola thank you card, but it has no intrinsic value.

It has appreciation value. It is the sentiment and you can tell that Naaman is everlastingly grateful and the material gift doesn't need to be given and Elisha refuses it. But Gehazi, verse 20, 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. Now, when Abram raised his hand to heaven, what did he say? As the Lord lives, I will not take so much as a shoestring. Gehazi says, as the Lord lives.

I will run after him and take something from him. It's kind of like the anti-matter oath. It's the opposite oath.

And you can see where this booty comes into the neighborhood and sits outside all of these servants and all of these beasts of burden laden with gold and silver. And here's what really fascinates me that I spent, sadly, I spent more time on this than probably anything else while I was working on this passage. Because if you go back, the nature of the booty, gold, I understand, silver, I understand, timeless value.

If you could find wherever this silver eventually went, it got, most of it got hauled back to Syria, some of it ended up with Gehazi. But that silver is around somewhere in the world today. Those lumps of silver, the molecules that made up that silver, they are somewhere in the earth today.

Who knows where? They may have melted down and recast many times. But God knows, God can tell you, well, you see that little silver thing in the museum? That silver is part of what name and all. It lasts and silver is silver and it always has value.

The gold that he brought down, that gold is around somewhere today. Somebody may be wearing an antique earring or there may be some sort of a bauble or a thing they dug up out of

a tomb someplace that's on display in a museum and that gold went through two or three transformations, originally came from Syria. It's the gold that Naaman hauled down there and offered to Elisha and Elisha refused it.

Now, let's be Gehazi, just for the sake of argument. We don't want to actually be Gehazi. The whole point of a sermon is to say, don't be Gehazi.

You know, but let's put ourselves in his place for a moment. That, all of that loot is disappearing over the farther hills. He probably let him go over the first hill, you know, and it was just kind of like fidgeting.

And then he sees it going over the second farther hill and he's like, as the Lord lives, I will not give you, all of that, brought it all the way down here. It's just silly not to, the guy's just begging to give it to us. What my master is, there's something wrong with him.

He's, you know, go up old bald head, maybe the sun stroke got him. He's just not thinking correctly. It's just criminal that this should leave without us taking some.

So, as the Lord lives and as, I will run after him and take something from him. So, Gehazi pursued Naaman, pursued him, ran after him, overtook him. I think Gehazi must have been pretty fast.

You remember the previous thing where he's going back and forth between the prophet and the widow. You know, he can make several trips while ordinary people are just plotting. So, he overtakes him.

When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. I believe this is the first mention of the fact that Naaman is in a chariot. He's in a conveyance.

When's the last time we saw a chariot? It was Elijah and God's chariot. This is the Syrian chariot from afar. And he says, is all well? Gehazi says, all is well.

My master has sent me saying, and you imagine Gehazi, you know, has cooked up this story. How can I make this be on the up and up? Something has to have changed for Naaman to turn loose of some of this loot because he knows that Elijah will have no part of it. So, I've got to tell him that something has changed.

Well, it isn't going to work that Elijah's mind has changed. So, well, we've had a visitor. You think back to the days of David and the story that Nathan tells about the rich man and a visitor came.

So, he takes the poor man's lamb and slaughters it and gives it to the visitor. So, Gehazi says, a visitor. We've got visitors.

And Elijah, you know, thins to. He wants to take care of these two guys. He needs some provision.

So, if you'd see fit. So, this is his story. He probably cooked it up while he was running over hill and dale.

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. One of the features of lies is they're always too detailed. I've seen programs where they talk about the features of lies and the liars that tell them.

And one of the things is people always make the story too detailed. The police immediately smell a rat when somebody starts giving all of the reasons why they didn't kill the body that's in the next room. And they've got all of this detail in the story.

And it's over. Well, lies, you know, people think, Well, the more detail I throw in, the more convincing it will be. And for people who have a little sense of truth and falsehood, it just does the opposite.

And he's overly detailed. Who cares where the guys came from? He could have said, We've just had some visitors. And Elijah says, Could you make provision? But no, these are special visitors.

They're of the sons of... Does Naaman even know who the sons of the prophets are? Has he ever heard of the sons of the prophets? He's barely heard of Israel or Elisha until this trip. And they've come from the mountains of Ephraim. Well, who cares where they came from? It doesn't matter.

It's needless detail. But this is one of the... If you're going to lie, be a good liar. And Gehazi is a terrible liar.

Comes from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments. Now, I said that a particular thing caught my eye, and I worked on it more than anything else.

From what we've seen so far, what would you think is a strange detail? What's the strange detail? What are the three specific things that Naaman brought with him? When you go back to verse 5. The king of Syria said, Go now, I will send a letter to the king of Israel. So Naaman departed and took with him... What? Ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and what? Ten changes of clothing. Alright.

I'm exceedingly rich. I'm going to come to you, and I'm going to overwhelm you with my generosity. So I bring you... This, by the way, a talent of silver, which is what he asks for here.

He says, please give them a talent of silver. They have figured out that a talent, in these days, was about 75 pounds. There's 16 ounces to the pound.

And I did a calculation before I came, because I'm terrible at math in my head. But, 75 times 16, times 30 dollars per ounce, which is the going rate for silver, thereabouts. Is it 20 now? Well,

now see, I have to do the calculation all over again.

Alright. 16 times 75, times 20 dollars an ounce. Is... a lot of money.

I get... I can't do it in my head. And my calculator isn't working. 75... Okay.

Because I had originally gotten about 35, 36 thousand. 25 thousand dollars worth of silver. One talent.

We just had a poor son of the prophet come. He needs 25 thousand dollars and some clothes. I just, I'm mystified by this.

Aren't you? I mean, seriously? 25 thousand dollars and a pair of Levi's. 25 thousand dollars and a nice Hawaiian shirt. 25 thousand dollars and a pair of sneakers.

Does this not seem a bit... I was just fascinated by this. I mean... 10 talents of silver, 6 thousand shekels of gold, and a chest of rubies. Talents of gold... Talents of silver, shekels of gold, and... a box of diamonds.

But gold, silver, and clothing. I'm just... befuddled by this. So I got to thinking, well, where else have we had changes of clothing mentioned? And there are two previous places.

A little pop quiz. A little Bible trivia here. What are the two prominent times in the Bible prior to this that changes of clothing have been mentioned? I actually was able to dredge these out of my ever weakening memory.

One of them is Joseph. When his brothers, he finally reveals himself to his brothers, and he sends them back to Jacob in the latter chapters of Genesis there, and he says, go back and tell my father, come down. He gives each of his brothers a change of clothing, but his brother Benjamin, all the others are his half-brothers, with various mothers, but Benjamin is his full brother.

Benjamin he gives 5 changes of clothing, and 500 talents of silver. He gives Benjamin silver and clothes. There is another time prior to this where changes of clothing come into play.

I'll give you a hint. Jawbone of an ass. There is a riddle from the guy who wielded that weapon.

From the eater, you know, Samson. Remember that? There was a bet. And if you can answer the riddle, if you can't, you know, and part of that bet was changes of clothing.

You remember that? There was 30 changes of clothing on the line. So he goes out and slays 30 Philistines and gives the guys the clothing. But clothing is valuable.

Joseph has met his brother Benjamin and gives him silver and clothing. And what my surmise here, and I searched the earth and couldn't find anybody that said what is the significance of this. Interestingly, however, in all three of these stories, there is an element of deceit.

Delilah weasels the answer out of Samson and she, by means of subterfuge, gives the answer and there is deceit and the bet is for changes of clothing. Joseph, with malice aforethought, deceives his brethren and doesn't tell them who he is. But when he finally reveals himself, when the deceit is revealed, then he gives his brothers a change of clothing and one is sort of a good deceit.

He's testing them. The other is a bad deceit. He's, of course, you wonder if Samson should have been in that situation in the first place.

And now here you have Gehazi lying in a bald-faced manner about these mythical sons of the prophets and that they need clothing. But in all of the cases, these changes of clothing are really valuable. It's up there with gold and silver.

Gold, silver, clothing. Well, we just take it for granted. Have you ever seen that thing, How It's Made? And they show you how stuff is made and you see clothing and all this and we've got great factories and we've got automated processes and we've got giant machines that weave cloth and we have things that in earlier days would have been exorbitantly expensive because of the way the seams are sewed.

I was looking at a particular piece of clothing and noticing that the way the seam is done, I can't figure out how they did it. There are two pieces that are together but you can't see the thread that holds it together. And it's designed to not chafe, not produce any kind of abrasion when this clothing is worn.

And the techniques and the intricacy of it is amazing. Well, in ancient days, this all had to be done by hand. And if you had fine garments, silks from Basra and things like this, it was expensive and they were coveted and they were treasured because they were quite a bit more valuable.

Now clothing is just ubiquitous. It's like in the desert, water can be worth its weight in gold if you need it and you don't have it. Here, water is common as dirt.

Water runs down the alley all night long from somebody's overflowing pool. Nobody thinks twice about it. Can you imagine, in the desert, that water running down the alley, how valuable that would be? There would be somebody down there with a straw.

You see these survivor guys that get out there and they're stranded in some place with no water. And they're taking plastic and trying to distill it off of... I saw a guy pull a bunch of leaves off a tree and put them in a bucket and then put plastic over it and put a weight in the middle and put it in the sun so that the water would come out of the leaves and distill into this cup in the center so that he could get a half a cup of water and he did this all day long and got maybe two or three cups of water in a day. And the water was just precious.

But it all depends on availability. Well, clothing in these days was extremely... good clothing was extremely valuable. Not just your homespun, but these fine spun... this came from the houses

of royalty.

And when Gehazi sees this clothing and, you know, it's not an exorbitant amount. Ten changes of clothing. And Naaman figures, this is like gold and like silver.

For a prophet in Israel to have ten different sets of these. This is way off the chart from an Armani suit or anything else. And it's very valuable.

Because you notice what Gehazi does not ask for. What's the most... in order of value, what's the first and foremost thing? It's gold, silver, precious stones. But there's a lot of the silver.

There's a lot of gold and there's these ten changes of clothing. And notice Gehazi doesn't say, well, a little bit of the gold and a little bit of the silver. He says a change of clothing for each of these guys.

Gehazi figures two of these sets of clothing is going to make him a wealthy man. Plus he's going to get \$50,000 in silver and these two changes of clothing. It's just an interesting come to pass that so often these changes of clothing in ancient times were considered to be so valuable.

But what does clothing do? Clothing is used by the Lord in parables. Talking about sewing a patch on a garment. The garments of the Jebusites when they come and fool the Israelites, they put on old garments and we have come from moldy bread.

These things, the more you look at them, they convey something. And if you're wearing extremely rich garments and you're not extremely rich, it's a put on. It is a kind of deceit.

Clothing, the outward man, this is why when people are grieving in the soul they would tear their clothing. And it's a big deal. What did the king of Israel do when he got the letter from the king of Syria? This is a big deal.

This isn't a he cursed, he said a bad word. Tearing these expensive garments, this is an expensive gesture. Remember they used to, I don't know if they still do, when a guy spikes the football in the end zone, it cost them like \$5,000 every time they spiked the football.

They wanted to stop guys from doing that. But they do it anyway. But it's an expensive gesture.

And this rending of the garments is no small thing. At any rate, this is what Gehazi asks for. Well, it is covetousness.

He sees this raiment and he he's a servant, when is he going to wear this stuff? Everybody knows Gehazi is a servant of the prophet. And Elisha is living in a very modest means. Where is Gehazi going to go and wear these clothes? Well, he's probably not going to wear them, he is probably going to sell them.

And they are portable, they are hideable, he's got to run back and he can only carry he's got 150 pounds of silver that he's got to carry, right? And after he figures the two talents of silver,

that's 150 pounds, so what else can he carry that's got value? Well, the garments are light but worth a lot. If he had said, yeah, and I'll take a bunch of that gold, that's the densest stuff in the whole package. Elisha would have said, well, Gehazi, you sure look strange, your hands are dragging the ground, your shoulders are stooped over, you look like you're carrying a heavy load.

Well, he would be. The maximum that one guy can carry, and he had to be pretty strong as well as pretty fast because he's got to carry 150 pounds of silver back across these hills to the camp and not be observed. So he picks the clothing and it's a pretty good bargain because this stuff is really worth a lot.

Covetousness. So Naaman said, please take two talents. He urged him and bound two talents of silver in two bags.

He says, you're never going to be able to carry this stuff. And so he's going to send it back with two of his servants. Bound two talents of silver in two bags with two changes of garments and handed them to two of his servants and there carried them on ahead of him.

There's two of everything. Two changes of garment, two talents of silver. And this is kind of like, you remember when the priest said he's a rascal, but what he says is sort of prophetic in the time of Jesus when he says, wouldn't it be better if one man should die for the sins of the people? Gehazi mentions these two sons of the prophets and everything here is double, but this is a double portion and this speaks of what rightly belongs to the Lord.

He is taking what belongs to the Lord. The double portion is the Lord's to give. It is the Lord's to grant and he's taking it for himself.

And so there's double everything. Two servants, two beasts, two changes of clothing, two talents of silver and the two bags and they carry this stuff. So when they 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. I guess there's not beasts in there. I'm thinking of a different story.

So then he went in and stood before his master. We're back to the element of deceit. He's pretending like he hasn't done what he just did.

And this is a common thread. Think of the examples of people who have had greed cause them to take something that they shouldn't take and then they stand before people and try to pretend that they haven't done it. What are some of our examples? We don't have time to go to all of them but you can think of them.

How about Achan taking the prohibited spoils and burying them in his tent and then acting as though nothing had happened. You know what happened to Achan. How about Ananias and Sapphira who would have been fine if they had said we have sold our property and we're giving

half the proceeds to the Lord but they said to the church we have given it all.

Well they had not given it all and there was that element of deceit and they drop in their tracks one after the other. Ananias first and then Sapphira. You think about the cases where there is the representation that I haven't done anything wrong and it is exposed.

So he went in and stood before his master Elisha and says to him where did you go Gehazi? What was the first spoken words of the Lord after Adam and Eve ate the fruit? Why are you? It's always a question. The Lord Jesus you know why are you where you are? Why do you dispute among yourselves? What's the problem? And here this is just as though the Lord is speaking right through the prophet. Where did you go? And you see the italics where Gehazi? Where? He said your servant did not go anywhere.

Shades of Ananias and Sapphira. You compound the lie. He said to him did not my heart go when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? This is really fascinating to me.

Elisha's heart wasn't spying on Gehazi. Elisha's heart didn't go with Gehazi when Gehazi left the neighborhood. Elisha's heart went out when Naaman who had left with a pure clear message of the grace of God was caused to turn around.

This is the point at which God gives the awareness to Elisha. It isn't when Gehazi leaves. It isn't when Gehazi has the thoughts and intents.

It is when Gehazi's actions commit the harm against Naaman. This is sort of a double robbery just like the two talents and the two bags and the two servants, two changes of clothing. Two persons are sinned against, Naaman and God.

It is the point at which, and it's so interesting that he says, did not my heart go? See with you is in italics. I would scribble that out. It doesn't say my heart went with you.

It says my heart went when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you. That's when my heart went and observed and saw your lie and saw your theft of what belongs to Naaman and what belongs to God. Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? Notice, he not only saw the silver and the changes of clothing, but everything that Gehazi intended to purchase after he cashes out.

You can imagine Gehazi thinking, he's got x-ray vision into my soul. I've never said anything about olive groves. But of course, on the way back with these two servants, he's got this thought bubble up ahead with this movie going on.

This is what Elisha sees. Olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, servant no longer. Did you see this thing where a guy who is a scrap metal dealer bought a thing because he recognized that it had some gold and stuff in it.

And he said, wow, this has got some really scrap value. He paid \$14,000 for it. And he tried to

scrap it with several different outfits.

And they all turned him down because they said we aren't going to give you what you say it's worth. And so he's had it. He's in a small Midwestern town here in the States.

There's a Dunkin Donuts right next door to his house. And he's had this, when the person went to interview him and asked about this, this object was sitting on the table next to a plate of cupcakes. You know, just on the kitchen table, just sitting there.

It is a Fabergé egg from 1892 that the, you know, the czar made for the czarettie or whatever they call her. And it's got a watch, it's got a clock inside made by these guys. And it's insanely valuable.

It was bought by a collector for an undisclosed amount. And neither the guy that had it or the guy that bought it are revealing their identities for obvious reasons. But it was an enormous, enormously valued.

The last Fabergé egg that sold on the market was 13 point something million dollars. And this one is really special. It has not been seen since 1902.

It disappeared after it was last observed over in Russia. And nobody has seen it in over a century. And it turned up on this guy's kitchen table.

And he got interested. He googled the name on the clock, on the watch. It was made by, you know, this guy and that guy.

And he googled that and said, hey, wow, I think this might be worth something. He contacted an antique dealer in London. And the guy said, I will fly there and see you very soon.

And the guy flew to Kansas or wherever these people live and helped this guy unload this Fabergé egg that he's had, you know, like on his mantle for ten years. He tried to scrap it and nobody would take it. Because, you know, he said, well, I've got to at least get 14 grand back out of it.

And they said, we're not going to give you 14 grand for that. I say all of that to say this. Midwestern farmer living next to Dunkin' Donuts no longer.

You know, there's, you know, there's big, big things can happen if you choose. You know, it's, but what does it represent to you? There are people who come into something like that and they'll stick it in the bank and go on as before. You know, they'll drive their 14-year-old Chevy and live in the same house.

Some of these guys that made it big in the computer industry didn't change their lifestyle. They drove standard cars, lived in standard homes, put their kids in public school and just banked it. This is tremendous perspective and self-control to not be thinking olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants.

I've been a servant. Now I'm going to have servants. And this covetousness, which is idolatry.

Where do we look for blessings? And this is really the point. When you think about why is covetousness and greed and idolatry so roundly condemned, why do people die from it? Ananias and Sapphira. Gehazi is going to be afflicted with a living death.

The death that was removed from Naaman is going to be transferred to him. Look at what it says. Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever.

Now, you think, well, so if somebody is descended from Gehazi in the world, are all of these people endlessly afflicted with leprosy? Has this just been a line of genetically leprous people? No. This is talking about Gehazi's living household. Remember Achan stole the stuff and hid it in his tent, and Achan and his family were stoned.

And Gehazi's family is in on this. He has taken it to his house and hidden it and then gone. His household is complicit.

They didn't say, you have violated the word of the man of God and we want nothing to do with you. They're colluding. Just like Achan's family colluded.

If you have somebody in your periphery that commits an obvious wrong, you have got to part, distance yourself, get away. Regardless, divine justice was almost instantaneous in these example cases. Ananias and Sapphira, they walk in, say what they say, drop dead.

Sapphira comes in, says what she has to say, drops dead. Achan, there's no time at all, and he's under a pile of rocks with his family. If you find that somebody is in the wrong, and you know it's wrong, you have got to get away.

Distance yourself. Do not abide, do not collude, do not consent. Sometimes silence is consent.

Silence can't be consent. You have got to get away and say, I want no part of you. I want nothing to do with you.

Here's the really sad thing. We are going to see in the future a case where the servant of Elisha is going to be encouraged to lift his eyes to the hills. Remember that? It's coming up.

In our next chapter, look at chapter 6, and the king of Syria is troubled. He calls his servant and says, show me what it is the king of Israel. Elisha the prophet in verse 12 of chapter 6 tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedrooms.

He says, go and see where he is, that I may send and get him. He's in Dothan. That's where he lives.

This is where Naaman came. So he sent horses and chariots and a great army. The king of Syria is going to send horses and chariots and a great army.

Now, here's the thing. I told you that these episodes are out of chronological order. Stop and think.

If chapter 6 occurs after chapter 5, do you think Naaman is not going to speak up and say, oh king, this is the prophet that healed me. You can't go mess with him. Naaman is the general of the armies of Syria.

Is Naaman going to come after Elisha? Chapter 6 takes place before chapter 5. This is my suggestion to you. Because the king of Syria has no qualms about, let's go get Elisha and take care of that guy. Because he's thwarting our raids.

And these are the raids that took place before chapter 5. When the king of Israel is all vexed. Remember that? Is he picking a fight with me? He's already raiding and being very successful. The little maid was taken in a raid.

Well, when Elisha takes up residence in Dothan after Elijah is retired, this Syrian raiding stuff comes to a halt. So, I just suggest to you, and I'll tell you a good reason why I think chapter 6 is before chapter 5. First of all, the king of Syria sends chariots and a great army and they came by night and surrounded the city of Dothan to take Elisha. And when the servant of the man of God arose, verse 15, I'm going to suggest to you that this is Gehazi.

The servant of the man of God arose early and went out. There's an army surrounding the city with horses and chariots. His servant said to Elisha, Alas, my master, what shall we do? Elisha answers, Do not fear.

Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray open his eyes that he may see. Open his eyes that he may see.

Who are we talking about? Whose eyes being opened? The servant of Elisha, right? Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. You know what the name Gehazi means? What does Gehinnom mean? Valley of Valley.

Hazi, the second part, Geh means valley. Hazi, and this is actually a chet in Hebrew, it's a hard ch. And it's Hazah.

And the word Hazah in Hebrew means to see. To see from the valley. The one who is in the valley and sees.

You go to some, I forget, Strong's or somewhere and it says Valley of Vision. You can't figure out what his name means. His name means, this is the guy who sees from the valley.

He's in the valley and he sees the chariots and horses of God on the mountains. If you're looking at the mountains, you're probably, if you look where Dothan is, Dothan is in the valley at the foot of these mountains. Because that's where the water is.

You don't build a city unless you've got a good water source like Spring Gihon on a mountain. Jerusalem is unique in that respect. There's a mountain spring, Gihon, in the days of David.

Because normally you had to kind of build at the foot where there's going to be some runoff from the mountain and you've got water. Dothan is down in the valley. I think his name was probably something else.

But on this occasion, when God opened his eyes and he saw, he's the man who sees from the valley. And with that revelation, he does this in chapter 5. He's Gehazi now. And Gehazi, who has seen, is still tripped up and overcome by his own covetousness and ends up under the curse that Naaman arrived with.

Gehazi has it transferred to him. And the warnings that we have in Scripture about getting caught up in looking for happiness, looking for security in material things in the world, whether it's the good opinion of people, I'll have security because people think well of me. I'll have security because I'm popular.

I'm liked. I'm admired. I have a following.

I've got a click. I've got a fan club. I heard on the radio today our president has fan clubs in the Netherlands.

He's more popular in the Netherlands than anywhere else. And I'm thinking well, you know, maybe they could get rid of the king of the Netherlands and let him go over and run that country. But they were interviewing the president of a fan club in the Netherlands for our president.

He's got a following. He's got a fan club. And they said, you know, he ought to really be glad that we think so much of him over in there.

And so people get security from that security. Well, this is why covetousness is idolatry. Idolatry is worshipping something as God instead of God, capital G, right? Well, I have my confidence.

I have my hope. I have my security for the future vested in these talents of silver, these changes of clothing. This is where my future vineyards and olive groves are going to come from.

This is where my future oxen and sheep and my future manservants and maidservants are going to come from is this that I acquired right here. My security, my future is in this thing. We have to be really careful.

It is a great thing to plan for the future. It is great to map out and try to move toward a goal. This is a good, godly, healthy thing.

We just have to examine ourselves and make sure that we are doing it in faith, by faith, God first and not letting it replace our confidence and our faith in God Himself. This is a tricky thing and this is why we have to spend time meditating, remembering, thinking about, rehearsing

the Word of God and letting it be the critic of the thoughts and intents of our heart. Now, am I doing this because I have got to be sure I've got a mast to lash myself to when the next big storm hits? I need people.

I need this form of security. I need this material good and a nice sense of fire. Why did they say they gave everything? Apparently, they wanted the good opinion of the people in the church and that was so important to them, they were willing to lie to get it.

Gazi goes after this material goods. But covetousness, we are told twice by the Apostle Paul, is idolatry. How and why? Because you take that which you crave, that which you covet, that which you long for and you think, when I achieve this, this will do the things that, in reality, a healthy believer knows only God provides.

Happiness, security, hope for the future, peace of mind. And you notice, Elisha doesn't say to Gazi, go take the silver and the changes of clothing back. He doesn't say, give it to me.

Gazi keeps the silver and keeps the clothing, but what joy is it to him now that he and his entire family are leprous. All of this stuff fades away in its ability to provide the things that Gazi thought it would provide for himself. He has already seen where confidence and security comes from.

I think he's the servant in the valley. Geh Hazah. View from the valley.

What do you see from the valley? The chariots and horsemen of the Lord God surrounding Elisha, giving him protection, provision. God has his entire heavenly army, as it were, on watch for this one raggedy, dusty prophet. And Elisha says, open his eyes that he will see.

Well, his physical eyes were open and he saw, but the eyes of his heart were not enlightened the way Paul prays our hearts will be enlightened in Ephesians chapter 1. To see the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. Not material prosperity, not physical security, not mundane popularity, but those things that come from God himself. And it's such a powerful reminder.

We have it in the Old Testament, we have it in the New. Why did God stop Balaam on the road? Because he was going to give these prophecies for Balak, going to pronounce curses on Israel for Balak in exchange for remuneration. And God said, you're not going, I want you to deliver my word, and I've got a word for you to deliver, and it's going to be a word of blessing, but you're not going anywhere until you purge yourself of this greedy motive.

And he's Balaam, he's not Moses or Aaron, he's Balaam, he's a son of Baor, we don't even know for sure he's Israelite. But God says, you're not going with that motivation, you cannot deliver my word, you cannot be my witness, you cannot provide my testimony with that motive in your heart. And God has to scare it out of him before he proceeds and goes and delivers God's word.

Pray that it doesn't take leprosy or being struck dead or being confronted by the angel with the

sword in the path to wake us up. These things have been written for our instruction to wake us up and let us examine ourselves, judge ourselves that we not be judged, and to ensure that we are placing our confidence for those things that only God can really provide, in God. Our eyes have been opened, we have seen the chariots of fire.

And we don't want to go chasing the chariot of the Syrian general, trying to get what God's chariots of fire offer. The chariot that took Elijah to his divine retirement home. This is what we want to crave.

This is what we want to covet. The approval of God, the blessing of God, being qualified to receive the provision and the benevolent countenance of God. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for how powerfully it illustrates and conveys to us your heart, your plan and purpose, your watch care over us, your fatherly beneficence to us, and your desire to teach us and to train us and to prepare us for an eternal future with you. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will minister these things to our hearts, help us to see their pertinence and their applicability in our individual circumstances. May we grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as we meditate on these things.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.