

# 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 of the phrase, “Actions are 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 learned about a beautiful way that God showed His grace, mercy, and love to a man by the name of Naaman. He was in desperate need of help. Let's briefly review last week's story and then we will pick up with today's lesson. We are going to learn about a man by the name of Gehazi, Elisha's servant. We will learn that you can't buy God's love and grace with money. We will also learn that **God's grace is a FREE gift.**

King Ben-hadad of Syria sent Naaman to the king of Israel, thinking the king could order Elisha to cure Naaman of the disease of leprosy. He sent money with Naaman because he thought God's gift of healing could be bought. **God's grace is a FREE gift.** The king of Israel was upset because he knew he had no control over the situation and he thought the Syrian king was trying to find an excuse to fight. He was completely ignorant of God's powerful working through Elisha.

Elisha heard about the king of Israel's problem and sent the king a message not to worry. Elisha was confident in God's ability to help Naaman. Naaman would soon learn that there is a true prophet of God in Israel. God is able to meet our greatest need.

In the army, Naaman was respected. In combat, he was feared. When Naaman meets Elisha he treats him like an ordinary person. This makes Naaman very angry. Elisha didn't 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.

The cure of Naaman's leprosy was not in the water of the Jordan, but in the obedient faith in God's promise through His prophet. To

wash in the Jordan, Naaman thought was beneath a man of his position. But Naaman had to humble himself and obey Elisha's commands in order to be healed.

Naaman simply had to respond in obedience, yet his pride caused him to retreat in anger. His officers wisely told him to do as Elisha requested. Obedience to God begins with humility. When God wants us to do something, we need to obey with an attitude of humility.

We might not understand His ways of working, but by humbly obeying, we will receive His blessings. As a result of Naaman's humble obedience, he was instantly healed.

It is here that we pick up this week's story. Now that Naaman is healed he desires to hurry back to Elisha. He now has a different attitude towards Elisha. But it is here that we learn the lesson that **God's grace is a FREE gift.**

## 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 wasted no time in returning to Elisha's house in Samaria, which was a 25 mile trip from the Jordan River. He came to Elisha with a different attitude, he was healed and he was humbled. He had a heart of gratitude and desired to pay Elisha for his service. Naaman's deadly disease was cured, and Elisha would be richly rewarded.

Naaman came to Elisha a believer in God and His awesome power. He had discovered through his healing that only a true God could do such a miracle, and he was eager to share that with Elisha.

Elisha agreed with Naaman, that the Lord whom he serves lives. But Elisha refused to accept any reward for his ministry. It was the work of God in his life as a free gift. Elisha knew that it was God's work, not his so he didn't want to receive any payment. If Elisha had taken money from Naaman it could have done damage to what God wanted Naaman to understand about Himself. God wanted Naaman to know and wants us to know that **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 this day believed that no god could be worshipped except in its' own land or on an altar built with the dirt of that land. Though he desired to worship God, he didn't quite know how.

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 didn't intend to worship other gods. His asking for pardon in this one area shows the differences between Naaman and the Israelites, who were continually worshipping many idols. Elisha encourages him to go in peace.

## **Puzzle Partners**

Bring with you a 20 - 25 piece puzzle. If you don't 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 (don't 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 don't obey His plans for us

it is like we are 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.

All throughout the Bible we see great displays of God's great power, a revelation of His loving character. But along with it, we also see displays of man's great pride, a revelation of our selfish character.

Elisha had displayed a beautiful picture of God's loving grace by not accepting any payment for what God had done. But Gehazi, his

servant, didn't see it that way. True service is motivated by love and devotion to God and seeks no personal gain as Elisha had shown. Gehazi had a heart filled with greed.

Gehazi carefully plotted his scheme to get money from Naaman. Gehazi capitalized on God's work.

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 stops them at the hill where Elisha lived and sent the servants away, then quickly hid the money in his house.

## 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.



Elisha didn't waste any time to confront Gehazi. God had revealed Gehazi's deceit to Elisha so he gives Gehazi an opportunity to confess his sin. So to cover one lie, Gehazi told another. Elisha reveals to Gehazi that he is aware of his scheme and adds that a true servant of the Lord should not take personal rewards from people in return for blessings that God had given them. False prophets of that time were selfishly profiting from their position, bringing contempt on the prophetic office. Gehazi was no better.

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 dishonored God and the credibility of his witness on behalf of God to others. 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 an awesome privilege. With that privilege came an awesome responsibility. His sin was far-reaching and he paid dearly for tainting God's beautiful picture of His grace, mercy and love.

God doesn't want His work to be smeared with our selfishness. Naaman had to deal with his prideful heart and when he did, he soon learned that he could trust in God to help him without having to pay for it. Sometimes people reach to God's offer of forgiveness in the same way as Naaman did. Just to believe in Jesus Christ somehow doesn't seem like it is enough to bring eternal life.

Naaman's gift of healing was free; he didn't earn it, but received it by faith. What Naaman had to do to have his leprosy washed away is similar to what we must do to have our sin washed away. We simply need to respond to God's mercy with faith. God's grace, mercy and love are free and freely given. You can be washed from sin and cleansed as Naaman was, by giving your heart to God in humility and faith. **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 to do so.