

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*The Judas of the Old Testament.*"

On Sunday mornings we're in a series on covetousness. We'll get to see a very covetous man – Gehazi – who shares many similarities w/ one of the New Testament's most covetous men: Judas.

I taught on the first half of this chapter few years ago, so I didn't want to go over the same verses again. Instead, I'm going to pick up where I left off, which is right after Naaman was cleansed of his leprosy.

Just for context though, there are a few verses I want you to see. Look at **verse 1...**

**2 Kin 5:1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria** (some of your Bibles might say Aram, b/c Aram and Syria are the same), **was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.**

This is a tremendous description of someone, but it's all nullified by the words **he was a leper.**

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Notice it doesn't just say Naaman's a commander in the Syrian army. He's **THEE** commander of the army.

Also notice it says **the Lord had given [the Syrian's] victory.** If you look at **verse 2** you can see who Syria was getting these victories over...

**2 Kin 5:2 Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife.**

Naaman's victories were over Israel. Israel turned from God, and God used Syria to punish them.

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When Syria **raided** Israel, they took people – like this **little girl** – and what else do you think they took?

Wealth and probably lots of it!

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Briefly look back at **verse 5...**

**2 Kin 5:5 And the king of Syria said [to Naaman], "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.**

This is 750 pounds of silver and 150 pounds of gold, and that's what Naaman is bringing w/ him to pay for his cleansing!

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Syria was Public Enemy Number One to Israel. Just like the Philistines were Israel's main enemy in David's day, the Syrians were Israel's main enemy in Elisha's day.

But the king of Syria is desperate to see his great general cleansed, so he sends him w/ a letter to the king of Israel. That must've been a pretty interesting meeting!

The king of Israel can't help Naaman, so he sends him to Elisha.

Skip to **verse 14** to see Naaman cleansed...

**2 Kin 5:14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.**

When he came up out of the water it says **his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child**. It's like he was born again:

- Since leprosy is a picture of sin, this is a picture of him being saved.
- His physical cleansing was very dramatic, but his spiritual cleansing was even more dramatic.

Since he's a new believer, that's exactly how he's going to look in the following verses:

- He's passionate and zealous, which is wonderful
- But his theology isn't great. His heart is in the right place, but he needs to grow in his understanding of God.

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Look at **verse 15**...

**2 Kin 5:15 Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant."**

Earlier Naaman thought Elisha had to come out and stand before him, but now he travels 25 miles back from the Jordan to Elisha's house so he can stand before him. He's a changed man!

- He's changed physically in that his leprosy is gone
- But more importantly he changed spiritually.

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Since Elisha is the one who gave Naaman the instructions that led to his cleansing, it would've been easy for him to praise Elisha, but he praised God...who was ultimately responsible for his cleansing.

- God uses people, but He doesn't use them for them to receive glory.
- He uses them for Him to receive glory.

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Naaman's confession is beautiful. You'd be hard pressed to find a better one:

- He rejected the false gods of Syria and identified himself w/ the God of Israel.
- One of the ironies of this confession is that since the rest of the nation of Israel was apostate, he looks better than the Israelites steeped in idolatry

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Naaman tried to pay Elisha, but look at his response...

**2 Kin 5:16** But he said, “As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused.

When Elisha said, “Before whom I stand,” he meant, “This is whom I serve, and He wouldn’t want me taking anything.”

The fact that Elisha **refused** this gift is crucial to the story, but let me show you something interesting. Look one chapter to the left...

In **2 Kin 4:38-41**, Elisha miraculously purified the poisonous stew, and then someone tried to give him a gift. Based on what we just read we would expect Elisha to refuse it, but look at **verse 42**...

**2 Kin 4:42** A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And Elisha said, “Give to the men, that they may eat.”

Elisha accepted this gift!

The question is: why did Elisha accept gifts on some occasions, but not when Naaman offered?

There are a few reasons...

First, the cleansing didn’t cost Naaman any money. It cost Naaman his pride, and he was willing to pay that.

And it costs the same today:

- It doesn’t cost us some amount of money to be saved
- But it does cost the humbling of our hearts in that we must confess our sins and need to be saved

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Second, Naaman is a new convert. It’s kind of like when unbelievers or new believers attend church you don’t expect them to give anything financially. That’s not the time to ask what they put in the offering.

Third, Elisha wanted to show that he’s not like the pagan priests and prophets that Naaman would be familiar w/ that were motivated by money.

Naaman brought a lot of wealth w/ him, and when he goes back to Syria he’s going to have to give an account if some is missing. Which of these is going to make a better witness?

- Naaman says, “The prophet of the God of Israel cleansed my leprosy and I tried to give him 750 pounds of gold and he accepted it!” They’re going to say, “Of course he cleansed your leprosy. He wanted the money.”

- But if Naaman says, “The prophet of the God of Israel cleansed my leprosy and I tried to give him 750 pounds of gold and he wouldn’t accept any of it!” That’s going to be a dramatic testimony.

The fourth reason Elisha wouldn’t take the money is he didn’t deserve it:

- He didn’t cleanse Naaman any more than we could cleanse Naaman.
- God’s the One who cleansed him, and if he took some of the money it could look like he was part of the cleansing.

Similarly, Christians can’t take credit for anyone else’s spiritual cleansing:

- When we preach the Gospel to people and they get saved, we have about as much to do w/ it as Elisha had to do w/ Naaman’s cleansing.
- All we did was say, **“Go and wash in the Jordan seven times – or wash in Christ – and you shall be clean.”**

So the real issue wasn’t that Elisha wouldn’t receive gifts. The issue is the context and what receiving those gifts communicated.

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Paul said something similar in the NT...

**1 Cor 9:14 The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.**

Paul says people who preach for a living should make their living from preaching, and Paul is one of those people. He received financial support from churches.

But then he also said he refused support at times if it would be a barrier to people receiving the Gospel...

**1 Cor 9:15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision...18b That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.**

So Paul said he had the **right** to be paid, and sometimes he accepted payment, but other times he declined it...and the same was true w/ Elisha.

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Now at this point, Naaman asks Elisha for two things. Look at **verse 17**...

**2 Kin 5:17 Then Naaman said, “If not, please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the Lord.**

The first thing Naaman asked for is dirt!

Remember I said he was zealous, but his understanding of God was limited?

In the ancient world, many pagans thought their gods could only be worshiped on the soil of the nation they belonged to...on their home turf. Back in **verse 15** Naaman said, “**I know that there is no God in all the earth but IN ISRAEL.**” He thought the God of Israel was only IN ISRAEL, so if he wants to worship Israel’s God, he must bring back some of Israel w/ him.

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Look at the second thing Naaman asked for...

**2 Kin 5:18 In this matter may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master** (referring to the king of Syria) **goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter.”**

The second thing Naaman asked for is forgiveness!

He’s in a tough situation: he’s one of the most prominent men in the nation and he knows he’s going to have to accompany his **master** – the king of Syria – when he goes to worship Syria’s false god...so he asks for forgiveness for this...one more sign of his dramatic conversion.

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Now here’s what I would expect...

Idolatry is the worst sin in the OT, the northern and southern kingdoms were conquered b/c of this sin, so of course Elisha is going to say, “If you want to follow the God of Israel, you better tell your master you can’t go w/ him to worship his false god.”

Nope...look at **verse 19**...

**2 Kin 5:19a He said to him, “Go in peace.”**

Pause right here.

Elisha gave him the **pardon!**

I think the best way to understand this is...

Worship takes place in the heart, which means idolatry takes place in the heart. When Naaman **goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there**, he wouldn’t really be committing idolatry b/c his heart wouldn’t be in it. He’d perform the ritual outwardly, but not inwardly.

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Now there’s a dramatic change in the account. We move from:

- The newly converted Naaman...who’s trying to follow the Lord
- To the unconverted Gehazi...who’s consumed w/ covetousness.

Look at the rest of **verse 19**...

**2 Kin 5:19b But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, 20 Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, “See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him.”**

It's quite the contrast between Elisha and Gehazi:

- In **verse 16** Elisha says, “**As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none.**”
- In **verse 20** Gehazi says, “**As the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him.**”

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And if you want to talk about the kind of person Gehazi is, I couldn't help noticing in my studying this week:

- He shares many similarities w/ Judas
- He's like the Judas of the OT

The OT has pictures and types of Christ, and it has pictures and types of things: for example in this account we talked about leprosy being a picture or type of sin.

There are also some OT people who serve as pictures or types of NT people. In last week's sermon I couldn't remember the name of David's close friend who betrayed him. It was Ahithophel. David wrote about this betrayal in **Psa 41:9...**

**Psa 41:9 Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.**

Then Jesus quoted this verse in **John 13:18** and applied it to Judas. In other words, Ahithophel prefigures Judas.

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The other person who looks like Judas is Gehazi!

I'm going to point out the similarities between these men and the ways we can learn from them...and this brings us to Lesson 1...

### **GEHAZI AND JUDAS BOTH (LESSON 1) JUSTIFIED THEIR COVETOUSNESS.**

At the beginning of **verse 20** it says **Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, “SEE, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him.”**

Literally, it says, **Gehazi thought, “Behold.”**

Whom did Gehazi say this to?

Himself!

This isn't what he said w/ his lips, but it is what he said in his heart.

Nobody tempted him. He tempted himself...

**Jam 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.**

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In the ESV it says **My master has spared this Naaman the Syrian**, but in most other translations it reveals Gehazi's scorn:

- **My master should not have spared THIS Syrian.**
- **My master was too easy on [him].**

He thinks:

- My master is wrong.
- This Syrian beat us up, took our wealth, and now he gets healed by an Israelite prophet?
- He's got all this wealth, he owes us something for this dramatic cleansing that saved his life.
- Plus he probably got a lot of this wealth from Israel, so if he gives it to me it's like he's giving back part of what he took...which is only the right thing for him to do!

It was easy to justify!

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Judas also justified his covetousness...

Only a few days before Jesus' crucifixion, Mary anointed Him. It's the beautiful account of her using the expensive perfume on His feet and then wiping w/ her hair. But listen to this...

**John 12:4 Judas said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.**

He said, "This money shouldn't be used in such a frivolous way. It should be given to the less fortunate."

Gehazi and Judas both saw wasted opportunities to get wealth. They justified how the money should've been spent so they could satisfy their covetousness.

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Covetousness is one of the easiest sins to justify

We need to ask ourselves...

The way Gehazi thought things to himself, do I think similar things to myself?

- He has this and I should too.

- She got that for herself, and I should do the same.
- I deserve this
- I earned that

Or maybe we're like Judas, convincing ourselves we're trying to do something good:

- We really need this, so we can help others...when we really want to help ourselves.
- God wants us to have this bigger house, so we can be more hospitable...but we really just want a bigger house.
- I'm going to take out this loan for this vacation, b/c it'll be best for our family...but really we just want a fancy vacation.

If we don't want to be like Gehazi or Judas we must be honest w/ ourselves regarding why we want something so we can see if we're coveting.

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Let's consider the next similarity...

### **GEHAZI AND JUDAS BOTH (LESSON 2) HID THEIR COVETOUSNESS.**

When Gehazi said this in **verse 20** he looks bad, but it also looks surprising, b/c there's been no sign of this sort of ungodliness w/ him earlier. It's a little like when David committed adultery w/ Bathsheba and murdered Uriah. You couldn't see it coming!

But if you looked closely there was a sign of David's covetousness: he'd been taking wives left and right, so it was only a matter of time before he coveted a wife that didn't belong to him and wanted to take her too.

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And there was a sign of Gehazi's spiritual condition. Look one chapter to the left...

Here's the context: the Shunammite's son died. She races to Elisha so he can raise him from the dead...

**2 Kin 4:27 And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came TO PUSH HER AWAY. But the man of God said, "Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me." 28 Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'"**

Her point is she never asked for a son, so why give her one if the Lord would take him from her?

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Gehazi looks very insensitive and calloused toward this grieving mother:

- Imagine pushing away a woman who just lost a child!
- His attitude toward her reveals a dark streak in his character that became more apparent in the next chapter.

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Sadly, he looks like the disciples. Remember when the Canaanite woman came to Jesus b/c her daughter was demon possessed?

**Matt 15:23b [The] disciples begged [Jesus], saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.”**

It's like, “Are you serious?”

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Look at **verse 29**...

**2 Kin 4:29 He said to Gehazi, “Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child.”**

Elisha probably sent Gehazi ahead b/c he was younger and could reach the house faster. It's possible if anyone else – such as the father – found the body they might bury it.

But watch what happened...

**2 Kin 4:30 Then the mother of the child said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he (this is Elisha) arose and followed her. 31 Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him and told him, “The child has not awakened.”**

Elisha told Gehazi to raise the child. He told him exactly what to do. We'd expect it to work...but it didn't.

Why not?

Because of Gehazi's spiritual condition.

The account looks strange, b/c you say, “Why did Elisha send him if he wouldn't be able to do it?”

Elisha didn't know Gehazi would be unable. Gehazi hid his spiritual condition so well, he thought he could raise someone from the dead!

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Similarly, did Judas hide his spiritual condition well?

He was the group's treasurer! Imagine that: they had 12 choices and they chose him!

Listen to this...

**Matt 26:21 [Jesus] said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”**

What would we expect everyone to say?

“We know, we know...it’s Judas!

Nope!

**Matt 26:22 And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?”**

Judas had deceived them so well, they were more inclined to think they were the one to betray Jesus than him.

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The application for us...

Is there any part of our spiritual condition we’re hiding from those around us?

- Whether family
- Whether church members
- Whether neighbors or friends

Are we hiding covetousness or some other sin?

We might fool those around us:

- Like Gehazi fooled Elisha and Judas fooled the other 11 disciples
- But we don’t fool the Lord, just like Judas didn’t fool the Lord

**Heb 4:13 And no creature is hidden from [Jesus’s] sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.**

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Let’s talk about the last similarity for this morning...

**GEHAZI AND JUDAS BOTH (LESSON 3) MADE COVETOUSNESS THEIR MASTER.**

In **verse 20**, Gehazi is described as **the servant of Elisha** and Gehazi even refers to Elisha as **my master**.

Both times Judas addressed Jesus he called Him Rabbi:

- Going back to Jesus announcing His betrayal: **Matt 26:25 Judas [said], “Is it I, Rabbi?”**
- And when he betrayed Him: **Matt 26:49 [Judas] came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him.**

Scripture places a high value on submission to authority, and it strongly condemns rebelliousness.

Even though there was outward respect from both of these men toward their masters, they were inwardly rebellious...b/c where does submission happen...or not happen?

Inwardly, in the heart.

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Gehazi and Judas were both rebellious, b/c:

- They allowed covetousness to control them.
- Covetousness became their master and took the place of Elisha and Jesus.

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Listen to the way Jesus explained this...

**Matt 6:24a No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.**

We can't have two masters ruling in our hearts.

Why not?

We don't have room for two. We end up:

- Loving one and hating the other
- Or devoted to one and despising the other

Now at this point you're saying, "*Yup. We can't serve two masters. Makes sense.*"

But if you had never heard this verse before, what would you expect Jesus to say next?

**"You cannot serve God and SOME OTHER MASTER."**

But that's not what He says!

He says...

**6:24b You cannot serve God AND MONEY.**

Why does Jesus talk about not being able to serve two masters, and then say you can't serve God and money?

Because He's warning that money can become our master!

That's what happened w/ Gehazi and Judas. They coveted money:

- Gehazi couldn't serve Elisha and money
- Judas couldn't serve Jesus and money

So they both served covetousness. It became their master.

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And that's why Jesus chose money instead of all the other things he could've said...

He didn't say:

- You cannot serve God and power

- You cannot serve God and fame
- You cannot serve God and comfort

He chose money, b/c of the strong potential for it to become our master.

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Let me conclude w/ this...

This reveals how to have victory over covetousness...

Christ must be the master of our lives:

- And to say yes to Christ is to say no to covetousness.
- When Christ is our master, we aren't mastered by anything else

Listen to these familiar lyrics...

*O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to you,  
for you in your atonement did give yourself for me.*

*I own no other master*

*My heart shall be your throne:*

*My life I give, henceforth to live,*

*O Christ, for you alone.*

We can't have two masters ruling our hearts, and the wonderful thing about having Christ as our master is He doesn't share His throne w/ anyone or anything else.

If we struggle w/ covetousness – which we all do to some extent – if fill our hearts w/ Christ and there will be no room for anything else.

Let's pray.