

Elisha The Holy, Humble, Anointed Man of God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon focuses on the life of Elisha, an Old Testament man of God who exemplified humility, pursuit of the anointing, and a holy lifestyle. It emphasizes the importance of serving others, being free from the love of money, and seeking after the way of the cross to die to self. The examples from Elisha's life challenge believers to live with a new covenant spirit in all areas of their lives.

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13, Luke 22:27, 2 Corinthians 12:7, Galatians 6:14, James 5:16, 2 Kings 13:21

Topics: "Humility", "Pursuit of the Anointing"

Description

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Transcript

So, we'll continue our study on Old Testament men of God who lived by New Covenant principles, which is a challenge not only to us, but as we look around and see so many people have understood the New Covenant in their minds, who live by Old Covenant standards. This is the contrast. And we must learn from this one lesson.

And that is knowledge of the truth does not mean that we are living by it. Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free in John chapter 8. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. But what did he mean by that? It's not a head knowledge of the truth.

It's a knowledge that brings a result in our life. So if it doesn't bring that result, that's not the type of knowledge God wants us to have. So you need to ask yourself, is the measure of freedom in your life, freedom from sin? Because that is what Jesus was referring to there in John chapter 8, you know, they were talking about being free from sin.

Verse 32, you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free. And the Pharisees said, no, what do you mean free? We are already free. And he said, I'm talking about being free from sin.

Verse 34, if you serve sin, you're a slave of sin. If you commit sin, you're a slave of sin. So what is the mark that somebody knows the truth? It is that he's free from sin.

It's so clear in John 8, 32, if I'm not free from sin, I don't know the truth. What I know is in my head. And I fear that many, many people, because they have read so many of our books and listened to so many messages, they think they have understood the new covenant.

And that is why I wanted to take these studies from Old Testament men who could not explain 1% of what some people today can explain of the new covenant and contrast the old and new covenant and all that. But these men are still seeking their own. The fundamental problem with the children of Adam is they seek their own, not the things that are Christ's.

It's not just that I overcame my anger and I overcame some other habit here. Deep down underneath the root of it all is that we seek our own, not the things that are Christ's, that we glory in ourselves and not in the cross of Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified to me. So when we look at the examples of these men, which you've already considered, we see that they could not explain things like we can today, but they lived the life.

And there are many men through the centuries of Christendom who could not explain the new covenant like we can today, many of us, but who have lived the life and who lived the life. And that is the ultimate test of whether we know the truth or not. Please remember this all your life, my brothers and sisters.

Don't ever think you've understood the truth if it has not set you free from sin. You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. John 8, 32 to 36, please read it, meditate on it and see what Jesus was saying there.

So keeping that in mind, we look at one more example from the Old Testament books. We've already seen the example of Job and we saw the example of Abraham and Moses, men who lived really godly lives and understood so much of this new covenant principles we are talking about. They had their faults, they made mistakes, but they had some fundamental qualities which made them live by new covenant principles in many areas of their lives.

Today we want to look at Elisha. Elisha was the prophet who followed after Elijah. You know, Elijah in 1 Kings chapter 19, he ran away after bringing fire down from heaven because Jezebel threatened him.

And he got into a cave and said, Lord, take away my life, I've had enough. He was so persecuted. It's very easy to judge him why he got discouraged because of a woman shouting at him.

But he was under such tremendous pressure. He just killed 450 prophets of Beal and he didn't have the inner Holy Spirit like we have. So don't ever compare yourself with Elijah.

And he went and hid himself. And the Lord said to him, okay, I'll take you up to be with me. But I want you to go and anoint Elisha to succeed you.

And so, you read in 1 Kings in chapter 19 and verse 19, he departed and found Elisha, the son of Shephat, ploughing with 12 pairs of oxen and he with the 12. Must be quite a job, ploughing with 12 pairs of oxen. Hardworking man.

And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him, which is an indication, calling you to follow me. And Elisha understood that. He left the oxen immediately and ran after Elijah and said, hey, let me just say goodbye to my father and mother, and I'll follow you.

And Elijah said, what have I done, you do what you like. And so, he came and followed up to Elijah in verse 21 and ministered to him. Now, what I see here is the Lord chose a hardworking man.

You know, if you look in the New Testament, you find every apostle whom the Lord chose, every one of his 12 disciples were chosen, the ones we know about were all chosen in their place of work. They were hardworking people, fishermen, James, John, Peter, Andrew. Fishermen are some of the most hardworking people I have met in my life.

They go out to sea and sometimes, I've heard of fishermen in some places, they go out for weeks on end before they get fish and come back home. And hardworking people, because their entire income is from catching those fish and they have to keep on working until they get enough fish to feed their families. And Jesus chose such people who are hardworking.

Matthew was working hard as an accountant. I never find in the New Testament anyone whom Jesus called, who was just lazily sitting at home without a job. God does not call such people.

He calls those who are faithful in the work they are doing. The first thing we need to see about Elisha, he wasn't a man who went to a Bible college to get a degree to be a full-time worker, no. That type of tribe of people we see these days, they're not servants of God, they didn't get a job anywhere else and they failed in all their school and university exams, so they go to Bible school because there are Bible schools that give you free accommodation, free education, and a free job at the end of it.

That's a tragedy in so many countries today. And that's why Jesus, the Bible is completely against having Bible schools. You read in the Old Testament about a school called the School of the Prophets.

I think Samuel probably started it because there were no prophets in those days and I think it was, I mean, he had good intentions. They were called, the Bible school students were called the sons of the prophets. But not a single true prophet came out of the School of the Prophets.

All the false prophets came out from there with their Bible school degree and say, I'm one of the persons who's come out from the School of the Prophets, started by Samuel. And they were the false prophets at that time, just like Dick. But the true prophets, you read in the Old Testament, were never went to any Bible school.

They didn't come out of the School of the Prophets. They came, they were working hard and God laid a hand on them, called them and anointed them. That's how any true servant of God was called in the Old Testament or New Testament or today ever since.

You must never forget that. Don't be deceived by all these people who have a lot of head knowledge that they've accumulated in Bible schools. He was a hardworking man, Elisha, is the first thing you need to see.

And when he was called, he left it. He didn't leave because he wanted to be a full-time worker. No, there's no such thing as wanting to be.

If God doesn't call you and you try to serve the Lord, you will be a total failure. And 95% of the full-time workers I've seen are in that category. Total failures because God never called them.

Elisha was called and let's never forget that. If you're not called into full-time Christian work, work in your secular job and be a wholehearted servant of God. You can be more useful to God.

Paul was a working man. I say Paul was a Christian businessman who was an apostle. He supported himself.

He didn't depend on anybody for his money. People gave him a gift. He took it, but he was not dependent on them.

And that is the best way in our day and age to serve the Lord, to support ourselves, not be dependent on anyone, and to serve the Lord. And we see here a wonderful example in Elisha, a hardworking man, just like the New Testament disciples whom Jesus called. So that's the first thing we see about him.

Then we go on to the time when Elijah was about to leave. You know, God was going to take him up in a chariot of fire. And you read in 2 Kings 2, something more about this man, again, new covenant principles.

It says it came about in 2 Kings 2 that the time came when God was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. And now this is Elijah telling the man whom he has called, whom he had put his mantle on, says in 2 Kings 2, Elijah said to Elisha, please stay here because the Lord has sent me to Bethel. Where were they? They were in Gilgal, verse 1. Elijah went with Elisha in Gilgal.

So they're starting at Gilgal, and the Lord, Elijah told Elisha, stay here, I'm going. It was a test because later on, we read three times, Elijah told Elisha to stay and he said, no, I'll go, I'll go, I'll go, go, go on with you. And then finally, he first started in Gilgal, then he went to Bethel, verse 2. And then from there, he went to Jericho, verse 4. And then he finally went to Jordan, verse 6. So these are four places.

And every time Elijah told Elisha, no, stay here, stay here in Gilgal, Elisha said, no. Then Elijah said, when they came to Bethel, Elijah said to Elisha, stay here in Bethel. And Elisha said, no.

And then when they came to Jericho again, Elijah said, stay here. And he said, no, I'm not going to stay. And you read that in the first few verses.

Now, what do we learn from this? See, ultimately, when finally when Elijah and Elisha crossed over Jordan, Elijah asked Elisha, okay, why in the world have you been following after me? What do you want? And Elisha, let me paraphrase his words, what do you think I've been following you for all these times? You think I'm looking for a title like director of the work or chief elder of this church that I'm going to take over from you? I'm now your successor. You've been the elder so far. Please tell everybody I am the new elder.

He wasn't interested in anything like that. Today, Christians are interested in titles, director, supervisor, chairman, and the elder and all that. Elisha was not at all interested in that.

He was interested in only one thing. And I wish all Christians would also be interested in the one thing, the anointing of the Holy Spirit. All titles are worthless.

If you're not anointed with the Holy Spirit, to be known as an elder, oh-ho, big man in the church, then you think you're more spiritual than everybody else. You should be a servant of everybody else. The anointing of the Holy Spirit, I've seen so many churches where there are people in the church are more anointed than the elder.

It says here, Elisha said to Elijah, I don't want just the anointing you had. I want a double portion of the anointing you had. You know, he was bold in asking.

He was thirsting for it. He said, what do you think I've been following you? And if you look at the miracles that Elisha did, you find he did exactly the double the number of miracles that Elijah did. You calculate it and see.

He got what he wanted. He was anointed with supernatural power from heaven because he thirsted for it. This is the first requirement.

Jesus said, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me. And if you believe in me, out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. The first requirement to be anointed with the Holy Spirit is not doctrinal understanding.

He never spoke about doctrinal understanding. Today, we have so many books on being filled with the spirit, doctrinal understanding, but very few people who are genuinely filled because they don't have a thirst. Notice here, let's go back and see.

At Gilgal, you know, Gilgal is the place you read in the book of Joshua, I think it's chapter five, where it says, the reproach of Egypt was rolled away through circumcision. He circumcised and said, the reproach of Egypt has been rolled away. So that's the first step where we begin, where our sins are forgiven, the past is blotted out, and you come to that place.

And are you happy to stay there? Elijah tells Elijah, you come to Gilgal, the reproach has been rolled away, your sins are forgiven, you're on your way to heaven now, stay here. Many people say, thank you, brother. Thank you, I've got an assurance I'm not going to die and be in God's kingdom, that's all I need.

They stay in Gilgal all their life. You think such people will be anointed in the Holy Spirit? Never. So then they go on to Bethel.

This is the people who've gone one step further. Bethel is the place where, Bethel means the house of God. This is where Jacob saw the ladder going up to heaven, we call it Bethel.

So this is people who've gone beyond forgiveness of sins, and come into a New Testament church. See, this is wonderful. We're not just like those other people in the denomination, just that sins are forgiven, and they live like that.

No, we found a new coming church you're a part of. There are people who glory in that, the church they belong to. And they don't have any life themselves, they don't have no anointing, but they're in a good church, a good church with good elders and anointed elders, and new covenant church.

Bethel, this is the house of God. This is not a dead denomination. This is the house of God, Bethel.

Praise God that you went beyond Gilgal to Bethel. And Elijah says, stay here. He says, no, I'm not satisfied.

I'm not satisfied with forgiveness of sins. I'm not satisfied that I'm a part of a new covenant church. No, Elijah says, I'm gonna go on to Jericho.

And you know what Jericho means, stands for Jericho is the place where the power of God was manifested and they blew the trumpets and the walls fell down. And that's the other thing, some people, they experience the power of God in some supernatural way in their life, and they're satisfied with that. Maybe they got a genuine gift of tongues.

A lot of tongues I've heard, 95% of what I've heard is fake. There is a genuine gift of tongues, and some have received it. I thank God for it, I use it in my private prayer.

But some people are satisfied with that, supernatural experience. Or they got some supernatural healing somewhere, and they talk about it for the rest of their lives. But they don't have an anointing.

They just experienced some manifestation of God's power. The children of Israel experienced the manifestation of God's power, not once. Every single day for 40 years, they had food dropped from heaven.

Every single day in the desert, they got water from a rock. When they were bitten by snakes, they were supernaturally healed. Their clothes never wore out for 40 years, their sandals never wore out for 40 years.

They've got a testimony that they could go around testifying everywhere and it was true, but it says God was not pleased with them. God was not pleased with any of them, we read. We read that in 1 Corinthians 10, we read that in Hebrews and chapter 3. So Gilgal, great, Bethel, great, Jericho, far of God, great.

Not good enough, it's not the anointing. These are just manifestations of God's goodness. And so Elijah said, stay here in Jericho, are you happy with it? You got forgiven, you found a new covenant church, you've experienced some supernatural answers to prayer, are you happy? Elisha said, no.

Elijah says, I'm going to Jordan. Elisha said, okay, I'm gonna follow you. And Jordan speaks of death to self.

Where does death to self come, somewhere early on? No, see the stages. Gilgal, forgiveness of sins in the past blotted out. The reproach of the past life gone.

Bethel, come into a new covenant church. Jericho, experiencing the power of God in our life, still not satisfied. I wish there were more people like that, who experienced all this and say I'm not satisfied.

I want to go further. Jesus said, if you want to follow me, you got to take up the cross every day and follow me. I want to come to that life, which is called in Hebrews 10:20, the new and living way through the flesh, which speaks about the way Jesus went himself through the flesh.

So that is the way of the cross. And Jordan was the place where Jesus was baptized. And baptism, when Jesus got baptized, he was saying, I accept death to myself.

To be buried, I accept other people pushing me down, putting me to death. Inwardly, he lived like that for 33 years before he finally hung on the cross. Dying to self every day, otherwise he couldn't possibly tell us to take up the cross every day if he himself had not taken up the cross every day.

He's not saying, well, I'm going to take up the cross once finally when I die on the cross, but you guys are going to take it up every day. No, he said, if you want to follow me, if you want to walk the way I walked, you have to take up the cross every day because that's the way I walked. So thereby he was telling us in

Luke 9.23 that that is the way he walked all his life, and though Elisha didn't understand all of that, he wanted this.

So that is what Jordan symbolizes, death to self. Jesus said, I submit to John the Baptist burying me under the water, submitting to what symbolically saying, let people do what they like to me. I believe my father will raise me up.

Wherever there's an acceptance of death to self, the father raises up people, we experience the power of resurrection. So that is what Jordan symbolizes, submitting to the cross and not stopping there, experiencing the power of his resurrection. That's the real anointing of the Holy Spirit.

That's the real part of the Holy Spirit, part of his resurrection. And it's not something you just get once. Paul said towards the end of his life when he was 60 years old in the Philippians, I want to know more of the power of his resurrection.

So that's what we see here. And then Elisha says at the end in verse nine, what do you think I've been following you all this time? Give me a double portion of your spirit. And what does Elijah say? Now today, he says, you asked for a very hard thing, verse 10.

Now today you go to some preachers who believe in this. And you say, brother, I want to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. He says, no, come right here.

I'll lay my hands on you, and you'll be anointed right now. Well, it's an easy thing. Rubbish, you get nothing out of that.

That man puts his empty hands on your head. What do you get? Zero. What you need is the nail-pierced hands of Jesus to be laid on your head.

Not that man's empty hands being put on your head. You get nothing out of that. It's not an easy thing, Elijah said.

It's a hard thing. I wish there were more people who said that today, to people seeking for the power of the Holy Spirit. Verse 10 of 2 Kings 2, you've asked for a hard thing.

But if you see me, when I'm taken up, you'll get it. Otherwise, you won't get it. See, seeing the risen Lord, Elijah here is a picture of Christ who was taken up to heaven.

And Elisha is a picture of the disciples seeing him go up, you and I. So what the Lord is saying here is symbolically, if you see me, you'll have the anointing. But if you have taken up with ministry and taken up with titles and taken up with other things on this earth, you will not have it. Even what you have, you lose.

But that's the first thing we need to learn from the example of Elisha. Great testimony, seeking for the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit, and willing to pay any price for it. Lord, I want this at any cost.

So, let me go on to another thing that we learned from Elisha. In the next chapter, 2 Kings 3, Ahab and Jehoshaphat were planning together for a battle. And there were so many false prophets, you know, the people who had come out of the Bible school of prophets, who were saying all types of false things.

And Jehoshaphat was a man with discernment, because the false prophets said, yeah, yeah, yeah, the Lord will give these people into your hand. And Jehoshaphat heard all this and says, it doesn't ring true.

And he said in 2 Kings 3, 11, is that a true prophet here? We decide all these preachers, we heard all of them.

Is that a true prophet anywhere here? And one of the King of Israel's servants said, yes, Elisha. He's the only guy who's a true prophet. And he's the one who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.

See, his title, he was not Dr. Elijah or Reverend Elijah, known as, not Archbishop Elijah, he was one who poured water on the hands of Elijah. He was known as Elijah's servant. Poured water means when Elijah finished eating his food, Elijah would bring a dipper of water and pour it for Elijah to wash his hands.

That was his title and that was his calling. The pourer of water for Elijah the prophet. Wow, imagine to be known like that.

And it's not that he, that's the only thing he did. Because in the previous chapter, we read that he split the River Jordan. When he took Elijah's mantle and struck the waters.

And we read in 2 Kings 2 14, that the river parted and he came through. And another time we read that when the waters were impure, bad in verse 19 onwards of 2 Kings 2. He prayed for it and poured some salt into it and the waters were purified. He'd seen some miracles like that.

So they didn't refer to all those. He didn't say this is the man who split Jordan and came through after Elijah went up to heaven. This is the man who purified water just by praying over it and sprinkling salt there.

No, they said this is the man who poured water on the hands of Elijah. It's wonderful after all the miracles we've done, dear brother, sister, to be known as a servant. That the primary thing you're known for is not the miracles you did.

But that you have a spirit of a servant. There we can all follow him. We are not all called to do miracles, but we can all follow him.

And we read there Elijah spoke the truth. Now the next thing I want you to see here about Elijah is in 2 Kings chapter 4. He used to pass through a certain town. And in 2 Kings chapter 4, there was a, but he used to pass over to Shunem, you read in verse 8, 2 Kings 4 verse 8. There was a very important lady, a prominent woman means probably a well-to-do, important lady in that town.

And when she used to persuade him to come and eat food with us. And whenever he passed by there, he stopped and ate food there. And so she told her husband, let's make a little chamber here.

And let's set a bed and a table and a chair for him, verse 10. So that whenever he passes by, he can stay there. And he came there, there's nothing spectacular.

He wasn't preaching sermons or he didn't do any miracles there. But he came and ate food with them. He would go and sleep in that room and pass on, he was only passing through.

And you know what impression this lady got about him just watching him? No miracles, she had not seen him do any miracle. She just saw the way he conducted himself in the house. The way he ate his food and the way he would quietly go to his room and probably keep his room in a tidy way.

And she said to her husband, I can see that this is a holy man of God who passes by. That's why she made that little extra room for her. See the impression Elisha gave to people just the way he ate food with them.

There's nothing else he did there. Just the way he conducted himself, the way he ate food at the table, and maybe the conversation he carried on with them in the table. He gave an impression of a holy man, a great example for us.

Today we have so many people boasting about newcomer and all. If you sit with them and eat with them, they're joking and laughing and this, don't get the impression of a holy man. You get the impression of a joker, man who's trying to get a reputation for humor.

You know the number of believers I've met who want to get a reputation for being a humorous person. You become popular because you get a reputation for being humorous. And other poor believers who don't have that ability, they feel inferior.

I can't do this, what this brother does. Uh-huh, can you be known as a holy man? Never mind if you're not known as a joker, be known as a holy man. Holy, this is a holy man of God.

That should be our longing. Elisha was not known as a joker. He probably didn't have a great sense of humor like many people today have and who long for it and who are seeking a reputation for it.

He wanted to be known as a holy man. His conversation was around holiness. He wasn't cracking jokes at the table.

He was leading people to godliness. This is a new covenant man in the old covenant. Compare him with all these people who claim to know the new covenant today.

Where is he and where are today's people? I hope we can see this. Remember what I said in the first message. Jesus said, you folks compare yourself with the men of Nineveh.

Compare yourself with the Queen of Sheba. Compare yourself with so many people in the Old Testament who repented and turned. So that's what I say, look at these people.

So we move on from there. God did a miracle later on for this lady and gave her a son. She didn't have any children to them and she got a son.

One day that son died. We see here, she goes looking for Elisha. The son died.

She left that child dead on the bed and she got onto a donkey, 2 Kings 4.22, and she saddled and said, let's go quickly, I want to meet Elisha. And she met the man of God, verse 25, at Mount Carmel. And when Elisha saw her, he said, hey, that's the Shunammite.

Let's go and ask her what happened. And she came and said that the, she first said the child is well. And then Elijah said, I think there's something troubling her and the Lord has not shown it to me, verse 27.

And then she explained to him how the child was dead. And then I want you to see this. Elisha said to Gehazi in 2 Kings 4.29, now take my staff.

I mean, you run, you can run faster than me. Run ahead and don't salute anybody on the way. And go and lay my staff on the lad's face.

And the mother of the lad said, I'm not gonna go with Gehazi. No, I know what Gehazi is like and I know what you're like. Both of you sit at my table and eat food with me.

And this guy is just a joker. But you are different, Elisha, I'm not gonna go with him. I will not leave you.

I will not leave you, Elisha. He can go if he wants. And so Elisha also got up and first, Elisha just wanted to send a servant.

She said nothing to him. Anyway, Gehazi went ahead and took the staff, verse 31. Just like Elisha told him to do, and put it on the lad's face, no response.

So he came back and said, nothing happened. See, this reminds me of people today who use the name of Jesus. You heard of someone who did something wonderful in the name of Jesus, some miracle, and they go with that.

The name of Jesus is the rod they have. In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, hallelujah, hallelujah. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord.

Nothing happens. Rather, it is not in words. Using words is just like Gehazi putting a rod on somebody and praying that something will happen.

When your life is not right, when you're not a holy man of God, your prayer is worth nothing. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much, we read in James 5, verse 17 onwards. The effective prayer of a righteous man.

Gehazi can use the same name and use this rod of Elisha, nothing happens. Then Elisha has to come himself. And he entered in and prayed to the Lord and went up and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hand on his hands and stretched himself.

And the child woke up and he gave the child back to the mother. And he went away. He didn't wait there to call everybody in the town and say, hey, do you see what I did? So he was a man who walked with God.

And when a need came up, as the Lord led him, he blessed people. He was first known as a holy man of God. And he had a servant who was absolutely useless.

He heard all the message, but he didn't get Elisha's spirit. And if you go to the next chapter, you see why it was like that. In 2 Kings chapter 5, we read of Naaman, who was a great man, a general in the army of the Arameans.

And he had leprosy. You know the story how they had a servant girl from Israel with them. And the servant girl said to them, to the mistress, we have a prophet in Israel.

I'm sure he can cure my master of the leprosy. And so Naaman got a letter from the king. And went, you read in 2 Kings chapter 5, and he went to the house of Elisha.

You read in verse 9. He came with his horses and his chariots and a lot of money. And stood at, Elisha was in a small little hut. He and Gazi was staying there.

And Elisha, and he stood at the doorway of the house. And said, can you come and heal me? And Elisha, look at this man of God. This great general has come from another country, big shot.

And Elisha knows this man has to be humbled. I really admire Elisha for this. He was a man of God who couldn't care less for the big shots in the world.

He wasn't going to cover before him and be scared. Come and greet him and say all types of nice things to him. No, he didn't come and say, Naaman, I'm so honored that you came to visit me.

Just like today's preachers. If some big man in the world comes, they'll fawn over him and make much of him. But not Elisha, he was a man of God.

I tell you, we need more men of God like that. And they're very, very rare. And so, he just sends a message.

I think Gazi went out and said, my master says, go to Jordan. Verse 10, dip yourself seven times and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean. And Naaman was angry.

He's never experienced the great general of Syria or whatever place, Aram. He's never experienced anybody talking like this. He says, I thought he would come out to me and wave his hand and cure me, and he tells me to go and dip in that dirty river Jordan.

There are better rivers in Damascus. And he was angry and he went away, turned away. Then his Naaman's servant said, hey, if the prophet had told you to do something great, you'd have done it.

It's so simple, why don't you go and try? And he went and dipped himself in the river Jordan, and he was healed completely. And then he comes back with money. Here is an unconverted, godless man coming with a whole lot of money.

To give to the servant of God, who has healed him of leprosy. What a miracle, there was no cure for leprosy those days. The lepers had to be put outside the camp.

And when this time Elisha comes out and tells him, 2 Kings 5.16, here you see what a man of God he was. As the Lord lives before whom I stand, I will take nothing. Now there are preachers today also who say, no, no, no, brother, I don't want it.

No, thank you, I don't want it. But somebody present, no, no, no, take it. No, no, no, I don't want it.

No, please take it. And they, okay, if you insist, I'll take it. Elisha was not that type of actor.

Pretending to be humble, pretending not to be interested in the money. No matter how much, he says, Neman urged him. He said no, he urged him 20 times.

He says, no, sorry, I will not take a cent from you. And there was a reason for it. He probably didn't tell him straight away, but you can see in the next verse, Neman says, and Elisha had discernment.

This guy got a physical healing, but he's not interested in following the Lord. No, he only wants a miracle. Just like a lot of people today, they want a miracle.

They're not interested in following Jesus. And Elisha could see that, and Neman said, okay, if you don't take this, at least let me take a little earth from here, which I can put in my house and take some of the

Israeli mud and earth and kneel down there and pray to God. And but there's one thing, Elisha, if you will please listen to me.

You know, when my master, verse 18, goes into the idol's temple, and he bows down to the idol, he always leans on my hand. He calls Neman, he says, Neman, come with me. And I have to bow myself before that idol, otherwise he'll dismiss me.

I'll lose my job, he may kill me. So I hope the Lord will forgive me for that one thing. Can you imagine the Lord forgiving somebody who are worshiping an idol? Throughout the Old Testament, God detests idols.

And there, Elisha discerned that, this guy's a compromiser. He wants the blessing, he wants the miracle, he wants to be healed of leprosy. But once he's healed, doesn't want to follow the Lord God of Israel.

He wants to go back and worship that idol who could not heal him of the leprosy. He wants to please his master. There are many people like that, who come to the church for some type of benefit for themselves, some gain they want for themselves.

And the true servant of God must be able to see through such people. You should be able to discern a person by five minutes of talking to him. If you're an elder in a church and you're a servant of the Lord, you should be able to discern people by speaking to them for five minutes.

You don't need to know all about their past history. Elisha could discern straight away. In fact, he discerned before he even met Cain.

And he knew that, that's why he never came out to meet him. And here also he discerned what type of man he was. He was a compromiser who was seeking his own position and honor with his master.

And so, Elisha said, I won't take anything from you. How many servants of God are there today who refuse to take money from someone who's a compromiser? Say, I don't want your money, go and give your money to the idol Rimon, or whichever idol you worship. We don't want it.

God doesn't want it, Jesus doesn't want it. We see such a different spirit in Christendom today that they would take money from anybody who offers it. There's a great verse in the third epistle of John, which tells us how it was with the early apostles.

In third John in the seventh verse, it says, those who went out to serve the Lord never took, the third John and, yeah, verse seven. They went out for the sake of the name of Jesus, accepting nothing. From non-Christians, accepting nothing from non-Christians.

In other words, if a non-Christian offered them money, they said, no, thank you. That is what a Christian church must have as a testimony. If you're not born again, brother or sister, you have no right to put money in the offering box.

We will not take it. There are people who've sent money to our church. When I knew they were non-Christians, I did one of two things.

In some cases, I returned the money as a testimony saying, dear sir, we cannot take money from you because you're not a born again Christian. And in some other cases, depending on the leading of the Lord, I would buy a whole lot of Christian books for the same amount of money and give it to that person. So that not one cent of his came into the Lord's work.

It's like he's buying a book, okay, here you are. So he doesn't feel insulted. But sometimes I felt led to tell him so that he gets converted.

Brother, God does not take money from someone who's not born again. So we need to be very clear in this area of money. Elisha was so clear and faithful in the area of money, and that is why God used him.

He had far more of a new covenant spirit than multitudes of preachers today. Almost 99% of preachers don't have this spirit. No wonder all talk of new covenant is just hollow.

It's not, this guy had more of the new covenant spirit than many, many people today, even you may not be a full time Christian worker. What is your attitude to money? Look at Elisha's attitude. There we see a new covenant man living in old covenant times.

And see the contrast there in Gehazi. You see, Gehazi was Elisha's servant, pouring water on his hands. Just like Elisha poured water on Elijah's hands.

And if Elisha took over from Elijah as the prophet, who was gonna be the next prophet? Gehazi. But instead of getting the anointing, he got leprosy. Instead of getting the anointing of Elisha, he got leprosy.

And you know why? Only one reason. That guy was crazy after money. A warning to all preachers and believers today.

We are crazy after money. What you'll get is spiritual leprosy. And you see that, how Gehazi, when he saw Elijah just letting him go.

And he says, what a fool, my master, Elisha is in verse 20. This man just came and gave it freely, and he still Elisha would not take it. Okay, if Elisha doesn't take it, I'll go and take it myself.

And so he ran, says in verse 20, I run. What's he running after? Money, like many people today. And he pursued Naaman, and Naaman saw him running and said, hey, what's the matter? Is everything okay? And then he has to tell a lie.

You know, when you're after something, when you're after money, it's very easy to tell a lie, small lie or a big lie. This was a big one. He says, two people have come to join the Bible school here to be sons of the prophets.

And can you please give me some clothes for them? You know, we want to support these students in the Bible school, just like people beg today with their begging letters. They call it prayer letters. It's not prayer letters at all.

It's all begging letters. Many of you may have got it from people in India and Africa and all. They send these so-called prayer letters, all begging letters, asking for money or hinting for money.

It's exactly what we see here. We're running a Bible school. Students have come.

They need clothes. They need some money. Will you please support us? Followers of Gehazi.

You think Elisha would do something like that? No. And the lies they say. So many people have come and so many people getting converted, a lot of rubbish.

And then Naaman said, oh, you want money? Sure, I'll give you. You want a talent of silver? I'll give you two talents. You asked only for one, two changes of clothes.

I'll give you any number of changes of clothes. Bags with two changes of clothes and say, here, my servants will take it. And when they came to the top of the hill nearing Elisha's house, Gehazi said, OK, thank you very much.

You can go away. And he quietly took all that and went and hid it in his house. And then he came and stood before Elisha as if he was very innocent and he had just been having a time of prayer or something.

And Elisha said, where have you been, Gehazi? And he tells another lie. You know, whenever you start telling lies, you never stop with one. And he said, oh, I didn't go anywhere.

You think you can fool Elisha? Elisha saw through Naaman. He saw through Gehazi. I want to see, I want you to see something here, dear brothers.

This man had more discernment than 99% of people who talk about the New Covenant today. I've seen so many people, even elders, talk about the New Covenant. They are fooled by people who are not really wholehearted disciples of Jesus.

They compromise the standards of God's word because they won't walk with God like Elisha. And Elisha could see through Naaman. He could see through Gehazi.

He said, Elisha, Gehazi, I know what you did. My heart went with you. You went to follow this chariot to collect money.

Is this a time to receive money? That's what I say to all the people who go around begging for money today in prayer letters and begging letters. Is this a time to receive money? Did Jesus ever send such prayer letters to get money from people like Naaman, today's Naamans, or those days Naamans? Did the disciples ever send begging letters like that? You see so many letters written by Paul. Does he ever mention, I'm in need, my work needs, my ministry needs? Never.

You find Jesus ever asking for, different people gave Jesus' hand to Paul. You read in Luke chapter 8, verse 1 to 4, and in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and 9, and Philippians 4, that people gave sometimes to Paul, and he took it. But they never asked for it, and they would never take from unbelievers.

And so he says, okay, you went after him, and is this a time to get money? I'd say the same thing, is this a time to receive money from these unbelievers? Okay, Gehazi, you not only got Naaman's money, you got his leprosy as well. And I believe this is absolutely true today, that so many people who have run after the money of unbelievers have got their spiritual leprosy as well. You see, dear brothers and sisters, how these men in the old covenant, Old Testament man like Elisha, had a hundred times more the spirit of the new covenant than a lot of people today would talk about the new covenant, particularly in the area of money.

Can you find a servant of God like Elisha nowadays? Rare. There are a few, but rare. Who have the discernment of Elisha, even more rare, but that's what we need.

So don't despise these Old Testament people, they were under the old covenant. We look at the Old Testament books and they were under the old covenant. We need to be shamed when we read about how

these people lived.

Yeah, I want to say one more thing, we read in, it's an amazing thing here. In 2nd Kings and chapter 13, verse 14, Elisha became sick with the illness with which he died. Do God's servants become sick or do they die without sickness? This wonderful prophet who had double the anointing of Elijah.

Who did double the miracles of Elijah, who raised people from the dead, he gets sick. Well, I'm sure he prayed, Lord, heal me, but no, his time had come, the Lord said, his time has come, you're not gonna be healed, you're gonna die. In the New Testament, you read that greatest of all apostles, Paul, he had a sickness.

You read in 2nd Corinthians 12, which he called a thorn in the flesh. It's amazing to see how some of God's greatest servants had sickness. And it troubled him so much.

I believe it was an eye infection that Paul had, which was so repulsive. That's why he says in Galatians 4, to those people, you saw this in me, this sickness, and you did not despise me. You were willing to pull out your eyes and give them to me.

That's why I feel that it was, that was his thorn in the flesh. And he says, Lord, take it away from me, take it away. This is a messenger of Satan, he calls it.

And the Lord says, no, what's the reason? Paul, you've been mightily used, you've been taken up to the third heaven, you've written scripture, you've planted churches. You need something to keep you humble. And this is the only way I can keep you humble.

Jesus never needed a thorn in the flesh. He was so radical and wholehearted that he could remain humble throughout the end, do miracles, do all types of things, walk on the water, raise the dead, feed the 5,000, not one speck of humility anywhere, a speck of pride, totally humble all the way to the end. But Paul needed it, and I want to say to you, my brother, sister, you and I need something that God has to do to keep us down in our face.

Sometimes it's a failure in the world and somewhere, maybe a financial loss. I know God's through the years as I've tried to support myself through the years, I've experienced financial loss and God says, that's to humble you. That's to free you from the love of money.

I say, praise you, Lord, I praise you with all my heart. Where other people praise God for their financial gains, I praise the Lord for financial losses, many times. Thank you, Lord.

But you provide me enough for my needs, that's all I want. The rest of the time, you're interested in my spirit, that I keep humble and broken and don't imagine that I'm somebody or I'm smart or any such thing that I will never glory in anything but the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the whole world is crucified to me and I'm crucified to the world. So Elisha became sick and he was about to die and he died.

And I want you to see this, it's very interesting. Verse 20, Elisha died and they buried him. And the Moabites used to invade the land in the spring of the year.

And as they were burying a man, they saw a marauding band coming against them. And so they threw the man into some open pit they saw there. Here's something dug here, they threw that dead man's body there.

And that happened to be the grave where Elisha was buried. There was no big monument or anything over Elisha's grave, just a hole there in the ground. And they threw this man in, and there was not much earth as well, that Elisha's body had degenerated, it had become all mud and earth.

But his bones were there, and this man's, dead man's body touched the bones of Elisha. Verse 21, and he rose up from the dead and stood on his feet. There was more anointing on Elisha's dead bones than there is in lots of so-called new covenant people today.

What a challenge. A man who lived and walked with God completely. The main thing we see about him, one of the main things we see, one is tremendous humility.

All his life he was willing to be known as one who poured water on the hands of Elisha. After he'd done miracles, he was not known as a miracle worker. Not the man who split Jordan or put salt on the water and healed it, no.

The man who poured water on Elijah's hands. See, that's how Jesus was known at the end of his life. A man who poured water to wash his disciples' feet, including the feet of Judas Iscariot.

He said, you call me Lord and Master, but I'm here as your servant, washing your feet, I'm your servant. He said, dear brothers and sisters, please be gripped by this. This is true of all the great men of God throughout the ages.

And we see that in Elisha too. The man who poured water, I don't want any other title. I poured water for someone to wash his hands.

Jesus, you know the time when they tried to, after he fed the 5,000, it says they wanted to make him a king. He said no. He ran away into the mountains because he would not take a position of honor.

He came here to be a servant. He didn't want to be a director or chairman or any title. He just wanted to be a servant.

And he manifested that by washing people's feet at the end of his earthly ministry. The last day of his life on earth, the last thing he did before he went to the cross was to wash the feet of his disciples. Wonderful example.

So that was one thing about Elisha. And the other one we saw was his tremendous pursuit of the anointing. I'm not happy with Gilgal.

I'm not happy with Bethel. I'm not happy with Jericho. I want to go through Jordan and get the double portion of the anointing so that I can serve God.

A passion. The Bible says in Jeremiah 29 and verse 13, you will seek me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29, 13.

That's what we see in Elisha. Pursuit. And then the third thing is what that woman of Shunem said about him.

Just seeing him, how he ate his food, how he conducted himself at the dining table. This man is a holy man of God. Without hearing his sermon.

These are the examples we need to follow. Washing people's hands or feet. Any of us can do it.

Seeking after the way of the cross to die to ourselves, to be willing to submit to other people crucifying us. That's going past Bethel, Gilgal, Bethel, Jordan to Jericho. Jericho to Jordan.

Yeah, we can go that way too. And being free from the love of money. Being free from the pursuit of money.

If we can learn these lessons from Elisha, this new covenant man in old covenant times, I believe it will benefit us much. What we learn from all these examples is that what I've said many a time, there were new covenant men living in old covenant times. The spirit of the new covenant.

They couldn't explain the doctrine like we do today. But there was an attitude in them towards serving others, attitude to money, willingness to deny themselves. Many, many things that we see in these men that we've seen so far.

Job, Abraham, Moses, and now Elisha. May the Lord help us to follow in their footsteps and learn from them as much as we learn from other godly men in the New Testament. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, help us, Lord, that we are not just understanding these things or just excited by some message, but be gripped in our heart to live this new covenant life. To have the new covenant attitudes in all areas so that we can fulfill your purpose, never seeking our own in anything, but only that Christ might be glorified. Pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/gHfmkOfx2Kw.mp4>

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