

2nd Kings 5: 15-27 – “Did Not My Heart Go With You?”, Message # 9 in the series – “Elisha and the Prophets”, A Bible Study conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 5th, for those gathered at his home.

I want to approach this study tonight from the standpoint of Elisha’s statement to Gehazi in verse 26 – “Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you?” At a number of points in previous studies I have said to you, that Elisha the prophet was a type of Christ to us in the miracles that he did. If Elijah the prophet was a type of Christ’s forerunner John the Baptist, and he was, then Elisha who received a double portion of his spirit, is a type to us of our Savior in the miracles that he did. Even as Elisha, by Divine discernment was able to see into the hearts of these two men in their motives for their actions, even so, in a much greater and more perfect sense, is Christ able to see into our hearts and to establish what our motives are, and what His response will be to us. So, as we look more carefully into this passage that I have just read for you, we find three situations where the heart of Elisha “went with” the person whose thoughts and actions represent for us whether they were a righteous or a wicked man. We will look at both tonight, and I pray that as we do so, each of us will understand that as believers, Christ’s heart goes with us wherever we go, and in whatever we do.

1st of all – Elisha’s heart went with Naaman when he spoke of giving Elisha a gift. (verses 15 and 16)

“And Naaman returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and he came and stood before Elisha; 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 Elisha said, ‘As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.’” “And he urged him to take it, but he refused.” So, we see here, that Naaman had now been convinced, by his being healed of his leprosy, that there was no God in all the earth, except in Israel. This was a good profession of faith, and Elisha was no doubt pleased with it. It does show forth the reality of his having been born again by the Spirit of God, to make such a declaration. Naaman was turning away from the gods of Syria and acknowledging no other God but Jehovah. And it would not necessarily have been a wrong thing to do, to have given Elisha a gift if it would not have been misconstrued. But in the case of receiving cleansing from his leprosy, the outward picture of the cleansing of his heart from sin, the basis of the cleansing, Elisha knew, must never been thought of as something which could be purchased with money or any other gift that might be given to a prophet or preacher, that might make it appear that the gift of God could be purchased with money. This is why Elisha refused any gift. It is really a very serious business; thinking that the gift of God can somehow be purchased with money.

Turn with me over to Acts chapter 8, and you will see the wicked example of a man who did think this way. Verses 9-23 – “But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’” “And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.” “Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.” “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” “For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” “Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” “And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’” “But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the

gift of God could be purchased with money!” “You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.” “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” “For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.”

Now, I hope that you can see how spiritually deadly this false view of the gospel was in Simon’s case. What was he most interested in? He was most interested in having and holding power, and being seen as someone great. When he supposedly came to faith in Christ through his “believing Philip’s preaching of the gospel to him”; things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, he had not really believed with true and saving faith. It says that he believed, along with a number of other folks, and he was baptized. He made profession of his supposed faith in Christ in the waters of baptism. And Philip did not know that his faith was false, at that time; that his heart had not really changed, and that he had not really repented of his covetousness and his pride at all. Simon was simply believing because he had seen these miracles and the signs which were done. You can see that there is a difference between the faith in miracles and saving faith because it says in verse 14 – “So when the apostles, Peter and John, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they went down, and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” Those who were saved had indeed received the Holy Spirit’s working in regeneration to their hearts, or else they could not have believed at all.

But what was being conveyed to some of those who had believed was the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, and others of the revelatory gifts, so that the fledgling church there would be established. When Simon saw this power being conveyed to some in the people who would form the church there, he “offered them money”. And he said – “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” And Peter was indignant toward Simon and said – “May your money perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money.” And in verse 23 he says – “For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.” In other words, he had not truly been saved, neither had he truly believed in Christ at all. Why? Because he was holding on to his sins of covetous, the bitterness of not being able to be seen as men as great; such was his selfish ambition and pride. He does not want any of the things which Peter had spoken to him, to come upon him, but he does not say anything about repenting of his sins, even after Peter had said to him that he should repent of his wickedness and pray that the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.

Peter’s heart had “gone with him” when he turned back from the good and righteous and plain path that had been set before him in the gospel, and he was given the supernatural wisdom to discern that Simon was still in the gall of bitterness and bound by iniquity”. Let us understand that all those who profess to be true Christians must repent of all of the awful sins which they have once loved; the sins of pride and seeking to be someone great, and using their money and possessions to try to obtain spiritual things. It truly is a great sin for salvation is the gift of God. Look over at Romans 2, verses 21-23 – “What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed?” “For the end of those things is death.” “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life.” “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Well, all those who believe in the gospel of Christ, even as Naaman did, should want to give something to the Lord and want to support those who preach the gospel also. Those are right actions of a new obedience. But they should never think that they can do something by their money or by works of their merit, to purchase it. This was what Elisha was saying to him when he refused to take anything from him. He was saying – Salvation is of the Lord, and it is His free gift. What is it, then, that new believers should be willing to give and to do? Psalm 116: 12-14 – “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me?” “I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.” “I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people.” And Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you

present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” The reasonable service of the Christian is to present your body in service to God in accordance with the commandments of His word. And in that service not to be conformed to the world’s way of thinking about what you should be doing with your life and strength; with you mind and affections and will. Yours is to serve the Lord Christ. Yours is to be transformed by the truth of God’s word by knowing His will and doing it. This, most certainly, Naaman was willing to do, even though he was a babe in spiritual things.

2nd – Elisha’s heart went with Naaman when he spoke about going back to Syria and having to serve the king as he worshiped in the temple of Rimmon.

Verse 17 says – “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.” What we have here, is the evidence of Naaman’s having become a new creature in Christ. At first glance, it seems like he is asking Elisha for permission to be able to commit a sin. It looks like he is asking pardon for going back to the false worship of false gods, in the temple of Rimmon. But this is not so either. What he is asking for, knowing that as a prophet, that Elisha was representing the true and living God, was that he might continue in the service of the king, even though that service would be to help the king of Syria when he went up to the temple of the false god. He himself would not worship the false god, nor offer burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord only. Yet, in his service to the king, if he was going to continue in that service, it would mean that he would have to be the king’s servant in these now undesirable circumstances.

The amazing thing here is that Elisha tells him to “go in peace” in regard to this matter. I believe that Elisha said this, not to compromise with any evil, but because he knew that it was the Lord’s will for Naaman to continue on in the service of the king, and in that service, the king would no doubt see, that Naaman was not actually participating in rituals of the false worship any longer. Rather, he was only there to help the king, and that by his whole demeanor and actions, he would show the king that he was submissive to his rule over him as king, but that he would no longer could serve or worship the false gods. In other words, this “going into the temple of Rimmon” by Naaman would turn out to be a witness to the king of Syria, of Naaman’s unwillingness to compromise the 1st through 3rd commandments of God’s holy law. He would actually, over time, be calling upon the name of the Lord to be excused from having to serve the king under those circumstances, and that it would be his hope that actually the king of Syria would not only respect his convictions concerning worship, but might actually in time, become a worshiper of the true and living God himself. But even if he didn’t, Naaman would not actually worship false gods when he was in that temple at all. Elisha’s heart knew that this was true, he followed his reasoning, and having heard no objection from the Lord on this matter, he could say to him – “Go in peace”.

There is one other explanation of the words which is given by John Gill. He says – “But be this deity as it may, it was worshipped by the Syrians; and when the king of Syria went in to worship, he used to lean upon the hand of one of his officers, either being lame, or for state sake, in which office Naaman was; and his request to the prophet, or to the Lord, is, not for pardon for a sin to be committed; nor to be indulged in his continuance of it; not to worship the idol along with his master; nor to dissemble the worship of it, when he really worshipped it not; nor to be excused any evil in the discharge of his post and office; but for the pardon of the sin of idolatry he had been guilty of, of which he was truly sensible, now sincerely acknowledges, and desires forgiveness of; and so Dr. Lightfoot, and some others, interpret it; and to this sense the words may be rendered: When my master went in to the house of Rimmon to worship there; which was his usual custom; and he leaned

on my hand, which was the common form in which he was introduced into it: and I worshipped in the house of Rimmon, as his master did, for the same word is used here as before: in as much, or seeing I have worshipped in the house of Rimmon, have been guilty of such gross idolatry: the Lord, I pray, forgive thy servant in this thing; the language of a true penitent.”

And so, I suppose it could be. But in this request he sought to please the Lord and not try to seek for any forgiveness for any sin that he knew that he would willingly commit in the future. Such would not be right. Naaman’s soul belonged to the Lord. And so, in his asking for two mule-loads of earth; from the land of Israel, near to where Elisha was living, was his confession that he understood now that not only the river Jordan was the only water which the Lord would bless to His cleansing, but now that he was a worshiper of the true and living God, he wanted to offer his sacrifices to the Lord upon an altar built upon the earth of the land of promise – even Canaan. He was confessing that salvation was of the Jews.

And then 3rd – Elisha’s heart went with Gehazi when he ran after Naaman to obtain the riches that he had offered to Elisha.

Verse 20 – “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.” Then he went in and stood before his master.” “And 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.”

This is a very sad incident indeed. A man like Gehazi, having had the privilege of serving Elisha for quite a long time, and yet he himself never did come to know the Lord. This shows that it is entirely possible to stand right next to the most spiritual of men and still, your own heart could remain unchanged and unmoved in relation to doing the right thing. It also shows the sovereignty of God’s grace; to place Gehazi providentially in this important service, where every expectation would be that he would improve upon the common grace that was given to him, and yet he did not only not improve it, but he had to lie in his master’s name to obtain these riches for himself; all the while insisting that he was doing this to benefit others. His heart was full of covetousness, treachery, deception and wickedness. But Elisha’s heart had gone with him when Naaman turned back from his chariot to meet Gehazi, and so Elisha knew all about it.

Let us understand that the same is true for all Christians, and indeed our God and Christ know the hearts of all men, and how to deal with treachery and the sin of covetousness. He would punish Gehazi by cursing him with the leprosy of Naaman, which would cling to him, and to his descendants forever. This statement shows us that there would be no forgiveness of this sin of Gehazi. He would have to forever bear the burden of God’s displeasure and wrath for the rest of his days and throughout all of eternity. But let us who know the Lord, and are taking care to walk in His ways by faith, rejoice in the fact that in whatever we are doing that the Lord’s heart goes with us to establish us as we seek to do His will from a sincere and loving heart. John 1: 47-51 – “Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!’” “Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’” “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were

under the fig tree, I saw you.” “Nathanael answered and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe?’ “You will see greater things than these.” “And He said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’”