



## Elisha

*“Taking up the mantle :  
A transition of power”*

### WEEK FIVE – “YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS!”

#### *Read 2 Kings 4:38-44*

Before we look at our main area of study, I want to go back to the end of chapter 4 and two amazing miracles. Firstly, the poison in the pot of stew. Notice, it was a time of famine so no doubt they were more hungry than usual. They had put various things into this stew but as soon as they tasted it, they knew something was wrong. Elisha asked for some flour which he put into the pot which miraculously dealt with the problem.

- Think about ourselves for a moment. We are often concerned about the food we eat and whether it’s good for us or whether we’re eating too much. But what about our minds? What do we allow ourselves to see or read or talk about? We perhaps need to deal with the ‘poison’ that is not so obvious.

The last few verses bring to mind Jesus feeding the multitudes. Having received a gift of bread made with the first fruits of the harvest of a man from Baal-shalishah, Elisha told his servant to give it to the group of prophets. His servant’s response was similar to that of the disciples: “Feed one hundred people with only this?”

Elisha tells him the Lord had said not only would there be plenty for all of them to eat but there would be some left over. *“And sure enough, there was plenty for all and some left over, just as the Lord had promised.”*

- Do we honestly believe that with God all things are possible? (Matthew 19:26)

#### *Read 2 Kings 5:1-15*

This is a remarkable account about a powerful man, Naaman. He was commander of the army of Syria, greatly honoured because the Lord had given victory to Syria. The last line of the first verse says: *“He was also a might man of valour, BUT A LEPER.”* It is also a great testimony to a young servant girl who had been captured during the raid on Israel.

The girl, who waited on Naaman’s wife, was obviously a believer in God. *(Read verse 3.)* There was no doubt in her mind that God would heal.

The King of Syria wrote a letter for Naaman to present to the King of Israel, which he took, along with a large amount of gold, silver, and clothing. Put yourself in the position of the King of Israel on receiving the letter: *“With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy.”*

This was the first of *“YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS!”* moments. Many of us remember John McEnroe and his on-court dramas, shouting these words to the referee. Most people found it highly amusing. However, in this case, not so the King of Israel. [Read verse 7](#). Clearly, he must have shouted long and loud to anyone who would listen because Elisha hears about it.

- What do we notice about Elisha’s response to the King? [Read verse 8](#).
- How do you think you would respond if someone came to you and said they believed you could heal them? What would you tell them? ([Acts 3:1-7](#))

Poor old Naaman, he goes to Elisha’s house and the prophet doesn’t even come out to speak to him but says to the messenger, *“Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of leprosy.”*

So, we come to our second *“YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS”* moment.

- What had Naaman expected of Elisha?
- Was he justified in being so angry?

Let’s just pause a moment and think of our responses to God. First of all, many people think there should be some test or feat to accomplish before you become a Christian. Surely, it must involve more than belief and repentance. As Naaman’s officer said to him, had he been asked to perform some mighty thing, he would have been delighted to do so. There are lots of people like that today. They don’t understand that our salvation cannot be earned. It requires obedience to God’s way; acceptance that there is nothing we can do to earn or deserve God’s gift of eternal life. As the words of the hymn says: *“Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling”*.

Fortunately for Naaman, he took note of the words of his officer and submitted himself to dipping in the River Jordan. ‘Seven ducks in the river’ and his skin was as healthy as that of a young child.

If the story had finished there, it would have been amazing. However, the factor of human greed came into play.

[Read verses 16-27](#)

As many people do, Naaman thought he had to give something in return for what he had received. He tried to give gifts to Elisha who refused; after all, he had done nothing except be obedient.

The story of Gehazi, his servant's greed is all too common today as it was then. Running after Naaman he tells a lie of how two young men of the sons of the prophets had come from the mountains and needed some silver and two changes of clothing. Naaman was only too happy and gave him more than he had asked for.

- What was the outcome of this? Are there lessons for us to learn?

### Prayer

**God, we thank you for the wonderful gift of salvation you have given to us.  
Help us to understand the enormity of what Jesus did and to accept his mercy,  
his love, and his grace.**

**May we generously share the good news with others.**

