

I. Our Heavenly Father is a God of second chances and restoration:

- A. Zech 9:11 "As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
Zech 9:12 12 Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I Declare That I will restore double to you.
Ps 80:3 Restore us, O God; Cause Your face to shine, And we shall be saved!
1. God was able & willing to do a work of restoration and give Israel a second Chance thru the power of:
 - a. "blood covenant" of the Old Testament
 2. Heb 8:6 inasmuch as He (Jesus) is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.
 - a. How much more will the better covenant of the Blood of Jesus bring restoration and a second chance into our lives, and ministries?
- B. God has a plan for each and every one of us, and without question ... all of us have failed along the of pursuing the "Will of God" & our destiny... both personally & corporately:
1. From getting out of the will of God through:
 - a. disobedience to scripture
 - b. quenching & grieving the Holy Spirit
 - c. to out right sin
 2. and the devil will lie to us when we have failed, and tell us that it is over:
 - a. and attempt to keep us in guilt & condemnation
 - b. feel out heart with hopelessness and despair
 3. But Let me show you the power of restoration & forgiveness thru the Blood of Jesus:
 - a. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - b. if we are willing to repent & surrender to the will, plan, purpose & destiny of God for our life in this world & eternity:
 - (1) The Blood of Jesus will not only forgive us sin, but also separate it from our life & unfold God's plan for our future:
 - (a) Ps 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (**Forgiveness**)
 - (b) Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (**Restoration**)

II. It is important that we know what to do when our dream dies & our destiny fades

As a result of disobedience:

A. After we repent, we must then lay down our life in the presence of God:

1. In the midst of our bareness & brokenness:

a. simply spend time in the presence of God

b. only an intimate encounter with the presence of God can resurrect our dreams and restore our destiny for which we were born

B. **Almond Tree Story:**

1. Imagine a young almond tree growing , and hoping some day to bring forth a bumper crop of almonds?

2. Suddenly someone comes and cuts it down, and strips it of all it's branches and leaves... thus stripping it of it's dreams & seemingly it's destiny

3. Then the master lays this almond branch in the sun, and comes by from time to time to turn it in the hot sun, thus drying it out every bit of moisture & life

4. Then the master picks up this dried out sapling and began to use it as a walking stick

a. and now the almond tree becomes a staff, a strong rod for it's master to lean upon

b. So this almond branch accepts it's new fate & determines to be the best rod ever made

5. Then one day it's master pulls out a knife & begin to cut gashes into it ... thus carving his name into the rod:

a. Then his master carries this rod into a dark room and left the almond rod in a place it had never been before:

(1) The Holy of Holies Laying before the Ark of the Covenant ... the very Presence of God

(a) Num 17:7 And Moses placed the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.

b. Then a miracle takes place, as described in:

Num 17:8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds.

(1) A dead almond rod sprouted. Put forth buds & yielded ripe almonds...

(a) What was the key of restoration of this one time almond tree that had been Cut down, stripped & dried out and turned into a rod To be able to Produce it's dream A bumper crop of almonds:

- (1) in the midst of it's barrenness, it was laid up in the presence of God
- (2) One night in the presence of God can bring restoration to our lives, dreams
And destiny
 - (a) maybe your life is laid up at this time
 - (b) and you find yourself stripped & barren
 - (c) instead of laying your life up in the presence of sin, drunkenness, drugs,
sex outside of marriage, fear, doubt, frustration..... Whatever it may be
- (1) choose to lay your life in the presence of God & allow His to restore you

II. Your tomb of failure, can be turned into a womb of success:

A. Do you remember the story of Naaman:

1. Naaman was a great warrior who brought his king many victories in battle:
 - a. but the bible tells us in 2 Ki 5: 1 that Naaman was a leper
2. The bible then tells us in 2 Ki 5: 2& 3 about the Prophet Elisha who could
Heal Naaman of his lepersy by the power of God
3. Naaman then goes to the king with this report & the following takes place in:
 - a. 2 Kings 5:5 Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the
king of Israel." So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six
thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.
4. vs 10 Elisha sends out a messenger to Naaman and instructs him to go dip
In the river Jordan and he would be healed of his leprosy
 - a. vs 11-12 reveals to us that Naaman had some pride issues in his life
and becomes offended because the Prophet Elisha himself did not come out
deliver the message and go thru some type of pompous service for his healing
 - b. vs 13 tells us a servant talked some sense into Naaman and convinced him to
humble himself & go dip in the river seven times as instructed
 - c. As Naaman obeyed the Word of The Lord he was healed of his leprosy
5. Pick up the rest of the story in:

2 Kings 5:15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came
and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that there is no God in
all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your
servant."

16 But he said, "As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing."
And he urged him to take it, but he refused.

2 Kings 5:19 Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a
short distance. Gehazi's Greed

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."

21 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?"

22 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.'"

23 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.

24 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.

25 Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

26 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?"

27 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.

B. Gehazi was in position for his destiny to unfold:

1. He was the servant of the Prophet Elisha, who carried the double portion anointing
 - a. Elisha faithfully served under the ministry of Elijah and picked up the mantle of Elijah and walked into his destiny
2. Now Gehazi was next in line to some day take the place of this prophet & pick up His mantle by serving the prophet Elisha
 - a. But: **Gehazi had issues in his heart: Greed, lying & deceit**
3. When Gehazi heard that Elijah did not take the offering Naaman had offered him
 - a. he devised a scheme in his heart & went after Naaman
 - b. Told Naaman a lie ,,,, my master changed his mind about that offering
 - c. then Gehazi operated in deceit & hid the money & clothing he received from Naaman
4. But: God revealed the heart of Gehazi to the Prophet Elisha:
 - a. dealt with Gehazi about missing the timing of God ... was not time to receive an offering

- b. Dealt with Gehazi lies & deceit, letting him know that he & God seen his sin that he tried to hide, as he hid the gifts from Naaman
- d. In reality greed had corrupted Gehazi's heart, and now was going to rob him and his children of his destiny
- (1) Elisha pronounced a curse upon Gehazi: 2 Kings 5:27 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.

C. Gehazi goes from being the next in line to inherit the mantle of Elisha to becoming a leper

- 1. In an instant due to his disobedience:
 - a. his future, his destiny, his ministry, his vision for his future for him and his descendants is cursed:
- 2. Instead of God's plan for his life,as a leper Gehazi:
 - a. became an outcast to society
 - (1) as a leper he had to wear the color of clothing that identified him as a leper
 - (2) and constantly, publicly have to announce who he was.... leper, leper, leper
 - b. his career and ministry were gone, and now was reduced to living a life of a beggar
 - c. He and his sons / children were exiled from their home & family
 - d. Gehazi's dreams die, his plans are destroyed
 - e. **Gehazi's name means: valley of vision**
 - (1) and now because of his sin ... he has no vision for himself or his descendants

D. **Leprosy in scripture is a type and shadow of sin:**

- 1. and just as sin separated Gehazi from his destiny
 - a. Sin will separate us from our destiny also, in this life & the next
 - b. we may do like Gehazi and try to hide our sin But God knows & sees all
 - (1) If we do not repent of our sin the bible says:
Num 32:23 **"and be sure your sin will find you out."**
 - c. Not only will sin destroy our eternal destiny by taking to hell instead of going to heaven But it also destroys our life & relations & destiny on this earth:
 - (1) how many homes, marriages & families have been destroyed thru some Form of sin
 - (2) how many ministries and careers have been destroyed by some form of sin
 - e. there is only one thing that can cover our sin & bring forgiveness:

(1) **THE BLOOD OF JESUS**

(2) 1 John 1:7 the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

- (a) Is there something in your life, in your heart that you have been hiding... that thing that has taken you off course in your walk with God
- (b) it has separated you from your destiny & the blessing of God
- © I want to encourage you today, you can have a second chance and experience forgiveness and restoration.

III. Maybe you read this story in the past, and mistakenly thought that Gehazi just died a leper It is not so ... let me tell you of Gehazi's second chance ... let me tell you about Gehazi's restoration to his destiny:

A. 2 Kings 8:1 Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the Lord has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years."

2 So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.

3 It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land.

4 Then the **king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God**, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done."

5 Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life."

6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now."

1. Here is Gehazi, the very man who was cursed with leprosy, now standing in the Presence of the king

a. Yes, it is the very same Gehazi:

(1) vs 4 "Then the king talked with Gehazi, the **servant of the man of God**"
....speaking of the Man of God: Elisha

(a) How did Gehazi go from being banished as a leper

(b) going thru life as a beggar

© now he is found standing in the presence of the King

b. It took Naaman seven dips in the Jordan river to receive his healing &

restoration

(1) And it took Gehazi seven years to experience his restoration:

- (a) Don't allow time to tell you that you can never be restored, no matter how long ago you may have failed God ... and been paying a tremendous price for your actions
- (b) let's take a look at how Gehazi experienced his restoration

B. 2 Kings 7:3 "Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die?"

4 If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians.

1. The city was under siege by the Syrian army

a. the people inside the walls of the city were dying of starvation

2. Outside the walls of this city sat four lepers, trying to decide:

a. do we go into the city & die with everyone else

b. or do we just sit here outside the walls of the city till we die

c. or do we just take a chance and head into the camp of the enemy and possibly live

3. All theologians, as well as Jewish Rabbi's believe & teach that

a. the four lepers were Gehazi and his three sons

(1) 2 Kings 5:27 "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.

(a) It was not just Gehazi who was cursed with leprosy, but also his descendants

C. 2 Kings 7: 5 And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one was there.

6 For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses — the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!"

7 Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact — their tents, their horses, and their donkeys — and they fled for their lives.

8 And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from

there also, and went and hid it.

9 Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household."

10 So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one was there, not a human sound — only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact."

11 And the gatekeepers called out, and they told it to the king's household inside.

1. Vs 5 “**And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians...**”

a. Like these four lepers, regardless of how far we may have fallen:

(1) “we must **start marching toward the promise of God**

(a) You might be thinking: what good will it do to start over

(1) Have you ever thought about: **What may happen when the Promise of God visits a life that has been cursed**

2. vs 6-7 God performs a miracle and causes the steps of four lepers to sound

Like that of a mighty army

a. The Syrians did not hear the sound of the footsteps of four lepers

b. Rather: they hear the sound of chariots & the noise of horses and they arose and fled

3. When Gehazi & his three sons arrived at the camp of the Syrians and found

That it had been abandoned:

a. At first he yielded to the same temptation that brought leprosy into his life

(1) 2 Kings 7:8 And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid them; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried some from there also, and went and hid it.

(a) Once again Gehazi and now along with his sons yielded to the sin of greed That had brought the curse of leprosy into his life

(1) they went from tent to tent eating, drinking, taking clothes, gold & Silver, and then running off and hiding it for themselves

4. Then something happens, I believe God began to deal with the heart of Gehazi

a. I believe the Holy Spirit brought conviction into their hearts

b. and caused Gehazi & his sons to begin to review the past seven years of their life living as lepers

c. possibly remembering what could have been in his life in regards to his destiny as he served under the prophet Elisha:

d. and also remembering that day he fell from grace, as he yielded to his lust

for greed and chased after the material gain Naaman offered:

- (1) 9 Then they said to one another, "**We are not doing right**. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household."
 - (a) God returned Gehazi to the very test that he failed seven years earlier, and Giving him a second chance
 - (1) for forgiveness
 - (2) and restoration
 - (2) and it is no different in our lives:
 - (a) regardless of how we may have fallen
 - (b) in the midst of our leprosy (and whatever form that leprosy may have come Into our life) due to our sin, our failure
- © God will bring you the opportunity to march toward the Promise of God To receive forgiveness, and to receive restoration for his plan, God will and God's best for your life

- D. As we read in Gehazi repents ... by him and his son going to the city and telling The king that the enemy had fled
1. and then we read in 2 Kings 8:4 "Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done."
 - a. we have already established the fact that this was the same Gehazi who served Elisha and was cursed with leprosy
 - b. and now Gehazi stood before the King, telling the of the miracles that God brought to pass thru the ministry of the Prophet Elisha
 2. But I want you to understand: lepers were not permitted to stand before the Thrones of kings:
 - a. a man covered with leprosy, wearing the clothes of a beggar was not permitted in the presence of a king:
 - (1) and it is believed that Gehazi & his sons ...these four lepers experienced conviction in their heart
 - (2) and going back to the city to tell the watchman on the wall to inform the king That the Syrian army has fled
 - (3) Forgiveness and restoration came into the life of Gehazi & his three sons... it was a common practice for kings to bring great honor to individuals who Helped the king and the people he ruled, and so the king did with Gehazi
 - (a) The curse of leprosy was broken, because of Gehazi's repentance & God Releasing forgiveness and breaking the curse in Gehazi's life

- (b) Gehazi no longer wore the clothes of a leper
- © he no longer was a beggar & outcast to society
- (d) but now stood restored to his destiny... daily standing in the presence
Of the king

IV. The shortest path between our failures, and God's mercy & favor is humility
On our part:

A. No matter how far you may have fallen, regardless of how bad you may have
Failed:

1. **Our God is a God of the second chance:**

a. When we face that test that had brought us down in the past, and destroyed
our future:

- (1) of both eternity
- (2) and God's best for our life here on earth

b. Stop what you are doing

- (1) quit trying to get ahead by **hiding your sin**
- (2) and say: "**We (I) am not doing right**"
 - (a) and quit trying to fix it thru your own strength, plotting & planning
 - (b) simply humble yourself by repenting and say "**I am not doing right**"
 - (a) and Call on God's mercy **Call upon the Name of Jesus**

B. Jer 29: 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord,
thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

- 1. Our leprosy, our sin, our failure, our circumstances may tell us that we
Have no hope, & no future
- 2. But I want you to know God has not changed His mind about any of us:
 - a. He is still thinking of each of us And they are thoughts of peace
 - b. God still has a plan, a future, a purpose for our life:
 - (1) for eternity
 - (2) and in this world
- 3. And He sends a second chance to us in the midst of whatever from of leprosy,
Sin that has cursed our life:
 - a. But we have to quit hiding our sin We must say to ourselves and to God
"I am not doing right" Jesus forgive me