

Sunday, June 23

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2 Kings 4:18 - 5:27

4 18 One day when her child was older, he went out to help his father, who was working with the harvesters. **19** Suddenly he cried out, "My head hurts! My head hurts!" His father said to one of the servants, "Carry him home to his mother." **20** So the servant took him home, and his mother held him on her lap. But around noontime he died. **21** She carried him up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and left him there. **22** She sent a message to her husband: "Send one of the servants and a donkey so that I can hurry to the man of God and come right back." **23** "Why go today?" he asked. "It is neither a new moon festival nor a Sabbath." But she said, "It will be all right." **24** So she saddled the donkey and said to the servant, "Hurry! Don't slow down unless I tell you to." **25** As she approached the man of God at Mount Carmel, Elisha saw her in the distance. He said to Gehazi, "Look, the woman from Shunem is coming." **26** Run out to meet her and ask her, 'Is everything all right with you, your husband, and your child?' "Yes," the woman told Gehazi, "everything is fine." **27** But when she came to the man of God at the mountain, she fell to the ground before him and caught hold of his feet. Gehazi began to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone. She is deeply troubled, but the LORD has not told me what it is." **28** Then she said, "Did I ask you for a son, my lord? And didn't I say, 'Don't deceive me and get my hopes up'?" **29** Then Elisha said to Gehazi, "Get ready to travel ; take my staff and go! Don't talk to anyone along the way. Go quickly and lay the staff on the child's face." **30** But the boy's mother said, "As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, I won't go home unless you go with me." So Elisha returned with her. **31** Gehazi hurried on ahead and laid the staff on the child's face, but nothing happened. There was no sign of life. He returned to meet Elisha and told him, "The child is still dead." **32** When Elisha arrived, the child was indeed dead, lying there on the prophet's bed. **33** He went in alone and shut the door behind him and prayed to the LORD . **34** Then he lay down on the child's body, placing his mouth on the child's mouth, his eyes on the child's eyes, and his hands on the child's hands. And as he stretched out on him, the child's body began to grow warm again! **35** Elisha got up, walked back and forth across the room once, and then stretched himself out again on the child. This time the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes! **36** Then Elisha summoned Gehazi. "Call the child's mother!" he said. And when she came in, Elisha said, "Here, take your son!" **37** She fell at his feet and bowed before him, overwhelmed with gratitude. Then she took her son in her arms and carried him

downstairs. **38** Elisha now returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. One day as the group of prophets was seated before him, he said to his servant, "Put a large pot on the fire, and make some stew for the rest of the group." **39** One of the young men went out into the field to gather herbs and came back with a pocketful of wild gourds. He shredded them and put them into the pot without realizing they were poisonous. **40** Some of the stew was served to the men. But after they had eaten a bite or two they cried out, "Man of God, there's poison in this stew!" So they would not eat it. **41** Elisha said, "Bring me some flour." Then he threw it into the pot and said, "Now it's all right; go ahead and eat." And then it did not harm them. **42** One day a man from Baal-shalishah brought the man of God a sack of fresh grain and twenty loaves of barley bread made from the first grain of his harvest. Elisha said, "Give it to the people so they can eat." **43** "What?" his servant exclaimed. "Feed a hundred people with only this?" But Elisha repeated, "Give it to the people so they can eat, for this is what the LORD says: Everyone will eat, and there will even be some left over!" **44** And when they gave it to the people, there was plenty for all and some left over, just as the LORD had promised.

5 1 The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the LORD had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy. **2** At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. **3** One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy." **4** So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. **5** "Go and visit the prophet," the king of Aram told him. "I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel." So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. **6** The letter to the king of Israel said: "With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy." **7** When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "This man sends me a leper to heal! Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me." **8** But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: "Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel." **9** So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. **10** But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy." **11** But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me!" **12** Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the

rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage. **13** But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'" **14** So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed! **15** Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant." **16** But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts." And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused. **17** Then Naaman said, "All right, but please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the LORD." **18** However, may the LORD pardon me in this one thing: When my master the king goes into the temple of the god Rimmon to worship there and leans on my arm, may the LORD pardon me when I bow, too." **19** "Go in peace," Elisha said. So Naaman started home again. **20** But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said to himself, "My master should not have let this Aramean get away without accepting any of his gifts. As surely as the LORD lives, I will chase after him and get something from him." **21** So Gehazi set off after Naaman. When Naaman saw Gehazi running after him, he climbed down from his chariot and went to meet him. "Is everything all right?" Naaman asked. **22** "Yes," Gehazi said, "but my master has sent me to tell you that two young prophets from the hill country of Ephraim have just arrived. He would like 75 pounds of silver and two sets of clothing to give to them." **23** "By all means, take twice as much silver," Naaman insisted. He gave him two sets of clothing, tied up the money in two bags, and sent two of his servants to carry the gifts for Gehazi. **24** But when they arrived at the citadel, Gehazi took the gifts from the servants and sent the men back. Then he went and hid the gifts inside the house. **25** When he went in to his master, Elisha asked him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" "I haven't been anywhere," he replied. **26** But Elisha asked him, "Don't you realize that I was there in spirit when Naaman stepped down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to receive money and clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and cattle, and male and female servants?" **27** Because you have done this, you and your descendants will suffer from Naaman's leprosy forever." When Gehazi left the room, he was covered with leprosy; his skin was white as snow.

15 **1** While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers : “Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.” **2** Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question. **3** The church sent the delegates to Jerusalem, and they stopped along the way in Phoenicia and Samaria to visit the believers. They told them—much to everyone’s joy—that the Gentiles, too, were being converted. **4** When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them. **5** But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, “The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.” **6** So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. **7** At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: “Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe. **8** God knows people’s hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. **9** He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. **10** So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? **11** We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.” **12** Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. **13** When they had finished, James stood and said, “Brothers, listen to me. **14** Peter has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself. **15** And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted. As it is written: **16** ‘Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, **17** so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the Gentiles— all those I have called to be mine. The LORD has spoken — **18** he who made these things known so long ago.’ **19** “And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. **20** Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood. **21** For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations.” **22** Then the apostles and elders together with the whole church in Jerusalem chose delegates, and they sent them to Antioch of Syria with Paul and Barnabas to report on this decision. The men chosen were two of the church leaders — Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas. **23** This is the letter they took with them: “This letter is from the apostles and elders, your brothers in Jerusalem. It is written to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings! **24** “We

understand that some men from here have troubled you and upset you with their teaching, but we did not send them!**25** So we decided, having come to complete agreement, to send you official representatives, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **26** who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **27** We are sending Judas and Silas to confirm what we have decided concerning your question. **28** “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements: **29** You must abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. If you do this, you will do well. Farewell.” **30** The messengers went at once to Antioch, where they called a general meeting of the believers and delivered the letter. **31** And there was great joy throughout the church that day as they read this encouraging message. **32** Then Judas and Silas, both being prophets, spoke at length to the believers, encouraging and strengthening their faith. **33** They stayed for a while, and then the believers sent them back to the church in Jerusalem with a blessing of peace. **34 35** Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord there.

Psalms 141:1 - 10

141 1 O LORD, I am calling to you. Please hurry! Listen when I cry to you for help! **2** Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an evening offering. **3** Take control of what I say, O LORD, and guard my lips. **4** Don't let me drift toward evil or take part in acts of wickedness. Don't let me share in the delicacies of those who do wrong. **5** Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they correct me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it. But I pray constantly against the wicked and their deeds. **6** When their leaders are thrown down from a cliff, the wicked will listen to my words and find them true. **7** Like rocks brought up by a plow, the bones of the wicked will lie scattered without burial. **8** I look to you for help, O Sovereign LORD . You are my refuge; don't let them kill me.**9** Keep me from the traps they have set for me, from the snares of those who do wrong. **10** Let the wicked fall into their own nets, but let me escape.

Proverbs 17:23

17 23 The wicked take secret bribes to pervert the course of justice.