

"Naaman the Leper"

Part 3

2 Kings 5:1-15

Introduction: In our past two studies we have been looking at what is considered the most popular miracle that Elisha was associated with and that is the healing of Naaman the Leper. So far, we have seen Naaman and his accomplishments and at the same time we were able to see that he also had an incurable disease, he was a leper. Naaman is a picture of all people who are born into this world. No matter what level they reach in their careers, no matter how much power they attain, no matter how great their wealth may be, they have an incurable disease (sin) that will end in death if they do not experience the miracle of the New Birth.

Ezekiel 18:20a

²⁰ The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Romans 6:23a

²³ For the wages of sin is death;

We then went on from Naaman to the little maid who had been taken with the spoils of wars from Israel and was placed in the house of Naaman. She is the example for all of us for she glorified God while in a situation that she would have never chosen.

Notice 2 Kings 5:1-3

She was carried away from her parents by Naaman's army and then placed under his roof to serve his wife. It would have been so easy for her to become bitter and angry due to her conditions but instead she accepted what God had permitted to happen. There was no bitterness toward Naaman and this we can see in the fact that she was concerned for his health and desired for him to be healed. For that reason, she spoke up about Elisha and longed for him to meet Elisha and be healed.

Her message, though very brief, reached the ears of the king of Syria and so he sent Naaman to the king of Israel with a very large payment. Neither of the kings knew of Elisha and his miracles so neither one knew where to send Naaman to be healed. These two kings picture many religious people today. They sit in lofty positions but know nothing of salvation. They believe it can be earned or purchased and do not understand that TRUE SPIRITUAL healing/salvation is by grace through faith.

This is where we stopped last week, and we are going to continue but first I need to point out some very important lessons from all of this for our lives.

1. It is possible to be very successful but miserable. [Naaman]
2. It is possible to be unknown but very influential. [The Little Maid]
3. It is possible to be powerful but useless. [The Kings]

I. The Deadliness of Pride

Before we look at the pride of Naaman there are few other thoughts we need to consider.

Notice 2 Kings 5:7

Last week we looked at how the king of Israel knew nothing of the ministry of Elisha. That tells us he was not concerned for spiritual things, but his focus was upon himself and his kingdom. He could not even point Naaman to Elisha for he himself had no knowledge of Elisha. How strange this seems considering the miracles which Elisha had already performed. We would think that raising the dead child back to life would have surely made everyone aware of Elisha and his ministry. But here we see the king knew nothing. This should not surprise us in any way for if we remember the life of our Lord and how He raised Lazarus from the grave and a few days following the people and the religious leaders cried out for Him to be crucified. There are a couple of verses that come to my mind here.

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Romans 8:6-7

⁶ *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Miracles often have very little impact on the lost. Let me show you an example.

Exodus 14:21-23

²¹ *And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.*

²² *And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.*

²³ And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

The Egyptians were not impacted by the parting of the Red Sea and that was a major miracle. Let me remind you of the words spoken by Abraham from Paradise to the rich man in hell who was pleading for the beggar Lazarus to be resurrected and sent to warn his family of the torment.

Luke 16:27-31

²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Before we move on let me just say it is the Word of God/the Gospel that changes lives.

Romans 1:16

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Notice 2 Kings 5:8

When Elisha received word that Naaman had come to the king and the king rent his clothing Elisha sent word to him and rebuked him. Naaman needed to know there was a prophet in Israel and there was a loving God of Israel that cared about people. Elisha was not intimidated by the king or his power and position. I am sure he respected the office but in this situation the king needed to be rebuked because he was hindering Naaman's way to God.

Notice the words of **Scott**:

"Naaman came into the land of Israel, expecting relief from a prophet of the God of Israel, and Elisha would by no means have him go back disappointed, lest he should conclude that Jehovah was like the gods of the nations, and unable to do good or evil as

they were. On the contrary he would have it known that God has "a prophet in Israel" by whom He performed such cures as none of the heathen prophets, priests, or physicians could affect; and which were far beyond all the power of the mightiest monarchs."

Notice 2 Kings 5:9

Here now we see the pride of Naaman. He comes riding up to door of the house which Elisha was staying in. He has his horses, his decked-out chariot and he is no doubt dressed in his full military apparel.

Naaman here can be seen as a picture of the natural man in all of his sin. He is not yet stripped of his self-righteousness, neither is he aware that he is in need of Divine grace and mercy. He is dressed in his royal apparel surrounded by his chariot and horses, but he is still a leper. He can wear any garment he pleases but it does not change the fact that he is under a death sentence because of the leprosy. I am reminded here of Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:6-8

⁶ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

⁷ And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

⁸ And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Adam and Eve covered themselves and they hid among the trees trying to cover up their terrible sin. Naaman was dressed in his best as he covered his leprosy, but it was still there.

I picture Naaman in his royal apparel and his horses a trimmed in gold and silver and I see a man wrapped in his own pride and self-importance. What a picture of the self-righteous sinner who has not a clue that he is separated from God and is even an enemy of God because of his sin but is completely unaware that he is nothing and that God is no respecter of persons. Naaman pictures the Reformed Sinner in Romans 2.

Romans 2:1-4

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

² But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

³ And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

There is a story I came upon that pictures this seen so well.

"There was once a famous artist who met a poor tramp and was so impressed with his woebegone appearance and condition that he felt he would make an apt subject for a drawing. He gave the tramp a little money and his card and promised to pay him well if he would call at his house on the following day and sit while he drew his picture. The next morning the tramp arrived, but the artist's intention was defeated. The tramp had washed and shaved and so spruced himself that he was scarcely recognizable!"

This is the very way the natural man responds when he is first introduced to the Gospel and he comes under conviction. He feels as though he must make himself presentable to God before he can be saved. Instead of coming to the Lord just as he is, lost and undone, he does his best to reform himself. He will get involved in religious activities, he may give up a few bad habits, and he will start attending a church service. He does not understand that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance not the righteous.

A. The Requirement of the Miracle

Notice 2 Kings 5:10-12

Elisha's instructions to Naaman made him very upset. When Elisha told him to "GO WASH" these words completely washed away every bit of self-righteousness that Naaman had brought with him. He wanted Elisha to go through some ceremony and acknowledge his position and wealth. But instead Elisha commanded him to wash in the Jordan. In Naaman's mind there were better rivers than the dirty Jordan and so he went away in a rage.

Notice the words of an unknown author;

"When Naaman stood with his pompous retinue, and with all his silver and gold at the door of Elisha, he appears before us as a marked illustration of a sinner building on his own efforts after righteousness. He seemed furnished with all that the heart could desire, but in reality, all his preparations were but a useless incumbrance, and the prophet soon gave him to understand this. "Go wash" swept away all confidence in gold, silver, raiment, retinue, the king's letter, everything. It stripped Naaman of everything, and reduced him

to his true condition as a poor defiled leper needing to be washed. It put no difference between the illustrious commander-in-chief of the hosts of Syria, and the poorest and meanest leper in all the coasts of Israel. The former could do nothing less; the latter needed nothing more. Wealth cannot remedy man's ruin, and poverty cannot interfere with God's remedy. Nothing that a man has done need keep him out of heaven; nothing that a man can do will ever get him in. "GO WASH" is the word in every case."

Application:

Naaman's response is often seen in the sinner when he or she is confronted with the Gospel. I have seen the rage in people when they are told their good works, their ceremonies or their church membership or attendance will not earn them the forgiveness of sin. The Gospel often sends people into a rage for it takes away all the hope they had in their own self-righteousness.

Naaman was in a rage because washing in the Jordan was far too simple a remedy. He wanted to do something, so he could hang the "medal of healing" on his military uniform with all his other medals. But God would not permit that for then Naaman would get the glory.

B. The Surrender

Notice 2 Kings 5:13

The servants of Naaman set a wonderful example for all of us. They would not let him walk away. There was the opportunity to be healed and so they did all they could to persuade Naaman to wash in the Jordan.

Application:

This is the very way we are to be with those around us who are not saved. We must be there to do all we can to turn them to Jesus Christ.

Notice the words of Spurgeon on reaching the lost;

"If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for."

Notice 2 Kings 5:14

The very first words of this verse are so important. We are told that Naaman went DOWN. He dismounted his chariot and he went down into the Jordan. The picture here is that he humbled himself. He came to Elisha sitting in the chariot with horse decked in

silver and gold and he was elevated in his own mind. Here he takes the place of his true condition as a leper and he goes DOWN.

Application:

This is what is needed for salvation in any man or woman. They need to see themselves in their true condition and understand that have nothing to offer. A man or a woman must be humbled in order to be saved. They must come to the end of themselves.

Conclusion:

I will leave you with the words from the hymn "Rock of Ages";

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy wounded side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
save from wrath and make me pure.*

*Not the labors of my hands
can fulfill thy law's commands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
thou must save, and thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to the cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.*