

The Bible our most Prized Possession Pt 6

Galatians 2:20

- Last week we talked about **The Praises of God, The Strength of God, The Works of God**, and even though the world does everything in its power to deny Him He is undeniable. This week we'll talk about how God and His Word changes us first **from the inside** > our thinking, our perspectives, our desires, our goals, our motives, **to the outside** > our behavior, our words, our responses. We become a whole different person, one who is more like Christ and less like self.
- Yes what God wants to change us from is ourselves, this is why its such a fight going on within us, we don't want to change do we? **Gal 2:20**- "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me". **2 Cor 5:17**- "therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away, all things have become new".
- When you read these two verses it makes it abundantly clear that God does not expect us to survive this transition, for He says we have died, crucified with Christ, meaning we no longer belong to our ideas, ideals, or self serving opinions of who we think we are, instead it is no longer I that lives but Christ Who lives in me. If we misunderstand that He explains, that the life we now live in the flesh is lived for the glory of God, and to fulfil the will of God for my life.
- This is all new according to 2 Corinthians 5:17, which is why the old must pass away as the new becomes my normal, this people is where the battle rages, as the old doesn't want to leave, as its comfortable, it's convenient, its all I've known, and yet God says it has to go in order for Him to rule. An example of this is found in 2 Kings 5- were we see two men, both blessed to witness the power of God at work in the lives of man and yet we two different responses.
- **V1-7** our first character is a man named "Naaman" he was a Syrian captain who not only had favor with the King of Syria but also with the Lord, as it says because of him God had given Syria many victories. How is that possible, I thought Syria was the enemy of Israel, they were, but when the people of God are disobedient to Him the favor that they once enjoyed and took for granted sometimes will find a home somewhere else, and the Northern Kingdom of Israel were in complete rebellion to God and so the Lord allowed Syria their enemy to defeat them.
- Also just like us, who started out as God's enemy, but then by the grace of God we became His children, Naaman although a Syrian has come to believe in the God of Israel even though they didn't. This man although favored by God has been afflicted with "**Leprosy**" in that day had no cure and was a death sentence. But God is at work behind the scenes as a Hebrew girl who happen to come into Naaman's service and also has favored him tells him about a man in Israel who can heal him, Naaman then goes to Ben Hadad king of Syria who writes to the King of Israel

- Naaman couldn't leave Syria without permission from Ben Hadad and he needed an official letter of introduction because Israel would perceive this as an act of war to find the commander of Syria's army roaming around in Israel unannounced. Jehoram when he reads the letter perceives this as an excuse for Ben Hadad to declare war on them for all he sees is a threat, He doesn't see God at all because he's in rebellion with God. **V8** but when Elisha the man of God hears of it all he sees is God at work to bring Naaman to him that he may know Who God is.
- **V9-12** when he meets Elisha he's brought **750** pounds of silver, **150** pounds of Gold, expansive clothing, to reward the prophet for healing him, but when he hears that all that is required is to bathe in the Jordan and that Elisha didn't come meet him himself but send a messenger to tell him this he gets offended is tries to leave. Here's our pride at work, Naaman is an important man in Syria, and Elisha won't come and greet him, the Jordan is like the Potomac not much to brag about, as there are much better waters in Syria than this so why bathe in that?
- **V13-14** were not told who said this to Naaman but he gives him wise counsel saying "if you were asked to do something great, to make you feel like you earned this healing would you not have done it, then why not do this? So Naaman humbled himself and listened to the servant and he is healed. What a lesson just in this as Naaman pride almost kept him from being healed, how many people won't come to the truth because of their pride, some hurt or offense that happened yrs ago, their suffering now having no peace, and yet they hold onto the pain.
- **V15-19** Naaman comes back and Elisha sees him this time, and he is so grateful and offers the gold, silver, and clothing, but Elisha refuses, then Naaman says can he take back some earth from Israel so he can build an altar and begin to worship the Lord, Elisha agrees. Knowing that although he has changed the King of Syria still worships false gods so he asks when he is obligated to go into a false temple will the Lord forgive him as his heart is now changed? Elisha tells him he is forgiven, Knowing that he was brought here supernaturally to find faith so the Lord even if it means removing the king so Naaman can worship Him freely will do it.
- We see Naaman needed the Lord, He went seeking the Lord, he resisted the Lord, then he trusted the Lord, lastly he wants to serve the Lord. **V20-24** here's our second character "**Gehazi**" a servant of Elisha who has been observing everything that has happened. Now instead of rejoicing that a sinner has come to salvation he is both angry and covetous, thinking how can he get his hands on some of the things that Naaman has brought with him without Elisha knowing.
- **V20-24** he begins by wrongly thinking that its Elisha who has done this not seeing that this is all the Lord's doing, people wrongly put a person's face on their pain or trouble instead of examining themselves to see it's the Lord that's dealing with them. This leads to lying and using Elisha's name to do it, people like this don't care if they malign others or their reputations in their schemes. Afterward he hides the stuff, a life of deception is lived in the dark not the light.

- **V25-27** while Naaman ended by seeking to please the Lord, Gehazi was seeking to please himself, and he ends up having his ministry revoked, and his place taken, as the leprosy that Naaman who he despised once had has now taken hold of him. **V20** Gehazi lied to himself, **V22** he lied to Naaman, He lied to Elisha, so instead of experiencing the power to change he remained the same, being isolated and away from the people of God. The next time you see Gehazi instead of serving the prophet he is telling stories about him to the King in **2Kings 8:5**.