

2 Kings 5 – Thursday, March 3rd, 2016

2 Kings 5:1 Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper.

- The chapter begins by introducing us to Naaman an honorable and mighty man of valor as the commander of the army of Syria.
- However, we're also told that Naaman had leprosy, which at that time was an incurable, and even an unmanageable disease.
- Today, we don't call it leprosy; rather it's called Hansen's disease and while it's still incurable, it is to some degree manageable.

2 And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. 3 Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy."

- Here we're introduced to Naaman's servant, who, it seems wishes to reciprocate kindness to her master who himself was kind.
- The reason I say that is, were he an unkind master, it would be very unlikely that she would even bring this up in the first place.
- To me, this speaks to how it is that often times, the Lord will place us in positions like this, in order to reach the lost for Christ.

4 And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel." 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. 6 Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy. 7 And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me."

- This is interesting for a couple of reasons, not the least of which is it's estimated he sent over 1.2 million dollars with the letter.
- Another reason I find this interesting is Jehoram, who is the recipient of the letter, tears his clothes in anger over being asked.
- Not only does Jehoram know he is unable to heal Naaman of his leprosy, he doesn't have a relationship with the God Who can.

One commentator wrote, "This is a crisis to him, because he has no relationship with the God who can heal lepers. But it is a needless crisis, because he could have a relationship with this God."

8 So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

- Couple of thoughts here the first of which has to do with the conspicuous absence of any mention that Jehoram had told Elisha.
- In other words, we're only told that Elisha heard about Jehoram tearing his clothes, but we're not told how he heard about it.
- The reason I mention this is it seems to indicate that Elisha was probably not very welcome there in the royal palace in Israel.

- The second thought has to do with Elisha's response, which true to form is exactly what we would expect from this prophet.
- Namely, that of his desire to not just see God heal him, but more importantly that he would come to a saving knowledge of Him.
- This is why Elisha sends for Naaman to come to him, which as we'll see next, he's about to be both healed and saved as well.

9 Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean."

- There's something I want to point out and we talked about this last week concerning what Elisha does and does not do here.
- Notice he doesn't come out himself to meet him and tell him to wash in the Jordan seven times, he has Gehazi do it instead.
- The reason I point this out is that this is Elisha's M.O. such that he doesn't want Naaman to think he is the one who healed him.

11 But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' 12 Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

- Clearly, Naaman is taking this personally, and is offended in his pride by Elisha sending a servant and not coming to meet him.
- It also seems that he's incensed with Elisha's servant telling him to go to the river Jordan instead of the better ones in Israel.
- This is textbook when it comes to pride in the sense that when one is full of them self as Naaman was, they're easily offended.

Proverbs 21:24 (NKJV) — 24 A proud and haughty man—"Scoffer" is his name; He acts with arrogant pride.

Proverbs 9:8 (NKJV) — 8 Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.

13 And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" 14 So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

- I would suggest that were it not for Naaman's servants, he would have never humbled himself to be both cleansed and saved.
- The point being is that humbling oneself is a prerequisite to ones salvation, and such is the case here with a very proud man.
- This is why his servants said what they said; they knew that Naaman wanted to be saved in a way that kept his pride in tact.

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. 17 So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. 18 Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing." 19 Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a short distance.

- What Naaman does here in offering this gift is understandable given that this was a common practice especially in that culture.
- However, when he wants to take some of the soil from that ground, it seems to indicate that he's being somewhat superstitious.
- In all fairness and to his credit, he's sincere in his desire to worship the true God of Israel Whom he acknowledges and accepts.

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.

- What Gehazi does here is wrong on every level, chiefly because he flat out lies to Naaman in order to get this money from him.
- Actually, that's the other thing that's wrong with what Gehazi does; he's using his position to get money from a new believer.
- As we're about to see, this will be a fatal mistake and one God takes very seriously, which I believe is the lesson of the text.

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.

- Here again, we don't know how Elisha knew about what Gehazi did, which leads me to believe that God revealed this to him.
- Notice Gehazi's bold-faced lie when he tells him he didn't go anywhere. He lies to cover up his sin of greed and covetousness.
- While it's not wrong to receive money for the Lord's work, it is always wrong to mar ones witness by greedily seeking after it.

G. Campbell Morgan of this wrote, "The deepest wrong in the action of Gehazi was that it involved the Divine witness, which had been borne to the Syrian, Naaman, by the action of the little serving maid in his house, and the prophet Elisha. Their action had been wholly disinterested, and for the glory of God."

- I'm hoping you'll kindly indulge me in closing as I point out the typology that's woven into the fabric of this fascinating chapter.

Leprosy starts small	Sin starts small
Leprosy initially appears white and shiny	Sin can initially seem pleasurable but only for a season
Leprosy numbs the senses so there's no feeling	Sin can numb and sear our conscience leaving no conviction
Leprosy progressively spreads over the entire body	Sin can spread throughout the entire body of Christ
Leprosy causes parts of the body to rot away	Sin can cause those in the body to fall away
Leprosy created and caused shame	Sin creates and causes shame
Leprosy isolated and separated one from others	Sin isolates and separates us from others
Leprosy was incurable and brought forth death	Sin is incurable and brings forth death
Leprosy cannot be cured, only cleansed	Sin cannot be cured, only forgiven and cleansed
The little servant girl shared the good news of being cleansed	We are His servants who share the good news of salvation
God's prophet called Naaman to him to be cleansed	God calls us to Him to be cleansed
Naaman sought out Elisha to be cleansed	We seek the Lord to be cleansed
Elisha sends a messenger to speak to Naaman	God sends His messengers to speak to us
Naaman saw this as humbling and foolish	The cross is seen as humiliating and foolish
Naaman had to obey God and humble himself to be cleansed	We must obey God and humble ourselves to be saved
Naaman went into the Jordan River	We are water baptized when we're saved
Naaman was saved by grace through faith in doing this 7-times	We are saved by grace through faith, (Jesus bled in 7-places)
Naaman forsook the worship of false gods	We repent and no longer worship false gods