

## Startled by Grace Part 7: "Enduring Grace" (5-20-2018)

**New Series:** "Startled by Grace . . . Waking up to the very Good News! The same Gospel that saves you is the Gospel that sustains you. We should wake up to this good news today and everyday!"

### Today: Enduring Grace - The Story of Naaman

#### 2 Kings 5:1 (ESV)

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.

**Note:** Outsider, Successful, yet incurably ill – God’s hand of Grace was on him.

#### 2 Kings 5:2-7 (ESV)

(2) Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. (3) She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." (4) So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel." (5) And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. (6) And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy." (7) And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

**Note:** Naaman goes to Israel – by word of a servant girl to seek help of the prophet (Elisha)

#### 2 Kings 5:8-12 (ESV)

(8) But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel." (9) So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and 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, and you shall be clean." (11) But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. (12) Are not Abana and 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.

**Note:** Grace & Pride don’t mix – Elisha doesn’t come out to speak with him (insulted), & his prescription is offensive! Dip continually (7 times) in a dirty river!

#### 2 Kings 5:13-14 (ESV)

(13) But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" (14) So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

**Note:** Naaman humbled himself, and after 7 times he was cleansed . . .

**Receiving God's enduring Grace . . .** often doesn't come easy, its more like a wrestling match!

**Luke 18:1-8**

(1) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, (2) saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. (3) Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' (4) And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, (5) yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " (6) Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. (7) And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? (8) I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" \*

**Note:** If even the unjust judge relents, not by merit, but out of the repetition & persistence, how much more God!

**2 Keys to Endurance – Persistence & Patience . . .**

**Matthew 7:7-8**

(7) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (8) For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

**Note:** Persistence doesn't stop, won't let up, & grows in aggressiveness when thwarted, instead of diminishing!

**James 5:7**

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

**Note:** A farmer is still on duty, plants, waters, protects, & watches over his crops – but he also waits patiently

**E.M Bounds**

"Persistent prayer – restless desire, restful patience, and strength to hold on are all contained in it."

**Enduring Grace** – requires patience & persistence, but it also requires hearing from God, in both stories through difficulty and persistence, direction from God was received.

**So like Naaman & the widow before the unjust judge, we pursue God's direction.**

**How? By praying according to the Will of God . . .**

**1 John 5:14-15**

(14) Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (15) And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

**Note:** Oh how this verse has been stripped of its power. . .

- We have turned this idea of praying according to God's Will into a habit of hedging in our prayers! We have caused it to add a bunch of "ifs" to our praying.
- This is the exact opposite of the intention of these verses – they are meant to instill confidence in our prayers!

Is there a secret will of God? Counsel known only to Him, which may be revealed to us? Or may be revealed later? Or may not be revealed to us at all? Of Course.

But why do we waste so much time on this? Trying to figure it out like putting a puzzle together.

And why do we give it power that God never intended in crippling our prayers?

If he wants us to know His will – he will reveal it. Sometimes because we have earnestly sought it & other times when we are running from it or hiding in caves. If you can figure out that mystery by all means please share it.

But we are called to pray according to His Will & so it must be possible to do so & pray therefore with confidence!

How? **The ability to pray according to God's Will is found in praying by His Spirit & according to His Word**

**a) Praying by the Spirit****Romans 8:26-27**

(26) Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (27) Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

**Note:** God's Spirit that is within us knows how we ought to pray & he will lead us into praying God's Will

**b) Praying the Word****Hebrews 4:12**

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

**Note:** God's Word is alive, powerful, & discerns thoughts & intents

**Important Note:** These two are meant to work together!

Separate Spirit from the Word & we get confusion, emotions, feelings, & down right weirdness!

Separate the Word from His Spirit & we quickly move to dead lifeless praying. Looking back on Past promises & ahead to Future plans with no living God dealing with us in the here & now!

### **Ephesians 6:17-18**

(17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; (18) praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints

#### **Note:**

- Word, Spirit, & Prayer – working in unison!
- The sword is the turning point in this passage moving from a defensive posture to an offensive attack!

### **R.A. Torrey**

“Mere intellectual study of the Word of God is not enough; there must be meditation upon it. The Word of God must be revolved over and over in the mind with a constant looking to God and His Spirit to make that Word a living thing in the heart. The prayer that is born of meditation on the Word of God is the prayer which soars upward to God’s listening ear.”

#### **Wrestling w/ God:**

- When a child is a baby, they cry & get what they need. This doesn’t continue as they grow older though.
- Often when a boy begins to grow his father will wrestle with him. The father withholds much of his own strength in order to allow the son to exert his strength & fight.
- In our walk with God all too often we think we have taken a step back in our faith, because things aren’t coming as easily as they did at first.
- We look back & long for the old days, & we give up. When I believe God is inviting us to come & wrestle with him & grow up!

#### **Examples of God wrestling w/ & even surrendering His will to men:**

- Jacob wrestling with the Angel of the Lord (Gen 32:24)
- Abraham arguing for Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen 18:22-32)
- Moses pleading & fasting for Israel to not be wiped out & God relents! (Deut 9:13-19)
- Daniel fasts & prays for 21 days for an answer & angels are in combat in the Heavenlies (Dan 10)

When we argue thru these passages and make them a theological debate about God’s Sovereignty vs. our free will, we miss the point! These saints were in a relationship with a Father who loved them & this is God interacting with them as a Dad!

**Conclusion:** God gives Grace that enables us to endure, so have patience with persistence as you wrestle with God!