

Sunday, September 14, 2025 - The Deliverance of Naaman the Great, a Leper - Pastor John Henry Raskin

For the past several weeks, we have been exploring the power of faith and the obstacle of pride. Last week, we discussed the faithfulness of the people of Israel and how their faith led to the fall of the walls of Jericho. Today, we delve deeper into the story of Naaman, a great general who faced an insurmountable problem and was healed by the Lord.

Naaman's Story:

- **Background:** Naaman was the commander of the Syrian army, a mighty man of valor, but he suffered from leprosy (2 Kings 5:1)
- **The Young Girl's Faith:** A young girl from Israel, taken captive by Naaman's soldiers, suggested that Naaman seek healing from the prophet in Samaria (2 Kings 5:2-3)
- **Naaman's Journey:** Naaman, with the support of the King of Syria, went to Israel with gifts to seek healing (2 Kings 5:4-6)
- **Elisha's Instructions:** The prophet Elisha instructed Naaman to wash in the Jordan River seven times to be healed (2 Kings 5:9-10)
- **Naaman's Pride:** Initially, Naaman was furious and refused to follow the simple instructions, but his servants convinced him to obey (2 Kings 5:11-13)
- **Healing and Transformation:** Naaman humbled himself, followed Elisha's instructions, and was healed. He acknowledged the God of Israel as the only true God (2 Kings 5:14-15)

Lessons from Naaman's Story:

- **Faith and Obedience:** Naaman's healing came through faith and obedience to God's instructions.
- **Humility:** Naaman's pride was a barrier to his healing. Humility allowed him to receive God's grace.
- **God's Power:** The story demonstrates God's power to heal and restore, regardless of one's status or condition.

Application:

- **Recognize Our Own "Leprosy":** Just as Naaman had leprosy, we all have areas in our lives that need healing. Acknowledge these areas and seek God's help.
- **Trust in God's Ways:** God's solutions may seem simple or unexpected, but they are powerful. Trust and obey His guidance.
- **Extend Grace and Mercy:** Like the young girl who showed compassion to Naaman, we should extend grace and mercy to others, even those who may not know or honor God.

Conclusion: Let us be honest about the "leprosy of sin" in our lives and seek God's healing through faith, humility, and obedience to the Holy Spirit. If you have not yet made the decision to follow Jesus Christ, I encourage you to take that step today.

THE DELIVERANCE OF NAAMAN THE GREAT, A LEPER

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the last five or six weeks we appear to have embarked on an unintentional series on the power of faith and the obstacle of pride.

Last week we explored the faithfulness of the people of Israel that allowed them to see the walls of Jericho fall flat and learned how through faith and trust in the living God we can see our Jericho walls fall flat as well.

In the middle of that message, I used an example of the great General Naaman who had an insurmountable problem and how the Lord healed him.

It occurred to me that this story in 2 Kings is so rich in the themes that we have been studying that I thought that we might explore it in more depth today.

Here's how the story of Naaman begins...

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.

This one paragraph of scripture is quite rich, so I want to unpack it a little bit.

It begins with a Syrian nobleman. He's the commander in chief of all the armies of Damascus.

He was a military conqueror. There are no heroes like military heroes.
In our nation, he would be like Washington or Eisenhower.

In ancient history he would be like Julius Caesar, William the Conqueror or Alexander the Great.

Naaman went out with his armies and brought back great victories with much spoil and many captives.

The King of Syria loved him and was grateful and devoted to him for his service.

He was an unusually capable and glorious Commander in Chief, a valiant warrior and Leader.

However, the scripture tells us, there is a “but”.

Naaman was a leper.

Naaman had much of what this world wants: power, wealth, connections.

But, as we find out in this reading, Naaman suffered from a chronic illness: he had leprosy.

Despite his wealth, his fame, his political power, and his physical strength, Naaman did not have control over this dreaded disease.

It had control over him.

He could glory in all his accomplishments; he could enjoy his power and position and prestige; he could admire his palatial home and his wealth but they all seemed to vanish as he stared into the mirror each day.

Every time he looked at himself there was something ugly looking back at him that defined his life.

He was a leper, and there was nothing he could do about it.

The story continues...

2 Kings 5:2

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.

This paragraph gives us some background to the story.

The fact that this young girl was a captive from the land of Israel tells us that Syria and Israel had a complicated relationship.

In this paragraph, while we don't see that they were at war with each other, we are told that Syrian Raiders were troubling Israel and capturing people and bringing them back to Syria as slaves.

2 Kings 5:3

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."

I find this passage of scripture remarkable, don't you?

We were just told that this young girl from Israel was captured by Naaman's soldiers in a violent raid and that she serves his wife as a slave.

And now, this scripture tells us that she took pity on her Master and suggested a way for him to be cured of his leprosy because of her faith in the God of Israel and the prophet Elisha.

If you remember, Elisha was the prophet who was given a double portion of his master Elijah's miraculous power when he saw him taken up to heaven by a chariot of fire.

Imagine this young girl who was ripped from her beloved people, God's chosen people, by Namaan's Raiders, taking pity on her cruel master.

If only there were more Christians who would have this level of mercy and grace towards people who don't honor or know their God. What a powerful witness they would be.

Another thing about this passage...

This young slave girl was not intimidated by Naaman's power, position, or prestige.

She saw his pain. Called it by name. Knew of a pain reliever. And told Naaman where he could find help.

We all need humble people in our lives who look past the pride in us ...

who look past our job titles, our bank accounts, our cars, and our houses - and see our loneliness and our need.

Who see our hurt.

We need people who will touch us at our point of need.

We need people who will call our problems as they see them.

We need people who see our blind spots.

We need people in our lives who love us enough to not let us make stupid mistakes even when we don't want to hear it.

And we need to believe them as Naaman believed this slave girl.

2 Kings 5:4-5a

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.”

These verses show us the level of relationship that Naaman had with the king of Syria as he was able to go directly into his throne room and ask a favor, which the king now answers in the most dramatic way.

2 Kings 5:5b-6

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”.

Here we see that Naaman is prepared to spend a significant amount of his wealth in order to be healed.

In modern terms, ten thousand talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold would be the equivalent of \$3,000,000!

This great General now marches into the King of Israel (who was at that time Jehoram the son of Ahab) and hands him the letter from his buddy, the King of Syria.

Given that Jehoram was one of the bad, idolatrous Kings of Israel his response is not surprising...

2 Kings 5:7

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.”

In this scripture we see a few things that we would expect from one of Israel's craven, apostate kings.

First, he's a coward.

Second, he clearly has no understanding or belief in the power of the God of Israel that parted the Red Sea,

let alone a relationship with Him because he doesn't even consider for one moment that there is a true prophet of the Lord in Israel who can do miracles.

Third, he's a whiner.

2 Kings 5:8

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.”

Now THERE is a man of God!

Fearless and faithful, he hears of the King's problem and not waiting to be summoned, he sends a messenger himself with a message that says, basically, “don't worry little man. I got this.” ...and more importantly he is saying... “fear not King, GOD's got this.

2 Kings 5:9-12

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." 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.

Now we see Naaman's real problem. More than leprosy perhaps. It's pride. Pride is spiritual leprosy. Pride is a sin.

We will talk about that more in a little bit...

So... the bigshot General Naaman shows up at Elisha's humble abode with his whole entourage, horses, chariot, soldiers, servants, all rigged up in military splendor, you get the picture.

And now we see that not only does Elisha not cater to Naaman's desire for a big religious show, but he doesn't even come out to greet him.

He sends his servant.

Well right off the bat, that ticks Naaman off.

After all, he is planning on paying this Prophet big money and he wants him to recognize him as a great man and then put on a big show.

He wants the whole shebang. The mumbo-jumbo, the hand waving, the whole nine yards.

And what does this servant of the Prophet tell Naaman to do?

He tells him to go wash in the Jordan river which to Naaman is just a mud hole compared to the great rivers of his home country.

Well now he's really mad, in fact, the scripture tells us that Naaman is furious.

So furious that he's ready to turn on his heel and return from whence he came.

But then, verse 13 tells us...

2 Kings 5:13

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’?”

So now we see more good humble people in the servants that speak good common sense to their master and calm him down.

And then we see the mighty Naaman humble himself for the first time...

2 Kings 5:14

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.

Now I find this curious and wonderful...

It occurs to me that when I gave my life to Jesus, I really wasn't planning on humbling myself to the degree that a true belief and faith in Christ would take when I had woken up that morning.

But that day, God sent His servant who asked me, in obedience, “Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God and that He died on a cross for your sins John, because you can't stand before a holy and a righteous God without a savior?”

When that question was asked of me, I found that I had no words to say but my heart screamed “yes I do believe” and so unexpectedly I said “yes”.

That was my Jordan river experience when I became clean of my leprosy. The leprosy of pride. The leprosy of sin.

God had let me be Lord of my own life for 43 years and suddenly, I realized who was really the Lord.

So it's easy for me to relate to Naaman and what happens next...

2 Kings 5:15

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.”

Here we see a humble and grateful Naaman. A truly changed man, both inside as well as out.

How wonderful to suddenly know the truth when you've worshipped idols all your life.

He had found the Pearl of great price... that there was a God and He was the God of Israel.

Naman would gladly have given Elisha the prophet \$3,000,000 worth of gold and silver for the great gift that he had just received, not only of health but of faith.

2 Kings 5:17

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.

Elisha, the man of God, the true prophet of Israel, refused Naaman's gift.

Elisha's reward was that he had done the will of the Lord and seen the miracle that God had wrought in Naaman.

Now I said that we were going to come back to the concept of sin, in Naaman's case pride, as a type of spiritual leprosy.

Here are some reasons why I say that.

Sin is something which spoils life. It detracts from happiness and wholeness.

Sin causes unhappiness and pain. It makes life ugly and offensive.

Sin is no respecter of persons. All are subject to it.

Men at their best and highest cannot deal with the problem of sin. Physicians, kings, governments, philosophy, education and culture have all failed to eradicate it.

The world is ignorant of the only way to deal with sin. The solution has been there the whole time, but man looks to "great" solutions and misses it.

The world looks for great, grand solutions but God's way is through the small, weak, and simple.

The solution to sin is in the "humble servant", the unknown, the unexpected - Jesus Christ.

The deliverance of sin is only found in the testimony of Jesus Christ and His power to heal and restore. We must point people to Jesus.

People must go to Jesus, trust in his power, and they will be healed and saved.

Beloved, Please be honest about the "leprosy of sin" in your own life and understand that no human effort can cure it.

I appeal to you today to be honest with yourself, and I encourage you to be honest with those who you care about and open to those who truly care about you.

If the leprosy of sin is sticking to you today and you are a believer, resolve right now that you are going to go to the cross and acknowledge that sin and ask the Lord to remove it with a heart of repentance that will bear fruit.

And if for some reason you are here today and you have never truly made the decision that Jesus Christ is Lord and decided to follow Him with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength, then I

encourage you to come see me after service and we will make a date to sit and talk about it.

But in the meantime, let's pray...