

Sunday, September 20, 2020

## SOME LESSONS FROM NAAMAN 2 Kings 5

Over the past few months we have presented a number of lessons from the Old Testament. While we are not under that law, there are still many good lessons and applications for us to learn from it. Romans 15:4, 1 Corinthians 10:11, etc. And we must never forget that they are just as much the word of God as the New Testament and thus worthy of our study.

For tonight's lesson, I would like to visit another Old Testament character we are somewhat familiar with. I want to talk about some lessons we can learn from Naaman. His account is recorded in 1 Kings 5.

### I. Background

- a. ***During darks day in Israel. Jehoram is king of Israel.*** He was the son of Ahab and was described as evil but not like his father (2 Kings 3:1-2). He rained for 12 years in Samaria.
- b. During his reign, Syria, a northern neighbor was continually at war against Israel (and Samaria) and had been for a long time. Their dominance went back and forth. At that time Syria (with Damascus as its capital) had the upper hand.
- c. ***Elijah has ascended to heaven, and Elisha carried on his work.*** We read about the various miracles he performed in the 2 Kings 3-13. There are many lessons we can learn from his works and message.
- d. ***In 1 Kings 5:1, we are introduced to Naaman,*** commander of the army of Syria (under Benhadad). He was described as *"a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD (YHWH) had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor."* As an aside to our lesson, at this time Israel was being punished by YHWH because of their sinfulness.
- e. ***Naaman was a leper*** – an incurable disease that ate away the flesh. It was a contagious disease which is why lepers were declared "unclean" and in Israel they were isolated from the camp or cities of the people. As we can see from our text, leprosy was found in other places as well.
- f. ***2 Kings 5:2*** – we are also introduced to a servant girl taken captive from Israel. She tells her mistress that there is a prophet in Samaria who could heal Naaman of his leprosy.
- g. The king sends Naaman with great gifts to the king of Israel (Jehoram) and asks to be healed. (5:4-6) Jehoram, being powerless tears his close and is angry thinking that Syria was seeking a quarrel with him.
- h. Elisha hears of this and sends word to King Jehoram to send Naaman to him and he would let him "know that there is a prophet in Israel." (5:8)
- i. Naaman goes to the house of Elisha and stands at the door. Elisha send his servant, Gehazi, with a message to go and wash in the river Jordan 7 times and his flesh would be restored. Naaman is angry thinking Elisha would come out himself and do some great feat calling on the LORD. Furthermore, he had little respect for the Jordan River and turned away in a rage.
- j. BUT (5:13) his servants reasoned with him saying that if Elisha had told him to do something great he would have done. Basically, they said, "Why not give it try? Go wash and be clean."
- k. So Naaman goes and dips SEVEN times and his flesh was restored like that of a little child and he was clean.
- l. He returns to Elisha (5:15) professing, "Now I know that there is no God I all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore please take a gift from your servant." Elisha refuses and takes nothing. But Naaman is given two mule-loads of dirt so that he only offer sacrifices to the LORD. (5:17)
- m. And the story goes on from there.

## II. Lessons from Naaman

- The disease of sin – incurable with worldly ways. We cannot earn our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).  
Isaiah 64:6 – our righteousness is like filthy rags;  
Jeremiah 10:23 – It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.  
Sin is compared to leprosy<sup>1</sup>

  - It cannot be cured by man's power
  - It is loathsome and defiling like leprosy
  - It is contagious like leprosy - 1 Corinthians 15:33. IF not taken care of, it can spread and "infect you more" and even others.
  - It will separate you from God, as leprosy separates you from your community – and if not taken care of, it will result in eternal separation – Matthew 13:41-42.
- The importance of telling the good news to people – Naaman needed cleansing and didn't know of the cure until the servant girl told him.  
How many today are wandering hopelessly look for answers? Will we share the good news with them? Romans 1:16-17, 10:9-15? Will we PREPARE so that we can share God's word with them effectively (we need to know something)? 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 – will we strive to save men.
- The problem of looking in the wrong place –  
Naaman went to the king of Israel, even though the girl told him there was a prophet in the land. He also had preconceived idea.  
Many today are looking for answers to their salvation in the wrong place. They are going where the crowds are (popular). Many have preconceived ideas about what they need to do and struggle to case off those idea. Proverbs 14:12 notes *There is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death.*  
The Bible continually warns of false teachers and their tactics, but it also warns that many will follow their false ways (2 Peter 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 notes why – they did not receive the love of the truth...  
Our JOB is to point people in the right direction.
- Sometimes answers are simple – the message of cleansing didn't require a performance by the great prophet. The message was just as true when spoken by a servant as it was if the prophet had spoken himself. Dipping in the river Jordan 7 times was a very simple act.  
What God asks us to do is simple. It may be hard to do, but it is simple – anyone can obey the gospel (Romans 1:16, John 3:16, Titus 2:11).
- Getting angry doesn't make your problems go away – Naaman didn't like the answer and so he became very angry.  
Often when one hears the truth and doesn't like, they become angry and walk away. But the sad reality of such is that when you do, you are STILL in your lost condition.  
THANKFULLY, Naaman eventually listened and did what he was told.  
Consider this: Getting angry about some truth you don't like does NOT change that it is truth! AND, if and when you finally DO respond to the truth – it is still there!  
God's word WILL NOT change! No matter how angry we get, reason away what it actually says, or anything else.
- Sin-cleansing requires humility – Naaman had to do what he was told to be cleansed. It was an act of humility.  
Similarly, we in obeying the gospel, must be willing to humble ourselves before Him to be saved.  
Matthew 5:3 – the first beatitude is blessed are the poor in spirit; the 2<sup>nd</sup> – blessed are those who

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor, Gene - Bible Greats – sermons on great Bible wonders) <https://www.padfield.com/acrobat/taylor/bible-greats-1.pdf>, pgs. 10-12

mourn (5:4); the third – blessed are the meek (5:5). ALL of these involve humility and are needed to bring one to the point we will obey Him.

7. Sin cleansing requires that we do what God tells us to do – there was only ONE way that Naaman would be cleansed of his leprosy – obeying what he was told!

There is NO other way to have your sins washed away than obeying the gospel.

Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Romans 10:9-10, Acts 22:16, Galatians 3:27, etc.

There's only one way to take care of your sins as a Christian – 1 John 1:9, Acts 8:22

Jesus in John 10:1 warns, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."*

8. Your sins are not washed away until you FINISH the process – How many times did Naaman have to dip in the river Jordan? SEVEN! (vs. 14) What if he had only dipped 6 times? I suspect he would not have been cleansed.

Many today do PART of God's plan, but they do not finish. Much of the denominational world teaches "only believe". They may call for belief, repentance, confessing Jesus and prayer – but that does NOT complete the process. Over and over, both by passages and examples we find the final step they took was to be baptized FOR ( eis, eis - unto) the remission of their sins. 1 Peter 3:21 – this is NOT a meritorious act – in other words, we don't earn anything by doing it, but it IS an act of obedience. NOR does it nullify either the grace of God or our believing faith.

That is how we are saved.

9. When you are cleansed that is just the beginning – Naaman realized what his cleansing meant. He declared his monotheism, though he still had some issues to work through.

When we become Christians, that is just the beginning. We must remain faithful throughout our lives – Revelation 2:10, Hebrews 10:38 – *Now, the just shall live by faith, but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.*

And thus we can learn from the example of Naaman. Remember that here we have a FOREIGNER – a non-Jew who obeys God's instructions and is cleansed. What about you? Have you obeyed His commands? If not, how can we help you this very day. Think about it!