

LESSON # 5

THE GREAT & PROUD NAAMAN GIVES IN TO GOD

Principle to keep in mind: When God's people had a king and a prophet and a controversy arose between the two, THE PROPHET ALWAYS TOOK PRECEDENCE OVER THE KING. In our story, Elisha is the prophet.

**II Kings 5:1 Naaman was: (1) Commanding General of The Armies of Syria—Eisenhower
(2) Favorite of King—Prime Minister POSITION
(3) Honored for Military accomplishments
(4) “Mighty man in valour”—REPUTATION**

**Naaman had “the world by the tail on a downhill pull”—all about him did his bid. He was great: He knew it, and everybody around him knew it. His wish was the command for those about him. BUT
HE WAS A LEPER!!!---Comparable to terminal cancer today. LOATHSOME AND BURDENSOME TO EVEN HIMSELF—much less others.**

“Naaman was as great as the world could make him, yet the basest slave in Syria would not change skins with him.”

Verse 2-3: Lowliest maid: Captured in land of Israel; brought against her will; served Naaman's wife—yet she:

- (1) Desired the health and welfare of the master. (Ephesians 6:5-8) Looked on her affliction as an opportunity. Like early disciples used persecution to scatter the word—Acts 8:4, Philipians 1:12, and John 4:29-39.**
- (2) She was not afraid to testify of blessings to be found in associating with God's people:
Although Elisha had never cured lepers before (Luke 4:27); but because of other miracles God allowed him to do, she was sure he could and because of his reputation for love and benefits, she was sure he would. Therefore she, with great confidence, recommended the prophet.**

NOTE: She directed him to the prophet—the highest representative of God known to her—not the king.

She was confident if Naaman would do as Elisha directed, he would be healed.

Verse 4-5: Naaman was to the point he would try anything—even taking advice from an ignorant little slave girl. Based on her suggestion, he:

- (1) Although the king had authority, he would not send for the prophet but rather Naaman WOULD GO TO THE PROPHET. “Princes must stoop to prophets when they need them” Jesus: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28**
- (2) WOULD GO WITH A GREAT COMPANY—the more to honour the prophet.**
- (3) SEEKS HELP FROM HIGHEST AUTHORITY. . .Letter from the King of Syria. Undoubtedly thinks if his king entreats, the prophet's king will command. Good reasoning in the affairs of men, but not correct reasoning for**

- (3) God's people because the prophet outranks the king in Israel. It also assumes, falsely, a good relationship between the prophet and the king of Israel.

Verse 6-7: The little maid directed him to the prophet of Israel—not the king; so this trip proved to be a “dry run” (like becoming a member of some human organization which God never authorized to act in His behalf—our efforts accomplish nothing toward reaching the goal of pleasing God or coming to Him.)

Verse 6: Letter ascribed divine power to the king—which he did not have, and thus forced him to admit he was but a mere man—embarrassing to the king, and that publicly.

Verse 7: It was the highest of insult to ask any man to do something publicly that you knew he was incapable of doing—an invitation to a fight. This request was a plot by General Naaman to publicly embarrass the king—asking the king to do a work God alone could do—and would declare war if he didn't do it. (Since the king and the prophet were not on good terms, the king refused to admit or recognize that Elisha could do something for Naaman that the king could not do. The little maid knew more about the prophet and how he could help Naaman, than the king of Israel did!)

Verse 8: Elisha was neglected and forgotten by the king—he, nevertheless, showed a proper godly attitude by offering his services to avoid the king further embarrassment. Not for his own honor, but for God's, Elisha would have them “know there is a prophet in Israel”.

Verse 9: Naaman (after one false try??) finally presented himself at the door of the house of Elisha. So WE must come to God—not expect God to come to us—and wait for God to tell us what to do. See Exodus 14:13-14.

Verse 10: God's directions were short, plain, and direct:

- (1) YOU (understood) GO.
- (2) YOU (understood) Wash in Jordan seven times.
- (3) Then receive the promise of what I will do—“thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean”.

NO FORMALITY in Elisha: Perhaps, because he knew Naaman's pride and what he therefore expected, Elisha was doing the unexpected to allow him to learn that before God, all men stand on the same level. God does not bow to man—man yields to God if he expects to benefit. Naaman was used to having people wait on him; now he is in the role of the waiter.

Verse 11: Naaman was mad because:

- (1) Elisha slighted his person by sending a servant instead of coming himself. Naaman expected Elisha to humble himself before Naaman. As if God needed him instead of him needing God.
- (2) Elisha did not perform as Naaman thought he should. Elisha's solution to the problem was too simple. Naaman THOUGHT—and we are not paid to do the thinking for God. Our inadequacies place us in the position of accepting what God says and doing that without asking questions or making suggestions of our own. Naaman expected an elaborate ceremony of conjuration from Elisha—with Elisha doing all the work; but Elisha prescribed a simple, inexpensive work to be done by Naaman. A task that most ignorant slave could perform and understand.

Naaman turned and went away in a rage; he FORGOT:

- (1) He was still a leper. As many today have hearts which refuse to be humbled, even by God (with leprosy) much less by men (Elisha, or representatives of God who tell the truth) (See Numbers 12:14.)
- (2) He was the petitioner—and beggars can't be choosers/patients write their own prescriptions. In the folly of pride—a cure will not content him unless it be with ceremony, pomp, and parade. He scorns to be healed, unless he also be humored.
- (3) He had not/could not find his own remedy—but still rejects the prophet's. (Jeremiah 10:23—O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.) He was scornful of waters of Israel, but glows with thought of rivers of Damascus. Jordan was too cheap, too plain, too common—and besides, water is water, what makes the difference?

He did not consider:

- (1) Jordan belonged to God's Israel—its relationship to God was more important than its beauty.
- (2) Jordan more than once obeyed commands of God before: passage of Israel and crossing of Elijah and Elisha.
- (3) Jordan was the river appointed by God—and if he wanted to be cured, he should, in respect for God's position and judgment, refrain from why's and wherefore's. (Romans 10:3 For they be ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.)

Verse 13: Servants advised him to obey—in spite of his rage—implying reproof of his resentments. Out of love for Naaman they disregarded their own safety. He would hear reason, SO THEY WERE BOLD. But their reproof was modest and respectful—"Father" from love and honor, for reformation—not reproach. (I Timothy 5:1)

Rational and considerate: (1) Do you want leprosy? (2) Would you do something hard, expensive? (3) If you would do something difficult, would it not be even more logical to accept and do something EASY? So easy even a child could do it? Like wash and be clean?

Verse 14: He (Naaman) and not as he expected (Elisha) went. HE had to do it. (See Mark 16:16)

He dipped himself 7 times—would 6 have done just as well? (See James 2:10)

In Jordan—just like God said. Would Abana & Pharpar done just as well?

According to the saying of the man of God--FAITH. Would someone else's instructions have done just as well?

NAAMAN WENT TO THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT—Got the results God promised.

Suppose he had merely gone to Elisha, received the instructions, believed they would do for him what he wanted (get rid of his leprosy)—at that point would he have been saved—NO. As a matter of fact, he still had his leprosy when he came up the 6th time. Neither do we today lose our sins until we have FULLY obeyed the commandments of God.

APPLICATION: Sin is the leprosy that keeps us from having a full and rewarding relationship with God. (Isaiah 59:2—Your iniquities have separated you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.)

Acts 2:1-42

Verses 22-23: These people had just a few days before crucified Christ—they were leprous with sin

Verses 37-38: Made to realize their position (lost) before God; asked what to do; Peter tells them to “Repent, and be baptized EVERY ONE of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Baptism is the final act of our initial obedience—it washes away our sins (Acts 22:16) and thus cleans us up (I Corinthians 6:11) and makes us fit to associate with God through the Spirit He gives us.

It is the only one of the 5 steps: Hearing, Believing, Repenting, Confessing, and Baptism—that is said to save us (I Peter 3:21). Just as Naaman had his leprosy until he had dipped the 7th time; so we have our sins until we have been buried (Romans 6:4) in water according to the instructions of the man of God (Paul, in this case).

OPTIONAL REFERENCES: All have leprosy of sin—for all have sinned.

Romans 3:23 All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world (Adam), and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Romans 3:9 ...we have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, “There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth. . .that seeketh after God. . .verse 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

I John 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. . .we make Him a liar.

Ephesians 2:1-3 “You (Christians) hath he (God) quickened (made alive from grave of baptism by the giving of His spirit) who were dead (spiritually—separated from association with God because of leprosy of sin) in trespasses and sins;

“Wherein (sins) in time past ye walked according to (1) the course of this world (same way the world walks today), (2) according to the prince of the power of the air (Satan), the spirit (unholy, leprous, evil) that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

“Among whom (the world) also we (Christians) had our conversation (life) in times past (before baptism) in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath.”