

The Blessings of Obedience

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

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Text: 2 Kings 5:1-14, Psalm 30:1-12

Purpose: Naaman was a sick man who received a message of salvation from his steadfast maiden. The supportive monarch sent vast wealth to buy healing from Israel's prophet, Elisha. The message of salvation was a simple message – go dip seven times in the Jordan River and you will be healed. Naaman obeyed and was healed.

We are sick with sin in need of a Savior. The message of salvation is simple, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Just as Naaman was obedient, we too need to be obedient in our lives in order to receive forgiveness for our sin. We also need to be obedient to the rest of what Jesus taught if we are to receive the blessings of obedience.

On the way to preschool one morning, a doctor mom had left her stethoscope on the car seat, and her little girl picked it up and began playing with it.



The mother saw her playing with the stethoscope and said to herself, “Be still, my heart, my daughter wants to follow in my footsteps and be a doctor!”

Then the child spoke into the instrument and said:
“Welcome to McDonald's. May I take your order?”¹

I have noticed that in life, things don't always turn out the way we plan it. We may have great plans for our life, and we end up in a far different place than we thought we would. We may have great plans for our children, our business, our retirement, or our vacations – but sometimes our children choose a different path, our business plans have to be adjusted, our retirement plans don't materialize like we intended, and our vacations may cause more stress than rest. We may have been planning a life filled without sickness and disease, instead we find those things come into our lives without notice.



Today, I want to introduce you to a man named Naaman and how an event that occurred in his life changed it

forever. It is a story of how a great man, humbled himself before the Lord and how he received grace, healing, and peace. There is a great lesson for us today because we too can be the recipient of God's grace, healing, and peace. I have found in my life, the blessings come as we are obedient to what God teaches in His word.

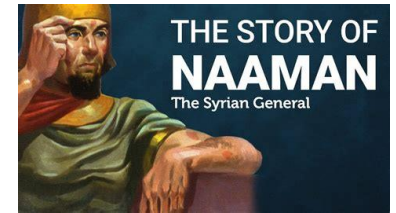


I may be speaking to someone here today that has never fully surrendered their life over to the Lord Jesus

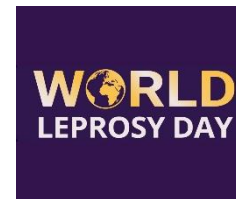
Christ. You will never understand grace unless you understand you are a sinner in need of grace. You will never receive healing for your wounded soul, if you don't come to Jesus by faith and trust Him. You will never experience peace until you know the prince of peace. Today can be the turning point in your life and you can leave from here restored. There are blessings abundant in the life of one that is obedient to the word of God.

A Sick Man²

The Bible describes Naaman as the **commander** of the army in Syria. He was the top military leader. He held the respect not only of the political leaders in Syria, he also was held in high regard among the military. When he spoke, the lives of the nation depended upon his wisdom.



He was a **conqueror**. Under his leadership his nation had been given victory over its neighbors. The servant girl that lived in his house was captured during a military campaign in Israel. He was able to organize the military to victory.



With all that going for Naaman, he had one thing that was wrong. The Bible says "*He was a mighty man of valor, BUT a leper.*" (5:1)

A person who had leprosy was separated from the people. You could not live with your family; you had to stay with a community of others that had leprosy. It was a skin disease that slowly ate away at your skin, killed the nerve endings in your body, and the skin rotted away while still on your body. Leprosy is rarely heard of today but it is still around in some parts of the world.



Naaman was a good military leader, BUT he had leprosy. He was a Commander, he was a Conqueror, but now he was a **Castaway**.

From a spiritual standpoint, we could say spiritual leprosy is a type of sin that separates us from God and often from others.

Maybe you have heard someone described as a “good father, or good mother” and then the little word BUT is inserted which totally ruins all the good they stand for. BUT they are an alcoholic, but they used drugs, but they lie, but they gossip, but they cheat on their spouse, but but but....



It is the BUT's that mar our lives and separate us from God. It is our sin that separates us from a Holy God. We are not sinners because we sin.

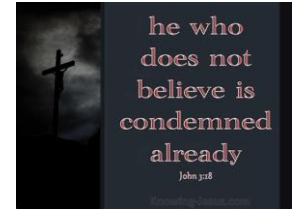
We sin because we are sinners. (R. C. Sproul)

We may do many good things ... we may be faithful in many ways ... but the Bible describes us as sinners. All of us are sinners.

I am so glad there is a John 3:16-17 for our sin. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*

You may feel fine today, but if you have not received Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are lost in your sins and are considered a spiritual leper, regardless of your greatness. Apart from Christ, you are already condemned.

John 3:18 continues: *“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*



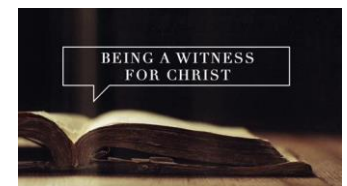
A Steadfast Maiden

When Naaman's servant girl heard about Naaman's problem with leprosy, she told his wife, *“If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy.”* (5:3)

This young girl showed **concern** for her master. Even though she was a servant in his house, she knew the prophet who was in Samaria could heal him. She didn't hate Naaman, instead her heart was concerned for his wellbeing.

She demonstrated faith in God because she knew and understood the mighty works that the prophet in Israel had done in the Lord's name. She knew what God could do. She had **confidence** in the BIGNESS of God. Even though she was a small slave girl, she had confidence in what God could do.

She didn't keep her confidence to herself. She took a risk and **confessed** her faith in God to her mistress. She was bold in her proclamation and confident in her testimony. She was letting her little light shine. In the midst of the dark situation her master Naaman was experiencing, she confidently spoke of a God that could reverse a bad situation and make it better.



We read earlier from Psalm 30 that speaks of the reversal we can experience as we trust in God.

How many of us know God could cure others of their sin problems and yet we stand silent? How can we stand by and watch as others continue in their sinful lifestyle and not tell them of the hope and forgiveness that can be found if they would only trust Jesus Christ as their Savior? The world does not know of salvation because we have hidden our light and not let it shine in a dark world.

A Supportive Monarch

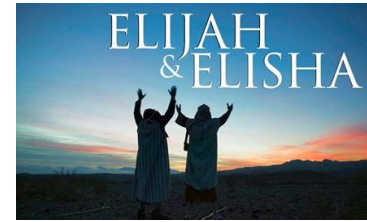
Word came to Naaman that there was hope in Israel for a cure. Naaman went to the King of Syria and asked for permission to go and see this prophet of Israel.



The King of Syria gladly sent Naaman with gifts of gold, silver, and clothing as payment for curing Naaman. Naaman and a whole host of people traveled the Via Mara – the ancient highway that runs from Damascus to Jerusalem to seek this prophet of God.

When they arrived and met with the King, the King thought it was a trap to ensnare Israel into a war with Syria. The king tore his clothes and lamented *“Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy?”* (5:8)

I am sure Naaman was puzzled by this response of the king. Naaman only wanted to be healed. He was not seeking a cause for war. Word of the king’s dilemma spread across the kingdom and it reached the ears of the prophet Elisha.



Elisha sent word back to the king that there is still a prophet in Israel and Naaman should come to see him. Naaman and the entire entourage traveled north to Samaria. When they arrived at the prophet’s house, they were expecting a grand welcoming party. Instead they were met at the door of the prophet’s house by his servant.

I find it interesting that the King of Syria misunderstood what the instructions of the servant girl. The young girl said the prophet could heal Naaman, not the King of Israel. Why would Naaman go to the king for healing? But that is the way of the world. They want to receive salvation or healing in the way they want it, not the way the Lord says you receive healing for sin. The world wants the specular and secular method of salvation. The Lord says you must come back to the words of the prophet to receive salvation.

A Simple Message

Naaman traveled to Elisha’s home and was forced to wait on the doorstep. Here was the commander of the Syrian army standing on the doorstep of the Prophet Elisha’s house. Naaman wanted a spectacular demonstration of God’s power. Naaman wanted to do something great in order to receive healing. Naaman still wanted to dictate the manner in which he would be healed.

But God’s ways are not man’s ways. Elisha did not even come out of his house to greet his visitor. He sent his servant to tell Naaman a simple message.



“Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.” (5:10)

Naaman was furious at how he was being treated. He was ignored. He wasn't even granted an appearance before the prophet of Israel. He was given instructions by a servant! The instructions were simple – go and wash in the Jordan seven times. But Naaman didn't like the terms or conditions of his healing.

Those traveling with Naaman prevailed upon him and encouraged him to submit himself to what was asked. Naaman argued there were cleaner waters back home in Damascus. His servants insisted Naaman surrender and receive this healing.



I could see Naaman going down to the dirty Jordan River. Probably during this time in history, the Jordan was

used by every community as a source of water and as sewage disposal. Towards the lower end of the Jordan River, even today, it is much more contaminated.

Naaman's crowd headed over to the Jordan River and Naaman dismounted and went into the water.

I could see Naaman washing in the water – rinsing himself with the impure waters of the Jordan. His friends and comrades on the journey watched to see if what the prophet said would occur.



After the first dip in the water, no change.
After the second dip, no change.
After the third dip, no change.

Would you quit after the third time? How many of us have come to the Lord with a need and quit after the first, second, or third request? The Lord wants us to persist and not faint.

Naaman went in a fourth time, no change.
A fifth time, no change.
A sixth time. No change.

I would be tempted to quit now. There should be some change. There should be some transformation. Naaman probably said to himself, “I have come too far to turn back now.”

Naaman went in the seventh time and he came out a changed man. His skin was as soft and new as a brand new baby's skin.

A Saved Man

Naaman was a changed man from that day forward. Through this experience, he came to understand that there was no God but the God of Israel.

How many of us gathered here this morning are operating under the illusion that partial obedience is good enough for God?





Several gathered here today have heard the voice of God in their life and have only partially surrendered their life to God. Maybe you are like Naaman and have gone to the Jordan River and dipped yourself in the water one time and you think that is good enough.

Maybe there is a ministry you are supposed to do and you have only partly committed yourself to it.

Maybe there is someone here that has given their heart to Jesus but has not followed up that inward commitment with an outward commitment of Baptism.

Maybe it is a half-hearted commitment in the areas of tithes, talents, or time given back to the work of the church.

Naaman received the blessing of healing when he fully surrendered and went into the water seven times.

You will never receive the blessings of God until you fully surrender that area you are still holding on to.

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹ Mikey's Funnies – July 1, 2013

² Sermon Notebook – Outline of 2 Kings 5:1-19 – Naaman: The Big Dipper