

Naaman is Healed

2 Kings 5:1-14

May 30, 2010

As we come now in our study of 2 Kings 5, we are introduced to Naaman, a captain of the Syrian Army, an area known as Aram. We are told that Naaman was a great man with the king of Aram. He was highly respected, a valiant warrior, and he was even used of the Lord when God wanted to give a victory to Aram, no doubt because of Israel's hard heart.

However, in spite of the fact that Naaman was such a highly respected man, he was a leper. He was highly successful; no doubt he was a hard worker, self-assured, self disciplined, self motivated, and self sacrificing. But all of that could not help him. He had leprosy and it was fatal.

Leprosy was a debilitating disease that was greatly feared in all cultures and civilizations. Leprosy was incurable at that time, and has been incurable throughout the centuries. With modern medicines, the disease can be completely halted, but the devastating effects cannot be reversed. Today there are less than 100 cases reported in the US each year, but there are 100,000's of cases reported every year throughout the world, 60% of which are in India.

Today leprosy is called *Hansen's disease* because in 1873 a Norwegian doctor by the name of Hansen discovered that leprosy was caused by a bacterium. This bacterium is exceptionally resistant to antibiotic treatment and in fact by the 1960s, the world's only known anti-leprosy drug became virtually useless. Only by utilizing a powerful multi-drug antibiotic therapy can leprosy be effectively treated today. And that treatment may take 2-3 years to complete.

In the Old Testament, leprosy came to represent sin. There was no cure, it was progressive in nature, it was contagious, and it was fatal. It's interesting to note that God made a provision in the Law of Moses for what a priest should do if a man was ever healed of leprosy. But leprosy was

incurable. In fact, the only person in the entire Old Testament that was ever cleansed of leprosy was Naaman and he wasn't a Hebrew, he was Syrian.

This is an amazing story and filled with personal application and spiritual significance because we see the person and work of Jesus Christ very powerfully in this story. Being cleansed of leprosy is a picture of the salvation that we have in Christ and the picture here of a Gentile being the only leper cleansed is important as well.

I. The Way of Salvation is Simple

- Naaman's wife had a young servant girl who was from the land of Israel and who said to her, "I wish my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."
- Here we see the benefit of this little girl being raised learning of spiritual things. This little girl's faith and her willingness to speak boldly was about to make an eternal difference in her master's life.
- When Naaman told the king of Aram what the little girl had said, the king offered to send a letter to the king of Israel.
- So Naaman departed for Israel with millions of dollars worth of gifts along with a letter requesting that the king of Israel heal Naaman of his leprosy.
- Jehoram, the king of Israel, interpreted this as an attempt to stir up trouble. But Elisha, the man of God, heard about Naaman and sent word. "Now let him come to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel."
- So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, millions of dollars worth of gifts and a letter

from the king of Aram. You couldn't come with more pomp and circumstance, yet Elisha sent his servant with a simple message, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean."

A. But pride stands in the way

- What a picture of pride we see in Naaman. And his pride almost kept him from receiving the greatest gift of his life.
- When Naaman heard those simple words, he became furious and stormed away saying, "I thought he would come up to me, and stand and call on the name of Jehovah, and wave his hands over the place, and cure the leper."
- Naaman wanted to bring his approach to life to his religion. "Give me something great to do, give me a difficult task of penance, give me some goal that can only be accomplished by self-discipline and great self-sacrifice and I will show you what a great man I am to accomplish it."
- When he was told that he must wash seven times in the muddy Jordan River, he exclaimed, "Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel?" And he turned away in a rage.
- Naaman wanted to be treated like a great man, but what he needed to was to be treated like a leper, a man who had an incurable, life ending disease.

Illus – Jesus gave an illustration of this very thing when he taught us how important it is to acknowledge just

how much we need a Savior. When he had called Levi, a tax collector, to follow Him, Levi then invited Jesus to his house and many tax gatherers and sinners were dining with Jesus and the Pharisees objected...

Mark 2:17, And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Isaiah 64:6, For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;

- There were many times when Jesus confronted the pride of the Pharisees with bold words that confront our own pride as well. He spoke of tax gatherers and prostitutes that were repenting and being transformed by the preaching of John and then said to the Pharisees...

Matthew 21:31, Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you."

Illus – We all have a fatal disease called sin and all our great accomplishments and technological advancements will not be able to address our greatest human need.

Illus – I ran into Andrew Palau the other day and noticed a scar next to his eye. He was a survivor of the plane that crashed in Jamaica a few months ago. I wonder how many atheists converted when that plane crashed and came face to face with their mortality.

- Naaman was facing his mortality. He knew he had an incurable disease and his pride almost

kept him from receiving what he needed most. We too must face our mortality and recognize our need.

B. Simply believe

- One of Naaman's servants came near and said, "Had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then when he says to you, 'Wash and be clean'?"
- The point here is that Naaman listened and went down to the Jordan and dipped himself seven times according to the word of the man of God.
- The cure for his leprosy, a picture of sin, was simple; but far beyond his own resources. He brought millions of dollars worth of silver and gold and other things, but no earthly treasure would be enough...

Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-7 "Ho, everyone who thirsts..."

- We have difficulty accepting the grace of God. Could it be because we don't want to let go of our pride?
- Naaman was a mighty man, an honorable man, no doubt he was a hard-working man and I'm sure he had a great work ethic. There is nothing wrong with any of these things; in fact we would say that they are all good qualities to have.
- But they won't heal leprosy and they won't cure sin and they can't give us eternal salvation.

- God tells us that we must simply believe. Religion is about "**doing**," but Christianity is about the fact that it's "**already done**."

Acts 16:31, "believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Romans 10:9, if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved;

II. You are Saved *in* Christ

- Naaman asked an interesting question, were not the rivers of Damascus better than the waters of Israel?
- But it wasn't just about being washed in some river. It was that the Jordan was a picture of being baptized into Jesus Christ.
- All of this should give us a deeper understanding of who we are in Christ and what He has done for us.

A. Jesus heals the leprous soul

- There were verses in Leviticus 14 that told the priests what they should do for the one who was healed of leprosy.
- But those verses were unused for 1,500 years. They studied them, but they never applied them because there was never a leper who was healed in the Old Testament, except for Naaman, or course, but he was a Syrian.
- But then Jesus came and lepers began to be healed, not just one, but many lepers were healed

and each time Jesus would say to them, go and show yourself to the priests.

Matthew 8:4, And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

- Caiaphas the high priest must have been befuddled completely because this was such a clear testimony that the Messiah himself was in Israel – Jesus.
- But in that same chapter 8 of Matthew there is something very important for us to see...

Matthew 8:2-3, And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

- Jesus is willing with all his heart to heal the soul. He is willing, so now the question is whether you are willing.

B. In Christ we die and in Him we live

- As we have said before, leprosy is a picture of our sin. And we have also seen that Christ is God's provision for our healing so that we can have life eternal.
- These verses in 2 Kings 5 are the shadow of what we have revealed to us in the New Testament; that Christ heals us through His death. But how does that happen?
- First, the obvious connection to leprosy is that sin is a fatal disease.

Romans 6:23, for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Next, we need to understand that we have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the death of Christ.

Romans 6:3,5 do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death?... For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death...

- In other words, Christ's death was applied to us to pay the penalty for our sin because we were in him when he died.

Illus – We were in Adam when he sinned so Adam's sin is applied to us, but now we are in Jesus Christ in a similar way so that what Christ did is applied to each one of us who are in Christ Jesus.

- However, not only is Christ's death applied to us, but also everything he did in righteousness is applied as well.

2 Corinthians 5:21, He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Illus - After Naaman was healed, he came back to Elisha and offered him a gift, but Elisha refused. So Naaman asked for two mule loads of earth so he could make an altar to Jehovah.

- What was in Naaman's heart was a desire to offer his heart to Jehovah because of all that God had done for him. That is exactly what we should do as well.