

Naaman, The Leper

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2 Kings 5:1-14

Luke 4:27, *“And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.”*

In 2 Kings, chapter 5, we have the story of the cleansing of Naaman. So I have an Old Testament sermon to preach with a New Testament text.

2 Kings 5:1-14, *“Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman’s wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped*

himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

The Old Testament story of Naaman is true, confirmed by the New Testament writer, Luke.

Some things we find about Naaman.

- He was a “*captain*”. He had a high position with importance.
- He was a “*great man*”. Evidently, he had accomplished much in his service in the army.
- He was “*honourable*”. He was respected by those about him.
- “*But he was a leper.*” A great man, yet not too great to have this loathsome disease.

Some things about leprosy.

A loathsome disease — something disgusting and hated.

It was such an unclean and loathsome malady that its removal was referred to as “*a cleansing*”. The removal of other maladies is spoken in the Bible as healings.

The disease began with a rising (like a boil), a scab or a bright spot on the skin. Lev. 13:2-8, “*When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests: And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh: and when the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in sight be deeper than the skin of his flesh, it is a plague of leprosy: and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean. If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall shut up him that hath the plague seven days: And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin; then the priest shall shut him up seven days more: And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague be somewhat dark, and the plague spread not in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean: it is but a scab: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin, after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen of the priest*

again. And if the priest see that, behold, the scab spreadeth in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it is a leprosy.”

This disease would sometimes so spread over the body so as to cause portions of the skin and even an arm or a leg to slough off.

It was also loathsome in that the stench was almost unbearable.

It was a contagious disease.

- Lev. 13:45-46, *“And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.”*
- Luke 17:12, *“And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:”*

It was contagious, although not very readily communicated by casual contact. It can be contacted by embracing someone who has it.

This was the main reason for lepers to be exiled. You don't embrace someone who has leprosy.

It was a deceptive disease.

It took several days to determine whether or not one had it. The sore might turn out to be a boil.

This disease is not inherited, but acquired.

This disease had a tendency to increase. Its increase was a slow process which continued to harass its victim until he welcomed death.

This disease was incurable except by the power of God. Such is implied in Luke 4:27 and 2 Kings 5:7:

- Luke 4:27, *“And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.”*
- 2 Kings 5:7, *“And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.”*

The medicines of man's device were of no avail, but with God none were needed.

An analogy between leprosy and sin.

Sin is loathsome.

Leprosy is loathsome, yet there is something worse than leprosy, and that is sin. Leprosy destroys the body, sin destroys the soul.

Leprosy is a physical disease, while sin is a spiritual disease. Ezek. 18:20, *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”*

Sin is loathsome — it is something disgusting to be hated.

We look too lightly upon sin. We lose our standard of morality because we lose our sense of sin. Heb. 5:14, *“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”*

We cannot afford to be nice to sin; that is like trying to be nice to a poisonous and deadly snake.

- Rom. 12:9, *“... Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.”*
- Heb. 1:9, *“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”*

Sin is contagious.

- 1 Cor. 5:6, *“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?”*
- 1 Cor. 15:33, *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”*

It can be contacted by embracing others with it.

Sin is deceptive (leprosy looks like a boil). Heb. 3:12-13, *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*

Sin is not inherited, but acquired.

- Ezek. 18:20, *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”*
- Ezek. 28:15, *“Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”*
- 1 John 3:4, *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”*

Sin has a tendency to increase.

James 1:15, *“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”*

Sin is incurable except by the power of God. Man cannot reform himself out of sin. Morality alone will not save.

- Heb. 9:22, *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”*
- John 14:6, *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*
- Acts 4:12, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*
- 2 Tim. 2:10, *“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”*

Naaman was kept from being cleansed at first.

There are a few reasons for this.

He was not cleansed at first because he got mad.

2 Kings 5:11-12, *“But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.”*

Some people today fail to secure remission of sins because they get mad when they are told what they must do.

He was not cleansed at first because he was prideful.

2 Kings 5:13, *“And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?”*

He was like the proud Pharisee. Luke 18:11-12, *“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”*

He was at first unlike the publican. Luke 18:13, *“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”*

Humility says, “I’ll do the big things if I must, but I’ll gladly do the little things if I should.” 1 Pet. 5:5-6, *“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:”*

Some people have too much pride to obey the Lord. John 12:42-43, *“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”*

He was not cleansed at first because he was prejudiced.

“Prejudice” means “to prejudge; to entertain preconceived ideas; to judge without knowing the facts.”

2 Kings 5:11, *“But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.”*

Many today are like Naaman in that way, *“Behold, I thought...”*

He was not cleansed at first because he wanted something sensational to happen.

2 Kings 5:11-13, *“But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover*

the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"

There are many today that are looking for something sensational and phenomenal to happen before a conversion can occur.

He was not cleansed at first because of the Jordan River.

2 Kings 5:12, *“Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.”*

Likewise, there are many today who say, “Are not sprinkling and pouring water better, or at least just as good?”

Let us turn to God’s book and see whether something else is just as good as what God commanded.

- Acts 8:36-39, *“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”*
- Rom. 6:3-4, *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*
- Col. 2:12, *“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”*
- Eph. 4:5, *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism,”*

There was no power in the water of their other rivers. 1 Pet. 3:20-21, *“Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even*

baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"

Naaman looked beyond the water to the Lord who commanded him to dip in the River Jordan.

He also had to dip seven times. Naaman became humble and obeyed God. 2 Kings 5:12-15, *"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant."*

Conclusion.

What was the secret of Naaman's obedience?

- His anxiety to be healed.
- His willingness to take God at His word and do just what He commanded.

The same thing must be true of the alien sinner.

- He must have a consciousness of his sin and an eagerness to be saved from his sin.
- He must then be willing to take God at His word and do just what He commanded.

What did God command to be done in order to become a Christian? The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn't

sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”

- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, “*Then Peter said unto them, 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.*” Acts 11:18, “*... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*” If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, “*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life, or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, “*But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto*

him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said “it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.” We are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, 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.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “for the remission of sins”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*” (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not yet become a Christian, won't you consider it today?

