

THE MAN WHO GOT MAD AT THE PROPHET

TEXT:

2 Kings 5:1-19:

1 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.

2 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.

3 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.



4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

5 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.

6 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.

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.

8 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.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 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.

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.

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.

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?

14 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.

15 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.

16 But he said, As the LORD liveth, before Whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.



God gives us here a picture of any man's life as God does the recording of it. He gives us the inside and the outside picture. It is complete, and there is not a man in the universe who will not get the spotlight shone upon him — full blaze — at some time or the other.

Naaman was a genuine hero. An enemy never saw his back. But he was

tarnished with pride of the worst sort. He received many medals, shouts, and flags. But stop and look him over. This great, honorable, victorious, valiant man was a leper. The basest, meanest slave in Syria would not exchange places with him.

Like an artist painting a beautiful picture — and before we can drink in its beauty — there is a slip, and the brush strokes across the face of the canvas, spoiling the picture.

Many a person is honorable — a good citizen or church member — but if they are not saved or do not know the meaning of the new birth, they have leprosy of the heart. Sin, like leprosy, makes men unfit for the best

Sin, like leprosy, makes men unfit for the best companionships.

The disease of the soul is worse than that of the body.

companionships. The disease of the soul is worse than that of the body. It is a disease that only God can heal.

Naaman has a gnawing, foul disease poisoning his life's stream - preparing his body for the worms of death. Remember – there is no human means of deliverance. Naaman tries everything, but all fail.

A LITTLE WITNESS

2 Kings 5:2-3:

2 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.

3 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.

NAAMAN'S WIFE WAS FOUND WEEPING. Her heart was breaking over the condition of her husband. An Israelite maiden was her servant. Though she had been stolen from her parents and home, she did not murmur nor complain. The maiden let her light shine. Had she been like many professing Christians, she would have glorified in Naaman's leprosy, thinking it served him right. She did not take comfort in the thought that God might have cursed him for her sake. She was not bitter. Rather, she was anxious for her master to be healed.



She tells about the prophet of God in Israel. She knew the power of God, and the One who possessed the goods. Her early training and knowledge of the Word was

not stolen from her. Christian fathers and mothers, take heed. Not all children today prove themselves as this little girl did.

The way she lived away from home was the same kind of life as when she was being watched at home by her parents, and the way she would behave at church. What children see in you, they will use as a loophole. It is good to have precious memories of seeing the demonstration of the power of God. She remembered the miracles of the prophet Elisha.

She must have lived her religion, and must have had a reputation for telling the truth. If she hadn't, her testimony would not have been heeded. God used her to bring a message of hope and life to a high-ranking, heathen official. Naaman totally believed her, and therefore traveled a difficult 150 miles in a slow, hazardous journey. His king wrote a letter to another king, thinking the king — rather than the prophet — would have power over the disease. But how wrong he was. It's much better to know the man who knows God, for a man acquainted with God has more power than a king.

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with God has more
power than a king.**

People under conviction of sin often get sent to the wrong place — to a physician, a specialist, a psychologist — when the place they really need to go is to where God and His people are.

There is a trait in the human heart which causes man to do something toward helping God cleanse himself from sin. When God paints a picture of sin and salvation, we may be sure to find this trait. Note what Naaman did. He gathered 10 talents of silver, 6000 pieces of gold, and 10 changes of raiment to pay for the cleansing. Then he started toward the wrong man for help. This is a picture of human effort. Often an awakened sinner tries some wrong thing, or some easy way first. Man glories in what he can do to help himself out, but usually ends up exhausting himself in the end.

The king of Syria had gotten things mixed up. The maiden did not say the *king*, but that the *prophet* would heal him. Naaman was sent to one who had a status which was closer to his own position. However, God surely does not look at one's position materially or physically, but at the position of his heart. You will find God with the lowly and humble, and not with the big and proud. One's position in this life means nothing, for we have nothing to commend ourselves to God.

Likewise, many are going to the wrong place for deliverance — to some church, creed, doctrine of men, or traditions. It is found only in Christ through repentance and faith in Jesus' atoning Blood.

The king of Israel had to own up — under the test — that he was only a man, although he felt important in his position. Elisha's authority was as a believer. He was one of God's men of high integrity who would not be bribed to change the message God gives him for money from a mortal man. He has rewards waiting for him over in Yonder Glory.

Naaman was a sinner. So were you and I. By nature, we were children of wrath. Yes. He was a hell-doomed sinner, unclean.

Romans 3:9-23:

9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the Way [turned from God's way], they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

But there is a divine cure for sin — the Lamb of God, His Son - Jesus:

John 1:29: The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Jesus has paid the wages for our sins by His death on the Cross at Calvary.

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is

eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Naaman tried to pay for that which is a *gift* from God to all who believe in the Word of God. You can have salvation by faith in His Name and obedience to His Word. If you refuse to have your sins blotted out by the Blood of Jesus, there is no escape from the damnation of Hell which is the wages of sin. It does not take long to get cleansed and filled up with the joy of salvation if you will hear the Bible message about Calvary and Jesus.



Naaman heard the message from the maid. *“Faith cometh by hearing . . .”*

Romans 10:17: So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Hear, and your soul shall live.

Naaman was a great man, so his king sent him to a great man — the king of Israel. But great men cannot deliver. It is just like the devil to send you to a great doctor who will twist the Gospel story and snatch the good seed of the Word of God right out of your heart.

There was no relief from Naaman in his own country, from his own wealth, or from his own efforts — his own chosen preacher or prophet.

Titus 3:5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Isaiah 55:1: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy [heart purchase], and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

What was Naaman’s reaction to the simple command the prophet gave him through his servant?

2 Kings 5:11-12:

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.

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.

He was willing to take the advice of the maiden, but not willing to take the way proclaimed by the prophet. The remedy was a terrible blow to his pride. He expected a great reception. He was used to it, as a Major General. He was full of proud thoughts. Surely Elisha would be flattered that a great general had come to him.

But nobody came to meet him. Elisha sent a message to Naaman by his servant.

It isn't always a bad sign if a man gets mad when you tell him the truth. Christians are afraid of making someone mad — wives their husbands, mothers their sons and daughters, saints the lost. Don't be afraid of making them mad if it is the truth that makes them so. If it is our foolishness or nagging, then we undo the work of the Spirit. If it is the truth, then God sent it, and it's better for them to get mad than to sleep on satan's chloroform.

Naaman turned away in a rage. What burned him up was that the prophet didn't even come out to see him. Naaman expected Elisha to do some great magic over him. Elisha turned up his nose at medals, money, fine raiment, and those who were self-important.



“Tell him to dip seven times in the Jordan.”

It isn't what you think, it is what God says that will save you.

God's ways are often offensive to the sinner. They are humiliating. Man wants to be petted and humored. Notice Naaman's high thoughts: *“I thought surely he would come out . . .”* “I thought” — I thought has messed up many a lost soul. It isn't what you think, it is what God says that will save you.

Those feeling their uncleanness will come to God on His terms.

Naaman was used to a “giraffe style” — eating highbrow hay. Elisha knew he had been a commander, so he knew how he took orders.

God's way up is down. Human nature will die before admitting it can't save itself. What does God think of a leper — or a sinner — with his nose high in the air?

The terms of the Gospel are easy and inexpensive. Sinners forget who and what they are and try to talk back to Christ, the Spirit of God, and the servant of God.

Proud hearts stick up their nose at the merits and death of Jesus Christ and His shed Blood at Calvary. They want their own good works to save them. They want to work it for themselves.

Naaman began to puff and blow, expounding on the rivers of Damascus. He did not get very far, nor make a hit with God.

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, would'st thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?



God's way, in other words, was the easiest after all. So Naaman tuned and obeyed the Word of God.

Cleansed people are the ones who have gone this same way. They are the happiest people in all the world.



Naaman now had nothing to say against the River Jordan. It is the best place he had ever been. Fresh, new baby skin — a type of the new birth — came with his obedience to the terms of the prophet. The admonition given by the Apostle Peter years later to “repent and be baptized” is clearly seen here:

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.

Naaman first lost his temper, then his pride, then his leprosy. Then, faith in the Word of God given through the prophet caused him to turn again to the man of God to give his testimony:

2 Kings 5:15: 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.

Romans 10:10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

There was a sudden conversion — which is what the Bible teaches.

Lastly, Naaman made a strange request — two mule loads of dirt:

2 Kings 5:17-18:

17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon¹ to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

The following commentary by Keil and Delitzsch helps explain this:

“It is very evident from Naaman's explanation, "for thy servant," etc., that he wanted to take a load of earth with him out of the land of Israel, that he might be able to offer sacrifice upon it to the God of Israel, because he was still a slave to the polytheistic superstition, that no god could be worshipped in a proper and acceptable manner except in his own land, or upon an altar built of the earth of his own land. And because Naaman's knowledge of God was still adulterated with superstition, he was not yet prepared to make an unreserved confession before men of his faith in Jehovah as the only true God, but hoped that Jehovah would forgive him if he still continued to join outwardly in the worship of idols, so far as his official duty required.”²

Naaman knew he would have to continue to serve the king of Syria which would require going into a pagan temple where sacrifices would be made to a false god. Naaman asked pardon from God for what he must do in fulfilling his duties to the king. Elisha responded to the petition of his heart as follows:

2 Kings 5:19b: And he [Elisha] said unto him, Go in peace.

When we follow the ways of the Lord we, too, will go forth in peace.



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¹ The supreme the supreme deity of the Damascene Syrians. Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament - Commentary on the Old Testament – Volume 3: 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles.

²Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament - Commentary on the Old Testament – Volume 3: 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles.