

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1-19

Note: I am going to preach a number of my favorite and most requested sermons from the first 20 years of ministry. This is the text of the very first sermon I ever preached about 25 years ago. There are a lot of biblical principles we can learn as we study the text.

I. God has a plan for our lives. (1-3) 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. And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. Three great truths are in these verses.

a) God had taken care of Nathan through His providential care. *the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour,* Gods providential care is when he blesses us while we are living outside His will. The rain falls on the land of the lost as well as on the land of the saved. This explains how God can bless us even before we are saved. God has a plan for this man's life. This gives us further encouragement for folks we pray for who are outside the Lord's will. It also provides hope for those who feel they are too far gone for God to help.

b) God provides a need for deliverance. *but he was a leper.* Leprosy in those days was a painful, incurable fatal disease. Naaman never would have sought the Lord if he didn't need help. The first time I preached this sermon I equated my drug addiction with leprosy. After all it is a painful Satanic stronghold. Apart from the power of God there is no hope for deliverance. Notice I said God provided the leprosy to meet a need. Everyone needs Christ and when we allow God to complete our deliverance it will grow our faith. I now believe the complications from my surgery was God providing a need for me become desperate enough to totally surrender my will to him and to cry out to him in faith. Today I can thank him for fresh faith. When you are going through trials don't waste them. God uses those trials to help us see he is real; to grow our faith.

c) God provided a messenger who helped Naaman find the way to his salvation. *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. And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. A captured maid pointed to Israel where he would eventually meet Elisha. Make no mistake about it that messenger plays a critical role in God's plan. It is that way in churches today. You may be like the maid, someone God uses to get a person in touch with the person God is going to us to reach a lost person.

II. There is nothing we can do to earn a miracle. (5-7) *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. Neither

king understood the way miracles happened. The pagan kings figured you could buy anything with money while the Israelite king figured God wasn't about to work a miracle for him. He considered a trap. He feared the King of Syria would use it as reason for Syria to attack him. This is a common response today; the world trust money or good works or self-help groups and the church has stopped believing in miracles. People still feel they don't need a relationship with Jesus to be saved. They believe all they need is to be more disciplined, try harder or do the next right thing. The Bible says **Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.* We are saved by grace and faith activates grace in our lives. Salvation by grace is a miracle.

III. The man of God directs Naaman to the cure of his leprosy. (8-10) *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* That's it. Dip in the Jordan River seven times. Did you ever consider how simple it is to be cured of sin? I'm not talking about being sinless. I'm talking about being saved from sins penalty. **Romans 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. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* It's simple but it is not easy because of that word believe. That's faith. We must believe Jesus is real even though we can't see him.

IV. Naaman learns that it was faith not the water that cleansed him. *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.* Naaman is angry. Doesn't this prophet realize that I have already washed in greater rivers than the Jordan? Finally in desperation he gives God a chance. That is the way it is even in the churches. You mean what I need to do is get saved and my problem will be over. No! That is just the beginning. Naaman's cleansing of leprosy is a picture of salvation but there is more to this story.

V. Gods purpose for his cleansing was to reveal His power to Nathaan. (15b) *Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: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.* Now he knows there is only one true God which was God's plan all along. I'm sure Nathan became a powerful witness for God.

VI. Practical application. When anyone saw Naaman after he had been cured it was impossible to deny the power of God. A miraculous deliverance is a powerful witness. When we get saved we are delivered from sin unto Christ. We experience not just deliverance but a transformation. Jesus says in **Matthew 11:28-30** *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* After the surrender

He becomes part of us. He sends the Holy Spirit to indwell. This Spirit empowers us to stay close to Jesus, teaches us about Him and reminds us when we go astray. My rest depends on if allowing Him to help me through this life or if I am trying pull out ahead and rely more on my strength than His. **Romans 12:1-2** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* It was the power of God that broke the Satanic stronghold of drug addiction in my life. But it was the process of His power as he was delivering me that grew my faith to the point that I consider it a privilege and not a sacrifice to present my body to Him for service. I realize that just as Namaan was bound for death until he met God through Elisha, I was bound for death without becoming reacquainted with my Lord Jesus who not only forgave me but taught me to stay yoked to Him. There have been some tough times on the journey but with Him to pick me up mostly I've found rest for my soul. I preached on this text on May 17, 2015 which was the 30 year anniversary of being delivered from drugs. Since that time I had my surgery at Penn medicine where once again God blessed me with adversity. He allowed me to become desperate enough to totally surrender where He was able to teach me once again that He is sufficient to meet my every need. Do not ever suggest to me that God doesn't still work miracles I know that He does.