

Four Of The Hardest Words

2 Kings 5:1-5:14

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... (2 Kings 5:1a KJV)

Intro: In the northwestern Mediterranean region..., between Palestine and Mesopotamia... is the land of Syria. On the edge of the Arabian desert..., is an oasis city..., literally a fertile land of plants..., and water..., and life..., known as Damascus..., which in the Old Testament early history was the largest and capital city of Syria.

Damascus has traces of evidence of settlements going back to 9000 years Before Christ..., making it the oldest continually inhabited city in the world..., at least 11,000 years old.

The country of Syria had become the most influential nation on the earth for the time.

A man by the name of Naaman was captain of the host of Syria. That meant that Naaman was second only to the king.

Naaman was a great leader He was honorable among his men. In Naaman's time the country was growing in power and might.

And the Lord had given Syria many victories in battle because of Naaman.

Victories even against the people of Israel..., at this time..., Israel's own king..., who was the son of Ahab and Jezebel..., did not seek after the Lord God.

So Naaman and his army would frequently conduct raids into Israel and they would take captive slaves of the Israelites

After one raid Naaman brought back to his wife a young girl to be her servant.

The Bible does not tell us the name of this little girl but the brief description about her...tells us that she knew about faith and the healing power of God.

Learn this lesson: **A little faith will go a long way.**

The bible teaches us that small beginning can grow to produce great results...

When you are facing a problem that is too big for you to handle Turn your eyes away from the problem and look unto Christ the Lord!

Only then will you be able to overcome the struggle, that is happening in your life...

As good and great a person as Naaman, he had a serious problem, A trouble so big that it was undoubtedly difficult for him to say...

Beneath his strong exterior underneath his jeweled armor...

- Was something so dreaded and hideous that it would have been hard for him to speak of it aloud.
- The Bible says, he was a leper....
- Leprosy in the Bible days was the most dreaded disease...

It produces large disfiguring lumps on the face and body, with sores on the skin and damage to the nerves in the arms and legs so severe that it would eventually cause numbness and total loss of the use their hands and feet.

It was progressively worse, until it becomes total debilitating.

After a mighty victory in battle the King would have a banquet and Naaman would be introduced as the winner of the battle

And as governors and other royalty would come to greet and shake hands with the Captain of the host of the Syria.

He was not able to make excuse, He could not say he had a simple headache

He did not say his diet did not agree with him He could not say he had a bug or a cold...

He would have to admit his affliction He would have to openly confess his secret

He would have to utter four of the hardest words to say

“I am a leper.”

Naaman admitted that he had the leprosy — the disease that ruins and rots the flesh and the body, Naaman's children knew he was a leper.

So did his neighbors, his soldiers, his friends, his King— everybody.

Oh, the anguish beneath his decorated uniform and armor, The bitterness in his otherwise life of luxury

- The tears he must have shed in isolation and silence.
- The mental despair as he utter those four words. "I am a leper!"

Story: One day a pastor dropped by to make a home visit to a lady who had not been at church in almost three years.

The pastor was sensitive to her plight, As she made excuse after excuse and justified her reasons for not going to church.

When pressed about the state of her faith and spiritual life she finally agreed that she was not living as she should be and that she was not a Christian.

But she was taken aback and alarmed..., somewhat insulted..., when the pastor made a comment along the lines of how did she feel about being a sinner.

It took quite a while and a lot of discussion about faith and relationship with Christ before she would ever come close to owning that she was a sinner.

In fact she held on to her reservations..., Until finally the pastor and her agreed that while she was a sinner, at least she was a "good sinner."

The un-churched, non-churched, not members, not connected to church..., Often do not want to say those four word, "I am a sinner."

Those are the most difficult, hardest, four words to utter.

You must admit that you are a sinner. What does that mean?

It means that you are lost and doomed and damned, without Christ as your personal Savior by faith.

They are four of the hardest words to say, "I am a sinner."

But weather we admit it or not underneath that outer layer that says, I have it all together...I have my life under control.

I am large and in charge...The truth is on our very best days When God helps us to do something good

When God has helped us do something very special on our very best day, We are still a sinner.

If I could go back with you and see what you once were, If you could go back to the place where you started from Would you show me a miracle of Love?

Would we see that God put his sweet arms around you...and made you into what you are today? Just an old sinner Saved by grace.

Remember that little girl that Naaman had captured and brought back to serve his wife...

When this little girl heard Naaman say those four words..., "I am a leper."

She thought about a prophet of the Lord named Elisha...And she told her mistress that this prophet could heal Naaman of his disease...

So Naaman's wife tells Naaman...And Naaman tells the king

And the king gives Naaman a letter of introduction for him to carry to the king of Israel.

Naaman tells the king of Israel And Elisha, the man of God finds out that Naaman is searching for a cure...And Elisha sends his messenger Gehazi.

Who tells Naaman "wash seven times in the Jordan River."

It must have sounded as silly as some childhood nursery rhyme to Naaman From a little slave girl..., to the king of Israel who does not even believe in God.

To the Jordan river---Because there were many other rivers of far better water than the dirty, muddy, mosquito infested waters of the Jordan.

And Naaman became angry and walked away. He started naming all the other rivers that were better and cleaner and more desirable to bath in...

The Abana River and Pharpar River of Damascus they are better than all the rivers of Israel put together?

Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.

But one of Naaman's officers and friend began to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it?"

But if there was some great thing that could be done to earn a way...People would try to do it...

God doesn't ask us to do some great thing...He only asked that we say four words...,

Four words that many people find to be the hardest words there are to say..., "I am a sinner."

So Naaman gets on off his high horse...And he humbles himself...And he goes down to the Jordan river and he dipped himself seven times...

As the prophet of God had instructed him to do...It is important to note that the Hebrew word used for dipped...Is the word which means to be baptized.

And so Naaman was baptized in this one act in the Jordan river and when he came up out of the water. Jesus Christ died for us on the cross.

We have a huge debt because of sin a debt that we are unable to pay. But Christ took it upon Himself to pay that debt for us. He blotted it out. He nailed it to the cross.

And so when we admit that we have a debt that we cannot pay.

- That we cannot work hard enough to earn
- That we cannot be a good sinner
- But will humble ourselves and confess our need
- When we utter those four words, "I am a sinner."

Then we come up out of the waters of baptism and we are not simply washed

We are cured! We are healed! Our sin sickness is gone...The disease that rots the flesh and soul is gone!

Healing is not magic, but underlying it is the mystery of God.

If Elisha had told Naaman to go to one of those famous rivers

Many of those present would have assumed that the healing had something to do with the water of the river but when Elisha said go to the Jordan, No body connected the water of that muddy river to the healing, they would only connect it to faith in God.

The link between the river and the healing...Started out with a little girl who had faith enough to tell somebody about the word of God

Our link is the cross and the one who died on the cross in our place...All that we have now melts into nothingness.

The fact that he was a great general, the fact that he was courageous, the fact that he was honorable, the fact that he was highly esteemed by his own king and even the fact that God had lead him to accomplish great victories is completely meaningless, because he is soon doomed to die. He is a leper.

But he sought a cure...For you, a sinner, it means you must admit that you cannot save yourself. Can you say those four words?

"I am a sinner." The Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:15 **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."**

If anyone had a reason to feel guilt-ridden by their past and to think that God could not forgive and accept them.

It would have been the Apostle Paul for his hunting down Christians of God before he was converted..., But God forgave Paul and used him in a mighty way in the Kingdom.

1. Will you let down your hardened heart
2. Let down your exterior walls and allow a tiny tear to flow down your cheek?

Will you admit that you are powerless to save yourself...,That salvation is not in the things the world holds in such value as silver and gold.

But your salvation is in a wooden cross...Naaman took a long trip to go from I am a leper

Doomed to die a miserable death But think about when he came home and said I have been rescued from perishingI have been saved...

Think about the joy of those who could finally put their arms around Naaman and hug him; the people who could finally shake his hand.

- Think about what joy salvation holds for your life. Think about those who would put their arms around you...
- To be able to say go home today and say. I am a believer
- I am a Christian I am a sinner..., saved by grace.