



Ruined By Reality

2 Kings 5:1 *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.*

NAAMAN was a common name in Ancient Syria, meaning “gracious, fair or pleasant” This particular man, however, had distinguished himself above his countrymen in four ways:

- He was the supreme commander of the army of Syria, the army’s highest ranking officer.
- He was a great man, a man of high social standing and prominence
- He was an honourable man, highly regarded because of the military victories he had won. Jewish tradition says that Naaman was the anonymous soldier who inflicted wicked King Ahab of Israel with a mortal wound. (**1 Kings 22:34** *And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.*)
- He was a mighty man of valour, meaning a man of great wealth and a courageous warrior.

BUT HE WAS A LEPER!

Leprosy was a fatal disease that literally terrified the people of ancient times. It appeared in various forms and stages of infection, but once it became malignant it was a terminal and debilitating condition. At this stage, the skin turned white and became numb, then began to erupt in nodules and ulcers. The limbs would swell and the hands and feet became distorted. The bones and internal organs would be affected as the disease spread, and gangrene usually resulted.

Leprosy was called **SARA’AT** by the Jews, meaning “a smiting or a scourge.” There was no way to deal with infectious leprosy in ancient times other than to separate the sufferers from the general population (“outside the camp”). Clinical leprosy today is called Hansen’s disease.

Leprosy’s symptoms showed on the outside, but it was primarily an internal disease of the nerve endings. As the disease progressed, more and more damage was done to the body by the sufferer themselves, as their sense of pain became deadened.

LEPROSY IN THE BIBLE IS ALWAYS REGARDED AS A TYPE OF SIN!

Naaman’s wonderful life was ruined by the reality that he was a leper. Everything else he had achieved would eventually come to nothing because he was afflicted with this incurable disease.

YOU ARE NAAMAN!

You may be at the top of your profession, have great wealth or social standing, be the hero of your friends and be admired by your associates. You may even be a noble person, but you are a leper!

Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*

Sin is indeed a fatal illness of humanity. Like leprosy, it may start small or even hidden, but it will eventually rise to the surface of your life, deforming the person God intended for you to be.

2 Timothy 5:24 *Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.*

The longer sin is allowed to continue unchecked, the more damage is done and the more scars are left. Sometimes,

spiritual gangrene sets in and parts of our life die and drop off – irretrievably! **“WHAT A TRAGEDY TO LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF FORGIVEN SIN!”**

Sin separates us from God’s people, many times openly, but always secretly. You can usually deceive others, but you can seldom deceive yourself – and you can never deceive God!

But the most tragic consequence of unchecked sin is a loss of sensitivity to God’s Spirit!

Ephesians 4:17-20 *17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But ye have not so learned Christ. (“YOU KNOW BETTER!”)*

Naaman’s carefree life was RUINED by the REALITY that he was a LEPER. Once you realize that you are a sinner, you are “ruined” for “business as usual” in your life. You are forever marked by the message of God’s Word; you will never again be completely carefree in sin.

God operates on the basis of progressive knowledge. The more you know, the more responsible you are! (**Luke 12:48** *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.*)

THERE WAS ONLY ONE CURE FOR LEPROSY – A MIRACLE!

Naaman had to go outside his own country for a cure; he brought with him a letter from his king, a large monetary gift, and a contingent of chariots and servants to impress the king of Israel.

But the king of Israel couldn’t help him. He was a RELIGIOUS Israelite, not a TRUE Israelite!

When Naaman finally got to Elisha’s house, it was a mere SERVANT of the prophet who came to meet him. His MESSAGE was both SIMPLE and HUMBLING. Naaman got angry!

He wanted the cure to be accomplished by similar methods to those used in Syria.

Finally, he was convinced to obey God’s Word by these immortal words from one of his servants:

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?*

MANY PEOPLE ARE LIKE NAAMAN

- First, we have to realize that the world has no cure for sin. They aren’t even doing a good job treating the symptoms! The disease just gets worse and worse!
- Some people try to impress God – or the church – with the fact that they are indeed a good person. But all of their personality, achievements and possessions don’t impress God in the least.
- Many go first to RELIGION to seek a cure for sin. But it is powerless to deal with the root cause!
- Later, as they seek God, many people feel that He should accommodate them because of their position or religious pedigree. They are angered that God would send one of His servants to tell them what to do! They are even more insulted by the ABSOLUTE MESSAGE they receive!
- IT IS NOT HARD TO OBEY GOD, BUT IT IS HUMBLING.

ONCE NAAMAN HEARD THE MESSAGE, HE HAD TWO CHOICES: HE COULD IGNORE IT, LIVE WITH HIS LEPROSY, AND DIE – OR – HE COULD OBEY THE WORD OF GOD AND BE CURED!

The ABSOLUTE MESSAGE of salvation is summarized in Acts 2

Acts 2:37-42 *37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 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. 39 For the promise*

is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

What were the “MANY OTHER WORDS” Peter preached (verse 40)? They were obviously exhortations similar to those found in the epistles, since the result among the people was that they continued stedfastly “IN THE APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE” (verse 42). Peter preached more on the Day of Pentecost than Acts 2:38! God intends for you to continue walking in truth to be saved!

If you follow these words back to their root form, Peter is saying: “RESCUE YOURSELF (SAVE YOURSELF FROM THE DISEASE OF SIN) BY SEPARATING FROM (PUTTING DISTANCE BETWEEN YOURSELF AND) THIS CROOKED (CRIPPLED) GENERATION.”

Our Christian lifestyle is designed to put distance between us and sin so we don’t have a “relapse”!

Like Naaman, you may be insulted that God does not acknowledge your personal goodness.

You may be offended that He sends a mere messenger to tell you how to receive a cure for sin.

You may be angered that the message is so absolute, for other options may be less humbling.

BUT ONCE YOU KNOW THE REALITY, YOU ARE RUINED FOR ANYTHING ELSE!

- You may try to drown conviction in even more sin, but you will never again enjoy sin like other sinners do. There will always be a tiny voice that haunts you, for you know the message!
- You may defensively refuse to ever darken the door of a Jesus Name Church ever again, but while you retreat into your religion truth will keep calling to your heart. You know what the Bible says!
- You may successfully ignore the messenger, but you can’t ignore God’s voice in your inner man!

WHY WOULD GOD DO THIS TO ME?

Because you are a leper! You will die unless you obey! He loves you too much to let you go!