



## **The Rewards Of Obedience**

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the King of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him, the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria; he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper. ( II Kings 5:1 ).

I want to bring you the story of a leper named, Naaman. He was a great man and had many positive things in his favor.

The Jewish Talmud says, it was his arrow that smote Ahab, in I Kings. Israel was at war with Syria. Ahab had disguised himself and entered the battle.

Naaman perhaps tried all day long to hit something, but missed his target. He just drew his bow at a venture, and let the arrow fly, killing Ahab, King of Israel.

I believe that when Naaman drew back that bow, it was the hand of the Lord, that guided the arrow to kill the wicked King of Israel. Sin always finds its mark.

So it was by Naaman, that God delivered Syria. The only thing that marred the life of Naaman, was his leprosy.

Leprosy is a type of sin. There are many people today who have great talents, but sin mars their life. You can be absolutely esteemed in the achievements of this world, yet if you are in sin, you are marred as a loser.

There was a little maid who was taken captive from Israel, who waited on Naaman's wife. She told Naaman's wife that if Naaman was in Samaria with the prophet, he would be healed.

Friend, let me tell you today, if you come to Jesus Christ at an altar of repentance, you can be healed and delivered of your sin.

An individual told the King of Syria about the little maid's comments to Naaman's wife.

The King of Syria wrote a letter to the King of Israel, that he was sending Naaman to his land to be healed of his leprosy. When Naaman brought the letter to the King of

Israel, the king was afraid. The king said, "Am I a God, to kill and to make alive?"

The town Mayor cannot heal you and make you whole.

The Governor of your state cannot cleanse you of your sin.

The President of the United States cannot pardon your sin.

The King of Israel could not cure Naaman of his leprosy no more than man could cure your sins today.

The prophet, Elisha, heard that the King of Israel was afraid, and ask that Naaman come to him, so that he would know there was a prophet in Israel.

Friend, I want you to know today, there is a prophet in Israel. His Name is Jesus. I want you to know, there is a redeemer in Zion, His Name is Jesus. I want you to know, there is a God in Heaven, His Name is Jesus.

Here comes Naaman, with all his horses and chariot, and stands at the door of Elisha. Naaman had brought with him ten talents of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold, and ten changes of clothes.

This was enough to make any preacher blink. One bearing gifts like that today would be accepted into churches with no questions asked, leprosy and all.

God will not allow sin in the church. God will not tolerate leprosy. Some people can shake a few hundred dollars in front of a preacher, and buy him, lot, stock, and barrel.

Elisha could not be bought with gifts of gold, talents of silver, and suits. Most true preachers today cannot be bought with a price.

We have preachers today who will pray for your healing if you have the money. Slip one a hundred dollar bill and you will receive prayer immediately.

Some preachers are traveling around today making a name for themselves. They take your money and say a simple prayer. They are rightly called, "Religious racketeers."

A true man of God could care less about your money, he wants you to obey God and be healed of your sin.

Elisha didn't even come to the door to greet Naaman. He did not greet him and say, "God bless you, brother."

What a jolt this was to Naaman. He had traveled so far just to see the man of God and now he didn't even come to the door to greet him.

What was more disgusting to Naaman, was that Elisha sent a messenger who told him to go and wash in Jordan seven times and he would be healed.

This really made Naaman mad, "The very nerve of this prophet, thinking I would lower myself to dip seven times in a muddy river; who does he think he is?"

Jesus told Nicodemus, that unless he was born again of water and Spirit, he could not enter the Kingdom of God. Peter at Pentecost said, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you."

According to Jesus and Peter, you must be baptized in water. "Oh no, not me!" Some people get mad at this. Some people go away and never get baptized, yet they still carry their leprosy.

Naaman's anger hit the boiling point. In his rage he said, "Are not the rivers of Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?"

Why should he dip seven times in a muddy river, when the rivers of Damascus were pure and clean? Surely, the prophet is beyond reason.

If you want to be healed today, you must do it God's way. Naaman tried to do it his way. Obedience is the key element in being cleansed of sin. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

Naaman sought the royal road to healing. The prophet did not tell Naaman to do some great thing, he just simply told him to dip seven times in Jordan. What was so hard about this? What a simple solution.

God makes salvation so easy today, yet people refuse to be baptized. They stick to their watered down theology of tradition, instead of the Word of God.

Naaman's servants finally convinced him to dip seven times in Jordan and be healed. All Naaman had to do was to get rid of his stubborn pride and obey the man of God.

Naaman and his servants came to the banks of the Jordan River. Naaman left his chariot and started for the river, as his servants followed.

As Naaman walked into the river and began to dip himself, his anger cooled down. He went down the first time and came up; nothing changed, just as he expected.

Remembering the message of Elisha, he said dip seven times.

Naaman dipped the second time and nothing happened. He dipped the third time and came up spitting water, he was still the same. Looking around at his servants, he dipped the fourth and fifth time, still nothing happened; he was the same as before.

Naaman dipped the sixth time and came up the same. By now I suppose he scared all the catfish in the river. Naaman thought to himself, "Just one more time, if this doesn't work, there is no prophet in Israel, and God does not heal lepers."

Taking a breath and closing his eyes, Naaman dipped the seventh time and came up. Immediately his skin began to change. He rubbed his hands over his body, there was no leprosy, it was gone. He looked at his arms and legs, he was clean, just like the prophet said.

Naaman jumped out of the water, ran to his chariot, mud sloshing in his shoes, and returned to the house of Elisha.

Standing there, he confessed, that there was a prophet in Israel and there was a God in Israel.

He demonstrated the fruit of humbleness.

He demonstrated the fruit of confession.

He demonstrated the fruit of giving.

He demonstrated the fruit of worship.

He demonstrated the fruit of thankfulness.

He received the rewards of obedience. His leprosy was now gone, washed away in muddy Jordan. He could now return to his land a pure man. He could now face his wife and family with a clean body, clean heart, and clean soul.

I tell you lepers today, who are stained with sin, there is a cure for your imperfections if you would but come to the healing waters of baptism. God will cleanse your sin and make you whole.

You can go home a clean person.

You can go home a changed person.

You can go home a different person.

You can go home a happy person.

You can go home a new person.

Thank God today, I have already been to the river, and I have already been baptized. My sins have been remitted by the blood of Jesus Christ. I got rid of my leprosy. I stand pure and Holy today in the sight of God.

Had Naaman continued in his rage back to Syria, he would have still remained a leper. He stands today as a witness to the rewards of obedience.