

## **God Has a Way to Get Things Done!**

<sup>14</sup>So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. II Kings 5:14

*Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:1 – 15*

This miraculous healing of Naaman, the captain of the host of Syria, recorded in the text this morning, was a dramatic reminder to Israel that the concern of God is not restricted to one country or one race but is as wide as the world. And it is a reminder to us that no matter what our circumstance, no matter what your current situation, God has a way to get things done in your life as well! If Naaman could become a worshiper of the God of Israel, it would follow logically that other people of the world could come to know him. If God would use his power to heal Naaman from the then hated nation of Syria, it would follow that God was interested in other nations too. That God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. And how does God do it? God uses the testimony of a slave girl who was a prisoner of war to bring about a miracle of healing in the life of a foreigner in order to rebuke the attitude of narrow nationalism and religious exclusiveness that was causing the people of Israel to isolate themselves from other nations. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than

your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Who would have thought it? God uses the testimony of an Israelite slave girl. The testimony of an unknown servant, torn from her mother, father, and playmates at the age of seven or eight and hurried amid all the alarms of war to a foreign land, robbed at once of home, of freedom and of her childhood. But in a land of idols and idolaters she was not ashamed to own her God. She had full confidence that Israel's God could cure the captain of the host of Syria, Naaman. This little unnamed girl dramatically illustrates the redemptive purpose of God for Israel as a nation. This little maiden had been taken captive in one of the expeditions that the Syrian army had made into the land of Israel. She became a servant of the wife of Naaman, the commander-in-chief of the army of Syria. Her faith in God manifested itself in a concern for the physical well-being of Naaman, who was afflicted with leprosy. She expressed her concern and gave her testimony concerning her God and his prophet. By so doing, she was the means of bringing health, happiness, and faith to a man who most of her people considered to be completely outside of the concern of God. By her testimony, she became the instrument of making Israel's God known among the heathen. I'll tell you this morning that God has a way to things done! She had so much of the faith that it filled her whole nature and made her faithful under terrible trials. She was a lonely child in a heathen palace,

which often rang with laughter and taunting at her religious beliefs. Hers appeared to be a more noble courage than some heroes on the battlefield. Seeming to be the weakest in all of Syria hers proved to be one of the mightiest. What a treasure she was in the household of Naaman. She directed her master to the waters that healed his leprosy. Through her the true religion was known and respected in Syria, and Naaman became a worshipper of the true God. The humblest people who have faith and faithfulness may hope to be fruitful in good works. No matter what, God has a way to get His work done in us! Listen to how the text runs: "Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier..... but he had leprosy. Naaman was a man who stood tall in the highest virtues of the heathen world. He was lifted to the proudest eminence of worldly ambition. He had a generous heart, he enjoyed a well- earned reputation; he shared the smile and the favor of the great King Benhadad, this was the prosperity of Naaman. But no matter how great he had become; these were the words that followed him....." but he was a leper." And this can be our own situation..... great as a Mom, terrific as a Dad, fine corporate officer, outstanding student, excellent statesman, but... given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment us. "If only my master

would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.”<sup>5</sup> “Go and visit the prophet,” the king of Aram told him. “I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel.” So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold,<sup>[b]</sup> and ten sets of clothing. <sup>6</sup> The letter to the king of Israel said: “With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy.”

Jehoram, son of Jezebel and king of Israel, was helpless and distressed when Naaman appeared at his gate with a letter from the king of Syria requesting a cure for the captain of his army. Jehoram had no solution for this perplexing problem. When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, “Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? Why is this man asking me to heal someone with leprosy? I can see that he’s just trying to pick a fight with me.” But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: “Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel.” The prophet Elisha took the initiative and sent a message to the king, instructing him to send Naaman to the prophet’s house. Through Elisha God would graciously show his presence, power, and purpose to Israel and to Syria alike. The Syrian warlord was to discover the power of the God of Israel and to experience a miraculous healing that would

cause him to become a worshiper of the true God. Sisters and brothers, God is still the same and God has a way of getting things done for you. “Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, ‘Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored, and you will be cleansed’” (2 Kings 5:10 NIV). At first Naaman was insulted and angered by what he considered to be a degrading suggestion from the prophet. What kind of silliness is this? Go wash in the Jordan seven times? But believers, God’s work puts us all on the same level. Naaman wanted to be treated like a great man that happened to be a leper; Elisha treated him like a leper who happened to be a great man. Naaman correctly reasoned that the waters of Damascus where he had been, were better than those of Israel. It was only normal for him to think that his suggestion was designed to humiliate him. He turned away in anger. The plan suggested for a cure was entirely too simple. It did not agree with his preconceived ideas and expectations of what ought to be done for a person of his lofty position. We are like Naaman. Trying to prescribe how God should come, how God should remedy our dilemma, how God should fix our problem. But our God is a sovereign God. And what we need to do in our own lives is let God be God of our lives. Not just some of it but all of it. “I am yours Lord, everything I am everything I’m not, I’m yours Lord, try me now and see, see if I can be completely yours.”

God's way of healing Naaman of his leprosy was so simple that there was no legitimate excuse for its rejection. The means used for effecting the cure was intended to direct his attention to the true God rather than to a king, a prophet, or a magic ceremony. "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

Ensclosed in the text is our *way of faith*. The instructions of the prophet emphasized the necessity of faith and humility on the part of Naaman. The nearest route from the city of Samaria to the Jordan Valley would involve a journey of about twenty-five miles. By the journey and by the repeated dipping in the river, Naaman was required to exercise faith. However far we've come and however far we have to go we have done it by faith. In today's Gospel lesson of the ten lepers in the New Testament, only one returned to give thanks and praise for his healing and what does Jesus tell him? "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well." This journey of ours needs faith. And it also shows *the way of obedience*. Because of the command of the prophet, the encouragement of his servants, and his own personal need, Naaman dipped himself seven times in the Jordan. By a miracle that could be ascribed only to the power of Israel's God, the leper was made clean. In striking contrast to his former diseased and defiled condition, this mighty man of valor found himself healthy and clean. How

nonsensical this sounds! Dip in the water seven times, march around a city seven times until the wall's come tumbling down; water in a river turning to blood; a strong east wind blowing all night and making a highway, just like that; a man in the belly of a whale; lepers cleansed by the Word of Christ; but God has a way to get things done in our lives! And here God had used the testimony of an obscure slave girl in a foreign country as a means of communicating the truth concerning his power and willingness to exercise that power on behalf of all humanity. God had used one of his prophets as a means of communicating specific instructions to a great man concerning what he must do if he would be clean. The mighty military leader of Syria exercised faith in the instructions that were given him concerning the will of God. His faith and obedience made it possible for God to do something wonderful for him and for others also. God wants to continue his program through our testimony. He wants to use our lives and our witness. Great things can be accomplished through us if we will but trust him and obey him. The accomplishment of God's great redemptive purpose in the world waits on our faith and obedience. God can get things done! We should follow the example of the unnamed slave girl and let God do wonders through us. And one more unusual thing.... on a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame. And I love that old cross where the dearest and best. For a

world of lost sinners was slain. When it came to our redemption God had a way to get things done. He sent Christ to Calvary! Died on an old rugged cross, buried in a borrowed tomb, but on the third day, he rose with all power in His hands... God has a way to get things done! May it be so in your life as well! Amen.