

A Blessing or a Curse

2 Kings 5

¹Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper. ²And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. ³Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." ⁴And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel."

⁵Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. ⁶Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.

⁷And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me."

⁸So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

⁹Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house.

¹⁰And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and

your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean.”¹¹ But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, “Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.’¹² Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage.¹³ And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’”¹⁴ So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

¹⁵And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, “Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.”

¹⁶But he said, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused.

¹⁷So Naaman said, “Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD.¹⁸ Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing.”

¹⁹Then he said to him, “Go in peace.” So he departed from him a short distance.

²⁰But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, “Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but as the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him.”²¹ So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, “Is all well?”

²²And he said, "All is well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.'"

²³So Naaman said, "Please, take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed them to two of his servants; and they carried them on ahead of him. ²⁴When he came to the citadel, he took them from their hand, and stored them away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. ²⁵Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?"

And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

²⁶Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? ²⁷Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.

—2 Kings 5

Read 2 Kings 5

Why are we so often resistant to doing things God's way? Throughout Scripture we see that God's way is proven and best. Yet, we resist. This resistance is so natural to us, but can result in a loss of blessing or even dire consequences. However, when we are willing to humble ourselves and follow God's way, we experience God's power, strength, and direction in our lives! In Matthew 21, Jesus told a parable about two sons. The father asked both sons to work in his vineyard. The first son refused, but later regretted his refusal and went into the vineyard and worked. The second son agreed to go into the vineyard and work, but never showed up. Like the first son, although our first response to God might be negative, He is willing to wait until we relent and are willing to obey. However, what is much more grievous to God is the son who feigns willingness to obey but never follows through.

Our reading this week resembles this parable that Jesus shared. Like the first son, Naaman, a Syrian commander, refused at first to follow the instruction of Elisha. Later, he relented, and his obedience resulted in a huge blessing. However, Elisha's servant, Gehazi, feigned obedience to God's ways and lied to the prophet about his actions. The result of his disobedience was costly.

The more we cooperate and say *Yes* to Jesus, the more we will experience the faithfulness and goodness of His ways.

Ask the Lord to work in your heart to be willing to obey His ways above your own.

1. Use 2 Kings 5:1 to detail Naaman's:
 - a. Prestige
 - b. Condition
2. From 2 Kings 5:2–4, comment on the servant girl's:
 - a. Background
 - b. Faith
 - c. Credibility
3. Answer the following questions from 2 Kings 5:5–6:
 - a. What was the king of Syria's reaction to Naaman's report?

- b. What did Naaman take with him?
4. Note and contrast the response of:
- a. The king of Israel (2 Kings 5:7)
 - b. Elisha (2 Kings 5:8)
5. Use 2 Kings 5:9–13 to remark on:
- a. Naaman's arrival
 - b. Elisha's response
 - c. Naaman's reaction
 - d. Naaman's servants' reasoning
 - 1) Why do you think Naaman was resistant to Elisha's instruction?

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

The Abana and Pharpar rivers, flowing from the slopes of Mount Herman and coming to an end in the desert marshes east of Damascus, probably were more attractive and cleaner than the ever-muddy Jordan.¹³

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Elisha knew that Naaman had to be humbled before he could be healed. Accustomed to the protocol of the palace, this esteemed leader expected to be recognized publicly and his lavish gifts accepted with exaggerated appreciation because that's the way kings did things.¹⁴

—Warren Wiersbe

**FOOD
FOR THOUGHT**

Why did he ask to take soil with him? “In those days, people had the idea that the gods of a nation resided in the land, and if you left the land, you left the god behind. ... Taking the soil was a courageous act, because his master and his friends would surely ask Naaman what it meant, and he would have to tell them of his faith in the God of Israel.”¹⁵

—Warren Wiersbe

6. From 2 Kings 5:14, describe the outcome of Naaman’s reluctant obedience.

7. Write any insights you have concerning the conversation between Naaman and Elisha from the following:
 - a. Verse 15

 - b. Verse 16

 - c. Verse 17

 - d. Verse 18

 - e. Verse 19

8. According to 2 Kings 5:20–25, what did Gehazi:
 - a. Reason

 - b. Pursue

- c. Conceal
 - d. Lie about
9. From 2 Kings 5:26–27, note and comment on:
- a. Elisha's rebuke
 - b. The consequences of Gehazi's actions
10. Share an observation you have about:
- a. Naaman
 - b. The servant girl
 - c. The king of Israel
 - d. Gehazi
 - e. Elisha
11. What is your greatest takeaway from 2 Kings 5?