



SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday : 9:30 AM
10:30 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

ELDER

Todd Cox Jimmy Griffith
Travis Everett Paul White

DEACONS:

Derek Anderson Bret Cox
James Dow Patrick Gaughan
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin
Craig Hecht Danny Meek
Skyler Meek Phil Parker
Jay Silvers Jason Stannard
Travis Starling Bryan Tacker
Steve Turquette Eric Wise

EVANGELIST

Paul White

CEDAR PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST



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But, I Thought

In 2 Kings 5, we find the story of Naaman, a commander of the Syrian army, who had leprosy, an incurable disease. Through the word of a Jewish slave, Naaman heard about a prophet in Israel who could cure his leprosy. Naaman left Syria with an entourage, a letter from the Syrian king, and gifts to seek out his cure in Israel. After a detour to the court of the Israelite king, Naaman finally found his way to the house of Elisha, the prophet.

Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. And 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." 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.' 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. 2 Kings 5:9-12

Naaman reacted in rage. His reception at Elisha's home was not what he had expected. His anger nearly made him go home without the cure! Perhaps part of his anger was the fact that Elisha did not show a great deal of respect for his person or his position. Naaman was an important man, after all. He was the

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commander of a great army and an influential man in a powerful king's court. The prophet had not even bothered to come out to speak with him, but had sent word by a messenger. How dare a lowly prophet treat one of the king's high officials in this way!

Naaman was apparently expecting a show. He was expecting Elisha to come out of the house, call out to God, wave his hand over the leprous wound, and amazingly cure the leprosy while Naaman and his servants watched. Naaman believed. He was expecting to be healed, but he was frustrated that it did not work the way he had imagined it would. He did not even get to see the famous prophet.

To top it all off, the instructions the messenger gave Naaman did not make any sense. He was afflicted with a deadly, incurable disease and the prophet tells him he needs to wash? If washing in a river could cure him, surely he could have done that in the rivers of Damascus, which were far clearer and cleaner than the rivers of Israel! Naaman was on the verge of returning to Damascus, thinking he had wasted his time coming all this way. However, his servants were wise. After he had settled down, they talked some sense into him. If the prophet had asked you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more sense does it make to do what he says when all he asks you to do is 'wash and be clean'? What harm is there in doing what he tells you? Fortunately for Naaman, he took their advice, washed in the Jordan, and was healed.

Lessons from Naaman

Set aside your pride. Naaman may have been angered that he was not given the honor or prominence that he felt he deserved. He may have felt above washing in the rivers of Israel. His pride nearly made him leave without the cure. But if you are suffering from a fatal, incurable disease, there is no room for pride. You need the cure. You will suffer whatever perceived indignities necessary to get it.

Set aside your preconceptions. Naaman said, "Indeed, I said to myself," or as some translations have it, "Lo, I thought." Naaman already had opinions about how this meeting with the prophet would go. God's ways can be

surprising. He does not conform His plan to our expectations. God could have chosen a number of other ways to bring about Naaman's healing. He chose one that was unexpected (and infuriating) to Naaman, perhaps for the very reason that Naaman needed to be humbled. Naaman had to set aside his ideas of how things should be to accept the simple instructions of God and be healed.

Just obey the prophet. You do not have to understand everything to obey. Naaman did not understand how washing in the Jordan was going to heal his leprosy. If washing was going to do the job, he could think of better rivers to wash in. But, in the end, he did as he was told and he was healed.

Like Naaman, all mankind suffers from a fatal disease (Ephesians 2:1; Romans 6:23). "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Only the gospel of Jesus Christ provides the cure. Unfortunately, many have preconceived notions about the gospel. Some become angry when the gospel confronts them with their sins, turning away in pride and rage. Others, when they hear the simple message of the gospel say, "But, I thought." They allow their preconceptions of what the gospel should have said to get in the way of what it does say.

The gospel message is clear and the instructions are simple. We need to hear the word that we may come to have faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:17). That word will also convict us of sin (Acts 2:37; Hebrews 4:12-13). Those who respond in faith will repent of their sins and sinful ways (Acts 2:38), confess Jesus Christ as Lord (Romans 10:8-13), and be baptized, immersed in water, in order to receive the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:1-4). However, to many, the simple instructions of the gospel do not make any sense. "What does immersion in water have to do with sin?" Surely, that is not really necessary! Yet, that is what the gospel says. Do not walk away from the cure in a rage as Naaman nearly did. Do not let pride, preconceptions, or your own limited understanding prevent you from obtaining the cure. Just do what the prophet says: "Wash and be clean."

- Pat Gaughan