Study of Elisha - Part 6

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[0:00] Seeking the Lord's blessing, we can turn to the first portion of scripture we read, the second book of Kings, in chapter 5, reading again at verse 1.

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. Especially the words, but he was a leper.
And I want to consider with you the whole narrative concerning Naaman's disease and his healing.
And his encounter with Elisha, the prophet of God. Now as we followed the life of Elisha up till this point, we've noticed a remarkable prefiguring of the Lord Jesus Christ himself in the life of Elisha.
It seems as though his person and his work somehow foreshadows the work of Christ himself many hundreds of years later. We saw, for example, that their names are the same.
[1:38] Elisha and Jesus are both the same names. And they mean that God is a savior or God is salvation. And through the ministry of both, the Lord healed and saved many.

And then again you'll notice that they both followed ministries of repentance. The Lord Jesus Christ followed the ministry of John the Baptist. And Elisha followed the ministry of Elijah.
That is also instructive because it tells us that revival never comes without repentance before it.
And those of you who are just looking for revival without repentance need to think again.
We must turn to the Lord before he turns to us. And that is the biblical significance of these Elishas and Jesus and Joshua's being foreshadowed or forerun by preachers of the law.
Repentance comes before revival. And then again there is this. Elisha began his ministry with a great work of mercy followed by a great work of judgment.
[2:49] And so did the Lord Jesus Christ. He began in the same way. He turned water into wine as an act of mercy. And then he cleared the money changers out of the temple as an act of judgment.

To show that although they were both saviors, they were also judges. And that the sword of the gospel is a two-edged sword. The sword of the gospel is two-edged.
And then again you find them both multiplying bread. Elisha, the saviour, multiplies bread. He did that for the man at Balshalisha. And you find the Lord Jesus Christ doing the same.
Here now we find Elisha again active.
And we find him this time healing a leper. And that again speaks of the salvation which Christ is to bring into the world. Christ particularly healed.
[3:57] And he healed lepers. And that in itself was symbolic of healing us from sin. And from the spiritual disease that cleaves to our soul.

And that is the real significance of this cleansing that takes place in 2 Kings chapter 5. The cleansing of Naaman from leprosy is in a deeper sense the cleansing of Naaman from his sin.
And it is a picture of the salvation of a soul from the darkness and misery of sin into the light and into the blessedness and felicity of gospel liberty and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
And really this foreshadows the way in which Christ himself would go out among the Gentiles.
Notice that Elisha is dealing here with a man not from Israel but a man from Syria.
Somebody who was outside the covenant. Someone who was outside of the commonwealth of Israel. That prefigures the way in which the Lord of glory himself would go out.
[5:00] And his gospel would go out throughout the whole world. And interestingly in Luke chapter 4 and verse 27. You find the Lord himself referring to this.

He turned round to the people of Israel and he said to them. There were many lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha the prophet he says. But none were healed saved Naaman the Syrian.
Which was a warning to the Jews. Not to think that they were saved because they were Jews. And to open their eyes and to enlarge their hearts. And to bring the gospel not just to themselves but to

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bring it to others.
To bring it to the world around them. And that still has abiding relevance today. Now this particular history takes us to around about 840 years before Christ.
840 BC. And it brings us as I said not to Israel but to the border country of Israel. The country of Syria which is the north eastern border country.
[6:05] Now Syria was a powerful nation. And it was ruled at this time by a powerful king called Ben-Hadad II. And the history brings us to the home of a very powerful man in that country.

The home of a man called Naaman. Now Naaman was a man known everywhere in Syria. And a man probably feared in other nations round about.
Because he was the commander of the Syrian army. Now that meant that he was a man of distinction. And it meant that he was a man of ability. The Syrian army was a mighty army.
And to rise to the status of commander and chief of that army. Meant that he was a man of courage. He was a man of ability. Of strength. Ingenuity. He had all these qualities.
And all these virtues. As I said to rise to the head of that army. Demanded these things and necessitated them. And that in itself tells us that he was a great man.
[7:05] He was a naval man. And we're told that he was mighty in valor. He was at the end of verse 1. We're told that he was also a mighty man in valor.

Not only that. But we're told in verse 1 that he was honorable. He was honorable. Now that word means that he was highly regarded.
He was respected. Now I've no doubt that that was partly because of his ability. After all he had given deliverance to Syria. He was largely instrumental in turning the Syrian army from a rather weak one into a powerful one.
And when the Syrians thought of who had helped their country become as powerful as it was. They looked to their commander in chief more than even to their king. It was Naaman who had made their army powerful.
And we're told therefore that he was a great man with his master in verse 1. That meant that the king highly regarded him. He laid weight on him. He sought his counsel.
[8:10] And he put his hope in him. He was great with his master. And not only that. He was great with the whole nation. Because he had made the nation what it was. But I think this word honorable or highly regarded also carries another idea with it.

And that's this. That he was respected as a man. For being a man that you could see as being in some sense honest.
Or that you could deal with. A man that you could like. In spite perhaps of certain traits in his character. A man that you could basically like. Now again I'm not just shooting in the dark and saying that.
But you'll notice the particular reliance or affection that his servants placed in him. Or had for him. Now that's an important thing. If you find somebody's servant liking the master.
Then that is an indication that the master has some qualities or some attractiveness. For example this little girl. The little Israelite maid. She said to Naaman's wife.
[9:17] Would God. Now she means this earnestly. Would God that my Lord were with the prophet in Samaria. He would recover him of his leprosy. Now if he wasn't somehow attractive or respectable.

She would never have said that. She would have just as it were left him to his ways. But she had a liking for him. And she had a concern for him. You'll find his own servants also in verse 13.
They care for him as well. And they turned to him. And they say in verse 13. My father. If the prophet had asked you to do a great thing. Would you not have done it? How much rather than when he says to you.
Wash and be clean. So he appeared to command. The respect and the affection. Of his own servants. So he was honorable. And he was highly regarded.
And he was a great man. In Syria. Now then that meant. That this man really had everything. That worldly people want.
[10:22] In the world. He had power. Influence. He had popularity. He was well liked. He had riches. All these things were given to him.

He was great. He was a great man. But. And what a powerful but it is. He was a leper. There was a crook in the lot.

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There was a dark spot. There was a blemish in his life. Everything seemed all right. But then suddenly something broke into his life. Which shattered everything which he had.
He was a leper. Now you'll notice that these words. But he was. Are in italics. In your bible. That means that they're not actually there.
They're only. They're not there in the Hebrew. In other words. They're just filled in in the English. To help us understand. Really what you have is this. That he was a great man. He was honorable.
[11:23] The Lord had given deliverance. He was a mighty man. A leper. In other words. In the Hebrew. It just thunders in suddenly. It's as it were. A shattering anticlimax.

You'd expect the whole thing to build up to a crescendo. But no. It falls. Because he is. A leper. And you can imagine the suddenness. And the shock.
With which the whole thing came to Naaman himself. And we know many people like that. People who have everything in the world. And who don't look to God. But they have everything that the world can give.
Their houses are nice. They have many possessions. They've got a family. They've got everything. And they think it's just going to go on. And on like that forever. And then there's a sudden. Disastrous break. Into that whole situation. Whether it's a terminal illness. Or whether it's financial ruin. Or something of that kind. And the bottom falls out of the world.
[12:24] It's no wonder if you have no knowledge of God. If that's what your life consists of. What you eat. And what you wear. What you put on. Then it's small wonder. That when these things come.

Everything falls apart. And that's how it was for Naaman. The fact that he was a leper. Tarnished everything. It ruined everything. And it destroyed it.
Why? Well simply because there was no treatment. And no cure for this disease at all. There was nothing that could be done about it. It was fatal.
Once these dreaded white spots. Appeared on the skin. It was like. A death sentence.
Great. Powerful. A commander. And a leper. And when that happened. That was all. That Naaman.
[13:23] Could see. All he had to look forward to. Was shame. And ugliness. Corrosion. And death. And I'm sure he tried to hide it.

First of all. And he would use many ways. In trying to hide the whiteness in his skin. But sooner or later. It becomes a matter of public knowledge. And everyone knows. That Naaman.
The commander in chief. Is now. A leper. Now. My friends. Most of you will know. That leprosy. Has a particular significance.
In the Bible. In the Old Testament. Leprosy. Is one of the most important symbols. For sin. Leprosy. Represents. Sin. And it does so. For a particular reason. Well. For a couple of reasons. First of all. Because of its ugliness.
[14:19] As a disease. Leprosy. Was. Ugly. It was. Loathsome. And that is.

True. Of sin. Also. The sin. In your life. Is ugly. And it is loathsome. It is loathsome. In the sight of God. And that is what matters.
It may at the moment. Be attractive to yourself. Although. Sooner or later. It will become ugly. Even to yourself. Once it reaches. Its full bloom. And that may not be.
In a sense. Until hell itself. Is arrived at. Then it will bloom. Then it will enter. Into its full maturity. And then its ugliness. Will be seen. The ugliness.
Of pride. And vanity. And rebellion. Against God. Will be seen there. And it is ugly. In the sight of God. Do you wish to know. What sin is.
[15:16] In God's sight. It is more. Than what you see. Physically. In leprosy. The loathsomeness. Of the limbs. Rotting.

The ugliness. Of the wasted. And corroding. Face. And limbs. And body. That is what sin is. In the sight of God. In the sight of God. And then again.
And in connection with that. Sin is destructive. As well as being ugly. Leprosy. Is destructive. As well as being ugly. Sin.
Destroys you. My friend. It destroys you. You live for it. And it kills you. That is the reality about it. It kills you.
It wastes away your life. It diseases your soul. Maybe some of you are in the grip. Of particular sins. Maybe it's alcohol. Or drugs. Or something of that kind.

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[16:13] And already it's wasting your body. And it's wasting your life. Wasting your brain. And wasting your soul. And everybody else can see it. Except yourself. It's written all over your face.

It's all over your life. And everyone knows it. But you look in the mirror. And you don't see it. But sin destroys. And it corrodes. And there is nothing in hell.
But a soul that is corroded. And is destroyed. A soul that is wasted. With the ravages of sin. Ah my friend. If we could have. Just one glimpse.
Into our lost eternity. How it would change our lives. One glimpse. Into what a soul is like. When God removes.
All his influence from it. It is monstrous. Devilish. It is hellish. Because it is nothing. But the power of evil.
[17:13] Ripened. Until the soul becomes. Like its own father. The devil. Sin is ugly. And it is destructive. And loathsome.

Now. My friends. Before I pass from that. I want you to understand this. You may tonight. Have a situation. Which you think.
Is like Naaman. Before the leprosy. You may come to church. Week in. Week out. And you find it hard. To find yourself in it. Because everything is so good. In your life. Everything is so good.
There is no but. As it were. In your life. There is nothing I can point to. Perhaps. And say. But this is there. Or that is there. Everything is all right. But the fact is.
As far as sin is concerned. You are also a leper. Whether you know it or not. It is there. It is true. This is in your life.
[18:10] And in your soul. And unless you conquer it. It will conquer you. You may be beautiful. You may be rich. You may be many things.

But you are a leper. And may God. Jolt you. To see that. And to recognize it. May he move you. To see. That you are a sinner.
And if you do. You will never rest. Until you deal with it. Where the symptoms are described. You can't see your disease. Well read the word. And see the disease. Your carelessness.
Your rebellion. Your reluctance to listen to the gospel. The hardness of your heart. Your insistence on your own ways. These are symptoms. Of the leprosy in your soul.
Which will conquer you. And which will destroy you. Unless you come to Christ. Now what I want to look at with you tonight. Is the particular cure.
[19:05] That this man finds. And there are three things. That I want us to look at. First of all. How he hears of the cure. In the second place.

What the cure proposed is. And how he reacts to it. And in the third place. The cure. As it is actually. Effected. In his life.
These three things. How he hears about it. What the cure is. And how he responds to it. And thirdly. How it is effected. Or acted out.
In his life. And may God help us. To apply. These things. To our own souls. As we hear them. Now first. How does he hear of it? Well my friends.
It is quite remarkable. How God brings the gospel. To a soul. Whom he is saving. He has ways. And means. That are beyond. Our understanding.
[20:05] And we can only marvel. At his gracious. Providence. When he brings the word. To a soul. Or when he brings the soul. To his word. He moves.

In mysterious. Ways. Now. It happens for Naaman. Like this. The Syrians. Were progressively. Becoming angry.
With Israel. Because Syria. Had an ongoing. Conflict. With its own. Northeasterly. Neighbor. The Assyrians. And the Syrians. Were constantly. Looking for Israel's help.
Against the Assyrians. And the Israel. Was refusing. And because of that. The Syrians. Were frequently. Making raids. Into Israelite.
Territory. And that. Eventually. Developed. Into a full-blown war. But at this point. In time. It was just a series. Of border skirmishes. Or raids. On the part.
[20:59] Of Syria. Now. In one of these raids. A little girl. Was captured. From one of the small. Towns or villages. Near the border. This girl.

Was taken. In her early teens. And she was moved. Into Syria. She was in the slave market. And she was sold. And she was bought. In the providence of God.

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By the wife. Of this man. Naaman. The Syrian. And so. This little girl. Finds herself. In the home. Of this powerful man. And through time.
She develops. A kind of affection. For him. Or a concern. For his soul. We have every reason. To believe. That this girl. Is a Christian girl. And that will become important. In a moment. And she's concerned.
For this man. And one day. She turns to her mistress. And she says. Would God. Or may the Lord. So bring it about. Or if the Lord. Would will it. That my Lord.
[21:54] Or my master. In this house. Would go down. To Samaria. And meet. The prophet of God. There. For he. Would recover him. Of his leprosy.

He would recover him. Of his leprosy. Now. That in itself. Was a great thing.
She witnesses. And she witnesses. To God's power. And that. Has an effect. Upon the wife. Because the wife moves.
Or somebody moves. And passes that information. On to the king. So the fact is. That this man. Comes to hear the gospel. Because of the witness.
Of this girl. Now how. Instructive. That is. You know friends. For every dark.
[22:53] Providence. That comes. In the way. Of a Christian. God. Has something good. To do. In that providence. He has a reason.

For bringing it about. He is working. And he is doing something. And the Lord's people. Should always. Cleave. On to that. When their circumstance.
Becomes hard. And when it becomes trying. For example. You imagine. The thoughts. And the feelings. Of this girl. When she is removed. From her home. And from her town.
And she is taken. Hundreds of miles away. To a strange country. And the home. Of a strange man. She is in the midst. Of the heathen. And she is in the house. Of a heathen man.
Imagine the tears. And the heartbreak. In her home. We assume. She has one. In the heart. Of her father. Perhaps. Or in the heart. Of her mother. And the cry.
[23:48] That ascends. To the Lord. And which asks. Why? Why is our child taken? Why is our child. Taken captive? Why is she brought. To Syria?

We know not. What has become of her. Is she dead? Or is she alive? The providence. Is dark. For the girl. And if they live. The providence. Is dark.
For the family. What do we make of it? Well my friend. What we make of it. Is this. That God. Works. In that way.
And at those times. You are required. To trust. And to believe. Because the only reason. These dark providences. Come. Is because God.
Is saving his church. And saving your soul. It is only because. He is doing good. That he allows evil. To come to pass. And that is your resting place.
[24:42] And you can find. No resting place. But that. And your soul. May be tossed to and fro. But you will never rest anywhere. Unless you rest in that. That the Lord is good. And he doeth good.

And he doeth what is right. And he is bringing good. Out of the evil. That comes about. For example. If you had asked Joseph. During the 13 years.
Of his humiliation. What does this mean? What would Joseph say? What would he say? In prison. In no man's land.
For having done the will of God. What would he say? What would you say afterwards? When he was exalted. Or what would he say? Well he would say this.
That God sent me before you. To preserve life. He saw it. When the work was finished. And the trial was over. He said.
[25:37] To his brothers. God sent me here before you. To preserve life. That was hidden. In the prison. But it was revealed. When the trial was over.

Or if you had said to Daniel. A young man. Brought into captivity. In Babylon. Why have you been removed? From your home. And from your people. What would he have said?
Ah. But my friend. When the trial was over. What would he have said then? Well he would have said this. That he was prepared by God. To lead the church out of captivity.
But what about Esther? A young woman who loses her own mother and father. And who is raised up by her uncle Mordecai. Why does that young girl lose everything that she has?
Well she doesn't know. But if you came to her years later. She would have said. I came. And I was raised to the kingdom. For such a time as this.

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[26:37] God did it. And he had a purpose in doing it. And that is my confidence. And that is yours. And you know as well as I do. That there are times when this world is impossible.

When the trial that the Lord gives us is too hard. For flesh and blood to bear. And you may have such a thing tonight. Well my friend. Bear it. Accept the darkness.
And shine in that darkness. Because the only reason it's yours. Is because God is blessing you. And blessing the church through you. That is the only reason that that is given you.
Do you think he willingly afflicts the sons of men? No he does not. But he does it for good. And my friend. Don't be scared of the dark. Because you'll do your best work in the dark.
In the dark. In the dark you shine the brightest. And it's in the dark that this girl's light. Really came to the fore. So there's a purpose.
[27:35] In every single dark and mysterious providence. Accept them. And shine. Shine. And in that connection. You'll notice the power of this girl's witness.

No. No. She didn't say much. She just pointed Naaman. To Elisha. The savior. That's all she did. Would that he were.
In Samaria. For the prophet is there. And he would recover him. Of his leprosy. No. That's all she said. But in the Christian life.
And in the Christian witness. It's never what you say. So much as the power of one. Who can do great things with what you say.
That is where the encouragement of it lies. That is where the excitement of it lies. It is never in you. Or in your word. It is in the great power.
[28:36] That can at his will. Accompany that word. And make that word grow. And go far beyond. Its own native or natural power. That is the power.

Of witness. And that is what this girl does. She just speaks. And she speaks a little. And how effective. That word becomes.
Now sometimes you say a little. And you feel it's not much. But. Well a small cog isn't much. But a small cog in a great wheel is much. It then becomes a great cog.
It becomes powerful and important. And that is the way you should view. What you say and what you do. It may be little. Or a little seed scattered. But God can bless it.
And God can water it. And he can make it grow. Oh mightily. Now I'm sure she perhaps even thought. When she heard the way the Syrians were talking. That she said. Well. All I've said seems to have encouraged them.
[29:35] To look just to Elisha. And not to God. And sometimes you feel that what you said. Maybe. Just didn't do full justice to the gospel. It doesn't matter. Providing that your heart is right.

Providing that you are sincere. And that you have watered the word with prayer. It doesn't matter. If there's a blemish or a defect. Or if people even pick it up wrong. It doesn't matter. It's still a small cog.
The Lord can use it. And he can make it grow. You just never know what will work. You just never know what the Lord will take and bless. You all know about Spurgeon. Preaching in the Crystal Palace.
Before 20,000 people. And he prepared for preaching in the Crystal Palace. And he went there on the day before. And he went to test the acoustics. And he just shouted.
In the empty Crystal Palace. Or he thought it was empty. He just shouted. Behold the Lamb of God. Which taketh away the sin of the world. And unknown to him. There was a workman. Working on the Crystal Palace.
[30:34] Who heard these words. Ringing through the palace. And they rang in his heart. And stayed in his mind. And he was converted. By the power of God. Spurgeon prepared.

For the sermon the next day. When he preached to 20,000. Not knowing. That his test of acoustics. Had saved a soul the day before. That is God. And that is what I mean.
By the encouragement. And the excitement. Of scattering the seed. You just never know what will work. And you never know how it will work. The Lord does as he pleases. Don't withhold your hand. And don't withhold your seed. This little girl. Just plucked up the courage. And she spoke the words. And God blessed them. And I'm sure. She marveled herself.
Many a time. At what had happened. She never thought. It would get to the king. She never thought. It would go to Naaman. It would go to King Jehoram. And it would go to Elisha.

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[31:30] And Naaman would come back. A worshipper. Of the true God. She never thought that. But that's what happened. And may that fortify. Yourself and myself. In speaking.

About the things of God. Now as I said. God is working here. Somebody hears. What the girl said. And she takes it to Ben-Hadad.
The second. The king. And Ben-Hadad himself. Becomes excited. About the news. And he immediately. Prepares Naaman. To make a journey. To Israel.
And he sends a letter. With Naaman. And he says to Naaman. Give this letter. To King Jehoram. And the letter. Just goes like this. That.
It just asks. King Jehoram. Or it must have been coached. In such a way. That Jehoram thought. That he was responsible. To make sure. That Naaman. Was healed.
[32:25] Now. That has a terrible effect. On King Jehoram. In verse 7. It came to pass. When the king of Israel. Had read the letter. That he rent his clothes.

And he said. Am I a God. To kill. And to make alive. That this man sends. To me. To recover. A man of his leprosy. Wherefore. Consider. See how he seeks.
A quarrel. Against me. Now. That is the way. That this man takes it. King Jehoram says. Look. He says. It's just another plot. He expects me. To cure his commander.
In chief. And when I fail. To do it. He'll use it. As a pretext. For a full scale war. Which Israel wasn't ready for. And you'll notice. This despair.
He rents his clothes. Now. This is the man. My friends. We saw some weeks. Abak. Who was involved. In the war. Against Moab. And he saw the hand of God. Has he changed? Not one bit. He saw a miracle.
[33:20] Has he changed? No. He hasn't changed. Miracles will never change you. Unless it's the miracle. Of the heart. No objective power. Will change you. Unless it's a change in here.

He's still. Wringing his hands. With frustration. And he doesn't trust God. But the news comes to Elisha. And Elisha says. Send the man to me. Why?
So that he will know. That there is a prophet. Of God. In Israel. So Naaman brings his chariot. He brings his money. His gold. His precious clothing.
And he stands outside. Elisha's door. And Elisha sends a messenger. Out to him. And the messenger says this. Go and wash. In the Jordan. Seven times.
Now I want to look with you. At this cure. And how Naaman. Responds. To it. Now this is very important. Because it shows a lot.
[34:17] About the human. Heart. Now. There are two reasons. For saying wash in the Jordan. One. Perhaps we could call it practical. And the other is symbolic.

Now let's take the practical. Reason first. Elisha. Wishes to do. Something to Naaman. When he tells Naaman. To wash. In the Jordan.
What does he want him to do. Or what does he want to do. To him. Well. He can tell. That Naaman. Has. A problem. And he knows.
Exactly. What that problem is. And he prescribes. This cure. Because he knows. It's going to bring. Abraham. Bring Naaman's problem. To the surface.
He knows. That the minute. Naaman hears. These words. Washing the Jordan. That Naaman's going to react. And sure enough. He reacted. How? He became wroth. He was.
[35:13] We're told that. He was in. A rage. And why was he in a rage? Well. For two reasons. First. In verse 11. Now. Notice this.

Naaman was wroth. And went away. And said. Behold. I thought. He will come out to me. And stand. And call. On the name of the Lord. And strike his hand. Over the place.
And recover the leper. And that's the first reason. He was angry. Because he thought. That Elisha. Would just come out. And touch his hand. As it were. And that he would just. Instantly become whole.
That was his idea. Of the cure. And the second reason. He was angry. Was because of the river Jordan. He says in verse 12. Are not Abana. And the Farber.
The Damascus rivers. Better than all. The waters of Israel. Can I not wash in them. And be clean. So he turned. And he went away. In.
[36:06] A rage. Now friends. These reasons. Are very interesting. First. He says. I thought. He would come out.

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And touch me. Now what does that tell you. Well it tells you. That here's a man. Who's not really willing. To go to much trouble. Over this kind of thing.
At all. He doesn't want to come down. From his chariot. He doesn't want to go into. Elisha's house. He just wants to stand. Where he is.
As he is. And just get a touch. That's got no fuss. Attached to it. He doesn't want. Any visible. Kind of. Ritual to go through. He just wants a touch.
And he wants the whole thing done. Just like that. That's what he wants. And he prescribes that. You see. He comes to Elisha. With that in his own head. This is what I want. And this is the cure I want.
[37:02] And in the second place. With respect to the river. Rivers. You notice that he just does not like. The river Jordan. And why does he not like that? Because he doesn't like Israel.

And why doesn't he like Israel? Because they're the people of God. That is why. He has an aversion to Israel. He looks down on the church. He doesn't want his cure really.
To have anything to do. With the church of Christ. He doesn't want to be connected. In any way. With the despised covenant people of God. He wants a cure.
For his problem. But he doesn't really want it that way. Do you suppose. He says. That I'll go and wash myself. In the Jordan river. Of Israel.
No. He says. The Abana and the Farper. Are just as good as those. And I would rather wash in them. My own land. And my own people. Are far better. Now.
[37:56] I said that Elisha. Was bringing his problem to the surface. And that's what he's doing. What's his problem? Pride. This is the man's. Leprosy if you like.

This is his disease. He comes as a leper outwardly. But he's really a leper inwardly. And that's what Elisha will show him. And that's what Christ will show yourself. You may have.
A terrible disease. In your body tonight. And it might be occupying. All your attention. And Christ desires. To bring to your attention. The disease of your soul.
And that is what he does to Naaman. Pride. Pride. It comes. To the fore. And that's his real. Leprosy. And you forget.
And I don't mean that lightly. Or in any way. Disparagingly. But. You forget. Every other disease. Until you've dealt. With this one. Because this one.
[38:52] Will kill. Body. And soul. Body. And soul. And it will do so. Eternally. Pride. And that pride.

Must be shattered. Before Naaman. Can be a new man. Now it's strange. But once you see. This pride in the chapter. You see it coming through. Everywhere. You see it.
Written. All over. Naaman's life. And character. Look for example. At verse 9 here. So Naaman came. With his horses. And with his chariot.
And stood at the door. Of the house of Elisha. Now what's that? But pride. He doesn't come down. Really to Elisha. As a sick man. He comes down.
To Elisha. As the commander. In chief. Who happens to be. A sick man. It's not. His disease. In a sense. That is paramount. It is who he is. That is paramount.
[39:49] In fact. His disease. Is incidental to that. It's his dignity. As commander in chief. That worries him. That's what worries him. And he doesn't come down. As a poor man.

Saying I'm finished. Or I'm sick. But he stands. In a glorious chariot. And he stands. With his dignity. And he won't even come down. Off his chariot. But he stands there.
And expects to be cured. Just like that. He's come with all his pride. He comes as commander. And chief of the Syrian army. Now I'll tell you my friend. It's no use coming to Christ.
Like that. It's no use. Coming to Christ. Like that. Trying to preserve your dignity. Or making sure that people. Think well of you. Or making sure that you have.
Your social status. Or all these things. It's no use. That is baggage. That has got to go. And these things. Have to mean nothing. To you. If you are going to be cured.
[40:43] Or healed. By the Lord. Jesus Christ. In fact. In that connection. You'll notice that he's got loads of money. With him as well. In verse 5.

He departed. Halfway through verse 5. And took. Now listen to this. Ten talents of silver. Six thousand pieces of gold. And ten changes of raiment.
Now. Why do you think he brought all that with him? As a gift. As a gift. It is. Extremely extravagant. Well. I think it relates to his pride.

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Because he wants to leave Elisha. In such a way that Elisha thinks. That he has got the favor. And not Naaman. Naaman just wants to come down.
No first. Get a touch. And away he goes back. Glorious Naaman. Big Naaman. Back home in his chariot. The commander in chief. So that Elisha is left with all this gold and silver.
[41:41] Thinking that he's the one. Who has been done a favor to. It's all pride. And to confirm that. I want you to look at this.

Now pay careful attention to verse 9 here. We're told that Naaman came with his horses and his chariot. And stood at the door of the house of Elisha.
Now it doesn't tell us that he went in. In fact it's absolutely clear from the passage. That he definitely didn't go in. Because it says at the beginning of the next verse. Verse 10.
That Elisha sent a messenger unto him. That tells us that Naaman stopped outside. And sent somebody in.
And Elisha sent somebody out. Now that's not what Naaman wanted or expected. Naaman thought that Elisha would come out in person. But Elisha doesn't. Elisha sends a messenger back.
[42:40] Now again the Hebrew puts a little bit of light on this. Because what Naaman says in verse 11 is this. Naaman was wroth and went away and said.

Behold I thought he will surely come out to me. Now it doesn't come clear in the English. But in the Hebrew the emphasis in that sentence falls on the words to me.
To me. In other words if you were going to put it into English it would be like this. Behold I thought that to me he would come out. In other words the emphasis is all again upon himself.
The commander in chief. His social status. His dignity. And his pride. And that's why he won't go under the roof of this man.
He doesn't want to be in the same house as this man. He'll use this man. But he doesn't want to be associated with him. Are you like that yourself? You know there are people who seek favors from the church.
[43:40] And really want nothing to do with the church at all. Some of you perhaps may view the church as a place to baptize in. Or a place to conduct funerals. Or a place to conduct weddings.

But do you want anything really to do with the people of God? No you don't. You want a little service here or a little service there. But nothing in the way of commitment. Nothing in the way of loving and fearing the Lord.
Nothing in the way of following him. No. Well that's how Naaman was. Let him come out and do his part. Then let him go back to his own house. And I'll go back to my own people.
Shame on Naaman. Shame on you. If that is how you view the church of Christ. And if that is how you view the saviour. Somebody to be used in emergency. Called upon in an extremity.
But no use for him the rest of the time. Is that how you view Christ? Is that your view of the church? Well it was Naaman's view. And it's the view of pride. Arrogance.
[44:39] He's high. And he's lifted up above the people of God. And you'll notice that we read a passage from the New Testament. And it was about a Roman centurion. And Christ said that he hadn't found such faith anywhere as he found in that centurion.

How did you see it? In his humility. Where did you see the humility? When the Roman centurion said to Christ. I'm not worthy. That you should come under my roof.
See that? He said to Christ. I'm not worthy. That you should come under my roof. That's the complete opposite of Naaman. Who didn't think Elisha was worthy.
Of his presence. Inside Elisha's house. There's pride. And there is humility. Now. Elisha discerns this.
What's his problem? Well. Except you become. As little children. You shall no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. You've got to get down. You've got to get down.
[45:45] And come off your high horse. Before you can enter into the kingdom of God. Whatever show it is that you have. It's got to go. And you've got to come humbly.

To the prayer meeting. To the church of God. You've got to come to Christ. And you've got to do so openly. And throw your pride. And what people think of you. Out the window.
And confess. I need the Lord. And nothing else. Will sort out my life. But the Lord himself. Oh how difficult that is. Your pride.
You know tonight. That you're a slave of something. As I said. It could be drugs or drink. Nothing will break it. But the Lord. But you're too proud. To turn to him for it.

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You don't even want. Somebody to think of you. For a minute. As somebody who's looking to God. For help. You can save yourself. You think. And all the time.
[46:41] You're corroding. And going downhill. My friend. Come down. Come down. And you'll find that the Lord. Is rich. And he's bountiful. In mercy.

Now. How does Elisha deal with him? Well he administers the cure. And the first part of the cure is this. He sends a messenger. Back out. To Naaman.
Now I think my friends. That there's something marvelous in this. He sends a messenger. Back out. To Naaman. As much as to say. I'm going to teach you a lesson in this.
You expect me. Just to meet you. At every single point. Well he says. No. I serve a greater king than you. And you need to learn your place.
And I will send out a messenger. On my behalf. Or a messenger. On God's behalf. Now my friends. When the church. Is dealing with pride.
[47:39] And when the people of God. Are dealing with pride. You have to be careful. That you don't become a doormat. For people. There are some church men today. Who are very. Weak.

And soppy. And they would. Have gone out themselves. And say. Well we must run out. And meet this man. And they become a doormat. And they think that. That's always the posture to take. Well sometimes my friend. The church has to show.
That it's standing on the dignity of Christ. And serving a greater king. And Elisha says. I won't go out. He says. To you either. You're not coming in. Well I'm not going out. And I am sending my messenger to you. And that arouses the pride of Naaman.
You see what the Lord is doing. If we can call Elisha the servant of the Lord. He's bringing the disease to the floor. Pride and rage. Welling up in the heart of this man.
And then again. There is this. Go and wash in the Jordan. Go and wash in the Jordan. And do that seven times. Go to the place of humility.
[48:40] Go step inside that river. That you've always hated. And the river that you believe is useless. And ineffectual. Go into it. And dip yourself into it.

And dip yourself well and truly into it. And you will find. That it will cure you. Now that looks foolish to Naaman. Believe you me. It sounded and looked foolish to Naaman.
And he thought the Abana and the Farper are better. And so do you. I am telling you that the gospel. Is the only thing that will help you and save you. Oh but you think.
Oh well. That sounds so foolish to me. I keep hearing about this cross. I keep hearing about the Savior. And I say. What relevance is it to me? If I'm going to trust in anything.
Can I not trust in a Naaman and in a Farper that I know? Can I not trust perhaps in a doctor? Can I not trust in some philosophy that will do me good to think on?
[49:38] Can I not put my reliance in something that I can imagine greater than myself? Or in a medicine? Is there not something like that that will do me? Instead of this old story about a man called Jesus.

Jesus. Who lived 2000 years ago and gave us this book. That I can't understand. Well that is the heart of the matter my friend. It is the foolishness of God.
But only the foolishness of God can save you. That is it. Only the washing in the water of God's appointment will save your soul. Only believing in Christ will make you whole.
That is all. And you will find if you do. That you will become whole. And you will be renewed. Like Naaman. And your flesh. Like the flesh of a child.
You say I don't understand. How? Well Naaman wasn't asked to understand how. He was just asked to do it. There are many elements of the gospel that we don't understand.
[50:39] But if you understand that you must believe Christ and follow him. That is enough. Go to him. And he will save you from your sins.

Now what about. Just last of all and very briefly. The time has really gone on. What about the cure itself? Well dipping in the Jordan is symbolic as well.
The Jordan stands for something in the Bible. Crossing the Jordan always means entering something new. It means a new start. A fresh start. In fact you could say that it even symbolizes the resurrection.
And when Naaman washes seven times in that water. That means that he is completely made new. Seven means complete. Seven times in the Jordan means a complete resurrection.

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Or a complete renewal. Or a complete start. And that is why Naaman is asked to dip himself seven times in here.
[51:42] And Naaman does get a new start. We're told that when he comes out his flesh was like the flesh of a little child. That means that if you come to Christ you will be a new creation.

It's a fresh start. Do you need a fresh start? I'm sure there are many of you who know that you need that. And only God can give it to you. A fresh new start.
Cleansed. Though your sins be as scarlet. They shall be white as snow. Though they be crimson. They shall be as wool. God can cleanse you. And cleanse you completely. And that is what Naaman experienced.
He went down. And when he came up. His flesh was like a little child. A new life. And a new beginning. It is a new birth. And what are the signs of it?
Well you notice that his whole life has changed. He suddenly starts to call Elisha. He calls himself Elisha's servant. That's a change. Notice the humility. Pride has gone.
[52:43] Humility has come in. I am your servant. He's thankful. He wants to pour the gifts upon Elisha. Out of a thankful heart. There's even infirmity.

And I would say that that was the mark of faith. And perhaps I can just close with that. I think it's very important. He makes a strange request of Elisha.
He says. Let me take two bags of earth with me. He says. So that when I go back home. I can make an altar. And worship the Lord. Because he says.
I'm not going to worship any other God. Save the Lord. But he says. May the Lord forgive me in this. That when I go with my king.
Into the temple of Rimon. Now that was an idolatrous temple. When I go with him. He says. And I bow myself. With my master. May the Lord forgive me in this.
[53:38] As much as to say. May the Lord overlook that thing that I have to do. To bow myself in the house of Rimon. Along with my master. And Elisha says to him.

Go in peace. Now. I want to just say a little bit about that. Although the time has gone. I want to say a little bit about it.
Because it's very important. Many people have taken Elisha's answer here. As though Elisha is saying. Yes. It's all right for you to go. And to bow yourself in the house of Rimon.
Along with your master. As long as your heart is right. Before God. You can bow yourself to Rimon. As long as you are worshipping God. In your heart. Now my friends.
I do not accept that understanding. Of this passage at all. I think it is way. Of the mark. And I think that to understand it like that.
[54:35] Encourages hypocrisy. And what you would call the philosophy. Of the Jesuit. Now I have many reasons for saying that. Take for example this. Here you have Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

These three young men in Babylon. And here's this big image. And you remember what Nebuchadnezzar said. When you hear the sound of the music. He says. I want every single one of you.
To fall down. Before my image. And Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Just would not bow the knee. And what did they get for their pains?
They got a burning fiery furnace. That was heated seven times more than usual. Well. If this passage means what people think it means. Then what a waste of time. Why could they not have said.
Well. Let's just bow our knees. And let's look like everybody else. As long as in our hearts. We're really worshipping God. Is that not ridiculous to you? Of course it is. Of course it is.
[55:31] The whole thing would have been a sham. But it mattered to them. What people thought they were doing. The outward posture mattered to them. Just as much as the heart did.

If you're going to adopt that. Why have any martyrs at all? Why did everybody die in the first few centuries? After all of the sword was put to their throats. Why didn't they say. I don't believe in Jesus.
Or I worship this God. It would all be forgotten about. But none of them did that. And neither should you. We're not in an age of martyrs. I fear myself. I'm not one. And you perhaps fear you're not one. But the fact is. That if a gun is put to your head. And you are asked. As it were. To announce. Or acknowledge. Some other God save Jesus. Or if a gun is put to your head.

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And you're asked to deny Christ. You do not do it. You don't adopt the philosophy of the Jesuit. And say one thing with your lips. And say it's all right in my heart. No. Let the outward man be what the inward man is.
[56:34] That is what makes a martyr. And if we have not the spirit of a martyr. We are worth nothing. In the sight of God. Some people say. In this connection. That all kinds of things are right.

Taking your shoes off. In the temple of a mosque. In the mosque. Is that right? No my friend. And I cannot see it. As a question of liberty of conscience. I can't.
It is a universal symbol. Of homage and worship. To remove your shoes in a temple. And you say. Well I'll do it. As long as my own heart is right with God.
No. The outward gestures matter. Just as the inward person matters as well. The answer that Elisha gives. Go in peace.
Shouldn't be understood to say. Yes. I grant your request. After all. What is Naaman asking for? He's asking for something. That shows the immaturity of his faith. Let me take two buckets of soil.
[57:32] So that I can build an altar. He thinks for example. That he needs the actual earth of Israel. In order to worship the Lord properly. It's in the same category. That you should put the second request.

How does Elisha respond? Well what he says. He says. Go he says. And go in peace really. Is just shalom. It just means. Farewell. How does he mean that?
He means it in the sense of. You go. With your weakness. With your infirmity. And the Lord will lead you. And the Lord will guide you. That is what Elisha says to this new convert.
God will show you the answer to all these questions. About buckets of soil. And about altars. And about bowing in the house of Roman. And is that not true? Sometimes we become too harsh on people.
And we give an answer that is very harsh. When sometimes we should be patient. And recognize that God has his ways of dealing his own people. In his own time.
[58:29] He leads. And he guides. And may the Lord bless his word. Let us pray. Eternal one. Do thou bless thy word to us. And make us receptive to the truth.

Help us to stand fast for thy name. And to love thy cause. Do thou bless thy word. And go before us. For Christ's sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.

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