

## **Weekly Devotional – Do What GOD Says, Do What GOD Says Quickly; & Do What GOD Says No Matter What 9-21-22**

**Scripture - 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. [2 Kings 5:1 NIV]**

**Naaman, was a valiant and successful Syrian soldier, but Naaman had leprosy. The Bible often uses leprosy as a symbol of sin in the heart of man. In those days there was no cure for this dread disease and once it was contracted, it was a sentence of death; it was a terrible disease, causing a rotting of the body and an eating away of flesh. Hideous disfigurement would be the result and often the leper would die alone for no one dared touch him.**

**Such is the terrible effect of sin in the life of a person. Sin brings the penalty of eternal death, but it seems so subtle. At first, it's almost unnoticeable, but soon the effects begin to surface, and the suffering begins. The body itself is greatly affected for it begins a long march to the grave from the moment we are born and nothing in this world can stop that inevitable day when we shall each face the grave. Sin kills! Sin destroys! Sin eats away at the body of flesh! But most of all, Sin destroys our relationship with GOD and condemns us to eternal punishment! We cannot rid ourselves of sin. We cannot do anything to cure it. Like lepers, we live under the threat of dying without any hope of deliverance. No amount of good works, strong personality, charity, good character will ever be enough to cure the grip of sin on your life. We may be good people by the world's standards, but we are still a sinner in the eyes of GOD.**

**It so happened that Naaman's wife had a servant; a little Israelite girl who had been captured during a Syrian raid. One day the little girl told her mistress, "If only my master**

would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy" [2 Kings 5:3]. Naaman relayed this information to the king of Syria, who sent Naaman to Samaria with a letter to the king of Israel regarding the matter and a gift of silver, gold, and clothing. In the letter, the Syrian king asked the king of Israel to cure Naaman's leprosy. Upon reading the letter, the king of Israel was frightened, believing the king of Syria was trying to pick a fight with him.

Elisha heard about the letter, and he calmed the king's fear, telling him to send Naaman to him [2 Kings 5:8]. When Naaman arrived at Elisha's home, Elisha did not even come out to greet Naaman. Instead, he sent a message for Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River to be healed. Naaman was angry and went away, saying, 'Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his GOD, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abana and 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". As the proud Naaman was storming off, his servants spoke to him: "If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!" They persuaded their master that he should try the prescribed cure.

So Naaman relented and washed seven times. To his amazement, Naaman was cured of his leprosy. Naaman and his entourage returned to Elisha and offered a gift; ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, ten sets of clothing. But the prophet of GOD would take nothing, despite Naaman's urging. Elisha made it clear that GOD'S healing was free and that miracles were not for sale [see Acts 8:20].

JESUS used the story of Naaman and Elisha as an illustration of Israel's problem of unbelief. In Luke 4:27, JESUS tells the

**crowd in the synagogue of Nazareth, "There were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed; only Naaman the Syrian." The lepers of Israel overlooked the healing that could have been theirs through Elisha, so GOD healed a Syrian instead. In the same way, the Israelites of JESUS' day were missing the Power right in front of their eyes. But GOD is no respecter of persons [Acts 10:34-35], and the Gentiles eventually received the Gospel that Israel rejected. JESUS is our cure for sin! Hallelujah!!!**

**May we always have a mind through which CHRIST thinks; a heart through which CHRIST loves; a voice through which CHRIST speaks; a hand through which CHRIST helps; and be a vessel through which CHRIST lives!**

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