

Recognizing God's Unmerited, Supernatural Favor

II Kings 5:1-19

I. God provides for us by an exchange of our weakness for His strength (James 4:5-6; Matthew 5:3-12; I Corinthians 1:26-31).

- A. Naaman, the Syrian, would have paid any price for his healing, but God was after the deeper need Naaman didn't know he had—a revelation of the true God of all the earth.
- B. The only payment required was vulnerability and humility (II Kings 5:15-19).
- C. God wanted to show Naaman unmerited favor, but Gehazi distorted it and was severely disciplined (II Kings 5:20-27). God loves to reveal Himself as the One who gives unmerited favor. Grace is the motive for all our service. "Freely you have received; freely give" (Matthew 10:5-15).

II. The lessons of direct encounters with God

- A. Receiving the Holy Spirit—a loving God and His power (Acts 1:4-8; 2:14-21)
- B. "We love, because He first loved us" (I John 4:19).
- C. As with Naaman, God sets the terms of how He comes to us.
 - 1. Being vulnerable and open with your problems (Matthew 11:28-30)
 - 2. God loves our willingness to come in childlike faith, even though God's thoughts are not always our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).
 - 3. Hunger and humility will carry you to God every time (Mike's testimony—James 4:5-6).
 - 4. Dipping seven times symbolizes a willingness to soak in the Spirit's refreshing presence and power (II Kings 5:13-14). The verb tense of "Be filled" in Ephesians 5:18-20 is continuous; it's like tending a fire.

III. God solves our problems and brings us into deeper relationship (peace and joy) with Him at the same time. God is always better than we think (II Kings 5:15-19).

- A. The story of Naaman is the opening act of God revealing Himself to Syria and helping Israel. Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, began to know the only true, living God. And the raids on Israel stopped because of God's miraculous intervention (II Kings 6:8-23).
- B. Our pain makes us vulnerable to God, and God makes Himself vulnerable to us (e.g., Israel's unfaithfulness).
- C. The deeper question for all who walk with God is whether we are only connected to God because of His provision. God is continually healing our hearts in this matter (Matthew 6:25-27, 31-34; Psalm 32:6-11).

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