

THE POWER OF BEING WILLING AND OBEDIENT

2-4-24

2 KINGS 5:1-14 - (READ) - (K.J.B.)

Naaman was the chief military commander of a persistent enemy of both Israel and Judah. As recent as the days of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, the nation of Syria had fought and won against Israel (1 KINGS 22:35, 36). His position and success made him a great and honorable man, and personally, he was known as “A MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR” (1 KINGS 5:1).

Both “Gideon” (JUDGES 6:12) and “David” (1 SAMUEL 16:18) we’re both mentioned in the Bible as “MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR,” but Naaman is the only specific GENTILE that is named in the Bible, as “A MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR”. According to Jewish legends, it was Naaman who shot the arrow that killed King Ahab. Naaman had a lot going for him, but he had this against him, and it was devastating: HE WAS A LEPER, which meant that he had a horrible and incurable disease that would slowly result in his death. No matter how good and successful everything else was in Naaman’s life, BUT he was A LEPER. Here was a heavy tax upon his grandeur; he was afflicted with a disorder that was most lonesome and most humiliating, and that could possibly disgrace a human being.

Naaman led raids into the land of Israel, where he had taken a young girl captive, and gave this young girl to be a servant for Naaman’s wife. This girl was an unwilling missionary taken captive from Israel and was now in Syria. BUT THIS WAS “A GOD MOMENT”! God allowed this tragedy of her captivity to accomplish a greater good. The young girl illustrates the mysterious ways God works. She was probably raised in a Godly home and taken from her family at a young age. Her captivity was probably an irreplaceable loss of her parents, and one they no doubt grieved over every day, but she was greatly used by God in a simple way. This little servant girl, one day, tells Naaman’s wife that if Naaman would go into the land of Israel and seek a prophet there, God would heal him of leprosy.

So then, the King of Syria sent a letter of reference and accommodation to the King of Israel (King Jehoram), a letter that led the King of Israel to be understandably upset. First, it was obvious that it was out of his power to heal Naaman’s leprosy. Second, he had no relationship with a prophet of God, whom did have the power to heal. He thought the King of Syria was seeking a quarrel or more hostility against the nation of Israel. The

King of Assyria assumed that the King of Israel was in a much better relationship with “Elisha” than he really was. It’s always easy for others to assume that we have a better relationship with God than we really do. Thirdly, God wasn’t healing any Hebrew people of leprosy in the land of Israel, either (LUKE 4:27)!

The King of Israel was so upset over the matter that he tore his clothes, but when Elisha heard of this matter, he gave a general rebuke to the King of Israel. This is a crisis to you. Because you have no relationship with God, who can heal lepers. But it is a needless crisis, because you can have a relationship with God also. Naaman would never know there was a prophet in Israel, by hanging around the royal palace. The true prophet in Israel wasn’t welcome at the royal palace. Elisha tells the King of Israel to send Naaman his way, SO THAT “HE SHALL KNOW THAT THERE IS A (TRUE) PROPHET IN ISRAEL” (ISAIAH 1:8).

So Naaman came, with his rich TREASURE (By today's standards - \$10,000,000 to \$12,000,000) for his healing. Naaman came with his horses and with his CHARIOT, and probably with a whole entourage of support staff, and stood at the door of the House of Elijah.

First of all, Elisha didn’t even go to the door to meet Naaman, but sent his servant to the door to tell Naaman what to do to be healed. Now remember, that no one in the land of Israel was being healed of leprosy either. Elisha, who had never seen anybody healed of leprosy, took himself out of the “Picture”, so that God would get the GLORY (SHOW UP AND SHOW OFF). Because Elisha knew that this was going to be a “GOD MOMENT”, and that Naaman would be healed, and come to know the true and living God. Naaman was expecting FROM ELISHA “A FLASHY GOD MOMENT – INVOLVING SOME CEREMONIAL ACT FROM ELISHA” (ISAIAH 1:11), for him to be healed. But it surely was not what Elisha sent his servant out to say to Naaman. For Naaman to be healed: “GO AND WASH (DIP) IN (THE SMALL – CREEK LIKE, MUDDY RIVER) JORDAN SEVEN TIMES” AND YOU WILL BE HEALED (ISAIAH 1:10)!

It says in ISAIAH 1:11, that Naaman “WAS WROTH (ANGRY)” and in ISAIAH 1:12, it says that “HE TURNED AND WENT AWAY IN A RAGE” AND SAID THAT THE RIVERS IN SYRIA WERE “BETTER” (BIGGER AND CLEANER). But Naaman’s servants, chased after him and reason with him, that if Elisha had told him to do some big and great thing, that would be difficult to do, that Naaman would still attempt to do it because of the desperation, of his illness. So his servants convinced Naaman to be “WILLING AND OBEDIENT” to the word of God, spoken to the Prophet Elisha, and it resulted in Naaman being healed, knowing that Elisha served the true and living God, and for Naaman, to acknowledge the true and living God in his life also.

The Book of Isaiah contains the prophecies of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, who ministered from about 740 to 680 BC. For about 20 years, he spoke to both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah. After Israel fell to the Syrians in 722 BC, Isaiah continued to prophesy to Judah. This, of Israel’s history, is told in 2nd KINGS 15

through 21 and 2nd CHRONICLES 26 through 33. Isaiah was a contemporary of the prophet Hosea and Micah. By the time of Isaiah, the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, and Amos had already accomplished their ministries.

SO THE TRUE AND INSPIRING STORY, OF NAAMAN, BEING HEALED OF LEPROSY, WAS A FAMILIAR LESSON, TO THE HEBREW PEOPLE AT THIS TIME, – ABOUT BEING “WILLING AND OBEDIENT”, TO THE WORD OF GOD AND THE GREAT MIRACLES AND BLESSINGS FROM GOD, THAT RESULT FROM RESPONDING POSITIVELY, TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD!

ISAIAH 1:18 – “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”.

It is interesting that the name “Isaiah” means “The Salvation of Jehovah” and that it should contain the “Winning Gospel invitation”.

But what is also interesting is that ISAIAH 1:18, is it quite often quoted in the churches today, but not ISAIAH 1:19, which is connected by the word “IF” and is equally true!

* THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING “WILLING” AND “OBEDIENT” TO GOD.

ISAIAH 1:19 – “IF YE BE WILLING AND OBEDIENT, YE SHALL EAT THE GOOD OF THE LAND”.

According to this Scripture, the only outcome of being “WILLING AND OBEDIENT” is a good outcome. We can only benefit, if we do what the Lord directs. There’s no negative scenario here, unless we are UNWILLING AND/OR DISOBEDIENT. It sounds like a “No-brainer”, right? So, let’s commit to being “WILLING” (HAVING AN AGREEABLE ATTITUDE) and being “OBEDIENT” (IN OUR ACTIONS), and good things will come our way.

But there is a negative scenario, here in this portion of scripture, which explains the penalty and the great negative outcome of us not being “WILLING AND OBEDIENT” to the commandments of God.

ISAIAH 1:20 – “And the DESTRUCTION of the TRANSGRESSORS and of the SINNERS shall be TOGETHER, and THEY THAT FORSAKE THE LORD shall be CONSUMED”.

* THE BIBLE MEANING OF US TO BE “WILLING” TO GOD.

The word “WILLING” means: “TO REST CONTENT, TO BE ACQUIESCENT – TO BE READY TO ACCEPT SOMETHING WITHOUT PROTEST, to consent, to yield, to accept the desire of another”.

The best example of having “WILLINGNESS” is that of Christ Jesus, as He prayed for direction, in the imminent future course of His life, in the “Garden of Gethsemane”:

LUKE 22:42 – “Saying, Father, IF THOU BE WILLING, REMOVE THIS CUP FROM ME: NEVERTHELESS NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE”.

LUKE 22:43 – “And there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him”.

LUKE 22:44 – “And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”.

“HIS SWEAT WAS AS IT WERE GREAT DROPS OF BLOOD” – THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT CHRIST JESUS SHED HIS BLOOD FOR US! THIS PORTRAYS A RECOGNIZED FACT, THAT UNDER EXTREME PRESSURE, THE PORES IN THE FOREHEAD MAY BECOME SO DILATED, THAT BLOOD MAY ISSUE FROM THEM, IN THE FORM OF BLOODY SWEAT!

HEBREWS 5: 7 – “Who in the days of His FLESH (HIS INCARNATION – FULLY MAN AND FULLY GOD), when he had offered up prayers and supplications with STRONG CRYING AND TEARS unto Him that was able to save Him from death, AND WAS HEARD IN THAT HE FEARED”;

* THE WORD “FEARED” IS FOUND 74 TIMES, IN 72 VERSES, IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT KING JAMES BIBLE. BUT HERE IN THIS VERSE, THE WORD “FEARED”, IS THE STRONG’S GREEK WORD # 2124 AND MEANS “To have the character, of caution, circumspection, discretion, reverence veneration, fear, anxiety, and by implication, to dread concretely (of failing God)”.

* THIS GREEK WORD IS UNIQUE TO “THE BOOK OF HEBREWS” AND IS FOUND ONLY 2 TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE. HERE IN HEBREWS 5:7 AND IN HEBREWS 12:28!

*HEBREWS 12:28 – Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, we’re by we may serve God acceptably with REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR”:

* THE BIBLE MEANING OF US, TO BE “OBEDIENT” TO GOD.

The word “OBEDIENCE” means: “TO OBEY – TO COMPLY WITH OR FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS, to hear with understanding and to discern, to agree to, to consent to, and grant a request of another”.

HEBREWS 5:8 – “Though He were a Son, yet learned He OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED”:

Christ Jesus “LEARNED OBEDIENCE” – This doesn’t mean that he “Learned to obey”,

for that would mean that at least one time, He walked in disobedience and that he had sinned, but what it does mean is that HE ACTIVELY SOUGHT OUT THE PATH OF OBEDIENCE, AND THEN UNFAILINGLY WALKED THEREIN!

HEBREWS 5: 9 – “And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation UNTO ALL OF THEM WHO OBEY HIM (AND HIS COMMANDMENTS)”;

In HEBREWS 5:7, it shows that the wrath of God was to judge Him as if He (Christ Jesus), and He ALONE, were the only sinner who ever existed, even though He was no sinner AT ALL; this caused that “AGONY” – so His death was not JUST, a great example of resignation and self-sacrifice, as many vainly think.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12 – “Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always OBEYED, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING”.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13 – “FOR IT IS GOD WHICH WORKETH IN YOU BOTH HIS WILL AND TO DO HIS GOOD PLEASURE”.

PHILIPPIANS 2:14 – “DO ALL THINGS WITHOUT MURMURING AND DISPUTING”:

PHILIPPIANS 2:15 – “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, AMONG WHOM YE SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD”;

PHILIPPIANS 2:16 – “Holding forth the WORD OF LIFE (THE WORD OF GOD); that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain”.

PHILIPPIANS 2:17 – “Yea, and if I be OFFERED UPON THE SACRIFICE AND SERVICE of your faith, I JOY, and REJOICE with you all”.

PHILIPPIANS 2:18 – “For the same cause also do YE JOY, and REJOICE WITH ME”.