

## **Behold I Thought....Behold Now I Know**

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### **II Kings 5:11-15**

As I stand before you this morning to proclaim the word of God, I am thankful, first of all, for the tremendous mercy of God on me and my house. I am thankful to God for my wonderful wife, who these thirty-eight years has been a constant blessing on a daily basis. She is here this morning with me. I am thankful to the leadership of this fine congregation for presenting me with this opportunity to help celebrate brother Eric Heeter's work at this congregation as he works hand in hand with brother Lamar Davis, the fine evangelist here.

I bring nothing new save the word of God which I shall endeavor to present in a manner that all will be edified to the glory of God. I dare not keep you long but just brief enough for you to taste of the goodness of the word of God in a way that you may carry fragments in your basket with you for further devourment at later times.

I am coming from II Kings 5:1-15, the account about Naaman. While the stretch of verses is long, as I indicated earlier, the lesson is not. To be somewhat comprehensive, I will need to address 7 points. The benefit of this is to lay it out in such a way that you can place yourselves and your concerns inside these 7 points. The points are as follows:

1. The Problem: II Kings 5:1
2. The Presence: II Kings 5:2
3. The Prophet: II Kings 5:3
4. The Pride: II Kings 5:11
5. The Pleadings: II Kings 5:13
6. The Proper Attitude brings about the Promised Outcome: II Kings 5:13-14.
7. The Profound Conclusion: II Kings 5:15

1. **The problem was leprosy.** Naaman was a great man with his master and honorable. The Lord had used Naaman. In the KJV, Naaman is called captain of the host of the king. In a military sense, Naaman was a distinguished general over the armies of Syria. He was a man of valor. He was a mighty man. He was a leper. Let me pause here to suggest strongly that greatness need not be minimized by adversity. Consider the following people who overcame:
  
2. There are so many times when the greatest of humans have the greatest of problems. James Earl Jones, whom we all know had his problems as a child. He had stuttering problem as a child and said very little as a child; he still struggles with the problem and says he has to think about what he says carefully before saying it (impressive, since he is known widely for his voice). **IMDb.com (internet movie database).**
  
3. Lance Armstrong-- The diagnosis was testicular cancer, stage 3. Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in men aged 15-35, and when diagnosed early, has a very good cure rate of 90%. However, Lance being a seemingly healthy young man ignored the warning signs. By the time the cancer was diagnosed, it had spread to his lungs, abdomen and brain. His chances of survival dimmed. During his treatment Lance underwent two surgeries, one to remove the cancerous testicle and another to remove two cancerous lesions from his brain. **Ovarian cancer facts.com**
  
4. Perhaps better known than these two is Helen Keller. Helen Adams Keller was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. In 1882, she fell ill and was struck blind, deaf and mute. Keller graduated, cum laude, from Radcliffe in 1904, at the age of 24.

**2. The Presence II Kings 5:2, 3.** An unnamed Israelitish maid awaited the wife of the general. How so much like God to have the solution to our problems within reach. Was it coincidence that this maid served the wife of Naaman? Dare we go so far as to suggest that it was the will of God to heal the man? Everything was in place—the maid, her nationality, her religion, her knowledge of how God works and through whom he works—everything was in place. Sounds like the church doesn't it? Let it be known that the means of the solution to your problem may not at all be the means you would have selected. It may not be someone who is serving you. It could very well be

someone with whom you have an antagonistic relationship. The reason for the pairing is to heal that relationship. There is a presence to your problem!

3. **The Prophet Elisha** was God's man on call. It was the prophet not the king that had the power to change the outcome. In Naaman's case, the routing was wrong. The king of Syria sent a troublesome letter to the king of Israel. The King of Syria had no direct solution to Naaman's problem. The king of Israel had no solution to Naaman's leprosy. In fact, the king of Israel tore his kingly clothes in frustration. The prophet told the king to send Naaman to him. In other words, stop stressing and send him where he can find help for his people

4. **The Pride of Naaman was too much.** When he finally made it to the prophet and was told what to do, he hardened his heart. Elisha did not come to Naaman himself, he sent a messenger to tell the general what to do. This did not go over well at all. This is what he had said.

*<sup>11</sup> But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. <sup>12</sup> Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.*

When he went off in a rage, he took his leprosy with him. He went away uncured. How many times do we walk away in sin because we think it is the wrong person telling us to repent? Too many times I fear. It is not the person but the message. Sometimes we cannot see what is plain to others. Consider this text.

*<sup>26</sup> Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. <sup>27</sup> When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat it with his staff. <sup>28</sup> Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?" <sup>29</sup> Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now." <sup>30</sup> The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of*

*doing this to you?” “No,” he said.<sup>31</sup> Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.*

Pride is so uncharacteristic of Christians that it is very difficult to utter the word pride and Christian in the same breath. One is surely a contradiction of the other. *Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling. (Proverbs 16:18). In James 4:6, we find<sup>6</sup> But He gives us more and more grace (<sup>[a]</sup>power of the Holy Spirit, to meet this evil tendency and all others fully). That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it).*

5. The Pleadings.<sup>13</sup> *And his servants came near and said to him, My father, if the prophet had bid you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, Wash and be clean?* Notice the tone of the language. *My Father* --Gentle and respectful. *A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.* (Proverbs 15:1). Notice the emphasis to Naaman’s strong side--*if the prophet had bid you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?* Who in his right mind can condemn a person who respects his strong character? *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise. (Proverbs 11:30).* Now comes the flawless logic. *How much rather, then, when he says to you, Wash and be clean?* One does not become a general over the armies of a nation without being a reasonable man. Naaman was reasonable. His servants knew that. Naaman could not refuse the logic advanced by his servants. To do so would undoubtedly lay the groundwork for perhaps a small measure of disrespect. Their methods created the proper attitude.

6. **The Proper Attitude brought about the promised outcome.** Nathan’s attitude propelled him to do the thing most needed.<sup>14</sup> *So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.* The lesson here is like an avalanche gaining momentum as it moves downhill. Once the attitude toward obedience is right, the reward promised for that obedience is certain. Consider with me the reasonableness of this conclusion. If such a thought is applied to II Peter 1:5-8, it would be plain if faith were the snowball rolling downhill gaining momentum. On the way down it attracts virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love as it gains avalanche status. The only difference here is that anyone under the avalanche

will not be harmed. Naaman obeyed the voice of the prophet and his problem disappeared. The proper attitude is not to fight against what is being asked of you to do. Surrender to it. As a child would respond to it so should you. For of such is the kingdom of heaven. The promise was immediately realized when the submission was complete. Leprosy spelled with seven letters was cured with seven dips.

7.       **The Profound Conclusion.** You will note that in verse 11, Naaman said, “Behold I thought. In verse 15 he says, “Behold I know. This is what the experiences of life teach us. This is what God teaches us through our afflictions. James says in his book, <sup>2</sup> *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,*<sup>[a]</sup> *whenever you face trials of many kinds,* <sup>3</sup> *because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.* The operative words in the text are **you know**. I will leave you with this verse. Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

**Behold I thought—Behold now I Know.**

**Present Invitation.**