2 Kings 5

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[0:00] The sky was shut for three and a half years, and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.

And 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.
All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.
But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people.
They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority. We'll end our reading there at verse 32, trusting that God will add his blessing to those two readings from his own precious and inspired work.
[1:15] Let us further sing to God's praise, this time in Psalm 65. Psalm 65 on page 82 of the psalmody.

And we're going to sing verses 1 to 5 to the tuned and firmly. Psalm 65.
To God's praise. To God's praise. Psalm 66.
To God's praise. Psalm 66. Psalm 66. Psalm 66. Psalm 67. Psalm 67. Psalm 67.
Psalm 67. Psalm 67. Psalm 67. Psalm 67. Psalm 68. Psalm 67.
[3:02] and what thou guilt away. How blessed are those who choose and praise within your courts of grace, we're filled with blessings in your house, in your most holy place.

With awesome deeds of righteousness you answer us, O God, our Savior, hope over the sea and all the earth abroad.
Amen. My text this evening is taken from the second book of Kings and the fifth chapter and the words we find recorded at the 14th verse.
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.
Naaman, the man in the story from which our text is taken this evening, had discovered a miracle.
[4:58] But before that miracle was discovered, there were some other discoveries that he made also. Let me suggest to you that, first of all, Naaman discovered a malady, a sickness.

Naaman was, as we learn, the commander of the army of Ben-Hadad II, the king of Syria.
He was the number two man in the nation at that particular time. But with all his prestige and with all his authority and with all his wealth, Naaman was a doomed man because we are told he was a leper.
And it appears from verse 11 that this infection was at least limited to one place. But you know, leprosy had and sadly still has a tendency to spread.
It's something that cannot be confined. It is something that spreads. It's something that defiles. It's something that isolates.
[6:16] Because anyone who was found with leprosy normally had to separate themselves from their own kith and kin, from their own friends, and either choose to live in isolation or join some other lepers who live together in a colony.

And of course, at the time in which this incident is recorded, there was no known cure for leprosy. So you can imagine how devastated Naaman must have been when he made this startling discovery.
The future for him was certainly gloomy. A man with promise, a man with great promise, and yet suddenly it seems as if the whole bottom has fallen out of his world and he cannot see too far

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ahead.
It's a sad story, my friends, but I'm glad tonight that that's not the end of the story. For we notice secondly that Naaman discovered, or he heard rather, some encouraging news.
He discovered a message, something that seemed to bring gladness and joy and hope to his heart. And what was the news that this man received?
[7:50] Well, it was that there was someone, and someone not too far away, who might be able to help him, who might be able to recover him of his leprosy.

It was indeed a message that must have brought hope to his heart. It was a message of help, because this person spoken of was not too far away from the place where he was.
And it was a message of healing. Someone, someone, who might be able to cure this accursed disease of leprosy that had taken hold of him.
He received the message because of the faithful witness of a servant girl who was there in his own home serving his mistress.
You know, I believe the Lord did a gracious thing when he allowed that little girl to be taken away from her own family, from her own loved ones, and brought into the service of Naaman's wife there in Naaman's home.
[9:05] And you know, even although she was in a strange land, and even although she was so far away from home and so far away from her family, it seems to me that she was a little girl who was good and a little girl who was kind, and a little girl who believed in God and believed in the Word of God.

I've no doubt that this little girl had been exposed to teaching concerning Jehovah in the formative years of her life. And it seemed as if this was something she had not forgotten.
She remembered what she had heard about this man of God and about what God was able to do through him.
And you know, my friends, that little girl, humanly speaking, had no reason to share what she knew with Naaman's wife.
She could easily have harbored within her heart a spirit of resentment and said, well, my master's got leprosy, so what? It's no more than he deserves after the way he treated my family, my people, myself.
[10:19] Let him suffer. Ah, but that wasn't her attitude. And I'm glad tonight that it wasn't her attitude, for in spite of all that had happened to her in the past, there seems to have been no resentment, no anger within her heart.

She went to her mistress on hearing of the plight of her master and she said, I know. And she shared the good news about this man of God.
She remembered the prophet Elisha who lived in the city of Samaria. She had heard how God had given Elisha power to perform miracles. Oh, if only my master, if only Naaman could go to him. Surely he would make the general well again. And this little girl did a very important thing she witnessed. She witnessed to her mistress about what she knew of the prophet Elisha and about what God was able to do.
She wasn't afraid. She wasn't ashamed. she spoke boldly. And it seems that her words were so convincing that the woman went and she told her husband what the little maid had told her.
[11:54] Ah, my friends, we should never underestimate the power of a single witness. How easy it would have been for that little girl to have kept her mouth shut.

how easy it would have been for her to have been resentful and said, well, let my master suffer. Let him take what he gets.
Let him take what he deserves. But here she was humbly and yet boldly witnessing to her mistress and sharing with her the good news of what she knew concerning this man of God and concerning the power of God.
That I have one or two young people in the church this evening and can I say, young folks, it's good to see you. It encourages my heart to see young folks in the church, boys and girls in the church and it especially encourages my heart to see them attending an evening service.
keep it up. Keep it up. And can I say to you very simply tonight, boys and girls, I'm sure you have learned in Sunday school and at home too a great deal about the Lord Jesus Christ.
[13:23] About God and about Christ and about what God and Christ are able to do. and if I could give you a word of encouragement tonight, it would be this.

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Don't keep what you know about Jesus. Don't keep what you have learned about Jesus. Don't keep what you have even experienced about Jesus to yourself.
Tell others about it. you know, there are lots of boys and girls in school that you meet every day, I'm sure. And it wouldn't surprise me that there'll be some of them who have never heard about Jesus, or if they have, they've heard very little about Jesus.
And there's a wonderful opportunity, a wonderful mission field for you young people. Sometimes you may ask, well, what can I do for Jesus?
Here's something you can do for Jesus. You can tell other boys and girls about him, about what you have learned concerning him, about what you know and believe he is able to do.
[14:40] we don't know how old this young girl was, but however old she was, she was not afraid and not ashamed to tell what she knew about God and about God's servant.

And you know, I believe that God can take words from the lips of a child and he can carry them to the ears of a king.
How do I know? Because it's here in the Bible. That's exactly what he did on this occasion. He took those words from the lips of a child and he carried them to the ears of a king.
name and discovered a malady. But he discovered a message, a message of hope, a message of health.
And he discovered it because a little woman, a little girl, a young woman, was bold enough and unashamed to witness about the Lord.
[15:59] So there's a lesson, a very important lesson, not just for the boys and girls, not just for the young folks, but there's a very important lesson here for all of us who know the Lord Jesus and who have experienced the power of God at work in our life.

Let's not keep it to ourselves. The world needs to hear. And you and I, if we are the Lord's people, and have undergone that great spiritual transformation of which the Bible speaks, we have, I believe, a responsibility to share the good news with others, to gossip the gospel.
There was a third discovery that this man made, and it was this, he discovered that he was making a serious mistake.
When Naaman heard what the little girl had said to his wife, we learn that he went right to the king of Syria. And the king said, go, I will send gifts of silver and gold and beautiful garment.
I'll write a letter to ask the king of Israel for his help. And when the king of Israel received Naaman and the other visitors from the enemy country of Syria, he was surprised, to say the least, but he was even more surprised when he read the letter that had been sent to him by the king of Syria.
[17:35] In fact, my friends, we learn that when he read that letter, he was afraid. He was afraid. he thought, surely this is a trick to trap us.

And he tore his clothes like folk did at that particular time when they weren't quite sure what action they should take, just to show that he didn't know exactly what to do in this given situation.
And he said, am I a god to kill and make alive? that this man does send to me, a man with leprosy, that I should cure him?
Why, nobody can cure a person of leprosy. Here is someone who's asking for the impossible. Here is someone that's demanding of me something that I simply cannot do.
He was distressed, he was troubled. And you see, Naaman had no business being there in the first place. It was not to the king or of the king of the country that the little maid had spoken.
[18:47] She had not said the king of Israel is able to cure my master of his leprosy. I know, it was to the prophet that she directed her mistress and her master.

And so, when Elisha, the prophet heard of what was going on, we learn that he went to the king's palace. Just send Naaman to me, he said, he shall find out that there is a prophet in Israel.
So, after a while, the chariots of Naaman and his men clanged and rattled down the streets of Samaria, and they stopped right south side the door of Elijah's house.
I'm such an important man, thought Naaman, that the prophet will come running out of the house and he'll bow low before me and he'll do something to help me.
Ah, but what a surprise he had in store. For instead of opening the door and running out into the street and bowing himself before this so-called important man, we find that the servant of God stayed in the house.
[20:11] He didn't come out. And instead he sent a servant out to Naaman, and the servant told Naaman exactly what he should do. Go, he says, wash in the river Jordan seven times and your

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leprosy will be gone.

Simple enough instructions. There's no suggestion that Naaman misunderstood what the servant was saying to him.
But he became angry. Why should I? Naaman, such an important man in my own country, why should I do what this man is asking me to do and go and wash myself in this particular river?
Why, he said, are not the rivers back home, the rivers of Farfar and Habana, far better than all the waters of Israel? Why is it that I cannot wash in them and be clean?
And he turned and in a rage was about to go away. Why should I go into the river Jordan?
[21:28] The rivers of my own land are much better. How can I not dip in them and be clean? You see, the mistake that Naaman made was this.

He first of all went to the wrong person. As I said, the little maid had spoken not of the ability of the kin to cure leprosy, but the maid had directed her mistress to direct her master to the prophet in the land of Israel.
But Naaman went to the wrong person. Perhaps you see his pride got the better of him. An important man such as I, why should I go to a prophet, an outcast?
I'll go to the king. Ah, but it was not the king who possessed the power to cure. And secondly, might I suggest he took the wrong price.
He took from the hand of the king certain changes of raiment and a quantity of money. He thought, you see, that he could purchase his healing.
[22:46] But that wasn't possible either. And then, thirdly, we learn he was prepared to use the wrong procedure.

The man of God, through the servant that he sent out to meet with Naaman, said, go and wash yourself seven times in the waters of Jordan.
Ah, but that wasn't good enough for him. Someone has suggested that the waters of Jordan were not too clean, whereas the waters of Farfar and Abana were in far better condition.
And, well, it would be a blow to his pride to go down into these mucky, murky waters of Jordan. Far better go home and go into the rivers there, and, ah, but you see, that was not the word that had been given to him.
He had been told, go and wash, not once, not twice, not three times, but seven times in the waters of Jordan. And it wasn't until he listened to the counsel of the servant and his servants, and he obeyed the command of the prophet that he forthly experienced a miracle.
[24:04] Then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God. And his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

A lovely story, isn't it? God. But what does it have to do with you and I gathered in this service tonight?
In all probability, you and I will never have leprosy. I saw sometime recently a presentation by a representative of the Leprosy Society, and my friends, it horrified me to see the effect of that accursed disease on the human body.
I hope that you and I will never be exposed to such a thing. But you know, the Bible informs us that a far more deadly and destructive disease rages through our bodies.
It's a disease of the heart. Its seat is in the heart. But it's a disease that manifests itself through the members of our bodies, through our ears, through our eyes, through our tongues, by means of our hands and our feet, and so on.
[25:58] I'm sure that you know the disease to which I refer. It's the disease of sin. The Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that it's a disease with which we've all been smitten and have been smitten, even before our birth.

all have sinned, says the word of God, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
Sin that deeply defiles, sin that separates, sin, my friends, that unless treated effectively will one day lead not just to physical death, but it will lead to eternal death, to everlasting separation from God and from those who are the people of God.
And you know the sad thing is this, that you and I, by our very best efforts, cannot rid ourselves of this accursed disease.
Oh, that's not to say that many try. but in trying we're up against an impossibility.
[27:27] We cannot purchase a cure. Nothing Naaman could do of himself would have rid himself of that leprosy.

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Ah, my friends, it was only as he was instructed from the lips of the servant of God and in obedience to the instruction that was given, went down into that river and washed himself seven times or dipped himself seven times that the miracle took place.
I want very simply to remind you tonight that there is a cure for the disease of sin. There is a cure that's effective, a cure of which the Bible speaks.
For the Bible tells us that a way back in eternity, before time began, before the worlds were created, before you and I came into being God in His sovereignty, drew up a plan of salvation, a plan of salvation that was to include the sending of His own Son, His only Son, Jesus Christ into this world, and which was to involve Christ in all manner of suffering and rejection and death itself.
That is a remedy for sin tonight. sin. The Bible says that the soul that sin of it shall die.
[29:16] But the Bible points us to one who is able to save and save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him.

It points to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. We were thinking a little this morning about the particular ministry of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling.
How the Holy Spirit, like a physician, convinces us, as the Catechism puts it, of our sin and misery. I wonder, are you there tonight?
conscious of the probing fingers of the Holy Spirit of God in your heart, searching your heart, reminding you, revealing to you the true state of your sinful condition.
You see, before you and I will be motivated to seek a cure, we have first of all got to be convinced of our need of it. There's no doctor on this earth that will ever convince me to take some pills or a bottle of medicine if he doesn't first of all convince me that I need it, that I'm sick.
[30:39] And so it is with the unregenerate sinner. My friends, no amount of preaching on the part of the preacher, no amount of testifying on the part of the individual Christian will convince a man or a woman or a young person of the need of Jesus Christ.

Only the Holy Spirit can do that. And it may be, oh, it may be that under the preaching of God's Word, the Holy Spirit has indeed put his finger upon the sin in your life, and tonight you're troubled, you're distressed, you're concerned.
for you know all's not well with it. Maybe like Naaman, having been convinced of your sin and misery can be convinced of your condition.
You've been trying to do something about it. Good works. Some people are convinced that by reading the Bible, by saying their prayers, by attending church, by giving to some charitable organization or the church that they can somehow purchase their eternal salvation.
Others are convinced that they're going to find it by submitting themselves to the ordinances of the church to baptism or to participation in the Lord's Supper.
[32:21] Ah, my friends, the Bible tells us that it's not by works. For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. And it's only when you and I come to Christ or are unable to come to Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
And we obey the God-given instructions regarding our eternal salvation that we will ever experience the miracle of the new birth.
Our Christian upbringing, our affiliation to the church, our good works, my friend, will never effectively deal with the cursed disease of sin that's right in the human soul.
There is only one cure, there is only one solution, and it's the Holy Spirit who alone can open our eyes to see it, to point us to Jesus Christ, able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through him.
[33:33] I wonder, I wonder, has the Holy Spirit shown you Christ tonight? and the same Holy Spirit who convicts us and convinces us of our sin and misery, and who enlightens the mind of the regenerate sinner in the knowledge of Christ, he alone can renew the will, or to put it another way, make us willing, or enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, who is freely offered to us in the gospel.

Would you experience that miracle? Are you desperate enough, my friends, tonight, are you concerned enough about the state of your soul to flee to Christ and to honestly confess before him, Lord, I'm a sinner and I need to be saved.
Lord, save me. It's a serious matter, the matter of your soul. Time is passing.
eternity is drawing near. All my friends, we cannot afford to trifle with sin.

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We cannot afford to neglect the God-given and God-provided means of salvation. The Bible says, today, today, today, if you will hear my voice hard and not your hearts.
[35:36] But seek ye the Lord while he may be found and call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. And let him return to the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

do you know I'm never happier than when I'm preaching the gospel, telling men and women about Jesus, pointing them to him who alone is able to save from sin.
I'm glad tonight there's a cure for that accursed disease that's rife in every human heart, the disease of leprosy.
Ah, there was no known cure for leprosy in Naaman's name. Oh, how glad I am tonight, how thankful I am that there's a cure for sin.
a cure for sin. But we've got to come God's way. God has given us instructions in his word as to how we'll find that cure.
[37:12] Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father Father, but by me.

In closing, I don't know the condition, the state of your soul tonight. But can I say from the very bottom of my heart, and time is gone, I've got to conclude.
Can I say from the bottom of my heart tonight, my friend, if there's the slightest concern in your soul about your spiritual condition, don't be content to leave it there.
Look to Christ. Flee to Christ. Christ. And with the help of the Holy Spirit, embrace Christ.
The one whose the tatechism reminds us is freely offered to us in the gospel. Let us pray.
[38:30] Oh, gracious God, in those solemn moments at the close of yet another service, we bow humbly in your presence.

And we thank you for your speaking voice. Lord, as we have been reminded again this evening of the curse of sin and the consequences of sin, we pray that truly you'll give us a concern.
But don't leave it there. O God, from the bottom of our hearts tonight, we cry unto you. Deal graciously with us all and enable us to flee to Christ and to embrace him, the one who is freely offered to us in the gospel.
hear us in our prayer. And be with us as we sing our parting praise. And we ask all in Jesus' name and for his sake.
Amen. Amen. Let us conclude by singing in Psalm 130. We are going to sing the whole psalm.
[39:57] It is on page 421. And the tune is Caroline. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear.

Unto my supplication's voice give an attentive ear. Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst mark in equity? but yet with thee forgiveness is that fear thou mayest be.
Psalm 130, singing the whole of this psalm to God's praise. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all.
Amen.

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