

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

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Elisha

No 10

Our Response to God's Mercies - Part 2 Naaman's Blessing

The LORD is good to all: and his mercies are over all his works. Psalm 145:9.

Reading: Second Kings 5:1-15

There are four characters and their responses in this chapter worthy of our study. There is something that each has to teach us and mould us into the image of the Lord Jesus. God's heart is for the world, all of mankind. He is good to all and His mercy is over all of His creation. In this study we see God's mercy to us, and in us, and through us to this needy world. The reactions of these people give us a glimpse of their character. Let us use this insight to mould our character after the pattern that is in Christ Jesus.

First, learn from the response of Naaman's Servants and their simple open hearts v13. Naaman was nonplussed at the simplicity of the transmission and content of Elisha's instruction. When we come to Jesus for cleansing from all the sins we ever committed and ever will commit, the instruction is 'whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.'

Believe! Respond by trusting! Simply depend on Jesus then the blood He shed upon the cross will cover all your sin; you will be restored to favour with God and will live for ever. How do we know? Because He gave His word. And just as Naaman had to believe Elisha's message so must we believe God's word.

Naaman had expected at least the presence of the man himself and some kind of ceremony. He was incensed. So many people cannot accept that forgiveness, cleansing, and all the associated blessings come freely from God.

Second, learn from the response of Gehazi and his grasping greed vv 15,16&20-27. We appreciate, Naaman's gratitude for his healing. It was overwhelming. He was willing to reward Elisha, but Elisha would have

none of it. We see there was more in all this than mere the cleansing of a leper, as amazing as that is, but because of these events, Naaman made the Lord his God. Here is the amazing story of conversion.

Salvation is free to all who believe. It is extremely costly to God, but all may come without money and without price:

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give Matthew 10:8.

As salvation is free, so preaching the gospel of salvation must be free to every hearer. Any attempt to mix the gospel with gold is contemptible.

The labourer is worthy of his hire, but the messenger is the servant of the Lord. The servant looks to his Master for support, and the Master has his people every where, some of whom are included in His support team. Proclamation and provision should never be confused. If the servant is confused over this, he will do great damage to the reputation of his Lord. Unfortunately some members of the Church have erred greatly over the years. To do so is unscriptural, unspiritual, unnecessary and unacceptable. Paul made tents for his own support to relieve the brethren, so that gold and the gospel in the

cutting edge of mission would be clearly separate. He then charged Timothy to not dabble in the affairs of this world, but rather suffer the hardship that this meant. 2 Timothy 2:3&4.

Everything has its place. See v26b. Gehazi however was a man of more earthy stuff. He is but one of a great company: like Esau who despised the spiritual, like Demas who loved this age and deserted Paul, like Judas with sticky fingers. So Gehazi loved money more than honour and he paid dearly for his greed.

Next, learn from the response of Naaman who understood the implications of his decision.

First, he announced his intention to comply with what He understood of the Lord's way v17. The two mule loads of earth were to construct an altar of Israel's soil to Israel's God v15, in accord with His instruction. See Exodus 20:24. This request shows an amazing degree of insight and understanding on the part of the Syrian. Would to God that all His people showed this level of zeal. Second, he foresaw a conflict in his new devotion with his present duties v18. He was required to physically aid his master bow before the idol

1. Rimmon 7417 is another name for the Syrian god Hadad 1906. Benhadad 1130 means 'Son of Hadad' a royal epithet. Identification of ancient kings as offspring of their gods, or a similar appellation, was common. Benhadad was by birth the son of Tabrimmon 2886 (made up from two words: *towb* 2895 'joyful, pleasant, lovely etc' and 'Rimmon 7417), thus: 'Pleasing to Rimmon' 1 Kings 15:18. Bible quotations in this study are from the NASB, if not otherwise acknowledged.

Rimmon¹, an action which evidently required him to bend his own back. In it he begged and received the Elisha's understanding and permission to continue this activity as an occupational duty. It was a required duty and not an act of devotion. Naaman anticipated that he would not be able to put his new understanding into Benhadad's heart.

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. Romans 14:4.

Compliance is not necessarily capitulation or even compromise, but accommodation of another with a different affection. See also Jeremiah 29:7-14. We sometimes criticise, or perhaps crucify brethren in the Lord who see things otherwise than ourselves and do not act as we would. Consider what Paul told the Romans in 14:1-15:7 and learn to accommodate one another in both ways. We have differing views, but one Lord. We need the wisdom of God to know what is what, and if any lacks that wisdom, there is a promise in God's word about that. In his heart, Naaman now belonged to the Lord.

Welcome Glen Park Gospel Church
Lower Road, Eltham North
Sundays 10.30 am

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