

2 Kings 5

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[0 : 00] 2 Kings chapter 5. We will, it's several verses, but we will look at the chapter in its entirety because I don't believe it does it justice to kind of split it up. 2 Kings chapter 5.

Let's open up with a word of prayer and then we'll get right into our text with one another. Lord, thank you so much just for allowing us the opportunity and the great privilege to gather together once again. We thank you for this day you've given us. We thank you for every wonderful chance we have to look at the Word of God with one another.

And we pray that the truth of it, even as we read the accounts in the Old Testament, Lord, that we begin to see more and more of you. And Lord, that we would understand just your ways and the ways of man.

We pray that you'd be glorified and honored in all that takes place. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Very familiar set of scripture to us this evening. Some of us have read it a number of times.

The account of Naaman. So 2 Kings chapter 5. Again, we're focusing on now. Let's set it up in its historical setting so that hopefully we can catch the reality of it.

[1 : 06] Again, our focus is primarily upon the northern kingdom at this point, the ministry of Elisha. We're looking at the prophetic, powerful, demonstrated ministry of Elisha in a matter of things he's done in rather successive events of chapters.

There's Naaman, the account of Naaman being one such event. And that the Lord uses Elisha to do a mighty work there. But here our focus is not so much on Elisha as it is on Naaman and those surrounding the circumstances.

So, again, it is telling to understand our context in that here is a portion of God's people that has really rejected the true worship of Yahweh and sought to replace it with idolatrous worship.

Not seeking after the Lord as a people group, though there were individuals there. Elisha being one of them who really had a heart for the Lord.

God was being used of him in a mighty way. But yet God is not bound by geographical boundaries or people groups, right? Because we are introduced to Naaman who is not of the people of Israel.

[2 : 11] Actually, he is a people, the people of Israel's enemies. And really, as we see this account for us unfold, we will see God's acceptance of a foreigner and rejection of a national.

By the time we get to the end of it in the story of Naaman and Gehazi, how one comes to really the true knowledge of who he is and one who really goes after his own desires and his own heart.

So, as we look at the fifth chapter, I kind of entow that all may know. Because we are not bound by geographical lines, again, and we are not bound by people groups.

God is drawing people, even throughout the Old Testament, all people to himself. This is the role and responsibility of the nation of Israel. God was raising up a people group so that others may know him, right?

God was raising up a people group to draw people to himself. God was raising up a people group to draw people to draw people to draw people to draw people to draw people to draw people.

[3 : 38] And she waited on Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria. Then he would cure him of his leprosy. Naaman went in and told his master, saying, Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel.

Then the king of Aram said, Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand talents of gold and ten changes of clothes. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, And now has this letter come to you?

Behold, I have sent Naaman, my servant, to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy. When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, Am I God to kill and to make alive that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy?

But consider now and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me. It happened when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, Why have you torn your clothes?

Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you, and you will be clean.

[4 : 51] But Naaman was furious and went away and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abna and Farpar of the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel?

Could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, My father, had the prophet told you to do something great, would you not have done it?

How much more then when he says to you, Wash and be clean? So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

When he returned to the man of God with all his company and came and stood before him, he said, Behold, now I know there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. So please take a present from your servant now.

But he said, As the Lord lives before whom I stand, I will take nothing. And he urged him to take it, but he refused. Naaman said, If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules load of earth, for your servant will no longer offer burnt offerings, nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord.

[6 : 02] In this matter, may the Lord pardon your servant when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon. When I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter.

He said to him, Go in peace. So he departed from him some distance. But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, thought, Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Aramean by not receiving from his hand what he brought.

As the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him. So Gehazi pursued Naaman. And when Naaman saw one running after him, he came down from the chariot to meet him and said, Is all well?

He said, All is well. My master has sent me, saying, Behold, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes.

Naaman said, Be pleased to take two talents. And he urged him and bound two talents of silver and two bags and two changes of clothes and gave them to two of his servants. And they carried them before him. And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and deposited them in the house.

[7 : 09] And he sent them in a way and they departed. But he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, Where have you been, Gehazi? And he said, Your servant went nowhere.

Then he said to him, Did not my heart go with you when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money and receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants?

Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever. So he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow. 2 Kings chapter 5.

I want you to see that all may know this event here that really steps beyond the boundaries of the nation of Israel and goes into the land of the Arameans, in particular the person Naaman, that all may know that the word of God is true and that the Lord God of Israel is the true God.

We see here God drawing people to himself, in particular this man with a great need. He is drawing him for the sole purpose that he may know who is the true God. What needs to take place that all may know?

[8 : 14] We see it in this text before us and hopefully we find the application. Four things I want you to see from this text. Number one, we see that the witness must be maintained. There is a witness to be maintained.

We are told in the verses, and it's rather astounding, the name and the captain of the army of Aram was a great man, he was a valued man, he's a wonderful man. But then there's this reference that says that the Lord had given him victory.

That the Lord had given him victory. We are reminded at the very onset of this passage of the sovereignty of God over the affairs of all men. That is, nothing happens other than the fact that the Lord God allows it to happen.

So the Arameans, being the enemies of the nation of Israel, and not in particularly here fighting against the people of Israel, though their raiding band goes in and out of there, the victories that are attributed to Naaman really are the credit of the Lord God.

So his position and his prestige among his own people group are the result of the Lord's blessing. He is a great man. We meet Naaman, a great man of stature, a great man of prominence, a great man of victory, but he's a man with a problem, right?

[9 : 24] And the problem is, is that he is leprous, or that he has this skin disease, as some translations say it. For all of his greatness, for all of his grandeur, for all of the respect that he has of all the people around him, there's this one problem that he can't master on his own.

Don't lose sight of that. And he has been given this position, the Bible tells us, because the Lord granted him victory. One of the victories that the Lord granted him was in their marooning bands that went through the nation of Israel, in which they took captive, what is said, this little girl from the land of Israel.

This little girl from the land of Israel was one of the spoils of the victory. We're not here to declare the right and wrongness of that, but we are also here to understand that God has a way of putting witnesses in place.

Because this little girl is the witness that is the key to open up the door that all may know, right? She had a witness to maintain. And we understand from our text that this girl, who was a slave of this victorious captain, makes this statement to her mistress and is, I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria.

Notice here, when we understand that it is the Lord who causes the victories and the Lord who gives the spoil, even to those outside of his people groups, that it is the witness that is maintained because she understood, she understood that she was where she was, much like Joseph, because of the Lord's leading there.

[10 : 54] And it seems to be implied here, there's no animosity, there's no despair, there's no bitterness. Rather, there is a look of favor and a look of desiring to be a blessing upon the one whom she is serving.

Don't ever, ever underestimate the smallness of any witness of any circumstance. This one statement that is given to her mistress, one obscure statement, I wish is what leads to the reality of all that follows, right?

This witness to be maintained, how easy it would have been for this girl to be bitter about her circumstances, for her to despair because of her circumstances, for her to have animosity towards those who were ruling over her.

Yet what we find is one who shows a genuine concern for those who are even her enemies. And her desire is for them to be blessed.

Now that's a very hard thing to do, but she has a desire for their good. And this demonstration of concern is what leads to all that follows.

[12 : 05] Because she makes this statement. Now notice what her witness is. I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria. Then he would cure him of his leprosy.

That's the witness. Now the interpretation of that witness we'll get to later is that, well, then we need to go to the king of Israel. That's not what she said. She didn't say go to the king. She said go to the prophet, right?

So it's a true witness. It's an accurate witness. Here is one from the land of Israel, the land that is forgetting about the Lord God. Here is one from the land of Israel, the land that is trying to replace the Lord God.

Here is one who knows there is a prophet in that land. And she was just telling what she knew. Here is the power of a witness. How do we maintain witness? We declare what we know to those whom we can.

And she maintains this witness even in unfavorable circumstances. And it is one of genuine authenticity. She really cares. Friend, it is a powerful thing when God allows us to have even a small witness.

[13 : 08] This powerful individual, this man of prominence and prestige, was nothing or is nothing apart from this little girl, as she's described in scripture, who has a concern.

This unnamed witness from the land of Israel is the one who unlocks the door for all that follows after that, that he may know. That seed is planted, and that seed is taken.

Now it grows in a manner in which Naaman would have never anticipated. Sure, he misinterpreted this witness. He understood that, oh, well, if that's the case, then I'll just go purchase this blessing, or I'll purchase this benefit, or because who I am, there ought to be respect because of this.

But yet she offered a true witness, so there's a witness to be maintained. The second thing is, there's a word to be humbly obeyed. There's a word to be humbly obeyed. We are told and reminded of the reality that Naaman is a man of position.

He is not only a victorious captain, he's not only one who has great, great, much prestige upon himself, he is a man of some position in whom the king of Aram leans upon his hand when he goes into the temple of his God, right?

[14 : 19] He is a man who goes to the king, and the king writes a letter in his name to the king of Israel. So he's a man of some means. He's a man of position. We are told in the text that Elisha doesn't go to the door.

I love how one Bible commentator said it. Elisha didn't go to the door because he didn't want to be near the leper. Elisha didn't go to the door because the leper needed to be humbled, right?

The anticipation of Naaman was that I am such a man as Naaman that he will come to me, he will receive my gifts, and I will get his blessing. He is a man of means, and he takes his means for the procurement of the blessing of the healing, and he has granted neither one of those, right?

He does not give his possessions. He does not get to claim his position. As a matter of fact, the interpretation of the witness is, well, if that's such, then I will go to the king of Israel. Listen, the word of God does not flow from the palaces.

It flows from the pulpits. The word of God doesn't flow from the kings. It flows from the prophets in this land. So king to king, Naaman said, well, this is a political matter. I am struck by the reality that evidently the king of Israel had forgotten that there was a prophet in the land.

[15 : 26] The little girl remembered, but the king of Israel forgot because when he read the letter, it said that he tore his clothes. He said, oh my God, what can I do? I cannot make a man clean, or I cannot make a man well.

The king of Israel forgot that there was a prophet in the land while this little girl who was in captivity remembered that there was a prophet in the land. And this is why when Elisha hears, he tells him to send Naaman to his house that he may know that there is a prophet.

This is not only that Naaman may know, but that all those involved in the account may know. This is a reminder. Again, this event of God drawing Naaman, a foreigner to himself, is also a testimonial sign to the people of Israel of the reality of the presence of God.

The blessings of God upon others is a testimony that he is present and he is there. So the people are without, without apology in their denial of God's existence.

So Naaman expects to be able to provide for this reality. We know the account. He goes and he stands at the doorway. His expectation is that the prophet would come out, say a magic spell, wave his hand over the leper spots and it would be cured.

[16 : 45] And then he would pay for it and he would go home and all is the wiser, right? Everybody's good. Now, you need to understand it was normal practice for the prophets of Israel to receive gifts in that time.

That's how they were provided for. But yet, that was from their own people, right? It wasn't that they were being bought or purchased. They were being blessed. That's one way God provided for them. Elisha doesn't even meet him at the door.

He just tells him to go wash in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman gets upset. Why does Naaman get upset? Because that's not what he expected. This is not what he anticipated.

Rather, he thought he would be able to buy it. He thought it would cost him a lot. He would have to give. This is a large sum of money and in ten changes of clothes that he brings with him. This is a really large sum of money, actually.

He thought this would cost him a lot. He's told that there's no expense, but there's something to go do. And surely, as he has accurately said, there are better rivers than the Jordan River. It's just a muddy river that's really supplied by a bunch of wadis and riverbeds, right?

[17 : 54] Dry river streams at this point. There are better rivers in his own land, but here is the word of God given to him. We are thankful that when Naaman heard the word of God and became angry and really left enraged that his servants reminded him of a reality.

His servants said, Our Father, which is a sign of respect that they have for him, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? And the answer to that, of course, is yes. It's an implied yes.

Any great feat that he would have had to accomplish, any great deed he would have done, he would surely have done it so that he may be healed. And here is the humbling thing. Then why not go do that which is easy?

You know, I've had people look at me before. People sit down and genuinely ask me, What must I do to be saved? I follow the same, same conversation that Paul has with the Philippians in Acts 16.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, right? But the response overwhelmingly is, It can't be that easy. But he can. The reality is, it's just like Naaman.

[19 : 02] The word of God is very clear. But man, in their natural desire and even in their pride, wants it to be something great, wants it to be something grand, wants it to be something, and now it is costly. We understand that you have to, you know, consider the cost as we're told in scripture because to believe on Jesus Christ costs you your life's commitment.

We understand that. So we don't want to oversimplify it and we don't want to make it easy believism as it's said. But people are looking for some great work that they must do when all they're told to do is humbly believe and acknowledge and obey the word of God.

This is the part where Naaman stumbles because it seems too simplistic. It seems too easy. But it wasn't until he said okay that he went and he dipped seven times.

Now think of the humble obedience there. I mean, six times down and nothing's changed. Seven times under and then all of a sudden it tells us that his skin becomes like that of a young man.

He's completely clean. There's the humility and the humbling of Naaman. We know because he travels the 32 miles back to the house of Elisha just to thank him.

[20 : 11] He went 32 miles to the Jordan River. He goes 32 miles back just to give him thanks for the reality. It wasn't until Naaman humbly obeyed the word of God that the blessings of God fail.

Elisha refuses to take any of the money any of the gifts and the reason is the third thing. There is a worship to be guarded. How will all know there's a witness to be maintained there's a word to be humbly obeyed and there's a worship to be guarded.

Naaman is so thankful for the reality of his cleansing that he comes back and he offers to Elisha these gifts and Elisha says no. It says that he compels him he wants him he urges him to take it and Elisha continues to say no.

Why is Elisha saying no? Because he wants Naaman to have the opportunity to freely worship the Lord God. The worship of the Lord God by a foreigner is much more valuable than the receiving of the gifts that he could be enriched by.

The reality is his desire is that he wants to see Naaman acknowledge that there is a true God that he may know. That's the onset, right? Send him to me that he may know, right?

[21 : 28] And then it tells us what Naaman confesses he says I know that there is no other God other than the Lord God of Israel. This is not something he could purchase this is not something he could earn this is not something that could be bought this is something that could be understood and the humility not only of Naaman but the humility of Elisha and his willingness to deny the gifts is really guarding the authenticity of the worship of Naaman right?

He's not making it about Naaman's works or his efforts or his abilities he's making it all about the Lord God and therefore Naaman makes this great declaration one of the greatest declarations we find in scripture of any Gentile or non-Jewish individual where he cast off all other gods I will not worship any other God this God alone will I worship now so much so he wants two mule loads of dirt we have to kind of understand the mentality of that time most people thought that gods were confined to geographical boundaries so to worship this God you had to be standing on this land so what Naaman is saying in the Arameans is their God was confined to the land of Aram well he wants to take a little bit of the land of Israel back to Aram so that he can stand on the land of Israel to worship Israel's God now I'm misconstrued in his interpretation because he's the God of all lands he's the God who puts his feet upon all the world but Naaman is making such a commitment that he's going to bring Israel to his land right he's going to put a little bit of Israel down so that he can stand on that dirt and worship the true God because he knows that the God of his dirt is a false God so he comes to this realization but then there's this burden upon the heart of Naaman he still wants to guard this true worship he knows that he politically is going to be put in a position that would compromise his faith so he asks that he may be forgiven and may be pardoned for when he goes into this false God of Ramon and his master his leader the one who is politically over him is leaning upon his arm we don't know why it seems to imply maybe he had some health concerns and he says

I don't want to disrespect my leader but I want to know that I'm pardoned now Elisha gives him his blessing tells him to go in peace in all manners what we see is that worship is being guarded here Elisha is not going to be a cause for stumbling and Naaman is asking for forgiveness for anything that may be a cause for stumbling what is being opened up before us is that there will be a man named Naaman who lives in the land of Aram who is going to be sincerely and honestly worshiping the true Lord God why?

because there is a witness and we see this witness when it was maintained the word was humbly obeyed now the worship has been guarded but there is one thing that we need to avoid and it is the wrong motives to be cast off because amidst all this good there is Gehazi the servant of Elisha he who should have known far better he who had the reality who knew there was a prophet in the land who was there present with him when the the lady's son was raised the one who has been present with him throughout all of this here is Gehazi it says but Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God thought behold my master has spared this Naaman the Arameans by not receiving from his hand what he brought so don't miss this Naaman I mean not Naaman Gehazi hides his selfish desires with national pride right this is the enemy of our people his selfish desires are to be enriched by Naaman's goods but he's hiding behind what we call national pride he's our enemy we should have taken from him we should have received from him again

Elisha is more concerned about the spiritual realm than he is about the political realm Gehazi here is using the political realm to meet his personal realm he says this is our enemy this is a great opportunity and notice this selfish pride this selfish desire this ambition leads to outright lies because he goes as he has let Naaman go some distance he runs to him and he openly lies about these two men who have come from Ephraim and the lies don't stop there these are motives that must be cast off Gehazi should have cast them off but he didn't he allowed them to remain the book of James tells us to be not deceived no man is tempted of God but he is tempted when he is carried away by his own lust and desires and ambitions of his own heart right he is carried away by these motives and these desires he's not tempted by God it is that which is within us Gehazi had this he saw the silver he saw the gold he saw the clothes national pride national identity gave him an excuse to do it and then he even invokes the name as surely as the Lord lives

[26 : 19] I will go take it so he makes it a righteous and holy cause right he says I'll put the name of God on it and I'll give God stamp of approval and I'll go do it and this all of a sudden gives him a reason now this reason causes a lie and he lies about the two sons or the prophets who come they never came and then he tries a little bit of humility all we need is one shekel but if you'll compel me I'll take two so he takes two he takes double the portion because of Naaman's generosity he knew he couldn't bring it all in there I mean if you got a change of clothes and all this money somebody's going to take notice but notice what he does he takes these people and it says that they come back to the place of the hill the hill is the geographical feature that constricts the view between Elisha's house and where Gehazi's at and then he takes the goods and sends them away before they go on the other side of the hill why?

so that Elisha can't see which leads to another problem now we're hiding this is a wrong motive we're making it a political agenda we're putting the name of the Lord God upon it we're openly lying about it now we're hiding behind it and then he runs and he goes into the presence of Elisha and stands there as if nothing happens and for some reason or another he who was the servant of the prophet forgot there was a prophet because Elisha asked him Gehazi where have you been I went nowhere another lie and he says was not my heart with you when the man stepped out of his chariot which by the way is a great sign of respect from Naaman normally people in such positions as Naaman would not step out of their chariot for a servant but yet Naaman had such respect for Elisha and even the servants of Elisha that he came down literally off his horse to meet him on level ground and this respect of Naaman given to the servant of Elisha was abused but Elisha said was my heart not with you when he stepped down and then he makes this declaration he says this is not the time is it the time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants he said all he took was a little bit of money and all he took was a little bit of clothes right but it was probably the desire of Gehazi to do all of these matters with that money see what Gehazi was thinking of is I can use this as an opportunity to be a blessing to my family

I can use this to multiply my goods and to make my position a little bit more secure but by seeking in his own ways and by his own motives to bless his family he ends up bringing a curse upon his family and the curse is that the leprosy of Naaman would cling to him and to his descendants forever see now we see this irony here that this foreigner who is an enemy of the people of God has come to the true knowledge of who the Lord God is and has been cleansed from sin by simple obedience but he who lives among and even in the presence of the prophet of God has denied the existence of that and he denied the existence and he took the curse of Naaman upon him because it really doesn't matter who we are that it matters is where our heart is God is not confined it is that all may know it is the heart of the individual not the geographical location of the individual that matters the most God is not compelled to save Jew or Gentile God saves and redeems those who come to him in faith and who come to this salvific knowledge of who he is and humbly obey his word but those whose motives seek for self gain and self pleasure and self exaltation

God will humble with the curses as Gehazi has seen we see here that God is drawing people to himself he's doing it in a magnificent way he uses the witness of a little girl to draw a powerful man with a problem to a humble act of obedience but in the same same account there's a man who should have known but yet decided that it was worth the risk and in the end it did not pay off for him that all may know I promise you that by the time it was over Naaman knew Naaman's wife knew the little girl was confirmed in what she knew and Gehazi knew but the blessing rests upon the obedience and we see that recorded for us over and over in the word of God but we see it in particular here in 2nd Kings chapter 5 let's pray and then we'll be dismissed God we're so thankful for this day we're so thankful for your faithfulness to your word and God we realize that as you call us to walk as people your word quite often you call us to walk in humble obedience it's not always the great and marvelous things that you want us to do simply put sometimes it's just obeying the word it's following you with a heart of faithfulness so God help us to be those people who set our motives aside to walk faithfully as you want us to

Lord we do pause and we pray for those families around us that are hurting we pray for Miss Womble and the Riddle family we pray that you be with Miss Runyon and the Cunningham family that you be with her in her recovery Lord there are others even in our own midst there are people in great need we pray oh God that you would help us to be faithful to walk in in obedience to minister as we have the opportunity we thank you for your goodness that you show us the love that you pour out upon us and the blessing of each and every day Lord would you continue to lead would we continue to follow Lord be with us now as we get ready to leave here and we pray that this week that our hearts and minds would be set upon you and we ask it all in Jesus name Amen thank you guys really appreciate your time this evening and we're