

Thank God for your Leprosy

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Next Wed: Dave Eubank. **Then** 9/27 Steve Gumaer.

II. Slide2 Intro: Thank God for your Leprosy

- A. How much do you know about the Lepers in the bible? (Q&A)
- B. What (former) leper of Bethany entertained Jesus in his home? Simon (Mark 14:3)
- C. What king of Judah was a leper until the day of his death? Uzziah (2 Chron.26:21)
- D. What captain of the armies of Syria was a leper? Naaman (2 Kings 5:1)
- E. What prophetess became a snow-white leper for a short time? Miriam (Numb.12:10)
- F. Who put his hand into his bosom and, drawing it out, found it leprous? Moses (Ex.4:6)
- G. Who became a leper after he lied to the prophet Elisha? Gehazi (2 Kings 5:27)
- H. Who told Moses to send lepers away from the Israelite camp? The Lord (Num 5:1-4)
- I. What is the greatest number of lepers Jesus healed at any one time? 10 (Lk. 17:12)
- J. We are going to meet 4 characters tonight & *learn lessons* from each of their lives.
 - 1. **Prayer:** *all these OT things happened for our example & for our instruction.*
- K. **Little kids** love bandaids. **Older kids** are too cool for them. As **adults**, we try to hide them, we don't want to show...*something happened there*. So we cover our cover up *life's boo-boo's*. [Often, the Lord will draw us out, to deal with those *hurts/sins/or r past*]

III. Slide3 LESSONS FROM A YOUNG ISRAELI GIRL (2,3)

- A. **A little slave girl**. Carried away captive to a foreign land probably as a teen. She remembers her God. Remembers her prophet. She maintains her confidence in God's ability to work wonders...*even though her* situation hasn't changed.
- B. **Slide4a** It is possible to serve God in a foreign land, in a pagan profession, heathen home?
 - 1. **Joseph** served in **Egypt**. **Esther** in **Persia**. This **young Jewish maiden** in **Syria**.
 - 2. **Daniel** showed us not only how to live in...*but* how to **abound** in **Babylon**.
 - a) Which area of your life would you call your *Egypt, Persia, Syria, Babylon...* where you have been called to serve in?

- b) Don't complain about where God **puts you**; just ask Him to **use you** while you're there
- c) Babylon's are usually for *a season*. But in Daniels case it was his *whole earth season*.
- C. Through her intervention...she starts this *providential ball rolling* that will effect her Master's life forever.
1. She uses the phrase *he would heal him* (3) (lit.) *he will gather*. Referring to readmission of the leper into society after being quarantined.
- D. Slide4b She sought the peace of the home to which she was carried captive.
1. Jer.9:7 *And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.*
- E. Slide4c But I'm just...a little slave girl. Servants play major rule in this miracle... The young Jewish girl gets Naaman to visit Elisha. Naaman's servants encourage him to see the prophet which bring about his healing.
1. Slide4d Lesson: no matter **who** you are, or **where** you are, God can use your service.
 2. Slide4e Don't forsake your post in a godless house, in a difficult workplace. Look for your Naaman. Pray peace upon that place.
- F. Slide4f What would you say if you were counseling her? You just heard she was ripped from her childhood home. Stolen from her country into a foreign land. Forced to work as a servant girl. How would you counsel this *unexplainable disaster* with no relief in sight?
1. Yet God enabled her to bring about a great deliverance, that would be written down, & brought inspiration to tens of thousands.
 2. She rose above her sorrows, & by faith brought victory out of defeat.
- G. Also, this is an example of the promise God gave to Abraham, *that Israel would be a blessing to the nations*.

IV. Slide5 LESSONS FROM NAAMAN THE LEPER (1-19)

- A. (1a) By him the Lord had given victory to Syria - we see the hand of God was guiding **heathen** as well as **Hebrew** history.
1. The story of Naaman's leprosy shows that God's power and concern extended outside of Israel. Which Jesus makes a point of in the NT. Jesus made it clear,

that from the beginning, God was concerned not only with Israel, but with gentiles as well.

- B. Slide6a (1b) ...but a leper - he had everything that this world could give, with one exception, **health**. *But he was a leper.*
1. His beautiful uniform and his mighty victories could not disguise, hide, nor mask the fact that Naaman was *a walking dead-man*. He had an incurable disease. [every lost sinner can see himself here]
 2. There is a lot of **evenness** in our earthly lives, more than we think, but there is also a **but** in every life which is meant to *bring us to God*.
 3. Do you see the **main thing** in the whole story that brought about his salvation...*his leprosy*. *Is all disease then bad?*
- C. (5,6) The king of Syria thought the king of Israel could bring about this healing...but the days of Israel's kings *representing Jehovah* had passed away.
- D. (7,8) Naaman really doesn't need the Syrian King, nor the king of Israel. He needs the King of Kings.
1. See, the Syrian king doesn't get who the healer is, Naaman doesn't get that, & neither does the Israelite king.
 2. Slide6b Ex.15:26 *If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you. Jehovah Rapha*, the God who heals.
 3. Do need a healing today? *Physical, emotional, social, financial, spiritual.* HE is the great physician. *What in your life needs a touch?*
- E. (11,15) Naaman came dangerously near returning home on healed.
1. *I said to myself*/I thought (11) will wreck us. Note the difference in vs.15 *indeed now I know*.
- F. (11) *Doesn't he know who I am* - some pride needs to be broken...and Elisha's on it.
1. Elisha treated him like any ordinary center.
- G. (15) Naaman responded by offering Elisha a lavish gift. His method of expressing Gratitude.

1. He was so thankful, he returned 20 miles out of his way to say thank you.
- H. Slide6c (15) **The man of God** - I want *your name* there as **the man/woman of God**.
1. **That's better than any other title. That's our goal.** **Not**, the really really cunning, crafty, clever successful business man or woman. **Not**, the most amazing mom who makes the best lunches. **Not**, the most amazing mom who works a hundred hours a week.
 - a) But say, *your name....the man/woman of God*. Try it on for size. **Speak prophetically to yourself.** That's who you are *in Christ*. **That's who you are, not the who you used to be, not who you once were.**
- I. Slide6d (17) **A little Dirt Can't Hurt**
- J. **Two mule loads of dirt** - Naaman wants *holy ground* with him so that he can have Yahweh with him while outside Israel.
1. The request reflects a belief that **Israel's territory** belonged to Yahweh, **while** other nations were under the dominion of other, lesser gods.
 2. **Slide6e Imperfect faith:** His faith was still imperfect. Brand new believer. Elisha **doesn't** say **no** to the dirt. **He knows its not a hill to die on** (*pun intended*). **He didn't need a lecture, nor a theology lesson.**
 - a) **Note:** *don't wack new believers in the face w/your 10lb King Jimmy family bible.*
- K. (18) Naaman now believes in Yahweh and vows to never sacrifice to another god, **but** his *official duties* require that he accompany his elderly king into the temple of Rimmon.
1. Again, **Elisha says what? Shalom Alechem** (or alech) **Go in peace.**

V. Slide7 **LESSONS FROM ELISHA THE MAN OF GOD (8-19)**

- A. **Elisha's** instructions to **wash** in Jordan River **echoed** in **Jesus's** instructions to a blind man to **wash** in the pool of Siloam (Jn.9).
- B. Elisha's attitude in this chapter was from beginning to end 1 of dignified loyalty to God.
 1. **First** in his message to the King who was filled with fear.
 2. **Next** his message to the wealthy leper calling for his submission/ humility.
 3. **Next** in his biblical confrontation with his servant. **Where did you go Gehazi?**

4. **And finally** in his absolute refusal to take any personal reward for what had been brought about by God.

VI. Slide8 **LESSONS FROM GEHAZI THE LIAR (20-27)**

- A. Now we understand why vss.5-7 talk about the money that was brought. The story is emphasizing **healing** can't be obtained by **influence or wealth**.
 1. The important Commander must learn to receive it as **a gift**, in a humble, obedient, and believing spirit.
 2. **But here**, Gehazi robbed God of **Glory** by asking Naaman for gifts. **The Syrians would now think that they had to pay for God to get His help.**
 - a) **Gehazi became poor by becoming rich.**
 - b) **Slide9 *He ruined the message of grace by his sin.**
 3. Gehazi received **the leprosy of Naaman**. And passed it down to his children.
- B. **Gehazi is the sad counterpart of Judas.**
 1. Like the traitor, he revealed the hardening effect that **association with pure goodness** may have on human conscience. [the bible says **bad company corrupts...but** we also sometimes see association with **pure goodness** sometimes hardens]
- C. **Slide10** In the bible leprosy is used as a picture of sin.
 1. **Gehazi** became a leper because of **covetousness** and **deception**.
 2. **Miriam** became a leper because of **criticism** and **envy** (Numb.12).
 3. **King Uzziah** became a leper because of **pride** (2 Chron.26:16-23)
 - a) **If God did this to people today, would you be a leper?**
 - b) **The hidden sins of the Spirit are dangerous.**