

Choices Transform

By Pastor Marvin R. Barham

2 Kings 5:1 *1Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper.*

Naaman was a man of strength, nobility, great pride. He was a man of independence, leadership and authority. He was a man of honor and valor. But apparently he was not a man of much humility.

Naaman had contracted the common yet dreadful disease of leprosy. If you contracted this disease you were an outcast and banished from all of society. Everything that defined him was about to be lost. Naaman was desperate for an outward transformation.

So often I see this in people. Many struggle with addictions and habits and they come into the church or try to do things outwardly to make changes. They want to change the way they appear to others. They desire to change outward behaviors. Yet, they always seem to fall short. Just as Naaman was about to discover, the only way anything was going to change on the outside is when something change on the inside.

With Naaman all hope of transformation, healing, and restoration was lost until he humbly received the advice of his wife's handmaiden. What? A man of such great stature takes the advice of a servant? What choice did he have? All options had been expended. This is where we have to be for God to truly transform us from the inside out. Sometimes God has to get us to a place where the choices we make are limited to as He put it, "I set before you this day, blessings and curses, life and death. Choose life." Again, we come to realize that the sovereignty of wills lies in surrendering our choice to God's opportunity to make us more like Him.

2 Kings 5:9-15 *9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11But Naaman was wroth, 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 strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. 13And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? 14Then 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. 15And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.*

Naaman was a man of authority. He was used to giving orders and telling others what to do and how to do it. Now he comes to the prophet with expectations of what should happen, when, where, and how. To his surprise he does not get healed at the touch of a hand. He does not get healed through some great words of prayer. He does not get healed in such a way that his dignity remains intact. Instead, he is given instructions to go bath in a nasty river not once but seven times. As a result he almost refuses and walks away having missed his destined opportunity for the greatest transformation of his life.

How many times in our lives have we been in Naamans place and because of our perceptions, preconceived expectations and pride missed God's sovereign opportunity to grow and embrace a portion of our destiny because we could not see past what we were confronted with? Fortunately, the servants of the Lord convinced him to obey. What followed was an incredible testimony to the transforming glory of God. Not only had Naaman's flesh been restored to that of a child but a change had taken place in his thinking, his heart and his perception of himself and God.

Notice that Naaman ultimately did experience God's transforming power but that it only came 1. As a result of his accepting God's terms and conditions and 2. His change of heart, thinking, and perceptions.

How many of us have longed for God to change us or grow in us, yet it never seem to see the fruit of it because there are still parts of our hearts, thinking, or attitudes that remain unwilling to submit to His terms and conditions, unwilling to make His precepts, principles, His ways ours? We want Him to do His work in us, through us and around us but we want Him to do it the way we expect.

What is it in you that is stubbornly resisting the terms of God's transforming power of your life? Choose to embrace God's opportunity today for a life changing encounter with Him from the inside out. Choose to accept the terms of God's transforming power. Let your choices be transformed that He may transform you into His image.