



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Kings 5: 1-27

Spring 2024

"He Was A Leper"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. Hudson Taylor was a great man of faith. He established the China Inland Mission, which was a faith mission. And those three statements that he made were witnessed in his own life and his ministry as he saw God's hand minister greatly to him and to those in China. And that is probably a work that is still going on today, just through the seeds that were sown so long ago.

Well, we see in our passage this morning that *God is*—and He demonstrates that to a man who was raised in paganism. Our passage is 2 Kings chapter 5, and we're going to look at all 27 verses.

I want to begin with some clarification, though. We read of *Aram* and the *Arameans*: Aram is Syria, and the Arameans are the Syrians. They were Israel's ancient enemies, and they are Israel's enemies today—which is quite interesting. This book is relevant—as relevant today as it was so many centuries ago.

Well, I'm going to begin reading with verse 1, and I'm going to conclude with verse 14, (although we will cover the entire chapter with our lesson today).

“5 Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, *but he was* a leper. ² Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on

Naaman's wife. ³ 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."

(Now I will just note this: That shows her great faith because, as we see from the New Testament and the words of our Lord in Luke chapter 4, (vs27), the prophet had not healed anyone in Israel of leprosy. So she had not known of anyone that had been healed of leprosy—but she knew that he could do it because she was a young person of faith. So she says, 'There is hope for the general with the prophet in Israel.')

Verse 4,

⁴ Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel." ⁵ 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 *shekels* of gold and ten changes of clothes.

⁶ He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy." ⁷ 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."

⁸ 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." ⁹ So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to him..."

(I think that's interesting. Elisha doesn't go out to meet this great man from Syria. He was no respecter of persons and I think that's demonstrated in this text, (and we see it elsewhere). But also, and perhaps this is the main thing, Elisha is not present because he doesn't want this man to think that it is the prophet that brings about this great miracle that he'll experience. Rather this is the work of God, altogether. So we read...)

¹⁰ 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." ¹¹ 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.' ¹² Are not Abanah and Pharpar, 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. ¹³ Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you *to do some* great thing, would you not have done *it*? How much more *then*, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" ¹⁴ 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.

2 Kings 5: 1-14

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, it is a great privilege once again to be with Your people on this LORD's day, and do what we're doing, opening the Word of God and reading of Your great work of grace. We were reminded in Sunday School this morning by Michael that, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone", (Psa118:22), that though Your Son was rejected by His people, He has become the corner stone of Your Temple that You are building in this day, and that we who've put our faith in Him have been joined to Him, and been made 'living stones'. What a great work of grace. You've joined us to Him, 'the living stone', and we are alive too, for You can make those who are as 'dead and cold as stone'...living.

And we read the same thing in our text this morning, and consider how You could take a man who is sick unto death with a dying disease and You can give life and healing to the sin-sick soul. That's Your grace.

Now, we are all like Naaman in and of ourselves and You've cured us and healed us through Your sovereign grace and what Your Son did on the cross, where He paid the price. We give You praise and thanks for His sacrifice for us, and Your salvation and grace that brought us to Him and has cleansed us. We thank You for that; remind us of these things as we study our text.

LORD, we are spiritually needy. We need to be fed on Your Word routinely, not just on a Sunday but throughout the week. We need to be built up in the faith and we pray for that this morning. We also pray for our material needs. We thank You that today there are not many names listed on our prayer request, but we pray for those that are sick who we know need prayer. You know who's in difficulty, and we pray You'd bless.

We pray You'd bless us now as we continue our service, and prepare our hearts for a time of worship and study together. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) In the eleventh century, French knights, 'The Crusaders', conquered the Holy Land, and established what they called, the 'Latin Kingdom', or, 'The Kingdom of Jerusalem.'

And they had kings. One of them was Baldwin IV. He was young and brave, an excellent horseman and a valiant warrior who defeated the great Muslim general, Saladin, with 300 men against 3000. —But he was a leper, the 'Leper King'. Eventually the disease took its toll. His face and hands became deformed; he went blind and unable to walk. —He died at the age of 24.

Centuries earlier, in the same land, there was another King of Jerusalem, Uzziah, a godly king who also died a leper. It is a cruel disease. It doesn't respect the prestige or position of men; it attacks the rich and powerful as well as the poor and weak—a tiny, microscopic bacterium that infects and slowly destroys a person, body and soul, until he dies a humiliating death. There was no cure.

Then there was Naaman, also a man of prestige and position. Like Baldwin, he too, was a great warrior. He is described in verse 1 of 2 Kings, chapter 5: He was a Syrian,

"...captain of the army of the king of Aram....by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, *but he was* a leper." (vs1). He knew he was doomed to die by inches—losing fingers, and then losing toes, his sight, and his life.

But in the many victories God had given him and the army of Syria was a victory over Israel. And in the providence of God, a little girl had been captured who became a servant in his house. She was a righteous girl and she knew about Elisha and his ministry. She believed in it and had a concern for Naaman, (and he may have been a kind master to her, and won her affection), but still, she loved her enemy.

So one day she said to Naaman's wife, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy." (vs3). An Israelite caring for a Syrian, a pagan. Unusual, but this is one of many examples in the Bible, and in life, of the mystery of providence: God gave victory to His enemy over His people, and a Syrian raiding party captured an Israelite girl, put her in Naaman's household—and by "a little girl", (vs2), a great man learns the Good News!

We don't see what God is doing in our disappointments in life—but He's active, active in all of them. As Paul told the Romans, (11:3), "How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" ...suddenly, from the mouth of a child there was hope. Naaman told the king what she had said, and the king told Naaman, 'Go to Israel', (vs5), (desperate times call for desperate measures).

So Naaman went to his enemy, loaded down with treasures—silver and gold, "and ten changes of clothes." (vs5). That's the way of the world, isn't it? Thinking he could bribe a prophet and buy God's mercy. He also went with a letter from the king of Syria to the king of Israel.

It was all for nothing. The treasures for the prophet would not be accepted; and the letter to the king was rejected. In fact, the king was alarmed by it; for in it the king of Syria asked him to heal Naaman. Now being a pagan, he, (*the Syrian king*), didn't understand the ways of God, didn't understand the prophets of God. He thought that if anyone could heal, it would be a king—a man of power. Again, it's the way of the world;

looking to the powerful for help—when the reality is, blessing comes, God said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit." Zechariah, chapter 4, verse 6.

The King of Israel was no man of God either; but he knew he was no healer. And after reading the letter, he saw a conspiracy behind it and was convinced that the leprosy of Naaman was a pretext for starting a war. (I guess if he couldn't heal him, then the king of Syria would see that as a provocative act, or lack of help.)

So seeing a conspiracy behind this we read that the king of Israel, "tore his clothes", (vs7), (which was a sign of despair). One of the commentators, Paul House, wrote, "He has no idea that deep, personal pain, and a child's pure motives have caused this trip" In other words, he was a spiritual dolt; he was a dullard; he had no spiritual comprehension. A man whose soul is untethered from the Word of God, (as the king of Israel's soul was), is left to his own devices—and with this lack of knowledge, and lack of perspective, and lack of wisdom, and lack of courage, in despair he tore his clothes.

But again, it brings out the contrast we see throughout this chapter: Power is not in the king, but in the prophet. Power is not in the state, but in the Word of God—and the man or woman of God.

Now at this point, Naaman must have been bewildered, and 'at his wit's end.' He had come to Israel for help, and he couldn't find it.

But God was in it, and His work cannot be frustrated. Elisha 'heard' that Naaman had come for healing. How he heard isn't said; maybe God revealed it to him, (he was a prophet). But it could just as easily have been by 'word-of-mouth'—after all, this is a great man, a Syrian, a general, the great enemy has come to Israel; so, no doubt, 'word had gotten out'. But either way, however 'word' got to him, it was the LORD who got the word to the prophet.

And so he learned of Naaman's need and mission, and also of the king's consternation. He sent word to him, "Why have you torn your clothes?" (vs8). In other words, 'Get a grip! Get ahold of yourself! This is not a bad thing, but a good thing.' So he

told the king, "...let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." (vs8c).

Now that's a man of God: Not confused and not afraid, but stable and strong. That comes with a deep knowledge and command of the Word of God. It's what all of us, man and woman, need to strive for. Elisha was the towering figure in Israel and the nations—and he would make known to Naaman, the Syrian, the Gentile, that, "...there is a prophet in Israel!" Which is to say that, 'The Lord God...is! He exists, and He works in the world to heal and give life.'

The King of Israel didn't have a clue, but the prophet knew what this incident was all about. It was about mercy, and grace, and glory—glory to God alone. (And we might even see in this a prophecy, a suggestion, of what would come in the salvation of the Gentiles and the gathering in of them, with the salvation of this great man from Syria.)

Naaman arrived at the prophet's home with a large entourage, horses, and chariots—expecting the prophet to greet him and perform a big, elaborate ceremony, one fitting for his high position. Instead, Elisha sent a messenger to give Naaman the instruction, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you, and *you will* be clean." (vs10).

[Now there's a connection here with the Law in Leviticus 14, for dealing with leprosy. It involves being sprinkled with water seven times...and it involved much more than that: The priest would slay two birds, one to be slain over running water. The leper had to wash his clothes, shave his hair, bathe in water, and live outside the camp for seven days.]

However, Elisha's prescription was simple: All that was required was a message—and faith in it. Not even the prophet's presence was needed. As I suggested in the reading of the Word, I think that was deliberate. One, because he, (*Elisha*), is not a respecter of persons—but two, it is to make clear that this healing would not occur because of some power *in the prophet*, but that this is the work of God. And so what we

see here is, 'Just simple obedience is what is required—simple obedience in the Word of God.'

But it was too simple for Naaman....in fact, he thought it was an insult. He expected personal attention from the prophet, and respect, and ritual. Ritual's so important to this man, and to men like him. '*Real religion*', in his mind, was about elaborate ceremonies—ceremonies affect what needs to be done. "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.' " (vs11). ('But No!, Just go wash in the Jordan River!')

Why the Jordan, of all places!? He was a Syrian—a proud Syrian. Verse 12, " 'Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be cleaned?' So he turned and went away in a rage."

He wanted blessing; he wanted it badly enough to come to Israel—but he wanted it on his terms...so much so that he was ready to keep his leprosy and go back to Damascus. Pride is an affliction more deadly than the most lethal disease. Fortunately for Naaman, he had good servants: A little Israelite slave girl back home—and some faithful, wise men in his army; and they were able to reason with him:

"Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, 'My father, had the prophet told you *to do some* great thing, would you not have done *it*? How much more *then*, when he says to you, "Wash and be clean?" ' " (vs13). That stopped him. It's like David's counsel in Psalm 34, verse 8, "O taste and see that the LORD is good." (Or, 'Don't question it...taste!')

And Naaman did that. He tasted; he obeyed Elisha and discovered that the LORD is real. Verse 14, "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."

But not only was his body washed clean, his soul was, too. Not by water, but by faith in the LORD. He returned to the prophet, the man of God, to show himself, thank Elisha, and confess his new faith; " 'Behold now, I know there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel...' ", (vs15b).

Now that is a remarkable testimony from a pagan Gentile; that's Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verse 4, the 'Shema', called the fundamental truth of Israel's religion:

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

There's only one God. However, most in Israel, at that time, did not believe what Naaman confessed. Many were idolaters, worshiping Baal and other gods—Moloch, and the gods of the nations. They were enamored of them.

So this is one of the great confessions of faith and conversion in the Old Testament, and one of the great confessions of faith and conversions in all the Word of God—and all the world. In a moment, in what was a rebirth, this great Syrian general abandoned the many gods of his fathers and the nations, to believe in the only true God, *God of Israel*.

That was the only explanation for his cure: It happened without ritual or magic, without the prophet, without any human agency—but through obedience to God's Word He alone saved Naaman.

And now, out of pure gratitude, the general wanted to bless the prophet with a gift. "Please," he said, "take a present from your servant now." (vs15c). You see the change in him from this arrogant general who's ready to leave because the prophet hadn't come out to him and wave his hand over him, and then done some magic words; for now he's the servant of the prophet, and wants to bless him with a gift:

Verse 16, "But he said, (*Elisha said*), 'As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing.' And he urged him to take it, but he refused."

Now that may have been as amazing to Naaman as his healing—a prophet, (or a priest, a minister), refused money! But Elisha would not profit off God's grace and Naaman's conversion—that would cheapen it.

The Word of God is free. The Good News is free. Salvation is free. That's the invitation the prophet gave, the prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 55, verse 1,

"Come, everyone who thirsts.

Come to the waters;

and he who has no money,

come, buy, and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price."

That's the message of Isaiah, that's the message of the Books of Genesis—from Genesis to Revelation, that's the message: The free grace of God; 'Have life, eternal life, for free, because it's already been paid for by another, by the Lord God—and He can now offer it without cost.'

Elisha refused to compromise that glorious message by taking a gift. And he could afford to do that; he could afford to pass up these rich gifts that were offered to him in order that God get the glory, because he knew God; he knew Him personally. He knew His Word, He knew His ways. He knew He is sovereign and He provides for a servant who seeks His glory above all else. He will not neglect that person.

Elisha believed what Jesus would later teach in Matthew chapter 6, verse 25, "...do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on.' , (vs25), 'But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.' ", (vs33).

A person can do that very thing who knows and trusts in the LORD. That's what all of this is about: 'Trusting the LORD'. Trusting the Word of the LORD from a lowly, slave girl,

to trusting the prophet's instruction, to trusting the LORD to provide for one's needs. All who trust in the LORD are blessed—in daily life, and with eternal life.

Naaman accepted Elisha's refusal of his gift, but then he asked for a special gift for himself, a gift from the prophet: Some dirt. Verse 17, "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.' "

This itself was an act of devotion, (and not a weakness of faith, as has been suggested, as though he thought that the God of Israel could only be worshiped on Israelite soil). Naaman knew Yahweh, the LORD, is the only God who fills the earth. There's no God but Him; he's made that statement. But he wanted a sacred place, set apart from the pagan soil of Syria on which to worship the LORD. —It was holy ground. (One of the commentators called it, "a personal outpost for the LORD in Syria.")

He, (*Naaman*), was wholly devoted to the Lord God; and he had one request for which he asked the LORD's tolerance—a further request when official duties required that he enter the temple of Rimmon, his former god. Verse 18, "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."

Rimmon was the Syrian version of Baal, the storm god—the god of thunder and lightning. Naaman had confessed his faith in the LORD as the only God—that his worship would only be for Him. Now the prophet Elisha knew his heart; he knew it was undivided and his official duty would not be worship. In fact, Naaman, the Syrian, had more faith than almost all the people in Israel. So Elisha, speaking for the LORD, gave His permission. "Go in peace." he said. (vs19). 'Shalom.' It was an amazing triumph of grace: Salvation through grace alone by faith alone in the LORD alone.

But then the story takes a sad turn from the prophet's self-denial to his servant's self-gratification... 'from grace to greed.' After Naaman had gone some distance from

Elisha, Gehazi moves stealthfully after him. He had seen the great wealth Naaman brought from Syria and how Elisha had turned it all down. He wanted it. "As the LORD lives", he vowed, "I will run after him and take something from him." (vs20).

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," Jesus said. (Mar 6:21). Our treasure occupies our heart, and what occupies our heart controls our thoughts and governs our lives. The treasures of Syria controlled Gehazi's heart—and he literally ran after them. When Naaman saw him coming, he stopped and he asked, 'If all was well?' (vs21). And Gehazi answers him, in verse 22, "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 in two bags with two changes of clothes, and gave them to two of his servants; and they carried *them* before him. When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and deposited them in the house, and sent the men away, and they departed." (vs 23-24).

There are few things more alluring than material wealth. It was, 'the glitter of gold' that snagged Achan's heart in Jericho, (so many years prior to this), where everything was devoted to the LORD alone. This is the one city that God said, 'This is devoted to Me.' *Herem* has been pronounced on that city, and everything was to be offered up to Him as almost an offering—a burnt offering. They were to take whatever they wanted, (the spoils of war), from all of the cities of Canaan—but not this one. It was devoted to the LORD.

But Achan saw some lovely things. He saw a beautiful Babylonian garment, he saw "shekels of silver", he saw "a bar of gold", and he said, "I coveted them and took them." (Jos 7:21). It cost him his life—and it would cost Gehazi, too.

What this is, is a failure to trust in the LORD. It's a failure to know Him and trust that He will provide: A failure to believe that, 'If we seek His kingdom, all that is best will be given to us.'

Now I don't believe this is an indictment on wealth, or being rich, and having possessions.

The real question is, 'Do possessions have you?'

Gehazi's sin was a problem of the heart. He knew what was right; Elisha had shown that when he refused the gift. Elisha was signaling something very important in that gesture, (that refusal), and that is: The Gospel, salvation, grace...is *free*. That truth that had been gloriously demonstrated by Elisha, also showed that godliness is not materialistic and wealth is not where the man of God's treasure is.—Rather his is treasure is *the LORD*.

But Gehazi had dishonored that message. Gehazi had dishonored the prophet and defiled his message by his greed. And like Achan, he thought he could get away with it, (as though God doesn't see everything!) So, when he returned to the prophet and stood before him ready to resume his duties, Elisha asked him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere." (vs25b).

Well, I guess there's some truth in that statement. A failure to trust the LORD and instead follow our own desires leads *nowhere*—only to an empty place, a spiritual vacuum...*nowhere*.

Gehazi thought he had gone to a place of wealth, he'd gone to a place of security and happiness—when in fact he had bankrupted himself; and not only for the rest of his life, but also for those who were associated with him.

Elisha showed him there are no secrets. Verse 26, "Then he said to him, 'Did not my heart go *with you*, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants?'"

In other words, 'Is this the time, Gehazi, for prosperity, for health, and wealth, and ease?'

No; that's the future. It is coming; Jesus spoke of the kingdom to come in Matthew chapter 19, verse 28 as, "the regeneration", when the earth will be reborn. It will be the resurrection age, one of great glory.

But that's not now. Today is the day of service in a fallen world, a hostile world where Gods' people live as pilgrims by faith, not by sight—trusting the LORD daily, and not seeking fleshly desires.

You might think, (I would think), that by now, 'the health and wealth' preachers would be thoroughly discredited and rejected by their followers. But evidently not, they still seem to be flourishing. No, the problem is not just with those false teachers and that false gospel of these charlatans that enrich themselves; it's with the people that follow them as well. They don't know the Word of God; they don't have an interest in knowing it, so they are easily deceived.

But Gehazi did know it. He was close to the greatest prophet of the day and the revelation that had come through him. But he failed to follow what he had learned.

And what a warning that is to us, who hear the Word of God every week. It's a warning to guard our hearts from the allure of the world and the danger of riches—and the power of covetousness and greed. Paul told the Colossians that, 'greed is idolatry.' And it is because of greed and immorality, he said, "...that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience." (Col 3:6).

And it came on Gehazi. The chapter ends, " '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*." (vs27).

Gehazi had great a privilege to be with the prophet and witness a glorious miracle: The cleansing of a leper, a Gentile, a Syrian—and his conversion. What he saw was rare.

In fact it was unique. Jesus spoke of it in the synagogue in Nazareth. At the beginning of His ministry, in Luke chapter 4, verse 27, He reminded the people, "And

there were many lepers...in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman, the Syrian." That was God's distinguishing grace, His sovereign grace. Why a Gentile, a Syrian, and a warrior who was the enemy of Israel?

Well, that's sovereign grace, the sovereign grace of God. He chose a man who was unworthy, who had probably given little to no thought at all to the Lord God, (and, who was not seeking Him), but whom God *chose* to heal and convert—(while He passed over Israelites).

Why did He save you? Why did He enlighten you so that you suddenly, (or over a period of time), understood the Gospel and your need...and believed—when the world is full of lepers, full of unbelievers, who are not enlightened? Why you and not them?

It's grace, sovereign grace. And the people in the synagogue got that message from our Lord—they didn't like it! They didn't like that observation that He made; it angered them. In fact, Luke wrote that, 'All of them were filled with rage, and drove Him out of the city to throw Him off a cliff.' (ibid.).

Now, that was Naaman's reaction to Elisha's instruction to, 'wash in the Jordan seven times.' It was too simple, and required humbling himself to wash in the Jewish Jordan. So he went away 'in a rage.'

That's the natural man, whether Jew or Gentile, for we are proud of who we are and we feel worthy of God's favor—and that we should have it! Naaman was a great man in his land and believed in '*Religion*'—ceremony for healing. He expected ritual and priestcraft...some 'magic' —not a simple washing!

But God used the counsel of the wise to change his mind. He went to the Jordan, and the leprosy was washed away. What a picture that gives of salvation!

Leprosy is an appropriate illustration of sin: It was incurable; it destroyed the body. And that's what sin does; it destroys the whole person, body and soul—and there is no human cure for it.

God alone cures the sin-sick soul. That cure is the bloody sacrifice of Christ; that's where the sinner must 'go and wash.' That's how the great multitude of Gentile saints in heaven are described in Revelation chapter 7, in verse 14: Those "...who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." 'They are justified', is what he's saying.

It's a beautiful way of describing faith in Christ, trusting in Him and His sacrifice alone for salvation. It's not by rituals of religion or human effort, but only by believing in the simple Gospel. It was the message of Paul and Silas to the Philippians, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:31).

If you haven't done that, you have just received a great blessing—you have heard the solution to your greatest problem. Sin has infected your soul, and it clings to you, and damns you—and will forever. Don't go out of here as Elisha's servant went out from him, a leper. Be healed. Be made clean. Trust in Christ for salvation—for forgiveness and eternal life. He took our sins on Himself on the cross, where they were all punished and removed forever. He became as a leper for us, so that we might have His health and purity—His righteousness and His life. That's what the sinner receives the moment he or she believes in Christ the Savior.

Receive that, and then live for Him—not for the world, not for time, but for the LORD and eternity. He blesses all who trust in Him. May God help you to do that.

And help all of us to live a life of faith, trusting His word daily.

(Closing prayer) Father we do confess;

"Not the labors of my hands

Can fulfill Thy law's demands;

Could my zeal no respite know,

Could my tears forever flow

All for sin could not atone.;

Thou must save, and Thou alone."

(Rock of Ages, verse 3)

—and You have done that through the person and work of Your Son. We thank You for Him and for the cleansing and the healing we have of the sin-sick soul. It's all of You, and we give You all the praise.

Now the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. Shalom. In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)