

# The Story of the Leper

by John Sung

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*The story of Naaman the Leper teaches us the importance of humility and complete surrender in receiving God's saving grace and experiencing spiritual transformation.*

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## Description

John Sung preaches about Naaman, a great Syrian general afflicted with leprosy, illustrating how despite his worldly success, he was spiritually dead due to sin. The sermon emphasizes that like Naaman, many people may appear successful but are suffering internally from their own 'leprosy' of sin. Sung highlights the importance of humility and obedience to God's word, as Naaman's healing came only after he followed the prophet Elisha's simple instructions to wash in the Jordan River. Ultimately, the message conveys that true healing and salvation come through the blood of Jesus, not through wealth or status. Sung's personal testimony parallels Naaman's journey, showcasing the transformative power of God's grace.

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## Transcript

my leprosy." applicationPoints: - "We must humble ourselves before God and surrender to His plan of salvation to experience spiritual transformation." - "Complete surrender is essential in receiving God's saving grace and experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit." - "The precious blood of Jesus is the only way to wash away our sins and experience spiritual healing." keywords: - "Naaman the Leper" - "God's Saving Grace" - "Humility" - "Complete Surrender" - "Precious Blood of Jesus" - "Spiritual Leprosy" - "Sin" - "Salvation" ---

### II Kings 5

Vs.1. Now Newman, 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 of wisdom, but he was a leper".

Here was a most famous general of Syria called Newman, an all-conquering hero. The King loved him and the people revered him. Perhaps many statues were erected in the kingdom to his honor. His name was used even as trade mark. He had everything. He was well-favored in everything except one. He was a leper. Though a person having a head, eyes, nose, mouth, hands and feet, he had contracted leprosy. His body became worm eaten. It was all odors and sores. Though he appeared a living person, he was as good as dead. He was a living hell.

When a person is encumbered with sin, he is like a leper. Besides he will pass on his leprosy to his children.

Naaman had education, money, position, everything. But there was one thing bad --- he was a leper. Nor could Naaman's wife help out.

Now, when news of his leprosy spread, the whole nation lamented for Naaman. What a curse as his leprosy daily grew upon him, as irresistible as the surge in our hands to gamble, as irresistible as the urge in our eyes to see things we should not see.

Naaman shut himself up in his room, morose and sad. How he wished to have died early. So is the condition of a sinner. He suffers not only for himself. He makes others to suffer with him.

There was a certain lady who wept for three years, even to her blindness. I asked her how her family was. She said, "We have money. We have two cars, children." Her husband was general manager of a mining company. But he drank, smoke, had many mistresses. This lady looked good outside. But inside her was pain and sorrow. She had everything, but was afflicted with leprosy.

Vs. 2 and 3. "And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy."

In Naaman's conquests he had brought home a little girl who believed God for a slave-girl. When this little girl saw her mistress in tears, she asked her why? Having known her plight, she said to her mistress, "Never mind. I have good news for you." This little girl in captivity could witness for her Lord. She said, "There is a prophet in Israel. He can heal." The little girl had nothing in the world, but she had Jesus. That is good enough. She wished her master would go and see the prophet. The mistress having known this little girl to be honest, and no pilferer, believed her word. She told the good news to her husband. Naaman, hearing this, reported to the king.

Vs.4. "And one went in, and told his lord, saying. Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel." Thus Naaman informed the king. Perhaps the king summoned the little slave girl to his palace. She put on her best to appear a witness before the Syrian king, his nobles and military. Now, I am this little slave girl tonight to tell you about the Saviour.

Vs.5. "And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment."

Could the saving-grace of God be bought by money? Many think money can cure leprosy, but surely money cannot redeem a man's soul. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Only one thing can save us, the precious blood of Jesus.

Vs.6. "And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come to thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou may recover him of the leprosy." The Syrian king wrote with his own signature to the king of Israel, requesting Naaman to be healed. The Syrian king was plainly a bully to a weaker Israel. Salvation cannot be obtained by power, money or cunning. The king of Israel could not cure leprosy. A great doctor, an eminent principal cannot save a soul. Degrees and titles are helpless.

Vs.7. "And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeks a quarrel against me." When the king of Israel saw the general of the Syrian army come with his retinue, he opened his palace gate to welcome him. But when he read the letter, he uttered in astonishment, "I am a king, not God. How call I cure leprosy?" A man of high position cannot save, only one solution --- the precious blood of Jesus.

Vs. 8, 9. "And it was so, when Elisha the man of God heard it that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

"So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." Elisha sent a messenger to the king saying. "Don't be afraid! Send Naaman here. Let him know there is a God in Israel."

Lest he offend Naaman, the king said to him in fear and trembling, "There's a prophet in the country. He can heal your sickness. Will you please see him?"

Maybe Naaman refused to go, but required Elisha to come to the palace. A proud man deserves not the saving grace. When I was in Nanking an officer of the government out of pride refused to come to Church to hear me. He wanted me to go to his house. What conceit! When Naaman went he expected the prophet to greet him on the highway. To his surprise he came to a little hut, and there was not one so much as to come and receive him. Naaman sent a servant in with his name-card.

Vs. 10. "And 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." No matter what, let everyone humble himself before God. Whether you are a great doctor, high principal, big so-and-so, all are lepers! Let all prostrate before God. A proud man cannot obtain God's saving grace.

Vs. 11. "But 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." Naaman said, I thought, I thought, I thought..." God's saving grace is not what man may think about. To wash in the precious blood of Jesus is the only way. God does not work out His will according to man's thoughts. But many people have different ideas of the doctrine of rebirth. "I think this is it, this is it." Don't let me think, let Jesus. The saving grace is God's wonderful plan.

Vs. 12. "Are 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." Naaman said why wash in the Jordan? Whether it be Jordan water or water of his own country, water is H<sub>2</sub>O anywhere. Are they not the same? He deemed the prophet's pronouncement unscientific. Is science opposed to God's saving grace? God's saying grace cannot be considered along scientific lines. You cannot cleanse leprosy by any method save by the precious blood of Jesus.

Vs. 13, 14. "And his servants came near, and spake unto him and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?"

"Then 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." Naaman's servants calmed down his master's anger. What pride is there at this stage? He urged him to go and wash --- and we are also to wash in the blood of Jesus. So, Naaman went. When he went to wash he truly lost face. After six washings, the leprosy was still on. It disappeared in the final wash. Seven times into the Jordan (seven is the perfect number), we must wash, wash thoroughly in Jesus' precious blood. Some people confess their sins a few times, but they are not cleansed. We must go the whole way, to the last cleansing, when our skin will become whole.

When I was in Foochow, a girl student came to confess her sins thirteen times. On the first day she confessed she stole two dollars, and promised to return them. She put the money on the principal's table while she was out. The second day she came with a troubled conscience. When I asked if she had returned the money and she related how she did it, I said, "That's not right!" So she returned but she wrote on a slip of paper and left it with the principal. On the third day she came again with the troubled conscience. She said she had put another person's name on the paper slip. I said, "That's not right," She left again but this time she wrote her "milk" name (name given at birth)." The fourth day she came with the same troubled conscience. And so she went back and forth 13 times. At last, she claimed the victory. This time when she put the money into the principal's hand, she became filled with the Holy Spirit.

Another sister told me how she had come under conviction several times, but had not experienced a thorough change. She had ordered a book costing only one dollar, but she never paid up. When she wrote to confess this sin. she became filled with the Holy Spirit.

There's a nurse from Bethel, who came to my revival meetings in Rangoon several times. But she was not born again. When she applied to join the Nursing School she had to have her lower secondary certificate. She borrowed somebody else's but was not discovered by the school authorities. While I was in Rangoon still preaching, she wrote me a letter, addressed to Bethel. Shanghai, confessing this sin. If the Bethel authorities would deprive her of the certificate, she was willing to be so dealt with. By so doing, she became filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Peking there was a chief nurse much liked by the people. Now, there was a woman about to give birth. Her husband said to her, "If you have a boy. I promise to live with you. Else, I'll divorce you." This woman discussed with the chief nurse to exchange for a baby boy for \$100. The chief nurse did get her baby girl exchanged for a boy. But she could not pray after that. When she preached there was no power. This went on until she returned the \$100, and revealed who the baby boy was. Then she became filled with the Holy Spirit. She regained her power. Some wash but once, twice, thrice, four, five times, but still not complete. No wonder they do not receive power from the Lord.

Vs. 15. "And 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 there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant."

Naaman, no more conceit in him! Very humbly he said to Elisha, "The God of Israel, He is God." Elisha would not take his gifts. Naaman instead asked of Elisha some earth. He now valued even God's earth. Before this, Naaman was very proud. Now much humbled. He had been an idolater. Now he was changed.

When I was in high school, I was first in every examination. In USA I finished in three years what would take four. I was one of four honors students in a graduation class of 300. I got my M.A. after nine months. I was elected honorary president of the Scientific Research Society. At 25 I got my Ph.D. I was Naaman, the proud Naaman. A Salvation Army man asked me, "Are you saved?" I replied, "I'm a pastor's son. Not saved?" A second fellow asked me if I was saved. I said, "I'm better than you." A third man asked me and I replied, "Don't bother me." Because there was no peace in my heart, I went to New York to study theology.

The Lord worked mightily upon me to make me feel my sinfulness. I felt I was full of leprosy as I recollected my sins: cheating in exams, assaulting my elder brother, reading filthy novels and magazines. That night I prayed till midnight. I confessed wholly my sins. A complete change came into my life, a complete difference from before. I witnessed for seven days.

On Feb. 27, the principal said to me, "I'm sending you to rest." I was sent to a mental hospital. I was told to sleep the whole day. The next day they came to test my blood. They asked if my parents ever had mental disorders. The third day, they wanted to take away my Bible. I refused. I knelt down to beg of the man. I would readily suffer death than have my Bible taken. He relented. Wherever I went the Police followed me closely. Some of the inmates were there for 13 years. The Seminary out of pity for me put me there, paying \$300 a month. The mental hospital staff made me to make baskets, unmake and remake. After 125 days I could stand it no longer. Since these westerners won't listen to my testimony, I wished to return to China. As I prayed the overseeing policeman fell asleep. I ran away for two miles, but was detected by the police dogs. The dogs caught me in the field. I was forced to return to the asylum. I got badly beaten. I was put into an inner cell. They gave me a metal bowl for my rice. I was hemmed in by mad fellows on either side. Their wailing at night took away my sleep and my appetite. When I found it impossible to bear, the Lord Jesus appeared to me. He comforted me. I was locked up 193 days. God let me out. My friends really thought I was mad. I never dreamed I'd be a preacher today. I'm like a child before God.

Because my head was full of leprosy, Jesus had to wear the crown of thorns. My hands and my feet were full of leprosy, so my Lord's hands and feet were pierced. My heart was full of leprosy so Jesus' heart was pierced for my sake. My face being full of leprosy, Jesus' face had to be stricken. He left heaven's glory to earth to save sinners. By his precious blood he washed away my sins --- my leprosy.

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