

re-define: Surrender

February 7, 2010

2 Kings 5:1-14

- A little word associate: Stubborn, stiff-necked, unmoving, selfish, determined, bossy, relentless, tunnel vision, glory-hound, manipulative, control freak

- I'm trying to live a life surrendered to God. But what does that word even mean: surrendered? Am I doing what God wants me to do...or am I doing what I want to do and simply attributing that to God?

- Lia and I live by a pretty tight budget. Not a lot of wiggle room, trying to pay down debt while getting hammered with medical bills is not easy (as you all know). Recently we received a couple of bills from the same place, were able to consolidate those, get financing to make monthly payments for an amount that was not possible in our budget. These conversations between Lia and I are always filled with tension (mostly because I'm a jerk), but this one was different, we agreed to pray. We trust God to take care of this. We surrendered this small moment to God, trusting His ways over our own. I'll share the rest in a bit.

We all struggle with this idea. It's why we don't tithe...we are worried that we won't have enough for our bills. It's why we don't serve...we need our "me" time. It's why we don't reach out...because we might be rejected. But don't you want God's ways to be your ways? Don't you want to live a life prescribed by God, 100% prescribed by God?

2 Kings 5

1) The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the Lord had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy.

- Naaman has it together!
- He's successful, powerful, well liked, admired by those around him
- He's a commander of the army, and God even has blessed him with great victories!
- He's a mighty warrior! BUT, he has leprosy.
- There is so much that is good in this life, that quite simply is over shadowed by this one thing...leprosy.
- Obviously he can function, even in a public setting...it may be a less severe case of leprosy, but regardless, it stigmatizes him...I would say especially in his own eyes!!!

2) At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. 3) One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy."

- They're were these constant skirmishes in this area...raids and ambushes and taking captive. Constantly at war with one another.

- One little girl is taken captive. Where's her parents? Family? Were they killed?
- If I was this little girl (ahem), and I heard about Naaman's leprosy...what would my response be? Yours? GOOD! He deserves it!
- Revenge! Paybacks!!
- God's sovereignty, the idea that He is in control is as much in this verse then in any other! This girl KNEW how Naaman could be healed, but rather than keep it to herself, shares the information.

4) So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. 5) "Go and visit the prophet," the king of Aram told him. "I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel." So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. 6) The letter to the king of Israel said: "With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy."

- Naaman believes this young, slave girl!
- Business of healing! This is how things get done...write a letter, send some money and materials, then we'll talk.
- Here's my letter from the king, some cash...now heal.
- I would bet anything that this king is like this, this is the stuff that impresses him.
- We all do it, dress to impress. Smooze them for the deal. Our words become patronizing and we talk about the deal.
- Our society today eats this up! Golf courses & fancy restaurants stay in business because of the "Art of the Deal"
- But, look what it says about Naaman and who he is, what the King is willing to "put up" so his commander can be healed!
- Kings and army commanders are almost always at odds, especially in this time...so much jealousy. The commander would be heroic and have all the victories, while the king would lead from behind the scenes and get none of the glory.
- This says something about Naaman and the King!

7) When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "This man sends me a leper to heal! Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me." 8) But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: "Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel."

- I just picture this whiney sniveling king...who cares more about his own skin than anything else.
- He thought the King of Aram was just picking a fight...he doesn't stop to think about how he can answer this request!
- I love Elisha's response, "What's your deal, send him to me!"
- You ever go into a meeting and have preconceived notions about the people you are meeting with and what everything is about, only to look foolish!

9) So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. 10) But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message:

“Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy.”

11) But Naaman became angry and stalked away. “I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!” he said. “I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the Lord his God and heal me! 12) Aren’t the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn’t I wash in them and be healed?” So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.

- Elisha senses Naaman’s pride and simply sends out the message
- Remember Elisha’s purpose! So that Naaman will know there is still a prophet of God and that the God of Israel is the one, true God!
- Elisha knows that there are things in a person’s heart that need to be addressed first, before they will understand and see God for who He is!
- For Naaman...it was pride! He’s a warrior. A commander. A winner. Kind of a big deal!
- Elisha sends...a messenger and tells the messenger to tell Naaman to wash in our dirty, muddy river 7 times...what!!
- “I expected...” My way is.... But I don’t want to...
- Pride, arrogance, conceit, power trippin’, self confident, garbage that will get you nowhere with God who is simply MORE!
- Naaman doesn’t understand that he is not responding to the messenger, to Elisha, to Israel, he’s responding to God! What about ME? What about what I want? How I want to do this God?

13) But his officers tried to reason with him and said, “Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn’t you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, ‘Go and wash and be cured!’”

- What an incredible risk...again it says something about Naaman to surround himself with people who will speak truth into his life.
- Part of this has to be that Naaman expected a big bang, a better show, maybe having the prophet heal him in front of a crowd would continue to boost that ego.
- But the overall desire for Naaman isn’t ego...it is healing...it is getting rid of the leprosy that is important.

14) So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child’s, and he was healed!

15) Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant.”

- Says a lot about Naaman, he doesn’t just consider his officer’s advice, he listens
- They played a huge role in Naaman’s healing simply by speaking the truth.
- They could have been demoted, cut down, smacked, left behind...who knows!?!?
- Naaman realizes that it was God who healed him and makes an incredible proclamation of faith...no other God!
- That’s one of the reasons Israel was and is such a huge target, monotheism! One God!

16) But Elisha replied, “As surely as the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts.” And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused.

- Elisha can't except the gifts, because what God did for Naaman was free. I wasn't purchased, but happened because of faith

17) Then Naaman said, “All right, but please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the Lord.

18) However, may the Lord pardon me in this one thing: When my master the king goes into the temple of the god Rimmon to worship there and leans on my arm, may the Lord pardon me when I bow, too.”

19) “Go in peace,” Elisha said. So Naaman started home again.

- Naaman is new to serving the One True God, so his request is honorable.

- He also knows that going to this other temple is wrong, but his civil duty

- Elisha says, “Go in peace”

- doesn't circumvent the law

- he knows what is really on Naaman's heart

- Naaman has a heart that has surrendered to Christ

What does it mean for you and I to surrender our hearts to Christ?

#1 - Surrender your lifestyle (servant girl)

#2 - Surrender your worries/concerns (King of Israel)

#3 - Surrender your motives (Naaman's officers)

#4 - Surrender your ways (Naaman)

This whole series about “redefining” these incredible words:

- righteousness

- sacrifice

- generosity

- surrender

It hinges on today's word, surrender - simply put, some of you are so consumed by your own life, your own ways, you own motives...you barely acknowledge that you belong to God. It's like we say to God...okay, you've got the salvation thing taken care of...I got the rest! God doesn't work that way!

The rest of the story...friends of Lia and I call one evening...

Whatever it is in your life that you are maintain YOUR control over rather than surrendering to God, I would challenge you...put it in His hands, trust Him...not always easy, but it simply is the best way to live a life redefined.