

“The Grace of Gratitude”
2 Kings 5:15-19
(Preached at Trinity, February 13, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This chapter opened with an introduction to Naaman, the captain of the Aramean or Syrian army. He is described as a great man, great in the eyes of the king, great in military exploits, a valiant warrior.
After describing his greatness we read at the end of **Verse 1** - "but he was a leper."
In spite of all of his successes it was his leprosy that defined him.
This is the nature of our corruption. No matter how great you come with earthly greatness, it is your sin that defines you. It is your greatest problem and the source of your greatest need.
2. We are told of a young Israelite slave-girl who had been taken captive in war and put in servitude. God's purpose in it was for the salvation of Naaman.
Like Daniel, although taken captive placed in servitude, she sought the good of her master.
2 Kings 5:3 NAU - "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy."
She was one of God's remnant. She knew Elisha. She knew God's power.
3. Naaman set his sights on seeking this man that might bring about his cure. Working through the king of Aram, a huge gift was collected and Naaman began the journey. Naaman arrived with a great display of his power and authority – horses and chariots. You can imagine the gathering of soldiers, the sound of hoofbeats, the snorting of horses.
 - A. Elisha was unimpressed with Naaman's power. He simply gave him the message of his deliverance.
2 Kings 5:9-10 NAU - "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, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and *you will* be clean."
 - B. This must also be our method—to carry God's message of deliverance through the Gospel to all men.
4. Naaman was told to wash seven times in the Jordan.
It was to be an act of submission and obedience. It was to be an act of faith in the God of Israel. At first, he was greatly offended. In fact, he was furious. It was humiliating. Yet, God did humble him. He went, and washed, and was cleansed.
5. This passage speaks much about the grace of God.
God did more than just heal Naaman of his leprosy. There was a much greater grace. Naaman was receiving, a much greater cleansing. Naaman was transformed. His heart was opened to see the greatness of God.

- a. Naaman arrived in a display of his greatness. He arrived with a letter from the king and a gift of over a million dollars. He arrived thinking he deserved to be healed. He was angered at the thought of washing in the muddy Jordan River.
 - b. After God healed him he was humbled. He saw himself as unworthy.
Five times in **Verses 15-19** he refers to himself as a servant.
This Gentile outcast became one of God's own people. It was an act of God's sovereign grace. Jesus spoke of it.
Luke 4:27 NAU - "And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."
 - c. He made a grand profession of faith
2 Kings 5:15 NAU - "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel;"
 - d. He pledged to worship God alone.
2 Kings 5:17 NAU - "your servant will no longer offer burnt offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD."
6. And his heart was overwhelmed with gratitude.
2 Kings 5:15 NAU - "When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now."
- I. One of the characteristics of fallen humanity is ingratitude
Romans 1:21 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
- A. God created all things as an expression of His glory, as an expression of His divine perfection.
 1. Creation is a manifestation of God's majesty—His infinite worth and value.
 2. His wondrous works are worthy of praise
Psalms 139:14 NAU - "I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well."
The KJV translates it: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made. . .":
The Hebrew word, תָּרַן, can be translated either way, praise or give thanks.
 3. The lost man sees himself as worthy of all good things. He sees God's blessings as God giving him what he deserves.
 - a. That's why they complain so loudly when things don't go well. They see it as an injustice—not getting their due.
 - b. If God is merely giving him what he deserves there is little cause for thanksgiving.
 4. Worship is an expression of gratitude, but since lost humanity has little gratitude, they have little interest in worship.
2 Timothy 3:1-2 NAU - "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,"

5. Instead of attaining their expectation of God's favor, their ingratitude robs them of every spiritual blessing.
John Davenant writes: "Without gratitude there can be no spiritual blessings within us. For since every spiritual blessing depends upon a certain perpetual influx of Divine grace, ingratitude is that infernal bar which interrupts the flow and course of the Divine goodness. Therefore we should be thankful, lest we should be deprived of all our gifts."¹
- B. Gratitude does not come naturally. In fact, we are naturally ungrateful.
1. Gratitude demands an act of God's grace upon us
 2. Jesus told a story about ten lepers, each of whom were healed, but only one expressed gratitude.
Luke 17:12-19 NAU - "As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; ¹³ and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" ¹⁴ When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine-- where are they? ¹⁸ "Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ And He said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."
 3. The lepers were alike in every way. All had leprosy. All had heard of Jesus and knew He could heal them. All cried out to Jesus for mercy. All were healed.
 - a. But one was distinctly different. He turned back and glorified God publicly and loudly. He fell on his face in reverence and humility. And he gave thanks.
 - b. To what do we credit the difference? And how was the difference made manifest?
 - c. It is also worth note, he was a Samaritan. And Naaman was a Syrian. God's grace is an international grace stretching to the ends of the earth. But the proper response to God's grace is gratitude.

¹ Davenant, John, *Colossians, Geneva Series of Commentaries*, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2009) page 128.

- II. One of the characteristics of Christianity is gratitude
- A. The Christian is overwhelmed by God's grace
1. Notice the change in Naaman
 - a. At first, he was smitten with anger at Elisha's charge to wash in the Jordan. The lost man doesn't like being humbled. Everything about Elisha's orders was repulsive to Naaman.
 - b. He was infuriated at the thought of bathing in the Jordan defiled by Israel's mud. Now he wanted to take that dirt with him so he could build an altar to Israel's God.
 - c. God gave him a heart of submission and obedience, and with it a heart of gratitude. He was overwhelmed that Israel's God had been so kind to him.
Romans 2:4 NAU - "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"
 - d. How many years had he endured his affliction—people repulsed by his disease. There was no cure, no way to end his ordeal. But then he heard that there was a prophet in Israel. . .
 But would there be hope for him? He had proven himself the enemy of Israel.
 In spite of his condition God showed him mercy.
 - e. He begged Elisha to allow him to express his gratitude.
 This change was further demonstrated when Gehazi arrives in the next scene. He came down from his chariot to greet Elisha's servant.
 - f. We can understand Elisha's refusal of a gift. He didn't want attention to be placed upon him as if the healing was by his power. He didn't want to rob God of all praise and honor. We are reminded of Peter's words after he healed the lame man.
Acts 3:11-12 NAU - "While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. ¹² But when Peter saw *this*, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"
 - g. But we can also understand Naaman's reaction. He wasn't to be denied his expression of gratitude.
 - (1) He knew that God alone was the source of his healing.
2 Kings 5:15 NAU - "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel"
 - (2) But Elisha was God's prophet, God's representative.
 He saw Elisha as the one available to receive his gift.

2. As Christians our hearts should be continually lifted up in gratitude. God came to us when we were without hope, without any means of helping ourselves. Bad theology leads to empty worship.
 - a. If you fail to see the horrible disease of your sin and your infinite guilt you will have little gratitude.
 - b. If you think your salvation is based upon something you did there will be little gratitude.
 - c. If you see yourself as worthy of eternal life you will have little gratitude.
3. If you comprehend even the smallest measure of Christ's love for you your love for Him will be great.

See Luke 7:36-47

- B. Remember praise and worship are displays of gratitude
 1. We praise God for the excellence of His Divine essence. He is worthy of worship.
 2. We praise God for His wonderful works.
 3. We praise Him for His wonderful gift in Jesus Christ.
His perfect life, His atoning sacrifice.
 4. We praise Him for the gift of His Holy Spirit, the source of our faith and repentance and of changed life.
 5. We praise Him in gratitude because we have been cleansed from our leprosy of sin.

Luke 17:15-16 NAU - "Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him.

Conclusion:

1. Has your heart been overwhelmed by gratitude to God for His amazing grace directed at your life?
2. What drives you to gather for worship? Is your gratitude being reflected?