



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “Miracle: Part 4”

Ps James Lowe - December 27, 2015

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- Can you remember getting a gift but being unworthy of it? What was the gift?
- How did you respond the last time someone treated you kindly after you had treated them poorly?
- Have you recently done a good deed for someone who didn't deserve it? What did you do?

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

##### **Sermons can be heard online**

2 Kings 5:1-19 ESV

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel." And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy." And 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 sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abana 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. But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" 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.

Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, "Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant." But he said, "As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none." And he urged him to

take it, but he refused. Then Naaman said, "If not, please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the Lord. In this matter may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, 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." He said to him, "Go in peace."

2 Kings 6:8-10, 18-23 ESV

Once when the king of Syria was warring against Israel, he took counsel with his servants, saying, "At such and such a place shall be my camp." But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are going down there." And the king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God told him. Thus he used to warn him, so that he saved himself there more than once or twice.

And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, "Please strike this people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha. And Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." And he led them to Samaria. As soon as they entered Samaria, Elisha said, "O Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." So the Lord opened their eyes and they saw, and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. As soon as the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My father, shall I strike them down? Shall I strike them down?" He answered, "You shall not strike them down. Would you strike down those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." So he prepared for them a great feast, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the Syrians did not come again on raids into the land of Israel.

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These portions of Scripture tell the story of how God brought about an end to the Syrian raiding parties that terrorized Israel during the time of Elijah the prophet. The miracles of the healing of Naaman, the Syrian military commander, and of the temporary blinding of the Syrian military detachment that was in pursuit of Elijah are impressive and clearly played a major role in the cessation of the raiding parties. However, two acts of compassion carried out in conjunction with these miracles were just as influential. In the case of Naaman, it was the unexpected kindness of the Israelite slave girl in pointing Naaman to Elijah for healing that made his miracle possible. By all rights she could have instead been bitter and vindictive, yet she had compassion on the man who by his position represented the very cause of her enslavement. Likewise, in the case of the temporary blinding of the Syrian soldiers, Elijah demonstrated mercy and kindness toward them. When the Israelite king understandably wanted to destroy the Syrian soldiers, Elijah intervened, sparing their lives, feeding them, and guiding them safely back to their land.

The miracles without kindness, mercy, grace, and compassion probably would not have resulted in the cessation of the raiding parties. Through these qualities of the heart expressed by a seemingly insignificant person (the young slave girl) and a major spiritual leader (the prophet), God brought about the bigger miracle of peace with Israel's enemy.

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- Can you think of anyone whom God would want you to view differently, with compassion instead of anger, with grace instead of vindictiveness?
- What do you think is needed for a person to be able to show mercy, grace, kindness and compassion to someone who otherwise would be viewed as an enemy?
- How do you think other people will react to someone loving their enemies?

**PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Pray that God will show us where we fail to love our enemies.
- Pray that God will show us how to practically love our enemies with His wisdom and compassion.
- Pray that God will perform miracles to bless our enemies so as to turn their hearts to Him.