
Jesus brings real healing

1. Intro

- Today we are beginning a new series – Jesus in the OT
- In case you're not familiar ... the Bible is split into two sections > OT & NT
 - NT
 - Gospels > Life of Jesus
 - Letters > explain the significance of Jesus and what that means for those who follow him and call themselves Christians
 - What about the OT?
 - Jesus isn't mentioned by name in the OT
 - Which is one sense is strange
 - Because if the Christian faith centers on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sin ... then what place does the OT have in Christianity and the life of the Christian?

- Jesus gives is the answer for that
- And he effectively says ... the OT is essential
 - OT was the scriptures that Jesus knew and read
 - It was the OT that Jesus quoted in his teaching
 - It was OT people and events that he referred to
 - And in doing so Jesus places his stamp of authority on the OT
 - The OT is just as much the authoritative word of God as the NT
- But more than that ... Jesus says the OT points to him
 - Road to Emmaus after his resurrection, Jesus is speaking with two disciples, teaching them all about himself, though they don't recognise him at the time
 - *Luke 24:27 - And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*
 - Disciples
 - A little later he appeared to all his disciples
 - *Luke 24:44-45* ⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.
- His point on both occasions is that
 - the OT scriptures point to him
 - the OT promises were fulfilled in him

- institutions and leaders like prophets, priests, and kings were merely shadows of the reality that would come in him
- You can imagine as Jesus was teaching them these things how their mind must have been exploding as they replayed scripture over and over in the mind through this new paradigm that was centered on Jesus
 - How the penny would have dropped for them
- **Illustration – Sixth Sense / Matrix**
- Like watching a movie with huge twist at the end
- Big twist that does your head in
- Go back and replay the whole movie in your mind and all of a sudden ... scenes, interactions, even the entire plot takes on a new meaning in light of the ending
- This is the effect Christ has on our reading of the OT
 - All the OT needs to be read in light what comes later in Christ
 - Which is why it's best to encourage a person interested in finding out about Christianity ... get them to read about Jesus in the gospels before they read the OT
 - Because then the OT will make so much more sense
- Our series this term aims to help us see the connection between the OT and the NT and in particular
 - to see Christ in the OT (not literally)
 - to see how the OT is fulfilled in Christ
 - to see how the OT points to Christ
- But not only see how the OT points to Christ ... but see how the scriptures points us to the true healing, rest, wisdom, love, unity and freedom that so many of us crave after
- This morning we're going to look at this story from 2 Kings 5 about Naaman and see how it points us to Jesus who bring real healing

PRAY

2. The need for healing

- Context
 - 2 Kings records the time when the northern tribes of Israel are under serious treat from the enemy nation Aram (Syria) to the north

- The Arameans had successfully invaded Israel and captured some of its cities and people
- One of those responsible for those invasions is Naaman who we encounter here in 2 Kings 5

- From a worldly perspective, Naaman has it all
 - General of the Aramean army
 - Second in command of the entire nation
 - Valiant soldier who's been victorious in battle
 - Highly regarded by the king who was considered a 'great man in sight of his master'
- He's powerful, he's successful, and he's connected

- But his life's not perfect
 - He's got leprosy!
 - He had this incurable skin wasting disease that slowly crippled, disfigured and finally killed its victims
 - The word had the same resonance that 'cancer' has to us today
 - Naaman's body going through a slow-motion explosion
 - He desperately needed healing and restoration
- Even though Naaman had everything – wealth, power, strength, prowess, acclaim ... yet despite all that ... his life was literally falling apart

- **Application**
- In a way, Naaman functions as a parable for us
- Many of us need healing
- In many ways ... it might look like life is going great
- But many of us are dealing with
 - Tragedy
 - Abuse
 - Illness
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Emotional scarring
 - Issues of self-worth
 - List goes on
- And the reality is ... success, power, and connections can't stop hardship, suffering and tragedy entering your life
- Deep down ... we're all broken, struggling, sinning, falling apart, and dying
- And the things of this world can't stop those things coming into our life

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- 1 week ago ... Emily and kids had no idea they were about to lose husband and father ... you and I had no idea we were about to lose a friend
 - I know for many of you ... there is stuff going in your life that is causing you pain, angst, hurt, sadness, guilt, worry, and despair
 - And I know how much you would love for it to go away
 - For there to be healing, restoration, comfort, peace
 - And we're foolish and naïve if we think we can control our life and circumstances in order to avoid all of that
 - Because there's no amount of money, success, insurance or planning can stop these things happening ... or taking them away
 - And so we have this great need for healing

3. The God of healing

- Not only is success, power, and connections unable to stop hardship, suffering and tragedy entering your life
- It's unable to bring healing and restoration we so desperately need
- This is what Naaman thought
- When Naaman hears that a prophet of God can heal him of his leprosy, look at what he does
- He loads up his chariots with
 - \$3.5m in silver and gold¹
 - A bunch of Armani suits and Versace dresses
 - Letter of commendation from the King
- Heads to Israel with this impressive entourage of chariots, horses, slaves, gifts, thinking
 - I'll hand over my wealth
 - I'll wave the king's letter
 - And this puppet king of Israel will tell his prophet to heal me and I can go home a healthy man
- He thinks success, power and connections will fix everything
- But when the king of Israel reads the letter he tears his clothes and says in v7 ...
 - *"Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy?"*
- In other words he's saying

¹ 10 Talents silver = 340kg = \$190,000; 6,000 shekels gold = 70kg = \$3.36m

- I can't heal!
- What you're asking me is impossible!
- Only God can give you the healing and restoration you need

- Fortunately for the king and Naaman, Elisha gets wind of it all tells the king to send Naaman to him
- Naaman's motorcade of chariots rocks up to Elisha's and much to Naaman's outrage ... Elisha doesn't
 - come out
 - accept the gifts
 - wave a magic wand
 - utter some ecstatic prayer
- Elisha just sends out his secretary who basically tells Naaman to go and have bath (you stinky Aramean)
 - In fact, go and have seven baths ... and that should sort you out

- Naaman was angry, he was insulted
 - He thought this was much too simple
 - Anyone can wash, an old lady can wash
 - If all I needed to do was wash ... I could have stayed home and washed in the rivers in Damascus

- But the points is ... the waters of Damascus weren't enough cleanse Naaman
 - He needed to go to the God who can heal
- Fortunately for Naaman he listened to his servants and he went and did what Elisha told him

- Now why wash seven times?
- Several reasons
 - Seven generally understood as a number of completeness
 - OT Law required lepers to be sprinkled seven times with water by the priest to symbolise their cleansing (Lev 14)
- But beside that ... it was meant to make it clear to Naaman that his healing came only by the hand of God
- But only if he obeyed the word of the Lord
 - If it was just washing in the Jordan River ... he could have gone down, had a really good soak, let his skin go all wrinkly, scrub himself with soap and come out
 - But no ... he had to wash **seven** times ... not once, not six times, not eight ... but seven

- He had to obey the word of the Lord
- Just like the Israelites had to trust God in walking seven times around Jericho before the walls collapsed

- And so in effect ... Naaman had to in trust the Lord and his word
 - Every time he came up out of the river and then went back into the river to repeat it all over again ... he his demonstrating to himself, all his servants who were watching, and God above ... that he was willing to trust God

- And he was healed
 - v14 – His skin became like that of a young boy
 - We might say his skin became “as smooth as a babies bum”
 - Like he was born again

- How?
 - Not because of his power
 - Not because of his wealth
 - Not because of his abilities or prowess
 - Not because of his social connections
 - But because he trusted in the word of the Lord that said ... if you want to be made clean ... you need to wash

- There is one true God who can heal
 - Servant girl knew it
 - Elisha knew it
 - Now Naaman knows it too
- And as a result, Naaman acknowledges
 - v15 – *“there is no God in all the world except in Israel.”*
 - And he commits to worship him when he returns to Aram
- And so, in the process of healing Naaman, God also saves Naaman
 - An Aramean! A Gentile! An outsider ... an enemy of God no less
 - A man who comes to God, trusts in his word ... who is washed and made clean

4. The hope of healing

- I wondered if you noticed the one who gave Naaman the hope of healing?
 - It all started with the servant girl of Naaman’s wife
 - She would have been one of those captured by Naaman and his armies after invading Israel

- At best it meant her family had been taken captive and sold off
- At worst they were killed before her eyes
- She's had to leave home and become a slave
- In short, her life is ruined ... and who's responsible?
- General Naaman ... the supreme military commander of Aram
- Yet how does she respond when she learns her nemesis has been struck down with leprosy?
 - We expect her to say
 - Ha! Leprosy! I saw another finger fall off today!
 - Oh I will dance on his grave
 - No! ... she has compassion and says ... "If only my master would see the prophet"
 - She wanted him to be healed and saved and she gives him hope
 - His life was in her hands
 - She knew she could save him
 - By withholding the information about Elisha, she could have made him pay for his sins and the pain and suffering he and his armies had brought into her life
- But she didn't
 - This unsung hero of the Bible refused to relieve her own suffering by making him pay
 - She didn't seek revenge
 - She him hope for his healing and salvation
- About 100 years later the Bible speaks of another suffering servant who would bring hope and healing and salvation
 - Not just to one man ... but to all God's people
 - In Isaiah 53 God promised to send the Suffering Servant who would be
 - ⁵ *pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, **and by his wounds we are healed.***
- This suffering servant who pointed Naaman to the hope and healing he needed ... points you and I to THE suffering servant
- Jesus Christ
 - He also had to leave his home
 - He too became a slave and servant
 - He suffered at the hands of his enemies
- Even though he could have ... he didn't seek revenge
 - Instead he showed compassion for his enemies

- At the cross he said - "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing"
- He could have allowed us to pay for our sins ... but he didn't ... he paid for them himself
- For by his wounds we are healed

Application

- Of course, the healing that Jesus offers is the healing every single person in humanity needs ... and it's the healing of our relationship with God that is broken because of our sin
- Our sin means we are far away from God, like Naaman
 - An outsider, an enemy
- But Jesus offers us the healing we need and the forgiveness that comes through his suffering on the cross

- And like Elisha effectively said to Naaman, Jesus says to us
 - "The healing and salvation I can give you ... cannot be attained because of your wealth, or power or connections"
 - "The only way you can receive the healing I offer is if you are willing to be washed"

- The night before Jesus was crucified ... he washed his disciple's feet as a symbolic act of what he was about to do for them at the cross
- At one point, Peter was too proud to allow Jesus to wash his feet
- And Jesus said "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."²

- Friends, in many respects, we are all like Naaman
 - We're Gentiles who are far off from God
 - We're all spiritual lepers
 - We have a sickness within each of us that the Bible calls sin

- And because of our sin ... we are enemies of God
- But when we are willing come to Jesus
 - And trust him when he says ... "if you let me wash you ... you will be clean" ... then you and I can have the healing he offers

- And this is the real healing we all need

² John 13:8

- For when we receive that healing that Jesus brings through the cross ... it's a healing that lasts into eternity
- If you haven't already come to Jesus
- If you recognise you need healing in the inside
- Then like Naaman
 - Come to the God who can heal you
 - Trust in him and his word
 - And let him wash you clean
 - For unless you allow Jesus death to cleanse you ... Jesus says – “You can have no part with me”
 - And your disease of sin will remain and eventually it will take your life
- But what about the all the other healing that you and I need
- Are we to say:
 - you just need to go to Jesus and he will heal you of your cancer, depression, gout, trauma??; or
 - is the only healing Jesus brings spiritual and when it comes to those other things we need healing of, he's got nothing for us??
- Well we need to be clear, that while God is a God who can, and has the power to heal ... coming to Jesus is no guarantee that he will of all those other things
 - That is a false promise
 - The Bible does not guarantee a painless life if you follow Jesus
 - In fact, it's the opposite
 - The Christian ought to expect suffering, and hardship because of what they believe; and
 - That God will refine you like gold in fire to remove the impurities and things that characterise your old way of life so you become more and more like Jesus
- However, when your trust is in Christ and you've been washed clean by the blood of Jesus ... there's a healing that comes to us in other ways
- **Tragedy**
 - Jesus death won't take away the pain you and I feel when tragedy strikes
 - Emily and her family, we here C@P, all of Pete's family and friends feel the angst and sadness and pain of losing a husband, father, brother, uncle and friend
 - But in Christ there is the hope of healing

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- Because the Bible tells us that while we grieve, as Christians we can grieve with hope
 - Because we know the washing that Jesus has given you and I and Pete ... means we are sure and confident that death is not the end
 - That Jesus has gone to prepare a place for those who trust in him
 - That Pete is now with his Lord and that all those who have allowed Christ to wash us clean will be reunited once more with our brother in Christ
 - So Jesus brings hope of healing ... and our grief will fade and eventually give way to joy
- **Depression / Anxiety**
 - For those who suffer from mental illness, such as depression or anxiety, this is an illness that does not end
 - For many people there is no cure but rather ongoing management of triggers and use of medication to help handle the illness
 - And therefore, depression and anxiety will be the burden that they will carry for the rest of their lives
 - But because of Jesus, depression and anxiety is not the last thing that people will experience
 - For those who are in Christ, those who's trust is in Jesus, who struggle with depression and anxiety ... these things will be defeated in eternity
 - Jesus brings light into the darkness of this world and our lives
 - And so, in him we have the hope of healing
- **Abuse**
 - What if you're dealing with the pain and hurt of abuse
 - Abuse is an awful, painful and tragic thing to experience
 - Knowing Jesus won't take that away
 - But knowing Jesus, being washed by him ... does bring the hope of healing
 - Because when you are in Christ
 - Jesus brings healing
 - Because the renewal that Christ brings means
 - You can let go of any bitterness and injustice
 - Because he will ensure that in the end, justice will be done
 - And in Christ you know the one
 - Will do nothing to hurt you
 - In fact he does the opposite ... he lays down his life for you
 - And in your pain, he will surround you with his people
 - Who mourn with those who mourn
 - Who will care for you and love (albeit imperfectly)

- Who will walk the road of recovery with you

Self Worth

- For others, their struggle is with their own self-worth
 - Whether through bullying, abuse, social media or other causes ... they just don't think they're any good
 - These issues of low self-esteem and personal value manifests itself in
 - Eating disorders
 - Depression
 - Self-harm
 - Suicide
- But friends ... when you have been washed clean and healed by Christ ... it means you are in eternal relationship with the God of the universe
 - You are made in his image
 - He delights in you just as you are
 - It doesn't matter
 - How many more kilos you lose
 - How many more followers you have
 - How successful you are as a parent or in your job
 - What your peers think of you
 - You are precious to him and there is nothing you can do to make him love or value you any more than he does
 - Because he's proven his love for you at the cross

5. Conclusion

- And while Jesus brings the healing we all need through the washing away of sin by his death on the cross
 - The consequence of what he has done at the cross goes far beyond our forgiveness and eternal life
 - For in him ... we also have the hope of healing that many of us are crying out for today
- The words of O come to the altar are helpful
 - *Are you hurting and broken within,*
 - *Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?*
 - *Jesus is calling.*
 - *Have you come to the end of yourself,*
 - *Do you thirst for a drink from the well?*
 - *Jesus is calling.*
- Come to Jesus
 - Let him wash you clean and experience the healing he brings

PRAY