

Have You Been Healed?

February 15, 2009

Pastor Michael Cofer

2 Kings 5

It may not be every Sunday that you hear Motown lyrics recited from the pulpit, but today, friends, you're in for a treat. There is a Marvin Gaye song that goes something like this:

“Ain't no mountain high enough. Ain't no valley low enough. Ain't no river wide enough to keep my from getting to you.”

Now, by virtue of my career, I tend to think of all kinds of things theologically – even R'n'B classics – so when I here those words I think about my relationship with God. I'd like to think that there is no obstacle that would come between God and me.

And for God's part, that's true. Romans 8 says:

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

But what about my end of the relationship? Am I as faithful to God as He is to me?

I'm sure that we have all read or heard about the persecution of the disciples or of even of Christians in our day who are faced with the choice of renouncing Christ or dying? Have you ever caught yourself kind of envying them? It's weird, isn't it?

I know when I put myself in their place, I like to think that I would choose Christ. By God's grace I may never find out. Still though, I get excited about the idea of making a stand for Christ. Ain't no mountain high enough, right?

Today's Old Testament lesson is a great story about big things and little things. Let's recap the story really briefly so we're all up to speed.

Namaan is the commander of the Syrian army. He is not an Israelite. In all likelihood, Israel is captive to the Syrians at this point in history, so he probably doesn't have a high regard for them or their God. He is well respected, well positioned. He was an important guy in charge of big things.

Namaan should have been on top of the world. But he wasn't, because Namaan had leprosy. Leprosy was unlike many of our modern-day diseases. There was a stigma that went along with being a leper. Lepers were relegated to the literal outskirts of society. They could not work, see loved ones. Their only companions were usually other lepers, and the disease was almost always terminal.

So, when it became apparent to Namaan that he had contracted leprosy, his life as he knew it had effectively come to an end. There was no hope until a young lady of no renown comes on the scene.

Who was she? We don't really know. As far as the story goes, we're not even given a name. She was, in point of fact, a prisoner of war serving in Namaan's house, which is what makes her actions so remarkable. She seemed to actually care for Namaan's well-being. "If only," she said, "If only my master would see the prophet in Samaria. He would cure him of his leprosy."

That is all we get from our little Israelite maiden, but how densely packed those words are! Think about it, with those small and simple words we see a real-life implementation of Christ's command to "Love our enemies." But not only that... what faith she demonstrates. There is certainty in her words. She believes, she KNOWS, that Elisha can heal Namaan. And beyond that, she believes that Namaan WILL heal him.

I think it is one thing for an Israelite to ask the local prophet to perform a miracle for him. But it is quite something else for some pagan gentile to ask the Prophet of Yahweh to serve him. After all, Yahweh has a history of wiping out the enemies of Israel. But this nameless servant girl had a faith and trust in God's compassion that defies logic.