

A picture of Baptism

Please turn in your bibles to **2nd Kings 5:11-12**

While you're turning there, I want to share with you this article I found titled *Wisdom from the mouths of babes*.

- From Patrick, age 10: Never trust a dog to watch your food.
- Michael, age 14: Never tell your mom that her diet's not working.
- Emily, age 10: Don't pull daddy's finger when he tells you to.
- Hannah, age 9: When your dad is mad and asks you, "Do I look stupid?" Don't answer.
- From Taylia, age 11: Don't let your mom brush your hair when she's mad at dad.
- Andrew, age 9: A puppy always has bad breath, even after eating a Tic-Tac.
- Kyoyo, age 11: Never hold a dust buster and a cat at the same time.
- Lauren, age 9: Permanent markers are not good to use as lipstick.
- And lastly, from Eileen, age 8: Never try to baptize a cat.

Now we are not going to be trying to baptize a cat today, but there are two here today who will be baptized later today, thus I thought today would be a good time to review what baptism means.

There are two "ordinances" that Baptist (and most protestant denominations) observe.

Last week we looked at look at the first ordinance: The **Lords supper**, and using our imagination, we looked at

- how the Lords supper had its' roots in the Passover,
 - pointing to the one who would one day come and be our Passover lamb
- that this became an ordinance for the church
 - at the time when Christ instituted it at the Last supper,
- We looked at how we continue to observe the Lords supper today
 - as an act of remembrance,
- And how it is a picture of the wedding feast yet to come in the future.

Today we will take a brief look at the second ordinance: Baptism

(Please stand for the reading of God's word)

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

(2nd Kings 5:11-12 KJV)

(Opening prayer)

Baptism...

The Old Testament is full of "shadows" that not only point to Christ

- But to other events.

One of the earliest "shadows" of baptism takes place in Leviticus 8:6, where

- Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons to be the first Levitical Priests
- Before the whole congregation:

And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. (Leviticus 8:5-6)

You may be asking yourself, how does the cleaning of the first Levitical Priests point to baptism?

1st Peter 2:9-10 tells us:

...ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (that means each of you who profess Christ), ***ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*** (1st Peter 9-10)

Every Christian is a priest for Christ. It is our priestly function (priesthood of the believer):

- To Offer up spiritual Sacrifices to our Lord
- And to praise and proclaim our Lord
- To be making disciples
- And to be baptizing others in the name of the
- Father, son and Holy Ghost

The ritual cleansing of the Levitical priests was

- one of the things that set them apart from the rest of the people in Israel
- It displayed that these people were set apart from the rest to serve God

So too does baptism the baptism of a believer

- Show that person has been set apart from the rest of the world
- In order to serve God

One of my favorite "fore-shadowing" of baptism

- Is the events that take place in the life of a man named Naaman

So who was Naaman?

"Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper." 2Ki 5:1

2nd Kings 5:1 tells us that

- 1) Naaman was "captain of the Host of the king of Syria"
 - a. Naaman was not just **one** of the leaders,
 - b. He was **THE** leader of the army!
 - c. Only King Aram exceeded Naaman's authority
- 2) Naaman was a "great Man", who was highly respected
 - a. a man of high status and influence
 - b. Naaman is referred to as a "mighty Man of Valor",
 - c. putting Naaman in the ranks of those "mighty men of Valor" who served King David!
 - d. Naaman was courageous and honorable!
 - e. We will see that Naaman was highly favored by King Aram
- 3) Naaman was a man who was favored by God before Naaman even knew the Lord.
 - a. Verse 1 tells us **"...by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria"**
- 4) Finally, we see that Naaman was a Leper.
 - a. Leprosy today can be treated if caught early enough
 - b. But in Naaman's time, was fatal
 - c. Essentially a death sentence waiting to happen.

As military leader, verse 2 tells us

"And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife." 2Ki 5:2

- Naaman had military encounters with the Armies of Israel,
- And he had been victorious.
- (Remember that at times when Israel was not "right" with the Lord,
- God would use the surrounding pagan nations to bring Judgement
- Naaman had victories against Israel because he was being used by God)

During one of these excursions,

- Naaman had captured a "little Maid"
- Who would serve Naaman's wife

Verse three tells us something amazing about Naaman:

"And she (the little maid captured by Naaman) said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." 2Ki 5:3

Although a prisoner of Naaman

- A servant to Naaman's wife
- Far from her home and family

This child takes pity upon Naaman

- She feels for him
- She wishes that there was someone like the prophet in Israel

- Who could heal Naaman

This tells me that people like Naaman

- It didn't matter that he was a military commander
- He truly was a man of Valor.
- He wasn't cruel or malicious.
- Later in verse 13 we will see where Naaman servants will call him "father"
- A term of endearment
- Those who served Naaman cared for him!

Naaman was who we would call a "Good Man"

And Naaman now knew that there might be a cure for his leprosy!

In verse 4 and 5, Naaman tells the king

- The words of this child
- And Naaman's hope for healing.

And tells me even more about the type of Man Naaman is:

- In a time when leprosy is incurable
- Based solely upon the words of a captured child, the king encourages Naaman
- And tells him
- ***Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel.***

In verse 5, we'll see that in addition to the letter from the King, Naaman takes the equivalent of

- 750 pounds of silver,
- 150 pounds of Gold
- And 10 Giorgio Armani suits with him
- (The rough equivalence of ¼ million dollars)

With him when he goes to see the King of Israel

Naaman appears before the king of Israel and produces the letter from the Syrian King which says:

- ***"...I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."***

Now, we have already seen that there had been military skirmishes between Israel and Syria. This was apparently a time of uneasy truce,

- Israel's king (Jehoram) sees this as some sort of trap!
- The way the letter from King Aram reads
- Is more of a command than request.
- Jehoram knows that God alone could heal Leprosy
- He believes that the Syrian king is purposing some sort of impossible task for the king of Israel that can then be used as justification to start a war!
- Scripture says that the King of Israel *"...rent his clothes"* in distress

Enter Elisha (verse 8), who tells King Jehoram "**let him** (Naaman) **come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.**"

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

(2Ki 5:9-13)

Naaman was insulted! He expected a big show! Either Naaman thought

- That his own popularity and prestige warranted Elisha coming out, or
- Naaman expected Elisha to come out and put on some sort of Charismatic show! (a "Benny Hinn" style show of healing!)

Not only does Elisha not come out, Elisha sends

- A simple messenger, who tells him to
- Go wash 7 times in the Jordan

Naaman rightly claims that the Abanah and Pharpar rivers are cleaner waters

- Both have their sources from mountains
- Both are rivers would be cleaner than the muddy, polluted Jordan river!

Naaman is about to give up and leave when his servants come and say: "**...if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?**"

- Essential, they say "If Elisha had given you some big quest to undertake
- (go slay a dragon, climb the highest mountain, or such),
- you would have done it, so why not try washing in the Jordan"

Naaman eventually shallows his pride and does as he is told:

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

(2Ki 5:14)

He was clean! His skin was as a little child!

Naaman goes back to Elisha and makes the following profession: ***Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.***

Do you see it?

Did you see the Picture, the Shadow of Baptism?

1) Before Christ we are like Naaman, walking dead men!

Leprosy types

- Skin rotting
- No rotting but a lack of feeling

Naaman – a picture of who we are before Christ – a walking dead man!
His time was short!

2) Naaman makes a decision to be obedient!

Because Naaman's servants (and others with him who cared for him) had to help Naaman to "open his eyes"

- Naaman acknowledges his pride.
- Acknowledges that he was let down by his reception
- Acknowledges that he would have undertaken incredible quests to "EARN" his redemption from leprosy
- So Naaman makes a decision to be obedient!

3) Naaman goes to the muddy, polluted waters of the Jordan for his cleansing!

Note it is not water that washes away our sins!

- Nothing in the baptismal that magically modifies the water to clean us!
- (Give example of the Korean Baptists church in Columbia at Grindstone Park)

4) Naaman dips 7(!) times in the Jordan

Numbers in scripture have meaning

1 – shows one God

2 – Shows the dual nature of Christ (fully human yet fully divine)

3 – the trinity

In scripture, 7 represents divine perfection, totality or completion. In the story of Naaman, 7 represent Christ! Christ who is divine, who is perfect!

5) Naaman DIPS!

Scripture says he went down "...***and dipped himself***"

- If sprinkling would have been enough, he could have got a cup of water from the Jordan.
- Remember, he didn't want to get **into** the muddy, polluted water of the Jordan.

6) When Naaman came out of the water, his skin was as a child's!

He had new life!

His old, dirty self was gone!

Naaman could do as we are told to do: **Walk in newness of life.** (Romans 6:4)

Naaman's washing is a picture, an imperfect shadow of things to come: A PICTURE OF BAPTISM

Just as Elisha stated,

- Naaman now knew that there was a prophet in Israel,
- But even more!
- Naaman now knows that there is but ONE GOD,
- and that is the God of Israel!

In verse 15, Naaman offers to pay Elisha from the gold, silver and suits that Naaman has brought with him, but Elisha refuses! Why? Elisha is showing what scripture later tells us:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

By Elisha turning down the payment, Naaman knew that this miracle was fully from God! That Elisha has nothing to do with it! That God alone deserved the praise and glory! Taking any of Naaman's bounty would have tainted Naaman, made him think that he (Naaman) had somehow earned his salvation from leprosy!

Finally, I want you to see the strength of Naaman's faith in the Lord:

Naaman has already professed verbally that there is no God on Earth other than the God of Israel.

- But he's going to go one step further:

And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. (2nd Kings 17-18)

This is big!

- This is along the lines of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- Refusing to bow to the golden image

- Or Daniel refusing to petition the King rather than God

The custom in Syria at this time was

- For the military leader to accompany the King
- And to worship together with the King.

Naaman here is stating that

- He will continue to perform his duty to King Aram
- to accompany him to the house of Rimmon (their false God)
- but Naaman himself will
- No longer offer up
- Burnt offering or sacrifice to their false God

Beyond this

- Naaman wants to take land from Israel
- To place where he worships!
- And place this dirt upon the ground therein
- So that when he does worship
- He on ground from the land of the one true God

Naaman is saying that in his home land

- He will only worship the God of Israel!

What about us?

- Do we have that kind of commitment?

I want to read to something that John Piper wrote about a conversation he had with a missionary to the Philippines. This missionary said that:

"in the Philippines... converts were tolerated and scarcely noticed by their family – until they came to be baptized. Then the Biblical predictions of hostility and separation came to pass. There is something about this open ritual of new-found faith that makes clear where a person stands and what he is doing."

In-other-words, when a person identifies with Christ publicly and openly,

- People start to get upset.
- They don't mind those people who just talk the talk,
- but when we start walking the walk,
- Then people start to get uncomfortable.

Naaman was going to walk the walk!

I will close with this (and I know, when a pastor says this, at times it means we may be about 50% finished):

The Bible talks about 7 different types of baptism

- But Christians today experience 2 of these:
- **Baptism of the holy Spirit** and
- **The baptism of believers**

The **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** takes place that moment

- When we first surrender to Jesus.

This is a spiritual baptism,

- and it is the baptism that saves us.

At that moment

- we are “immersed” in the Holy Spirit.
- The Spirit covers us,
- indwells us,
- fills us,
- and makes us a part of the spiritual body of Christ.

For the two being baptized today, they have already encountered
The baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Today, we witness the **Believers baptism**

Which is done by emersion of the believer in water.

Water baptism pictures some wonderful spiritual truths.

- 1) As Christ commands that we are to be baptized, this is our first step of obedience
- 2) It is a public profession of an inward change
- 3) It is symbolic (wedding ring example)
- 4) Water baptism pictures both the death/burial/resurrection of our Lord
- 5) And that When we are saved, we are “buried” with Christ and “rise” to newness of life.

Spiritual Baptism Saves us

- Water Baptism proclaims this!

Final recap of today’s message:

- 1) Like Naaman, without Christ, we are nothing but walking dead men!
- 2) Spiritual Baptism, the baptism that saves, takes place the moment we believe and surrender to Christ
- 3) Believers baptism is our first step of obedience
- 4) It is not the water that cleanses us, but the blood of Christ
- 5) Biblical baptism in scripture is by emersion
- 6) Baptism is a commitment

I do not often do alter calls, but I would like to do one today. (ask piano player to come up)

- As the music plays
- If there is anyone here today
- Who has never surrendered
- Who has never made that commitment
- We don’t have to stop at 2 as we baptize
- Should anyone desire to take that first step of obedience
- Well, the waters ready.

- Make this your day of salvation!

(Piano plays)

(closing prayer)

Lord

- We thank you for (names of those being baptized)
- And ask that you help them to
- Stand strong in your faith
- And call upon your strength.
- And for those of us who make this profession long ago
- Let us each use today as a chance
- To renew that commitment in our hearts!

In Jesus name we Pray