



PLAIN & SIMPLE

A Three Part Plain & Simple Series On
FIGHTING DISCOURAGEMENT

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Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

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Naaman Was A Leper

Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master...but he was a leper.

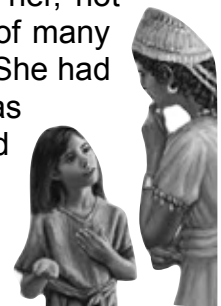
(Second Kings 5:1).

Naaman had what most seek. He had a position of leadership and respect, he was referred to as “honourable,” “a great man” and “a mighty man of valor, **but, he was a leper.**”

The word “*but*” is in the Bible 3,994 times. The word is used to introduce something contrasting with what has already been mentioned.

“A Little Maid”

As the story begins God focuses on “*a little maid.*” We know nothing about her, not even her name; however, she is about to have a major influence in the lives of many people and in some way changed the course of history for the Nation of Israel. She had a tremendous outlook on life that we would all do well to cultivate. She was young, she was a captive, a hated Jew in a strange land. The little maid had been taken from her parents and yet her concern is the health of her enemy.



“Naaman Stood At The Door”

Naaman finally humbled himself to go to visit Elisha. We read in verse five that “*Naaman stood at the door of the house of Elisha.*” Elisha did not bother to go out and greet him. He sent his servant with the following instructions.

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Second Kings 5:10,

“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.”

“Behold, I Thought”

Second Kings 5:11,

“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...So he turned and went away in a rage.”

More No Name Messengers

Second Kings 5:13,

“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?”

Naaman was without excuse. He was confronted with the influence of “a little maid” and “his servants.” We do not know what a simple testimony for the Lord will do. Because of the testimony of these unnamed people Naaman was completely changed for life. He was not only changed physically, he was changed spiritually. Naaman said, “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel” (Verse 15).

Proverbs 15:23,

“A word spoken in due season, how good is it!”

“But Gehazi”

Second Kings 20-23,

Unfortunately there is always someone around to spoil a beautiful story. Gehazi was Elisha’s misfit servant. We see his attitude in verse twenty-one where he refers to Naaman as “this Syrian.” His character is further revealed when he lied to Naaman in verse twenty-two saying that two sons of the prophets had shown up and Elisha sent him to get clothes and money from Naaman.

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Michelle Vansickle

In Times Like These

“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

(Galatians 5:6)

While reading Job this week I was so convicted about times in my life when I had been a "Bildad" friend. My heart ached for Job and what he was enduring, his friends adding pain instead of comfort. Bildad came to Job and his words must have been like slaps in the face..."if thy children have sinned against Him."(God)..."if thou would seek unto God"... "if thou wert pure and upright"... "so are the paths of all that forget God" (Job 9:4-13).

Job replied with such a beautiful Christ-like answer. He did not defend himself, he did not become indignant. His answer to Bildad was an acknowledgment of his sin "I know it is so of a truth: but how should a man be just with God?" (Job 9:1).

Righteousness with man and righteousness with God look different. Man seeks to justify himself by his actions of obeying the law, believing this justifies him before God; however, Scripture tells us faith works by love. It is our relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ that justifies a man. Repenting of my sin, and believing and casting myself at the foot of the cross is only the beginning of the relationship! I will want to know more about Him, what pleases Him? What does not?

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He lied again in verse twenty-five when he told Elisha he had not gone to meet Naaman.

Gehazi's Plan

We read in verse twenty-six that Elisha said,

"Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?"

It was Gehazi's plan to quit the ministry and start a farm. He received money to set up his "oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants."

It is an interesting fact that Elisha left all of that to be Elijah's servant, now Elisha's servant wanted to quit being Elisha's servant to be a farmer.

"The Leprosy of Naaman"

Verse 27,

"The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

"God Is Not Mocked"

Galatians 6:12,

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

"For Our Admonition"

First Corinthians 10:11,

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

1. Can I learn from the attitude of the little maid?
2. Am I standing at the door?
3. Am I willing to be a no name messenger?
4. Am I a hypocrite?

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I will want to do the things that please Him, I will hate the things that do not please Him. See the difference?

I am not justifying myself by obeying the law and through my good works, I am serving the one who justified me by His actions! His sacrifice. There will be good works, there will be obedience to His Word, but the works are evidence of faith, we are not justified by them.

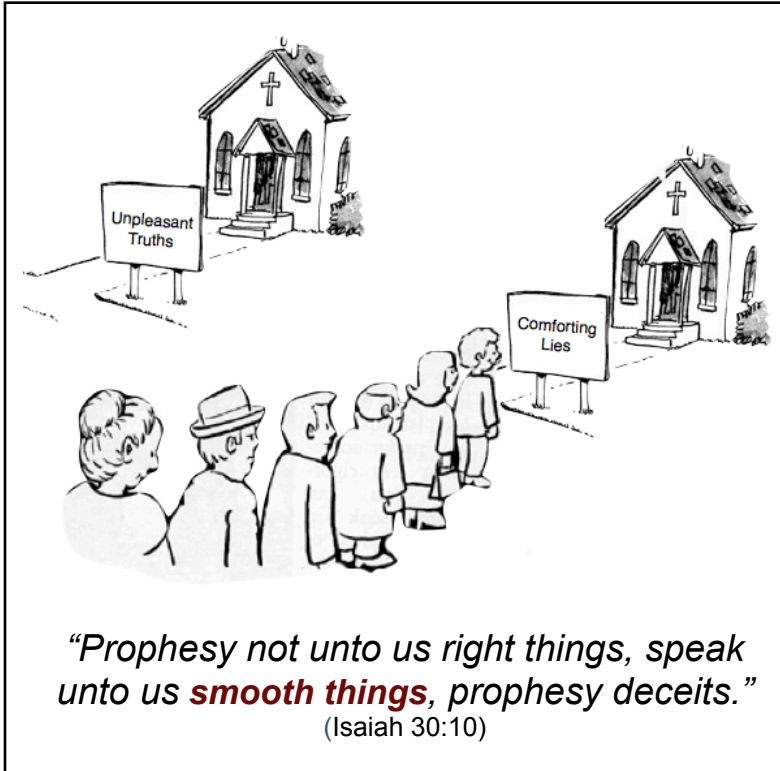
Job asked the question "How should a man be just with God?" He understood he was unable to justify himself, it was his faith which worked by love, his relationship that justified him before God; and it is how he became an example for us today. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (First John 3:16).



Michelle



I Need To Understand
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Gipsy Smith

“My business is not to speak **smooth things**, but to say some things that you may resist, fight, get angry with; and you may get angry with me for saying them, but they are here, and it is my business to say, Thus saith the Lord.”



C. H. Spurgeon

“We ought so to preach as to make every sinner tremble in his seat; and if he will not come to the Saviour, he ought at least to have a hard time of it while he stops away from Him. I am afraid that we sometimes preach **smooth things**, too soothing and agreeable, and that we do not set before men their real danger as we should. If we shun in this respect to declare all the counsel of God, part at least of the responsibility of their ruin will lie at our door.”

Political Correct Preaching

Much of the “politically correct” philosophy of our day has made its way into our local churches. We have reached the day when people, “will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” Second Timothy 4:3,4).

In order to keep from losing people many pastors are preaching and teaching only the “**smooth things**.” Our biggest problem is not what is being preached, but what is not being preached. Therein lies one of the main reasons for the apostasy that is flooding into our churches. As a result our young people are being “destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6).

We need to get back to the preaching of our forefathers. We need to take heed to Jeremiah 6:16, “Thus said the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” The verse continues, “But **they** said, We will not walk therein.” “**They** said”? Who are “**they**”? Verse thirteen tells us it was “the prophet even unto the priest.”

Do we not have the same problem within our leadership today? Our young people are being reared in our churches hearing only the “**smooth things**” and as a result apostasy reigns and apostasy will be the pathway of our next generation. It was to the pastor God commanded, “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (Second Timothy 4:5).