

The Unlikely Missionary

Luke 4: 27



“And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”
Luke 4: 27.



I. Introduction

The ministry of healing is essential in order to present rightly the character of God. God is love, and those who live in the valley of the shadow of death should understand that in their suffering, God provides solutions, restoration, and healing. This is the best missionary activity.



“A lot of people say they want to get out of pain, and I’m sure that’s true, but they aren’t willing to make healing a high priority. They aren’t willing to look inside to see the source of their pain in order to deal with it.”

Lindsay Wagner



“Since by keeping the body in health and vigor one walks in the ways of God, being impossible in sickness to have any understanding or knowledge of the Creator, it is a man’s duty to avoid whatever is injurious to the body and cultivate habits conducive to health and vigor.”
Maimonides (1135-1204 CE)
Mishneh Torah.



“I believe Jesus wasn't thinking about miracle when He performed it. He's just doing normal activities as he did in His heavenly kingdom.”
Toba Beta



“It is wearisome disease to
preserve health by too strict a
regimen.”
La Rochefoucauld, Francois de



"I thank the Lord that it is our privilege to co-operate with Him in the work of restoration, availing ourselves of all the possible advantages in the recovery of health. It is no denial of our faith to place ourselves in the condition most favorable for recovery."
Ellen G. White, CH 376.



“The quality of your life really does matter to God. A careful study of the gospels will show that Jesus spent most of his three-year ministry improving the quality of individual lives.”
Tunji Ogunjimi, Glory Realm Living



“God doesn’t promise us escape from suffering or pain. Rather, He promises to miraculously use even bad situations for your ultimate good.”

Jim George, *One-Minute Insights for Men*



II. Context



The text of the healing of Naaman is part of the speech that Jesus made in Nazareth, where He was rejected by the population. His words reminded the audience of the grandeur of God's project for His people, and also the results that are not necessarily matching the beauty of His vision.



The structure of the Gospel of Luke

In	1: 1 – 4	Search for Authentic Narrative about Jesus
1	1: 5 – 2: 50	Incarnation (Prophecies, John the Baptist and Jesus)
2	2: 50 – 4: 30	Nazareth (Baptism, Temptation, and Ministry in Nazareth)
3	4: 31 – 7 : 50	Capernaum (Headquarters of Jesus for his Ministry in Galilee)
4	8: 1 – 9: 50	Every City and Village
5	9: 51 – 19: 27	Trip to Jerusalem (Jesus' Ministry on the road, Samaria and Judea)
6	19: 28 – 21: 38	Jerusalem (Fulfillment of Jesus' Mission)
7	22: 1 – 23: 56	Jesus' Passion, Death, and Burial
8	24: 1 – 24: 53	Jesus' Resurrection, Post-resurrection Teaching, and Ascension

Structure of Luke 4: 16 - 30

A	16	Jesus came to Nazareth
B	16	Jesus went into the synagogue
C	16 - 20	The Anointment of Messiah by the Spirit (Messianic Text) Five elements of the Messiah's Mission 1. Preach; 2. Heal; 3. Proclaim Liberty; 4. Set at liberty; 5. Proclaim the Jubilee
D	20 - 21	Sermon of Jesus: Today the Messianic times begin
D'	22	Response of People of Nazareth: He is Joseph's Son (not the Messiah)
C'	23 - 27	Denial of the work of Messiah in Nazareth (Messianic Times) Two illustrations: 1. Widow of Sarepta; 2. Naaman from Syria
B'	28 - 29	Jesus was thrust out of the synagogue and of the city
A'	30	Jesus left Nazareth

III. The story of Naaman as a reminder of God's love and care for all human beings



1. Health situation of God's people

"And many lepers were in
Israel in the time of Elisha
the prophet..."



“Christ had been the guide and teacher of ancient Israel, and He taught them that health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God. The great Physician who healed the sick in Palestine had spoken to His people from the pillar of cloud, telling them what they must do, and what God would do for them. “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God,” He said, “I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee”... When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. “There was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.”

Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 824.

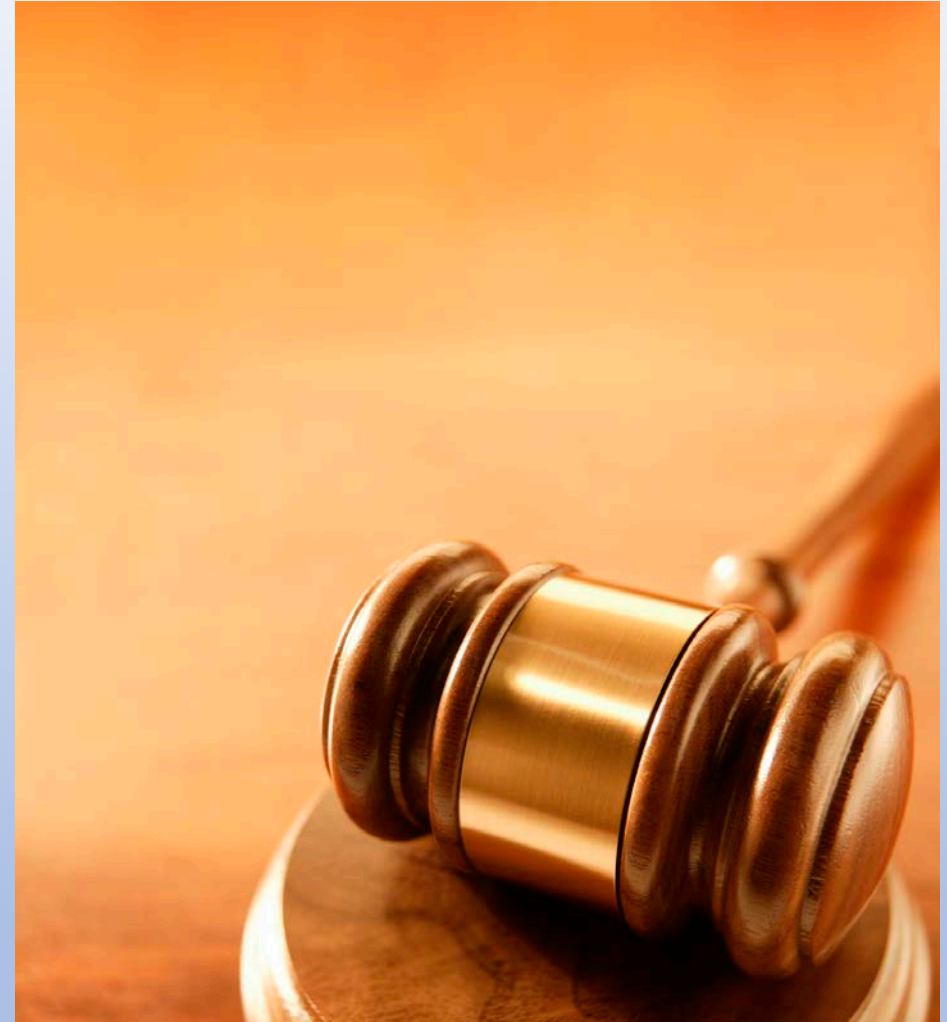
"Health is not valued till
sickness comes."
Thomas Fuller



“Pay mind to your own life, your own health, and wholeness. A bleeding heart is of no help to anyone if it bleeds to death.”
Frederick Buechner



“When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.”
Billy Graham



2. Conditions for the healing

"None of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."



“We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul. And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength. Ellen G. White, CT 467.

“All who claim to be Christians, have no right to assume this name; for a Christian is one who is Christlike. When the judgment sits and all are judged according to the deeds done in the body, they will learn that they have misrepresented Christ in practical life, and have not made themselves a savor of life unto life, but a savor of death unto death. In fellowship with them will be a numerous company who have conformed to lustful practices; but numbers will neither excuse their iniquity, nor lessen their condemnation for destroying the brain nerve power and the physical health.”
Ellen G. White, Manuscript 123, 1901.

"What makes a man physically strong and healthy is not only a good and a balanced diet or a regular exercise. The health comes through the proximity with God and through a spirit of serenity and thanksgiving. When God is in your heart, and when by His grace you follow his will and respect health principles, you will be in good shape. And your entire life will be a blessing."
(DS)



3. Healing as missionary activity



“Let our ministers who have gained an experience in preaching the word, learn how to give simple treatments and then labor intelligently as medical missionary evangelists.”
Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 172



The church of Christ is organized for service. Its watchword is ministry. Its members are soldiers, to be trained for conflict under the Captain of their salvation. Christian ministers, physicians, teachers, have a broader work than many have recognized. They are not only to minister to the people, but to teach them to minister. They should not only give instruction in right principles, but educate their hearers to impart these principles. Truth that is not lived, that is not imparted, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue. Its blessing can be retained only as it is shared.

Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ*, p. 244.

"God loves you just the way you are, but he refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus."

Max Lucado

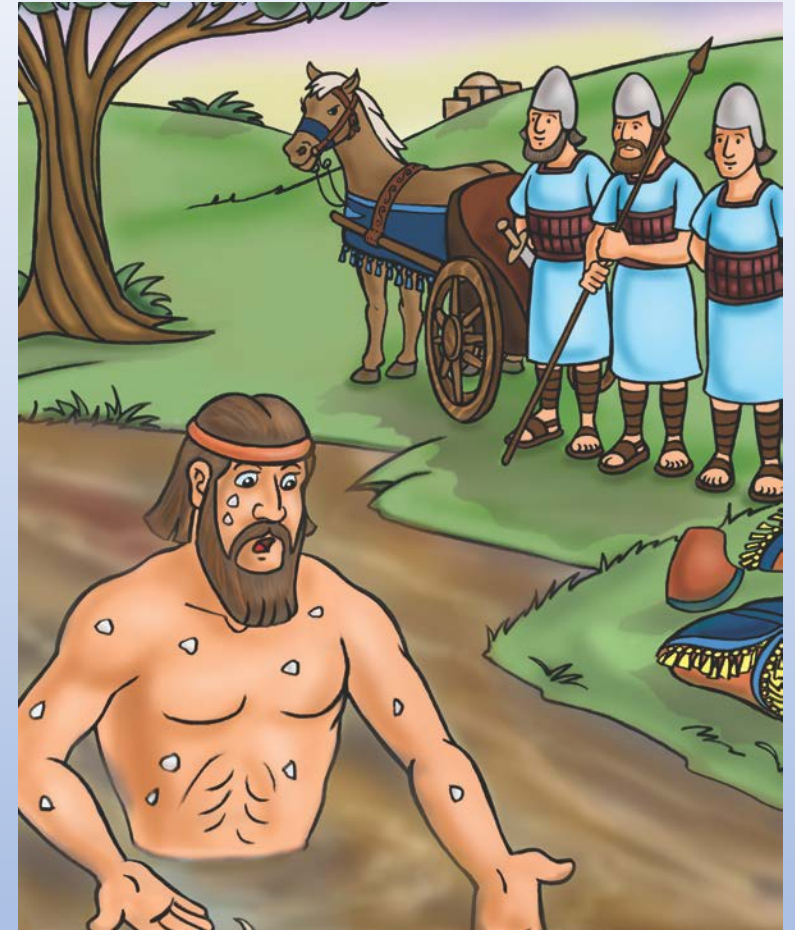


4. Lessons from Naaman's Healing



“Anger nearly deprived Naaman of his healing. He was however wise enough to heed the sound counsel of his servants. He dealt with his anger and avoided making a decision in annoyance. Finally, Naaman awoke to his true purpose in God. He gave his prayer, praise and ponder a focus. God was his focus. He became aware of the relationship God wanted to have with him and the hindrances that were on the way.”

Dele Oke



"Leprosy is incurable. Naaman knew that. You can imagine his surprise then when he heard from a small Israelite girl that she knew someone who could cure the incurable! Here was this girl... kidnapped from her family and taken as a slave into a foreign land. And yet her simple, yet rock solid faith in God and His prophets never wavered. For Christians, their responsibility is to play the role that this girl did. That is, to point the way, in simple faith, to the only one who can help... God! 'I know a man who can cure you' she said. 'The incurable is curable when God is involved!' And so it is with 'curing' the burden of sin that weighs upon all that don't know the Lord. For man it is an immoveable load. Yet God can move it. So an excited Naaman set out! And with him he took gold, silver and ten sets of clothing. 'Materialism' had served him well in the past... why not this time? 'Surely he should pay for his cure' Naaman thought to himself."

I Gordon

"It was a little girl to whom Naaman and his wife listened. For her, there wasn't anything God could not do. Although there were no precedents, she really believed God would heal Naaman.

It has always struck me as strange that this powerful general would even listen to her, instead of patting her on the head and saying: "Silly little girl, what do you know about real life". Or "yes, yes dear, I'm quite sure your prophet can do it" and then conveniently have forgotten about it.

Something in her life must have made her believable. Don't underestimate what God can do with our witness, even if we think we are insignificant in the world's eyes. We aren't in God's."

Martin Dale

"Every day, my brethren, you continue to ask of us, whether the road to heaven is really so difficult, and the number of the saved really so small as we represent? Our Savior answers you here, that the number of lepers was great in Israel in the time of the prophet Eliseus; and that Naaman was only cured by the man of God...

Nothing unclean shall enter the kingdom of God. We are all sinners, O my God! Who shall be saved? Those who work out their salvation with fear and trembling...

O my God! Create in me a clean heart, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. You will be my God in the midst of Babylon, as you will one day be in Jerusalem above!" It is thus that, after distinguishing yourselves from the sinful on earth, you will be gloriously distinguished in eternity!"

Jean Baptiste Massillon (1662 – 1742), the king of France selected him to preach regularly in Versailles Castles, and Voltaire considered him as one of the best preachers of that time.

“The lesson we need to learn from Gehazi is to beware of greed. It is easy to get caught up in the desire for the things of this world to the point that we are willing to do most anything to receive them or keep them. Furthermore, just because people are in a position where they are supposed to be serving God does not make them immune to greed. Greed destroys, as it did with Gehazi; and it will do the same to us if we fall prey to it.”

Jeff Jenkins

V. Conclusion



"What makes a man physically strong and healthy is not only a good and a balanced diet or a regular exercise. The health comes through the proximity with God and through a spirit of serenity and thanksgiving. When God is in your heart, and when by His grace you follow his will and respect health principles, you will be in good shape. And your entire life will be a blessing."
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The heeling of Naaman

“And dipped himself,” says the Scripture, “seven times in Jordan.” (2 Kings 5:14) It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but it served as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions; being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes, even as the Lord has declared: “Unless a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (John 3:5)

Irenaeus of Lyons, 2nd century, Fragments, 34.

“We know not in what line our children may be called to serve. They may spend their lives within the circle of the home; they may engage in life’s common vocations, or go as teachers of the gospel to heathen lands; but all are alike called to be missionaries for God, ministers of mercy to the world. He who sent ... the little Israelitish maiden to the help of Naaman, the Syrian captain, sends men and women and youth today as His representatives to those in need of divine help and guidance.
Ellen G. White, Conflict and Courage, p. 227.

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