

[2 Kings 5:1-5, 9-15a](#)

God's Incomprehensible Ways – The Healing of Naaman

Introduction

What do Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army in 850 B.C., Frank Sinatra, and all of us in this room have in common? We like to do things our way. Sinatra even did a hit song titled "I Did It My Way". We're very good at wanting our way. For example, Adam and Eve wanted to do things their way after they were deceived by Satan. That didn't work. King David did things his way in an adulterous affair with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband. That didn't work. Even our grandson, Oliver, is very particular of which toy train he plays with and which one grandpa gets. Yes, three year olds are very good at doing things their own way.

Wanting our own way reflects our self-centeredness, which emanates out of pride, which is sin. Pride says our way is best and no one else's is, including God's ways. Scripture, however, speaks to the fact that God's ways are so much better than ours. Here's what the Author Himself of the Bible says about His ways in [Isaiah 55:8-9](#)

⁸ *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.*

⁹ *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

[Isaiah 55:8-9](#) (ESV)

I have a saying, which expresses the fact that God's ways are so much higher than ours. **God's incomprehensibility is too incomprehensible for me to comprehend.** The magnitude of God and His ways is staggering! In fact, His ways are inscrutable! Attempting to comprehend God's ways is like trying to empty the oceans of the world with a teaspoon. It can't be done! But here's an assurance. Not comprehending God's way is okay. In fact, it's necessary that God have some mystery. If we attempt to fit God into a box, we've reduced Him to our ways and our thoughts and we're really not worshiping Him.

So, our main take-away from this account in [2 Kings 5](#) of Naaman's healing is that God is the hero. The focus is on God and His incomprehensible, unchanging, unfailing, sovereign, exclusive, perfect ways, which point us to His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus. We get to brag about God's greatness to the praise of His glorious grace. Boasting about Him points us to the glory of Christ in the gospel because Jesus is the gospel. He is the good news!

So, here are four points which expound upon the truth that God's incomprehensible ways are:

- Sovereign
- Exclusive
- Perfect
- Point to Jesus

1. God's Ways Are Sovereign

Naaman was a great man, a man of valor. He was in high favor with his master because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. Everything about Naaman could be attributed to God, including the fact that God was sovereign over his leprosy. In the text from [2 Kings 5](#), God's sovereignty over Naaman's healing was manifested in a little slave girl from Israel. Isn't it interesting that God would use an Israelite slave girl - a child - to point the way to Naaman's healing? Seems insignificant doesn't it?

Jesus spoke of a seemingly insignificant mustard seed and compared it to the kingdom of God. The gospel, a tiny seed, turns into a significant thing, which has significant effects on the lives of everyone who embrace it. An insignificant slave girl was used by God to change the life of a significant man in order that the kingdom of God would grow.

Jesus also spoke of Naaman's leprosy in [Luke 4:27](#)

²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

[Luke 4:27](#) (ESV)

Jesus was saying that God dispenses His grace to whomever He pleases. In this case, not one Jew was cleansed of leprosy in the time of Elisha, except only Naaman the Syrian. To proclaim that God chose to cleanse an enemy, a Syrian, was unthinkable. That's why the priests and religious leaders were incessantly angry with Jesus. He said things and did things that didn't agree with their ways.

God's ways are truly sovereign. Sovereign is defined as supreme, paramount, having unlimited and absolute authority. The theme of God's sovereignty is written about throughout the book of Isaiah chapters 45 and 46. For example, here's [Isaiah 45:12](#)

¹² I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.

[Isaiah 45:12](#) (ESV)

Do you and I believe our life is under God's sovereignty? Do you and I trust that God is in control when chaos and despair are screaming at us that the world is out of control? What about in our own families? Do you and I worry that God isn't concerned about our marriage, a wayward child or an elderly loved-one who has Alzheimer's disease? Is not God sovereign over all of these? Are we trusting in God's sovereign ways or would we rather trust in our ways? Here's [Proverbs 3:5-8](#)

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ⁷ Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

[Prov 3:5-8](#) (ESV)

Indeed, God can be trusted because He is sovereign. He owns everything. We own nothing. God owes us nothing. We owe Him everything. Take note that the sovereignty of God is one of our

core values at La Crescent Evangelical Free Church (LEFC). Since God's sovereign way describes His supremacy over all things for His own glory, it's important to realize that His ways are also exclusive.

2. God's Ways Are Exclusive

Naaman wanted healing his way, not God's way. Naaman arrived at Elisha, the prophet's house, with his entourage of chariots, horses and servants. In today's worth, the silver, gold and fine clothing that he had brought to find favor with Elisha totaled an incredible value - probably close to 3.25 million dollars. He also expected Elisha to turn his healing into a spectacle, with waving of the prophet's hands and calling upon the name of the Lord his God.

Instead, Elisha sent a messenger with a simple remedy for healing his leprosy: "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." Naaman was furious. He turned away in a rage. Why the dirty, muddy Jordan River for his cleansing? Why not wash in the clean and beautiful waters of the Abana and Pharpar River near Damascus?

When there's only one way, and it's the right way, but it's not our way, how do we react? Naaman's response was to turn away in an angry rage. He disrespected God's way of healing his leprosy. There is a danger in turning away from God's way and wanting our way instead. Here's [Proverbs 14:12](#)

¹² There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.
[Prov 14:12](#) (ESV)

Naaman was on a path that would lead to death if he didn't receive the cure for his leprosy. More importantly, he was on a path that would lead to spiritual death if he didn't receive a cure for his sin. God's way is exclusive in that it is the only way to be cleansed and forgiven of sin. Here's the simplistic beauty of the gospel. **The pathway to God is exclusively through Jesus.** Here's [John 14:6](#)

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
[John 14:6](#) (ESV)

A man named John Newton experienced the exclusive ways of God, which changed his life. Newton, the writer of the hymn "Amazing Grace" was a captain of a slave trading ship in the mid 1700's. During a violent storm while on the ocean, he realized God's way for his life was the only way. Later, he became a pastor and wrote the hymn which praises God for his exclusive way of rescuing wretched sinners from the darkness of sin. The words "I once was lost, but now am found; was blind but now I see" are at the heart of the gospel message, which proclaims Jesus as the only way to God. And since God is exclusive in His ways, He is also perfect in His ways.

3. God's Ways Are Perfect

Remember, Naaman stormed off in a furious rage because God's way of healing didn't line up with his. Naaman's servants implored him to listen to Elisha. In essence they were saying, "Here's the cure! If it were difficult, wouldn't you do what you were told? And this is so simple!"

Will you not do it?" God's perfect way included using the servants of Naaman to make a great change in the life of a desperately, needy man.

When it comes to perfection, there is none like God. Here's [Psalm 18:30](#).

This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

[Psalms 18:30](#) (ESV)

He is the author of perfection. He Himself is perfect. He is without sin. And yet in His perfection, He would orchestrate a perfect healing not only for Naaman's leprosy, but healing for his soul. And God would use Naaman's imperfect servants to speak truth into his life, even after he had turned away from God in a disrespectful, angry, rage.

At that moment, God changed Naaman's life. God changed his heart and what had been pride, arrogance and anger was turned to humility and submission. Scripture says that God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. So, Naaman went into the Jordan and dipped himself seven times, according to God's way, not his way. And his flesh was restored like that of a little child and he was clean.

Now, consider this with regard to God's perfection. Under the new covenant in Christ's blood being the perfect sacrifice for every believer's sins, the person who trusts in Jesus has an eternal redemption that is secured by His perfect righteousness, which covers every sin - past, present and future. That's what it means to be in Christ. Is your hope for today, tomorrow and eternity depending upon nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness? Many have rejected the hope found in Christ alone, but for those who have received Jesus as their hope, the gospel changes everything.

After Naaman dipped in the Jordan River seven times, God cleansed him of his leprosy. As a result, not only was Naaman's skin restored like that of a child, but he was made right with God. He came back to Elisha, he and all of his servants, and proclaimed God's glory as the only sovereign, exclusive and perfect God. Naaman's experience is a picture pointing us to Jesus.

4. God's Ways Point to Jesus

How does the story about a military commander of the Syrian army nearly 3,000 years ago, who had leprosy, point to Jesus? Leprosy is like sin. Both are hideous, disfiguring, and deplorable and are a death threat. People like you and me, whether we want to admit it or not, are a lot like Naaman. We really want to do things our way, even when it involves being cleansed from the horrible and ugly effects of sin.

And this is where pointing to Jesus comes in. God in all of His sovereignty, exclusivity and perfection made the only way for people like you and I to be cleansed and made right with Him. No amount of silver and gold, or power and prestige influences God's favor toward saving anyone. God's sovereign, exclusive and perfect way points to salvation in one Name alone - the Lord Jesus. Here's [Acts 4:12](#)

12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

[Acts 4:12](#) (ESV)

Can you think of a person who points to Jesus, the only Name by which we must be saved? Perhaps great evangelists and pastors, such as Billy Graham, come to mind. Maybe it's Pastor Dan Cravillion or Pastor Ryan Perry. What about a Sunday school teacher, a co-worker or a loved one? The question is: Are we listening and obeying? God Himself points to Jesus and says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him." ([Matthew 17:5](#))

In spite of Naaman's initial dismissal of God's way to be healed, he eventually listened and obeyed. Naaman turned toward God; he trusted in His sovereignty, exclusivity and perfection. If you haven't already done so, what prevents you from turning to God in Christ for healing from sin? Naaman was given a new life by God's grace. God cured his leprosy and his sin. You may not be a leper, but you're certainly a sinner like me and the rest of mankind. This is a picture pointing to the truth that in Christ alone a person is made new and set free from the horrible disease of sin. A new life in Christ is a life changed forever. Here's [2 Corinthians 5:17](#).

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

[2 Cor 5:17](#) (ESV)

Application for the church

The central truth of today's message is that God is sovereign, exclusive, perfect and points us to Jesus. So, how does that apply to the church today? What areas of our lives would we ask God to change in order to become more like Jesus? As the church, are we willing to put away our pride in order that lives would be changed for God's glory? Or would we rather do things our own way? Would we rather make much of ourselves or make much of God?

Here's a charge for all of us, from the youngest to the oldest at LEFC. Are we willing to be ambassadors for Christ in an increasingly hostile culture toward the gospel? Will we trust God in His sovereignty, His exclusivity and His perfection to use us to point others to salvation in Christ? If He can use a little, slave girl to point the way to Naaman's healing, then He can use people like us to point others to the love of Christ. But there will be a cost to follow God's way. Are we ready to pay the price, such as in church planting, in order to see people healed and saved from sin? Does our love for Christ and our love for one another shine as a light in a dark world?

Conclusion

Here's a few concluding thoughts. Elisha's message of washing in the Jordan River seven times to heal his leprosy was nonsense to Naaman. God's ways are always right and true. However, they don't always line up with our own common sense and certainly don't line up with the culture that surrounds us. What prevents us from following God's way? Pride? Arrogance? Yet, God chooses to rescue and cleanse undeserving people from sin like Naaman, John Newton, as well as you and me. Why would God do that? Here's [Ephesians 1:4-6](#).

⁴ ...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

[Eph 1:4-6](#) (ESV)

God chooses to cleanse and heal simply out of His rich mercy, great love and to the praise of His glorious grace. That's difficult to comprehend isn't it? But that's the incomprehensible, sovereign, exclusive, perfect God who points us to His Beloved Son, Jesus, for His glory and for our good. Amen!