

How Our Culture Creates Spiritual Leprosy

He was a warrior, a leader of men. Battle-hardened, he was a clear thinker who assessed situations rapidly, thoroughly and knew what to do. Uncompromisingly loyal and dedicated to his country, he lived with integrity in his personal life and in his leadership. All of these qualities and more made his men respect him and serve him with honor and dedication. His king honored him, trusted him and looked to him for counsel and wisdom.

But, he was a leper.

It seems inconceivable that such a highly respected man and tremendous leader would also be so diseased. Lepers were outcasts, living isolated from society and community, but not Naaman.

Information reached the commander about a man of God in Israel who had the power to heal him. He shared this information with the king, who immediately wrote a letter to the king of Israel explaining the importance of Naaman and requesting his cooperation in providing the healing.

Naaman took with him, ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten complete changes of cloths, to pay for the healing. Let's put that in current value.

A talent is approximately seventy-five USA pounds or nine hundred ounces. Two and half shekels are equal to one USA ounce. A complete set of men's clothing is \$ to \$.

Naaman took with him seven hundred and fifty pounds or nine-thousand ounces of silver and two hundred pounds or 2400 ounces of gold. The spot price of silver on April 25, 2016 is \$ an ounce and the spot price of gold is \$ an ounce. Naaman

brought with him \$152, in silver and \$2,971, in gold. He also brought approximate \$3, in clothing. **The army commander brought a total of \$3,126, to pay for being healed of leprosy.**

When the king of Israel read the letter and heard about the financial gift available to pay for the healing, he shocked. "Does the king of Syria think I am God," he shouted. "Is he doing this to start a fight," he continued? He pondered what seemed to him to be a very dangerous situation. The man of God, a prophet, heard what was happening and sent a message to the king of Israel. "Send the commander to me. He will know that there is a prophet in Israel."

Indeed, the commander went to see this man of God. He arrived at the home of the prophet with his entourage, horses and chariots. Upon arrival there was no fanfare or formal greeting. Indeed, there was no recognition at all except a messenger sent from the prophet telling him to go dip himself seven times in the Jordan River.

Furious by such treatment and indignant message, the commander exclaimed, "I thought he would at least come out and greet me; call upon his God and wave his hand over the afflicted area. Instead he tells me to go wash in the stinking muddy Jordan River. We have better rivers at Damascus, and cleaner. I could go wash in them." He went away indignant at such treatment.

His servants were concerned and able to see what their offended commander could not. "Sir, if he had told you to do something great, you would have done it. He has told you to do something simple, go wash in the river and you will be clean. If you would have made the effort to do something great, shouldn't you at least try the simple task?"

The humility and integrity of the commander is revealed by his willingness to listen and to follow through with what his servants told him. He did go the Jordan River and dip himself seven times. The leprosy was gone and his skin was like that

of a new born.

He arrived again at the home of the prophet with his full entourage. He came to say thank you and to pay for his healing. This time he met the man of God. "I know that there is no God in the world like the God in Israel. Please, let me give you a gift for what you done for me." The man of God refused the gift.

Naaman was surprised by the answer of the prophet. He was also humbled before the Living God. "I will no longer worship any other god but the Lord," was his response.

An idol worshipping man, sentenced to a horrible death by an incurable disease, found mercy and healing at the hands of the Living God. Nothing was required of him except humble obedience. It was a gift. Naaman received grace.

America, God has not changed.

We are afflicted with a horrible leprosy that is eating away at our very life. The soul of our nation is terribly sick; craving after passions that disease our body and destroy our spirit. Murdering our children and shooting our brothers in the street because we crave and cannot have. We are worshipping idols made with our own hands and idols we have imported from other nations.

God's mercy and compassion are still extended.

But we are offended at His message and His messenger. Our pride demands we do something. We have looked to education, it has failed us. We looked to science, it has only medicated us. We looked to the politicians, they only lie to us, steal our money, and use us for their own personal gain.

America, you would do something extremely difficult and pay any price for true healing. What God offers to you is truly simple. If you will humble yourselves before the Living God

and obey His Word, you will be healed. Let the river of Living Water, the Holy Spirit, flow over your body and soul and your innocence and purity will be restored like that of a new born.

We do not deserve it and it cannot be earned. Jesus Christ has already paid the price. It is paid in full. It is an absolutely free gift.

Won't you go to the river and be healed?

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