

LESSON #12 - WASHED CLEAN - 2 KINGS 5: 9-16

COMING TO THE WATERS - We are WASHED CLEAN by God's grace (note: we are talking about undeserved kindness here, not the Means of Grace, i.e., Word and Sacrament). That grace can come to us in the most unusual of places: the Jordan River, a Bethlehem stable or a Baptismal font. Whichever way grace arrives, it is God's way of inviting us to "COME TO THE WATERS."

THE PRAYER - Dear God, even as we acknowledge our sin and lost condition, we recognize that Your grace has made a wonderful and healing change in our lives. Make us into thankful and obedient children who, having COME TO THE WATERS, are willing to share them so that others are WASHED CLEAN. In the Name of our Savior, we ask it. Amen.

PARCHED HEARTS - ILLUSTRATION - In one location of central Turkey there are hot and cold springs found, which bubble up, side by side. For centuries, women have made use of this gracious gift by bringing their laundry. They boil their clothes in the hot springs and then rinse them in the cold. A tourist to that country, watching this procedure commented to his guide: "This is fantastic! These women must be extremely thankful to God for graciously supplying hot and cold water for their use" The guide replied, "You might think that is the case, sir. But most of the time the women complain because they have to bring their own soap."

THOUGHT: Human nature, being what it is, dictates that we do not give thanks to God for His undeserved gifts. More often than not, we complain about the means and manner in which He touches our lives. Nevertheless, because God is kind, He continues to extend His invitation to COME TO THE WATERS and uses them to cleanse us.

FIRST APPLICATION - As we read through Scriptures, we are amazed by the fact that so many pages deal with the need for God's Old Testament people to be clean. They had to be cleansed from any contact with blood; the animals they ate had to be clean, and their sacrifices had to be without spot or blemish. Ritual cleansings were a part of life. On an earthly level, this hygienic cleanliness prevented many illnesses. On a spiritual level, it was a reminder that God demands souls that stand in His presence, be untainted by sin. Please take a look at the story of 2 Kings 5, and see how God graciously cleanses a man.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH - HUMANKIND'S THIRST - 2 KINGS 5

VERSE	QUESTION	ANSWER
v. 6	..... What was Naaman's problem	He had leprosy.
v. 7	..... Could the king do anything to help this soldier?.....	No, he felt it was an occasion for war.
v. 10	..... What did Elisha want Naaman to do?.....	Be cleansed by washing seven times in the Jordan
v. 11-12	..... What was Naaman's reaction?.....	He wanted to be cleansed in a local river.
v. 13	..... What did his servants say?	If God asked you to do a great thing, you would do it. Why not a little thing?
v. 14	..... What happened?	He did as he was told and was made clean.
v. 15	..... What conclusion did Naaman reach?	There was only one God.

THIRST FOR AN ANSWER: In a similar way, those who follow the Lord's commands and COME TO THE WATERS, find themselves graciously cleansed and restored. Nevertheless, like Naaman, people still try to find their own way. Look at these ideas and tell how people TRY to improve on God's plan.

GOD'S PLAN

1. God says, "I will bless a union of husband and wife."
2. God says, "Give freely and you will be blessed."
3. God says, "Love your neighbor."
4. God says, "Believe on Jesus Christ for salvation."

OUR PSEUDO "IMPROVEMENT"

- People say "Let's live together."
- People say, "Only after the bills are paid."
- People say, "Watch out for Number One."
- People say, "You've got to save yourself."

**ISAIAH 55:1 "COME, ALL YOU WHO ARE THIRSTY, COME TO THE WATERS
GROUP BIBLE STUDIES - TEACHER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

We can take a look at other times when people tried to change God's gracious plans. Look at these passages and see what happens.

2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - DEEP DRINKING

VERSE	ACTION	RESULT
Numbers 20: 11-12	Moses struck the rock.	He disobeyed God and didn't enter the promised land.
Joshua 7: 24-26	Achan stole from Jericho.	He disobeyed God and was stoned to death.
1 Samuel 15: 15-26	Saul sacrificed against God's command.	The kingdom was taken from him.

QUESTION Samuel said it right when he told Saul that God wants people to listen to His directions more than He wants them to sacrifice. That is especially true for Christians who KNOW that God has invited them to COME TO THE WATERS and be WASHED CLEAN. We cannot improve on God's plan of grace. Let's take a look at some of the things that God graciously does for us:

WHAT GOD DOES	WHAT WE RECEIVE
Baptism	Forgives our sins / Makes us members of the church
.....	Brings us into the family.
Lord's Supper.....	Forgives sins / Strengthens faith
.....	Empowers us to sanctified living.
Prayer.....	God receives our thanks and adoration / gives us blessings
.....	Listens to us.
Holy Spirit.....	We are strengthened / Lets us know we are not alone.

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: - It would be impossible for us to list all the things God has and continues to do for us. What we can say is that when God is with us, we are changed. Living in Minnesota, I have had the opportunity of watching icicles form during our January thaw. It sounds obvious, but it took me until last year to realize that if the water dripping down was clean, the icicle remained clear, and sparkled brightly when the sun hit it. On the other hand, if the water was slightly muddy, the icicle looked foul, and its beauty was spoiled. Isn't that the way the Lord works with us. Drop by drop, day by day, He builds His people. As long as the Spirit works within our hearts, our souls are clean and pure and our actions glorify Him. When evil enters, or we wander from Him, then we become clouded and lose the ability to reflect the Son. Our lives become deformed and sad.

SHARING THE SAV(I)OR (If you have time in your lesson or wish to work at home)

No doubt you have people in your circle of friends who have faithfully received God's grace without complaint. They have relied on Him in happy times and sad. List one of these persons for each day of the week and thank God for them in your prayers:

MON _____ TUES _____ WED _____
 THURS _____ FRI _____ SAT _____
 SUN _____

A FINAL STORY: One of the kids in the class had gotten new glasses. After school, his friends discussed the addition. One said, "I'd hate to wear glasses all the time, wouldn't you?" "No" the other boy said, not if I get glasses like grandma. She sees nice things to do on rainy days. She sees when folks are sad, and what will make them feel better. I asked her one day how she could see all that, and she told me, "That's the way I look at things as I've gotten older. It must be her glasses."

QUESTIONS: Can you, like grandma, see that God has washed you clean?..... YES NO
 Can you think of any way to improve His gracious washing? YES NO

THANKS FOR THE WATERS - Dear Lord, I give thanks that You have washed me clean. I can't do that myself. I can't improve on it. All I can do is say, "Thank You!" Allow my life to be clean so that I may reflect the Son to all those around me. In His Name. Amen.