

“IT’S SIMPLE”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: 2 KINGS 5: 1-14

GOD’S WORD: PSALM 30

I – SIMPLE IDEA:

I sometimes wonder if God is in heaven, looking down on his children and the thought that comes to his mind is...”BUT IT WAS SUCH A SIMPLE IDEA!” I created the world and everything in it. I put all the plants and animals in it, gave it light and made sure it could sustain life. Then I made humans in my image so I would have someone to love and someone to love me. But that didn’t last long. They shortly turned against me and became disobedient. They ushered in sin like murder and it grew worse and worse. Even a giant flood didn’t teach them anything and the sin continued and grew.

But I still loved them. I still wanted them to love me, but sin kept us apart. So I had this wonderful plan. I would send my Son to earth where he would tell all my children about me and then he would be a sacrifice for their sin and the love between us could be restored.

II – WE MADE IT DIFFICULT:

The same children Jesus came to save took the simplicity out of it all and made it a lot more complicated than it was ever intended to be. Jesus said that God loved us so much he sent his one and only Son to save us and whoever believes in that Son would have everlasting life.

That’s a pretty simple statement isn’t it? Believe in Jesus and find God. It was simple when Jesus said it, but we have taken that one verse from the Bible...that one verse from the mouth of Jesus...and have turned it and twisted it until it lost its simplicity and became as a burden to some.

Think about it for a moment. One verse and we have developed how many denominations around it? One verse and we can't get along with other Christians because they think they have the right religion and everyone else is going to hell. One verse and we argue over how to practice communion. One verse and we argue over how to baptize. One verse and we disagree over how to worship the one who came to save us. One verse and we argue over the music we use to worship him.

We have taken the simple fact that God loves and Jesus saves and turned it into a pharisaical thing of contention! I think that not only is God looking down from heaven upon us and saying, "But it was such a simple idea," but I think he's probably crying too.

III – TEXT:

Two Sundays ago I preached about a prophet named Elijah. Today I want to look at his successor Elisha. This scripture makes the same point I'm trying to make...it's simple.

2 Kings 5:1-14 (NLT)

¹ The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the LORD had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy. ² At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. ³ One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy." ⁴ So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. ⁵ "Go and visit the prophet," the king of Aram told him. "I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel." So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. ⁶ The letter to the king of Israel said: "With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy." ⁷ When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "Am I God that I can give life and take it away? Why is this man asking me to heal someone with leprosy? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me." ⁸ But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: "Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel." ⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy." ¹¹ But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the

leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me! ¹² Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage. ¹³ But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'" ¹⁴ So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed!

Naaman is a big name in the sphere of fighting and conquest. His name is known wide and far. He respected and feared by all the neighboring nations. Probably because he has raided most of them in one form or another...including Israel. But even someone as famous as him does not get through life without some issues. One of those is leprosy. The Covid of the day. It made people stay away from you, even your own family and it affected your way of life.

His wife has a slave girl who had been captured and brought back from the land of Israel. She told her mistress about this great prophet of Israel in the land of Samaria who could heal her husband of this dreaded disease. At this point Naaman would have done anything to be cured so he went to his king and told him about this possibility of being healed and his king wrote a letter to the king of Israel to make his commander well.

Naaman and his entourage packed up and headed to the palace of Israel's king and presented him with the letter. This king went in to a panic knowing he could not heal him and thus would be attacked by Naaman and his men. But the prophet Elisha heard about it and told the king to take a chill pill and sent Naaman to him to be healed.

Naaman took his people and the gifts he brought and headed to Samaria where he stopped in front of the house of Elisha where he told the prophet's messenger why he had come...even though Elisha already knew. Elisha didn't even come out and greet this great man, kind of snubbed him and sent out word that Naaman should go down to the Jordan and take a dip seven times and he would be healed.

This infuriated Naaman. He was a great man. How dare this prophet snub him like this! How dare he tell him to take a bath in the river. He had his own rivers back home he can take a bath in. Didn't he deserve to have the prophet come out in person and do some magic mumbo jumbo complete with shouting, hand waving, and immediate cure at the very least? So in his anger he packed up and left. It was then one of his servants stepped in and calmed him down and pointed out that if it would have been difficult he would have done anything

he was asked. So why not try this simple thing. So he went down and did what he was told and was healed.

It was when he listened and did the simple thing instead of needing it to be complicated that God healed him.

IV – IT REALLY IS SIMPLE:

As I look at our faith I can't help but believe it is simple. Jesus didn't leave us a check list of what we had to do to see God. He didn't give us a proposed budget to live on. He didn't give us a bill to pay our way in to the hereafter. He didn't give us a chore list of all the good works we must perform before we can make it. He didn't even tell us how we should act or talk to enable our grand appointment with God.

Just the opposite. He said that if we believe we will be saved. As I read the Bible I understand more and more that I don't have to worry about the rest of this stuff. I come to know that if I believe. If I have accepted Jesus into my heart, then all of these other things become the normal way of life. It's just that simple.

V – KEEP IT SIMPLE:

When I talk to those of the next generation, especially those who do not go to church I get this response when I talk to them about their faith beliefs: "I'm not religious but I'm spiritual." What they are saying is they could care less about the religious stuff...the man-made stuff. They want to know the Jesus stuff and how it applies to their lives. That means the church of Jesus has driven people away from him instead of bringing them too him.

When we present the Gospel, the Good News, we have to remember to keep it simple so it speaks to them. They don't need deep theology, they don't need you to go on and on to make your point. They need you to tell them Jesus loves them, Jesus died for them, Jesus paid the price because they aren't perfect, and Jesus wants them to love him back. It's just that simple!

You get the point so I'll keep it simple and say.....AMEN.