

3/19/14

Week 12: Mission: Rescue Life
Beth Moore: Claimin' Naaman, Part One

Betty: Thank you so much for joining us on *LIFE Today*. It's Wednesdays and Beth is here to teach you, which I know you enjoy so much. I'm Betty and this is James.

James: She's going to talk about the power of servanthood and she is talking about Naaman the leper.

Now I won't ever say that without talking about how when I first started preaching I didn't know the Bible very well and I got up and preached on the greatest Old Testament athlete, Naaman the leaper. And I really had a lot of people who were listening in on me. And then I preached on the big strong man and I called Samson Tarzan all the way through my sermon.

So I was just getting into the word and learning. But Beth knows, and she knows the power of being a servant. But I think you're going to love the approach she takes when she is talking about this man, this great man who had leprosy and what happened. This is quite a series and Beth is such a blessing.

Would you welcome Beth Moore? Here she is, Wednesdays in the Word with Beth. Here's Beth!

Begin video clip

Beth: Turn with me if you would please to the book of Second Kings. I've been in Second Kings lately in a series we've done together. We have been jar gatherers with the widow and Elisha and now we're going to look at a different place in the narrative, Second Kings chapter five. Turn with me there.

We're actually going to have a good many weeks on these passages because it will be a part one and part two. So the story will go on all the way from verse one of chapter five to verse 14 but in this first half of the series, we're going to settle on verses one through eight. And for any of us that know the rest of the story, we're going to be very anxious and pushing against that ninth verse so that we can get straight to it and we're going to have to hold back.

There is too much that we could miss if we rush too fast into the next segment. So right here, Second Kings five, I'd like to read verses one through eight to you. Naaman -- everybody say Naaman. Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.

Now the Assyrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "Would that my Lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria. He would cure him of his leprosy."

Verse four: So Naaman went in and told his Lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel."

And the king of Syria said, "Go now and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, 6,000 shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. I mean that's packing like a woman; isn't it?

[Laughter]

We won't get to this part of the narrative but he's brought it to give it away. And you don't have to worry so much about sizes when you just wear a lot of robes. You know what I'm saying? It's like sort of like one size fits all. So if we just stop there somebody is going to think, now that's a little bit of over-packing. He's probably got all of his hair products in a carry-on.

[Laughter]

No, this is because he is bringing -- that's why they mention the money, he is going to pay for his healing if he possibly can. It says in verse six: And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant that you may cure him of his leprosy."

When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

Verse eight: But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may that there is a prophet in Israel."

I'm so intrigued by the story. I want you to back up with me and get a little bit of it in context so that we can work it out together. Because it seems like at first what does an archaic story like this have to do with us? We were talking earlier before prayer about this being a living, breathing word. That even in a story that happened thousands of years ago, we're going to see that it jumps into our here-and-now experience in such a way that it could get us right in-between the eyes, and I pray that it does.

Now this part gets me. Notice what happens here because the little girl goes to her mistress. It says that in verse three she said to her mistress... so you've got the girl who is the servant. We don't know how young, probably in her young teens. So she goes to her mistress and she said to her, "Would that my Lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria? He would cure him of his leprosy."

So Naaman went in and told his Lord. Now that's going to be the king over Israel. Now I love the transfer of information because it's going from the little girl to the wife, from the wife to the husband Naaman, from Naaman to the king over the people of God. And I want you to think that through for a moment because in this transfer, it put them in a situation where the mistress had to say something to her husband about a problem perhaps they had not wanted to discuss.

I love that. Because how many of us, for those of us that are married, how many of us are in a situation where no one ever brings up what the other person is obvious issue is. How many times... and it goes both ways. We have all sorts of stuff. But we will go for years and years and years in complete denial, no one in the couple ever says the obvious thing, "We've got this..."

She would have had to go into him and go, "You know about that leprosy..." If he was like some of us he would have been going, "What leprosy?"

[Laughter]

You know what I'm saying? There's just that little vulnerability here between this wife and this husband where one did not have to act like the other did not have their very, very obvious serious malady that could be treated.

And it says he went and spoke such and such. That is how the ancient rendering would be for us going, "And then she said like 'da-da-dah.'"

I have an Australian friend that says, "blar, blar, blar!" It just kills me every time; instead of blah blah blah, it's blar, blar, blar.

So this transfer of information. And then notice that it says something so powerful about him in verse one.

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria... we're going to be sitting in this first verse almost throughout our entire time together in this first half of this series. It says: Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor -- a great man with his master. That says something huge!

I want you to think about what is prevalent in our culture and I'm not a cynic about our culture. I see God doing things all over the world. I see some things happening in areas of injustice that are just profound and glorious and in due time. I see thrilling things that the testimony of Christ Jesus is going all over the world. He is revealing

himself through dreams to people that don't have any access whatsoever to the scriptures and any kind of Christian programming.

I'm not cynical about the world we live in. But I will tell you this, we do live in a western culture where to be a great man is not to be under authority. To be a great man... to be your own master is what it would be to be a great man. Not to his master, a great man is his master.

So as I was studying this, an old poem started coming back to my mind and I wouldn't have known then that it was from 1875. I would have just known it would have been around for a long time. Some of you who are older even though we actually, to those who are younger you might have thought we were alive in 1875 but we were not --

[Laughter]

But some of those that are older, it was in our English classes and things so you'll perhaps be very familiar with it. It is a poem by William Ernest Henley called Invictus, and I want you to hear it.

Out of the night that covers me, black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be for my unconquerable soul. In the fell clutch of circumstance I have not winced nor cried aloud. Under the bludgeonings of chance my head is bloody but unbowed. Beyond this place of wrath and tears looms but the horror of the shade, and yet the menace of the years finds, and shall find, me unafraid. It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishment the scroll, I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul.

What we know from a biblical perspective is that without the author of our soul, we are like a flea on a ship on a sheep dog; can anybody go there with me?

[Laughter]

I got to tell you. I was in a restaurant in a different state a couple months ago when the waitress that was so graciously at our table taking our order, she, I could see on her

forearm, you can see this just enough to know that there is a tattoo going across her sweet little arm.

Obviously, I said to her, "Do you have any mind of me taking a picture of that?" Because I had just read the poem. It says this: I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul. Somebody's got that tattooed on her.

But we're not the master of our fate! We are not! There is a God in Heaven who ordains all things and I'm praying somewhere along the way she is going to have that rewritten, "He is... my God is..."

I'm going to make a couple points with you and it starts with this one in this part of our series. Number one is this based on our very first verse in Second Kings chapter five: Greatness finds its sole validity in the eyes of the master. Greatness -- you and I, in this series, we're going to be talking about what it is to be a great man or woman. We're just going to deal with that transparently. Could it ever be in our minds, I'm just going to tell you up front, one of the things that I pray for for my children is that they will be great men and women of God. Can we have the courage to pray that?

What would that mean before God for us to have that kind of request before him? What would it be for you and me, believers in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, to be great men and women? That's the challenge on the table for every one of us regardless of your occupation, regardless of your background. I don't care if you told me today, "I'm so painfully shy, I can barely tell somebody my last name." I'm saying that it is on the table in scripture that you could become a great woman -- a great man of God.

And what would that look like? What if we had the courage to just say, "Okay, what would it be, to be great as a woman or a man of God?"

Well, it finds its sole validity in the eyes of the master. He was great with his master. It was his master who thought he was great.

Now, I want to pitch something to you; we're not going to do it together because it's much too broad a study and the context is all over the scriptures but sometimes, for those of you who are Bible students, go, check it out, you will not study more interesting, eye-opening concepts than authority in the Word of God. And I mean it starts right off the bat because in Genesis he is already telling man what to rule over -- I've given you to rule over. But all this idea of authority is that for every person God places in authority they are under authority.

So there's this thing that to fight for authority in the Word of God and in the ways of God... to fight for it is to forfeit it because if you have to fight for authority... you don't understand that to be a great person of authority, is to be a person under authority.

Do you remember that point in Matthew 8:9 where Jesus comes in contact with the centurion and the centurion says, "Listen, you don't need to come to my house to do what I'm asking you to do. I'm a man under authority. I have people that work for me. I get this. You just say it and it will be done."

And it says in the scriptures, in Matthew 8, verse 10, it says that Jesus marveled and said, "I have not seen such faith as that all over Israel." Because he was a man who understood.

What if we understood the concept of authority? And one reason why I can have freedom and you can have freedom, to be able to pray something like, God, raise my children to be mighty men and women -- great men and women of God is because he says, "Let me tell you of greatness to me, the one who is servant among you."

The servants among you, those are the ones that have greatness to me, that's God -- who is servant of all, that is the greatest in the kingdom.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, that is so powerful, Beth! I hope you grasp that. When Jesus describes greatness, you can rest assured you have heard the most appropriate description

possible. The greatest with impact from God's point of view in his kingdom purpose are those who have a servant heart.

Betty, I really do believe this. Our viewers, and I think of guests who are sitting here in the studio audience, I believe those of you who watch *LIFE Today* have to be among the greatest servants on this planet.

Here's why I say that. When we bring you something we believe is on the heart of God, and obviously, it gets on our heart, and it will be on the hearts of the mission workers who have been sent by God into very distressing, painful situations and you look and you see and you enable the missionaries to do what God sent them to do and you do it as a servant.

You say, "Let me find a way to help." And you make it possible for these wonderful mission workers to do what God sent them to do.

I want you to listen to what I found to be one of the most moving heart cries I've ever heard in my life. This is the heart cry of a girl that was sold into sexual bondage and slavery.

Now please listen, don't turn away because you're going to be part of a miracle that happened to her, and can happen to hundreds and even thousands of girls just like her, but only with our help. Listen please.

On the mission field

Announcer: Words -- they can inspire, they can abuse. For a young child, there may be none more shocking, more disorienting, and painful than the four words 15-year-old Lena heard, "You have been sold." How can the heart or mind of a little girl even process what that means?

Subtitles:

>> The woman in charge of the club told me to go inside and sleep with the men. I refused. Then the woman said to me, "Look, your mom has sold you to me. And I've spent a lot of money on you! I will kill you if you can't make me money."

I still refused. But then she beat me and forced me to.

I began to ask myself, "Why... Why are others born with a good life and have parents who love them? Why do I face such pain and trials?"

One day I escaped to look for my mom, but she had sold the house and moved. The brothel owner caught me and forced me back. I asked when my mother's debt will be paid so I can leave and they said, "When you're dead."

End of clip

In the studio

James: Oh, boy! Let me just tell you something, because of people like you we got her, and we got her away from there. And it's a great risk for the missionaries. We have to spend a lot of time protecting.

It's one reason, Betty, we have to build a safe house for areas in Cambodia, and places like that, and be able to take them where we don't put them in with the orphans because of the extremities of what they've come out of. If we take a lot of little children they're headed to be sold, parents will let these predators take their children because they tell them they're going to take them and train them and give them a good job and they will send money back to the family. But they never see them again. And the story she told, Betty, it's typical.

Betty: It really is, James. As I listen, it just breaks my heart. I can't even imagine a mother selling her child to get money. But they're desperate -- the parents are desperate. A lot of times they're lied to and they were told, "We're going to take this child and give them a good education and we're going to take care of them."

James: That's normally the case, they normally lie to them.

Betty: But this little girl, she was so hopeless and there are so many more like her. She thinks, why me? Why me? What did I do to deserve this?

And we can be an answer to those questions because we know who it is that loves her and holds her. And God wants to use us to reach out to precious little children like this, there are so many more of them, to give them a place that they can come and know that they are safe, James; and they have a hope of life, of living, and she so desires to have a good home and a good family that she won't be afraid anymore.

James: She's actually asking, how is it that some people have a good one? And she's saying it with a hopelessness that there's no way I could. But the fact is, because of God's love she meets a family -- a family of faith and love and God, and that really is exactly what happens.

I've got to say to all of you who watch us, I don't care what country you're watching us, or what state, you have made it possible to rescue girls like that. That girl we've rescued; she's becoming a miracle. And it is my hope that you'll see in another year or so a testimony of where she is; and I'm telling you, we could spend years showing you those testimonies.

Here's the issue a lot of times; when we show you the positive, people just start rejoicing and then the process of help will stop. But just understand, we're going to keep bringing some of those back. We've been doing it because we know you rejoice and say, "Let's do it again."

Here's what I'm asking you to do. I want you to reach out and dial that phone number. People are calling right now to be prayed with and for but I want you to call and say, "I'm going to help rescue."

\$128 will rescue one of those girls or a child that's about to be sold -- that's the average cost. We've got a group of viewers and friends who said, "We will match what people give; that's how much we believe in this cause and this need." So you give \$128, it's doubled -- we've rescued two. \$64 it will be doubled. You may say, "I wish I could rescue one." Now \$64, it will be matched, you can.

But remember this too, we've got to build a safe house. We've got a *LIFE* Center in Cambodia, we need a safe house. The situation is such that we need to bring women

like that in, not in with the little children and others because of what's happened around them; not because they're a problem, it's just what they've been through. It will traumatize the children that we're rescuing before they get trapped. We need a safe house. It's going to cost about \$350,000. Wouldn't it be wonderful if 350 people watching would say, "I've got \$1,000."

I don't know what you can do. You may be able to do more than that. All I'm asking you to do is whatever you can. Any gift you make, we're going to send you some gifts to bless you, a beautiful devotional guide, a beautiful side by side Bible, if you'll help us rescue one of those children.

Please go online LifeToday.org or dial that number and make the very best gift you can so we can share life with those who are desperate just like that precious girl you heard. Thank you so much for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Human trafficking -- it's impossible to believe but at this very moment innocent children, many very young, are being sold and forced into sexual slavery and exploited in every way imaginable. And someone must save them!

With your help today we can reach, rescue, and restore their hope for a better future. And now a miracle opportunity of a matching grant means your gift of \$128 to help rescue a child will be matched to help rescue two children.

Your \$64 gift will be matched to help rescue one child from the horrors of human trafficking. This year, with your help, we also hope to build a safe house in Cambodia where young rescued girls can find safety, loving care, and direction for a new life. The cost of this safe house is \$345,000.

With your gift, please request *My Daily Gift*, a beautiful new devotional describing the great love of God, who treasures you more than you can imagine.

With your gift of \$128, which today will help rescue two children, you'll receive the side-by-side Bible, which includes the easy-to-read New International Version and the Amplified text with its additional words and insights.

Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,000 to help establish the safe house in Cambodia and you may request our 2014 commemorative glass sculpture, "The Blessing."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today!

End of clip

On the mission field

>> So this is my first time in Southeast Asia and my very first opportunity to come face to face with the victims of sex trafficking here. The girls that I met in the brothel really expressed so much a feeling of being trapped, feeling hopeless, feeling like there was no way out for them. I can just imagine how hopeless that felt.

I even asked one of them what help looked like. What would it look like to be helped out of the situation? And she couldn't even come up with an answer because to her, there was no help, there was no option.

The body of Christ could totally change the world when it comes to modern day slavery. But we have to be willing to let our hearts be broken for these girls.

End of clip

In the studio

James: If you make a gift to rescue one of these precious girls, and oftentimes it is boys that are trapped, we are sending you the side-by-side Bible, the Amplified and the version that Beth teaches out of, the New International Version.

And then let me just remind you of "The Blessing" glass sculpture; it's just beautiful. It will actually reflect the light uniquely wherever you place it. It is a beautiful piece. I love to see a child reaching out, "The Blessing."

So if you could possibly help us build this halfway house, this safe house, to really, really make a big difference we need some large gifts and we ask you to help us. And then help us rescue as many as possible.

And Betty and I say thank you from the bottom of our heart. God bless you! Thanks for watching!