

Sermon Series: Victory in Jesus
 To be used with: Victorious hope
 Sermon Title Possibilities: Come like a child; Old man made new!
 Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1-14

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study of *Victory*, these sermon outlines will use different Scripture passages related to the small group study theme, so the pastor can reinforce the study from the pulpit.

Introduction: Charlie Brown was complaining because his team always lost their games. Lucy attempted to console him with, "Remember, Charlie Brown, you learn more from your defeats than from your victories." Charlie Brown responded, "Then I must be the smartest person in the world!"

It's easy to see the negative in your situation. Anyone can do that. It's hard to do anything but that. But when God gets involved in a situation, then the positive becomes impossible to ignore. Here in 2 Kings, we are introduced to Naaman. Naaman definitely knew negative. He was going to die...soon. But then God got involved and brought hope to a seemingly hopeless situation.

1. Naaman had a problem. (v. 1-4)

a. It was a problem he already knew about. (v.1)

Naaman had a lot of positive going on in his life. He had power, he had a family, and he was a good guy. Everyone around him – his soldiers, his king, even his captured slave girl – wanted him healed. But that one negative – leprosy – overshadowed all the good.

Naaman had an advantage that many people do not. Nobody needed to tell Naaman that he was a leper. He knew it. He was aware of his problem, and he was aware of how serious it was. Some people have a problem of which they are unaware (alcohol problem, health problem, sin problem). And therefore, they do nothing about it.

b. It was a problem God already knew about. (v. 2-4)

God had already provided a solution for Naaman's problem. In one of his raids against Israel, he had captured a young girl who became his slave. It was a negative situation for her, but God used her to become a part of the solution for Naaman's sickness. That leads to a question. Could some negative situation in your life be God's way of bringing you into contact with someone whose need only you can meet?

2. Naaman tried to deal with his problem in his own way. (v. 5-8)

a. Through his own resources (v. 5)

Naaman wasn't expecting anything for free. He was willing to pay. None of the "doctors" in Syria had been willing to "help" him without payment. Why should he expect anything different from the Israelites? But no amount of money that he could pay was sufficient to deal with the seriousness of his problem.

b. Through the king's resources (v. 6-7)

It made sense for him to go to the king. The king was the ultimate authority in the land. He was the one that everyone else looked to for the solution to their problems. True, there were some problems that he could fix, but this was not one of them. It was out of his hands. Can you hear the frustration and fear in his voice? He knew his own limitations. To look to any human to solve a death issue is futile. He had *caused* death before, but he couldn't *prevent* this one. There was no political answer to his problem.

c. Through God's resources (v. 8)

The only one who was going to be able to deal with Naaman's problem was the one who had created Naaman's body. Elijah stepped into the situation and gave hope to both the king and Naaman. There *was* an answer, but it wasn't to be found through the resources of any human.

3. Naaman's problem was going to take doing things God's way – a miracle. (v.9-14)

a. It was not the kind of miracle he wanted (v. 9-12)

He wanted a show – some big production – not something simple that didn't make any sense to him and might cause him some embarrassment. He was proud, so he didn't want to bathe in dirty Jordan. But he wasn't so proud that he wasn't willing to listen to a slave girl, or be willing to pay or be willing to go to an enemy for healing. All three were evidences of his desperation and humility. But everyone has their limits, and personal hygiene was his. Maybe that's why God used leprosy, a disease that makes you unclean, to get his attention.

b. It was the kind of miracle he needed (v. 13-14)

Naaman was right. The Jordan was dirty, so its waters could not clean him or anyone else. Centuries later, when John the Baptist plunged people beneath these waters, they still were not able to cleanse. The issue wasn't the water. The issue was the humility that allowed a person to set aside their own means of salvation and accept the means that was presented to them. The issue was the faith to believe what God communicated and to follow through with complete obedience. And just as faith caused Naaman's skin to become as that of a child, so the faith of any man can cause him to be born again (Jn. 3:3; Luke 18:17)

Conclusion: It was a mild October afternoon in 1982 and Badger Stadium in Madison, Wisconsin was packed. Over 60,000 die-hard University of Wisconsin fans were watching their beloved football team take a beating by Michigan State. What seemed odd was that as the score became more and more lopsided bursts of cheers and applause kept being heard in the stands. It was only natural that some people began to wonder who these strange people were who were cheering while their team was being pummeled.

As it turns out seventy miles away from Badger stadium the Milwaukee Brewers were beating the St. Louis Cardinals in game three of the World Series. Many of the Badger fans in the stands were listening to portable radios and responding to something else besides what was happening right in front of their eyes.

In many ways that is a fairly accurate description of what the Christian life is like. We might be in the midst of horrible circumstances in this world and yet we have something to cheer about. We can see by faith the victory that is ours in Christ.

Chris Talton is a graduate of Liberty University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served in three churches for a total of 13 years. Currently he teaches Bible at Colonial Hills Christian School just outside Atlanta, Ga. He and his wife of 27 years, Tammy, have two grown children and one grandson.