

~Other Speakers S-Z: K.P. Yohannan:

Naaman was raging with anger. He had traveled all the way from Syria with chariots full of gold, silver and expensive gifts for Elishaâ€™ and now the prophet wouldnâ€™t even grant him a one-minute audience. And what was worse, Elishaâ€™s servant passed a message to him that he should dip seven times in the Jordan River to be healed of his leprosy (see 2 Kings 5:9â€“12).

It was a simple, inexpensive ritual he was supposed to perform. No one could make fun of him because he was far away from his homeland.

But the mighty captain of the Syrian army was not about to follow these stupid instructions. Why? These instructions were not his own thoughts.

In his fury, Naaman exclaimed, â€œBehold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leperâ€ (2 Kings 5:11, kjv, emphasis mine).

However, the servants of Naaman realized that their master was about to pass up his only possible chance to get healed. Fearing they had made the long trip with all its hardship and headache for nothing, they pleaded with him. Naaman finally calmed down, obeyed the prophetâ€™s instructions and experienced the healing power of the God of Israel (see 2 Kings 5:13).

Hereâ€™s the frightening truth: Naaman came as a leper and was about to go back as a leper, to live a lonely, rejected, depressed and forsaken life. In the end he would have died of his disease, all because he thought the wrong thoughts.

This can be our experience as well!

Our own thoughts are one of the greatest enemies of a life of faith that honors God.

We may pray, fast, agonize, weep and cry out to God about a matter, but we receive no answer. Why? Like Naaman, we cling to our own thoughts as to how God should go about answering our request. And with our boundaries, we tie the hands of God and prevent Him from moving on our behalf.

Isaiah 55:6â€“11 gives us a clear picture of how much the Living God wants to abundantly pardon, bless us, answer our prayers and fulfill His wonderful promises. But those who come to Him must give up one thing: their own thoughts. â€œLet the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on himâ€ (Isaiah 55:7).

In the following verses, God gives us the reason why it is so important for us to give up our own thoughts: â€œFor My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,â€ says the Lord. â€œFor as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughtsâ€ (Isaiah 55:8â€“9).

Then God goes on explaining that His Word (or His thoughts) works just as the rain and the snow that come down from heaven and bring forth fruit: â€œSo shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent itâ€ (Isaiah 55:11).

The whole message God wants to tell us is that if we want to experience God, we must first abandon our thoughts and then start thinking His.

Why arenâ€™t our thoughts as believers in Jesus automatically in alignment with Godâ€™s thoughts? The Apostle Paul explains that our natural mind is always in opposition to God and what He thinks: â€œBecause the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can beâ€ (Romans 8:7).

You see, when we were born again, our spirit was regenerated by the Holy Spirit, but the house is still the same. That means our body and our mind, left to themselves, will continue in their old ways. Thatâ€™s why the Bible tells us clearly what we must do to bring both of them into subjection to God: â€œ . . . that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. . . . And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mindâ€ (Romans 12:1â€“2).

It is our responsibility, not Godâ€™s, to get our mind renewed. How? We renew our minds by changing our entire thought process through Godâ€™s Word.

Naaman the Syrian first had to align his thinking with the word of God spoken to him by the prophet Elisha before he could receive Godâ€™s answer to his problem.

We too must make the same decision. If we want to see victory over the sin with which we struggle, our families saved, our needs met and this world won to Christ in our lifetime, we must consciously choose to abandon all our own natural (and even religious) thoughts and begin to think Godâ€™s thoughts. All things are possible with God if we believeâ€as God thinks.

Believe Him!