

2 Kings 5:1-19

Elisha Heals Namaan of Leprosy

Read 2 Kings 5:1-7

Naaman healed of leprosy

5 Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

2 Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, 'If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.'

4 Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. 5 'By all means, go,' the king of Aram replied. 'I will send a letter to the king of Israel.' So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. 6 The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: 'With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy.' 7 As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, 'Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!'

1. Within this story we see God using people outside the 'faith community' to reveal more about his power and love. Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram and 'highly regarded'. However, despite being 'a great man', this didn't exclude him from the difficulties of life that befall us all – he became ill with leprosy.
 - a. Do wealth and status preclude us from the problems of life?
 - b. Can you think of any examples of where 'famous' people have experienced problems?
 - c. Dolly Parton wrote: 'if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain'. Are you experiencing the 'rainbow' or the 'rain' today?

2. God put a 'young servant girl from Israel' into Namaan's household who offered a solution to Namaan's illness.
 - a. Do we sometimes disregard the advice/solutions from those who we deem to be less important?
 - b. Should we be prepared to listen to all, not just to those in 'power'?
 - c. What are the 'young' saying to us today?

3. The 'young servant girl' was prepared to speak out, to witness on her frontline.
 - a. How are things going on your frontline – rainbow or rain?
 - b. Whilst we do not live in a society where leprosy is prevalent, there are many people in our community who are 'hurting' – physically, socially, psychologically – should we be telling them that God can help them?
 - c. What stops us?

4. Namaan goes to the king of Aram and asks for permission to go to visit Elisha. The king of Aram supports Namaan's request by writing a supporting letter to the king of Israel. The 'young servant girl' had said nothing about kings or gifts.
 - a. Can you think of another story in the Bible where they miss their destination by going to the wrong place? What was the outcome?
 - b. What was the king of Israel's response to receiving a letter from the king of Aram?
 - c. Do we sometimes misinterpret letters, emails, text messages? Do we need to be more careful in the way we read messages?

Read 2 Kings 5:8-10

⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: 'Why have you torn your robes? Make the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.' ⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, 'Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.'

¹¹ But Naaman went away angry and said, 'I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers

of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?' So he turned and went off in a rage.

¹³ Naaman's servants went to him and said, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, "Wash and be cleansed"!' ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

5. Namaan eventually arrives in the right place, but he, 'went away angry' – he didn't like the advice Elisha gave him nor the fact the Elisha 'sent a messenger' to speak to him.

- a. Have there been times when we have been given advice that we haven't liked? When / what happened?**
- b. Does our pride stop us taking/asking for advice – personally, professionally, spiritually?**
- c. DL Moody has written about Namaan – 'He lost his temper; then he lost his pride; then he lost his leprosy, that is generally the order in which proud rebellious sinners are converted.' Does our pride stop us coming to God? How does that help our relationship with God?**

6. Namaan was surrounded by people who wanted to help him, and they tell him to follow the commands of Elisha.

- a. Are we surrounded by people who help us and give us wise counsel? Tell the group some of their qualities and how these friends have helped us.**
- b. May be take some time this week to say thank you to your friends.**

7. Vs 14 says: 'So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.' When we become Christians we become 'clean'. How 'clean' are you today? At the last supper we read:

⁵ After that, he (Jesus) poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'

⁷ Jesus replied, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'

⁸ 'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.'

Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'

⁹ *'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!'*

¹⁰ *Jesus answered, 'Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.'*

John 13:5-10

Spiritually, do your feet need to be washed today?

8. The only reference to Elisha in the New Testament is the healing of Naaman in Luke 4:27 *And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed – only Naaman the Syrian.'*

- a. The account of Naaman being healed highlights the dichotomy that some are healed and some are not. It can be one of our greatest faith stumbling blocks. Is this something that we just have to accept?**

Read 2 Kings 5: 15-19a

¹⁵ *Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant.'*

¹⁶ *The prophet answered, 'As surely as the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing.' And even though Naaman urged him, he refused.*

¹⁷ *'If you will not,' said Naaman, 'please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the Lord. ¹⁸ But may the Lord forgive your servant for this one thing: when my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I have to bow there also – when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord forgive your servant for this.'*

¹⁹ *'Go in peace,' Elisha said.*

9. Naaman, once he was healed, could have returned home, but instead returns to Elisha to thank him and makes a declaration of faith - 'Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Vs 15. How often do we forget to say thank you to God for all that He has given us, all that He has done for us, all that He means to us?

10. Namaan offers Elisha the gifts that he brought with him, which Elisha refuses. How often do we look to be rewarded either in platitudes or gifts when we help someone?
11. When Namaan asks Elisha, *‘be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the Lord.’* **We might not take a bucketful of earth to work from the ‘Army’, but is there something that we can wear, take to, or place at work as a symbol of our faith – or do you think that would be weird?**
12. Namaan seeks forgiveness as he knows that when he returns home he will be expected to, *‘bow down in the temple of Rimmon’.*
- a. **At work are their things that we are expected to do which maybe contrary to our faith?**
 - b. **What are our faith non-negotiables at work / at leisure / at home?**

Read 2 Kings 5:19b-24

After Naaman had travelled some distance, ²⁰ Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said to himself, ‘My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him.’

²¹ *So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running towards him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. ‘Is everything all right?’ he asked.*

²² *‘Everything is all right,’ Gehazi answered. ‘My master sent me to say, “Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent^[d] of silver and two sets of clothing.”’*

²³ *‘By all means, take two talents,’ said Naaman. He urged Gehazi to accept them, and then tied up the two talents of silver in two bags, with two sets of clothing.*

He gave them to two of his servants, and they carried them ahead of Gehazi. ²⁴ When Gehazi came to the hill, he took the things from the servants and put them away in the house. He sent the men away and they left.

13. **We didn’t have time to cover this part of the story on Sunday, but Gehazi goes after Naaman to claim for himself some of the wealth that Naaman had brought for Elisha.**

- a. Have you ever been tempted to cheat someone for your own gain?
- b. Is there a temptation to bend the system for your own gain – what's the price for cash!
- c. Have we ever used our position to gain an unfair advantage?

14. Gehazi took the money and clothes from Naaman and hid them in his house.

- a. If you had to hide something, where would you hide it?
- b. In chapter 4 Gehazi shows some signs that his faith is declining - in verse 27 he tries to push the Shunammite woman away and in verse 31 he is unable to heal the boy. Should we try to be more discerning when people are struggling with their faith? How?

Read 2 Kings 5: 25-27

²⁵ When he went in and stood before his master, Elisha asked him, 'Where have you been, Gehazi?'

'Your servant didn't go anywhere,' Gehazi answered.

²⁶ But Elisha said to him, 'Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money or to accept clothes – or olive groves and vineyards, or flocks and herds, or male and female slaves?' ²⁷ Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants for ever.' Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and his skin was leprous – it had become as white as snow.

15. What goes the Psalmist write in Psalm 139 (selected verses):

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ...

¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

- a. Gehazi could not hide from Elisha. The Psalmist tells us that we cannot hide from God. Is this reassuring or scary?
- b. You are fearfully and wonderfully made – give thanks to God for the person He has made you. Give thanks for the people that God has placed in your life – they too are fearfully and wonderfully made.