



The St J's Group

2 Kings 5:1-15 - Naaman healed of leprosy

Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

1. Talk Passage – 2 Kings 5:1-15

1 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!' **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. **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.'

2. Talk Notes

2.1 Introduction

- "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel." (5:15). What an incredible statement for the commander in chief of the major superpower of the day to make. Outwardly Naaman has everything going for him: 'He was a great man' (5:1) 'a valiant soldier' (5:1) who was 'highly regarded' (5:1) but 'he had leprosy' (5:1) an incurable and contagious skin disease.
- "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed." (5:10) Elisha tells Naaman. To receive his complete healing Naaman is told to wash seven times. The number seven is often used in the Bible to symbolise God's action and completeness. Interestingly Naaman's miraculous story of healing has seven parts to it and involves seven different people including himself.
- So as we consider this seven part story of Naaman's miraculous healing from leprosy, where would we put ourselves? Are we like Naaman or are we like one of the other

- The worst thing that can happen is for us to walk out on God even before we receive His healing; not because God is not willing, but because of our lack of faith; not because God cannot heal, but because we do not want to submit to His ways. It would be sad if we want things our own way and lose out on God's countless blessings for us.
- Naaman's servants save the situation by pleading with Naaman and they are vital to part six of Naaman's miraculous healing from leprosy: "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!'" (5:13)
- The servants are in fact saying, "what do you really want Naaman?" Do you want to be healed? It's so simple what you have been asked to do – wash and be cleansed. What would you prefer, they say, to keep your "face" and leave with your reputation in tact or to strip yourself of your dignity and wash in the Jordan seven times and be cured of your life threatening leprosy.
- That's why we need Christian friends, we need brothers and sisters in Christ, and we need to develop and protect our fellowship with them. So I would encourage us to build relationships with a few close Christians - those who are close enough to know our problems and who are not frightened to prompt us to do the right things.

2.8. Part 7 - Naaman (2 Kings 5:14-15)

- It is just God and Naaman in part seven of this story. "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." (5:14) Naaman steps out in faith and makes the biggest life changing decision of his life.
- It's easy to trust God for something you've already seen Him do before. But Naaman's circumstance wasn't easy – he had a terminal disease, and nobody he knew had ever been healed of it.
- To an army General, this was difficult. It took great faith on Naaman's part to trust God's words and to step into that water, but when he did, he not only received physical healing but God saved his soul as well. "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel." (5:15) Naaman declares.
- Naaman discovers not only that God is a powerful God, but he is God in whom you can put your complete trust.
- Like Naaman, are we facing a crisis in our lives at the moment? ...maybe an illness? ... Maybe a crisis in our marriage? ... Maybe a hopeless situation at home or with the family? Do we trust God in this crisis situation? Are we prepared to pray and to submit to God's way?

2.8 Conclusion

- So where are you in the story? Whose circumstances most resonate with you? Where are we in this story? What has God been saying to you and to us today? What does He want either you or us to do from our interaction with His word?

3. Questions to consider at home

3.1 With which of these seven characters do you most readily identify?

3.2 Where would you put our church in this story, where do you put yourself?

3.3 When was the last time that God gave you an opportunity to witness for him? What happened?

3.4 Who are the 'Naamans' (foreigners of no faith who are suffering) around us and our church at the moment?

3.5 Why does God makes Naaman's healing so difficult?

characters who interact with him? Are our circumstances similar to his or one of the characters in this seven part story? What does God want us to learn, today, from this seven part story of Naaman?

2.2. **Part 1 - A servant girl** (2 Kings 5:2-3)

- The first part of Naaman's story starts with the testimony of his wife's servant girl, who has been enslaved after a recent conflict with Israel: *'Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife'* (5:2)
- Her mistress has probably shared with her servant that her husband has contracted leprosy. This young girl has a choice to make. Does she share her faith with these foreigners and her strong conviction that God can heal or does she just keep quiet and get on with her household chores.
- How many times have we been in a similar situation where God has opened up the opportunity for us to witness for him? She must have been fearful and frightened, just like us, but she does open up her mouth and offers her mistress and ultimately her master the cure to his problem: *"If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."* (5:3)

2.3. **Part 2 - Naaman's Wife** (2 Kings 5:3)

- Naaman's wife now has a choice to make and she forms the second part of Naaman's story. Does she share with her husband what her servant has shared with her. After all it wasn't as though Aram was short of Gods and priests and prophets who could supposedly heal. But maybe Naaman has already tried all these routes, he has tried all the alternative medicines and still he has his leprosy.
- She knows his desperation and she clearly loves him and wants the best for him and she makes that decision to share with him about this prophet in enemy territory.
- Who do we really care about? What lengths would we be prepared to go to support and bring out the best in those we care about most?

2.4. **Part 3 - King Benhadad of Aram** (2 Kings 5:4-6)

- Something about this servant's girls testimony catches Naaman's attention. He approaches his master, King Benhadad, to gain permission to make the journey to the prophet in enemy territory: *'Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said.'* (5:4)
- Now King Benhadad has to make a choice. He is the crucial third part in this seven part story of Naaman's miraculous cure from leprosy. Is he going to allow his Commander in Chief to make this journey into foreign territory?
- Given that he is the King of the current super power nation in the region is he prepared to ask for help from a smaller nation like Israel.
- Can we sometimes allow our own pride to get in the way and prevent us from asking for help?
- Fortunately for Naaman, King Benhadad, not only demonstrates some real leadership qualities but he is generous as well: *"By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel."* (5:3) *'taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing'* (5:5)
- How generous are we towards those who are weaker or poorer or in subordinate roles to us? Do we really look out for others? Is our passion to bring out the best in other people?

2.5. **Part 4 - King Jehoram/Joram of Israel**, (2 Kings 5:6-8)

- Part four of Naaman's miraculous healing from leprosy now involves King Jehoram or Joram who was a son of King Ahab and was the ruler of Israel when Naaman came to

call. Like his father before him Jehoram hadn't ruled the kingdom of Israel well because he had allowed the people to continue to worship false gods. Rather than worshipping Jehovah, Jehoram had endorsed and encouraged the cult religion of the Golden Calf that was first started by King Jeroboam the first ruler of Israel after the kingdom had split apart.

- It should therefore come as no surprise that Jehoram's reaction to Benhadad's letter, delivered by Naaman, was to suspect a plot: *"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!"* (5:7)
- Time after time God had displayed his power by rescuing Jehoram firstly in a supply crisis at war, secondly in preventing enemy raids on Israel's territory, thirdly in miraculously breaking a powerful siege, lastly by working many great miracles through the prophet Elisha — and yet, in spite of all this evidence, Jehoram never fully trusts God.
- Do we equally see the world around us like Jehoram? Is our default to see the worse in people rather than the best? Are we constantly suspicious of hidden plots and agendas? Where, presently, is our faith, like that of Elisha or the captured servant girl of Naaman's wife or like Jehoram, King of Israel?

2.6. **Part 5 - Elisha** (2 Kings 5:8-10)

- Knowing God is a tough call as Elisha now demonstrates. Elisha now becomes involved in part five of Naaman's miraculous healing from leprosy. He sends a message to Jehoram: *"Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel."* (5:8)
- Elisha intervenes and trusts God to make the impossible, possible for Naaman.
- Would we be prepared to do the same thing for someone of no faith from a foreign land suffering from an incurable disease?
- As Elisha prays and asks God what to do, God tells him firstly not to meet Naaman in person, but to send his servant with this message: *"Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."* (5:10)
- By any standards this seems a strange thing to do and a strange thing to say and yet Elisha has the courage and faith to do it.
- Again would we be prepared to do the same thing for someone of no faith from a foreign land suffering from an incurable disease.?

2.7. **Part 6 - Naaman's Servants** (2 Kings 5:11-13)

- Naaman was angry and resentful at the way Elisha had treated him: *"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."* (5:11)
- Very often, we come to God in the same way. We have our plan and we expect God to say yes to it. "Lord, give us a cure we say. Wave your hand and let our problems disappear. And we will be on our way." We want God to save us - to fix our problems but so often we want those fixes in the way we have planned them.
- So why does God make it so difficult for us? It's not difficult, just different – God's concern is not just physical healing – He wants to see faith, He wants to see obedience, He wants to see humility. He wants us to receive the Giver, not just the gift. A crisis in our life may well be God's tool to create submission in us, for us to learn what it means to obey His will and not our own.
- Obeying God was not what Naaman was expecting. He thought he could come and buy his cure. But God wanted to save his soul. God wants Naaman to put his faith in Him, to submit and to be obedient to his words. God wants so much more for Naaman than his mere physical healing if only Naaman realised it.