

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Nov. 26

MONDAY

Naaman is a mighty warrior and leader in Assyria, a man the Lord used to give victory to his army. But he is also a leper. A young servant girl captured in a war with Israel, came to serve in Naaman's household. That young girl told Naaman's wife about the prophet Elisha who could heal leprosy.

READ: 2 Kings 5:1-3

I love this early part of the story of Naaman. The servant girl, who we might say "slaves away" in his house, speaks of Elisha, and does so in a caring manner. That, my friends, is faith in action! Amazing faith and, in many ways, an amazing act. In a place in life which might easily foster anger, hatred, and a spirit of revenge, this servant girl overcomes the temptation to give in to any of that, and she lives for God, and speaks of Him to others. No matter how difficult our lives may become, living for God and speaking of Him is exactly what God would have us to do. That includes this very day. *Make me a servant, humble and meek. Lord, let me lift up those who are weak. Amen?*

TUESDAY

The king of Assyria insisted that Naaman visit the prophet whom the servant girl had spoken of, and in fact, gave him a letter to the king of Israel asking him to cure Naaman of his leprosy. (apparently, the king of Assyria thought that Israel's king controlled the prophet and his activities) When the king of Israel read the letter, he was distraught. He thought it might lead to war.

READ: 2 Kings 5:4-7

Isn't it ironic that for a healing which will end up costing nothing, and be divinely and miraculously given, Naaman comes loaded with cash pay for it, and armed with a letter which the king of Assyria imagined would assure that his trusted commander get the healing which he deserved. We can manipulate till we are blue in the face, but our best efforts to get things done will come to nothing apart from the gracious hand of our Heavenly Father.

How much better to trust Him fully and commit our ways to Him.

WEDNESDAY

News of Naaman's plight and the king's despair leads Elijah to contact the king. Elijah told him to send Naaman to him. Naaman goes and meets his servant, Gehazi, at the door. "Go and wash 7 times in the Jordan River and you will be healed," Gehazi tells him. Naaman is angry that Elisha did not come meet him and, somehow, take his disease away by magic. He walked away in a rage, mumbling about better rivers than the Jordan back in Assyria.

READ: 2 Kings 5:8-12

We easily recognize that Naaman had his own ideas about being cured and none of them involved washing in the Jordan River! Do we not sometimes feel that way - that our plan is definitely the way God should operate, and when He doesn't, do we not

tend to question His judgment? Advice: if God wants you in the muddy waters of the Jordan instead of the pristine rivers elsewhere and wade in as fast as you can! Follow in His steps wherever He leads and you will never be sorry.

THURSDAY

Naaman's servant advises him to reconsider his decision to ignore the words of the prophet. Naaman takes his advice, dips in the Jordan seven times, and is healed! He returns to Elisha, acknowledges the God of Israel, and tries to give Elisha a gift.

READ: 2 Kings 5:13-15

Naaman is a kind of object lesson for Israel: that God's blessing only comes when there is complete trust in Him and obedience to His Word. That's still true, you know. *Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey.* We sing the hymn and today we must walk the walk. Wherever it may lead. Trusting God to walk with us as guide and shield and comfort and friend. Obeying his word. Just ask Naaman how that's going!

FRIDAY

Elisha refuses Naaman's offer of a gift. Naaman asks permission to take some soil back to Assyria with him. (like most of the pagan world, he believed that a god could only be worshipped in the land where he was the god; taking soil with him would allow Naaman to do this) Naaman also apologizes to Elisha that he will also worship in the temple of Rimmon (probably Baal).

READ: 2 Kings 5:16-18

Naaman's story is a sad one: he he just confessed that there is no other god but the God of Israel, but he doesn't choose to live his life in accordance with that truth. We, too, know the truth about God - that he will reward His people for their faithfulness. We know that He will give a crown of glory to those who those who point others to the Savior. We know that He will honor those who honor Him. So let us resolve to live according to these truths.

SATURDAY

Elisha sends Naaman off without accepting a gift, but Elisha's servant Gehazi follows Naaman and says that Elisha has changed his mind: that he would like two sets of clothing and some cash. Naaman gladly gave him all he asked for.

READ: 2 Kings 5:19-23

Gehazi sinned grievously. Because of his own greed, he went behind his master's back and deceived Naaman. In doing so, he tainted Elisha's character. Naaman was likely thinking, "Ah-ha, I knew he was no different than the prophets of Baal - always eager to reap the benefits of being a prophet." His sin robbed God of glory, for the healing was gift of grace and Gehazi's actions made it appear less than that. Listen, that sort of thing still goes on today and we must guard against it. We want the unsaved world around us to see Jesus in us, right? Then, we must dedicate ourselves - body and soul - to staying clear of anything which would distort His image, and, in some way or ways, stain his character or cheapen His grace. #109