**NAAMAN’S OBEDIENCE**

2 Kings 5:1-14

Key Verse 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.”

**Introduction**



 In the last passage we learned how Elisha was helping the people in Israel. When someone had a deep agony, he shared their agony and struggled together. When someone was hungry, he gave what he had, and God worked a miracle through him. In this passage, Elisha shepherds a Gentile general, Naaman. He was very proud, and an idol worshiper. Elisha helped him to overcome his pride, learn obedience, and experience the power of God, the true God of Israel. In this way he became a shepherd for the Gentile general. We learn from Elisha how to shepherd the people of our times, who are like Naaman. Elisha represents Jesus Christ who is the Good Shepherd for all people on earth. Nothing is more important than being humble and obedient!

1. Read verses 1-6. What kind of person was Naaman? (1) How did he hear about Elisha? (2-3) How did he prepare to go to Elisha with the help of his master ? (4-6)

1-1, Read verses 1-6.

 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.[a]

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[b] of silver, six thousand shekels[c] 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.”

1-2. What kind of person was Naaman? (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.***

* 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.
* Deuteronomy 26:5 reads, **“**Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: “My father was a wandering **Aramean**, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.”
* Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were probably Arameans according to their family tree. But they humbly obeyed God’s command and migrated from Mesopotamia, Haran, and settled in Canaan. Then after more humble training in Egypt as a slave nation, they came out by the great mercy of God to be a kingdom of priests!
* Aram refers to Syria. According to history, Syria led an allied battle for independence against the Assyrians in 853 B.C.
* The Syrian alliance was successful in liberating the entire region, which included Israel. Thus, Israel was greatly indebted to Syria.
* According to history, Naaman had distinguished himself in this battle. That is why he was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded.
* However, it was really the Lord who gave them this great victory. Still, Naaman became an important person in Aram, second to the king.
* But he had leprosy. Naaman fought courageously against enemy soldiers, but he could not fight against his leprosy. At that time leprosy was regarded as an incurable disease.
* Naaman was groaning day by day with his fatal disease. His power, wealth and honor seemed to be nothing.
* People struggle hard to obtain these things, but they cannot guarantee happiness. Though Naaman’s problem made his life miserable, it became a great opportunity for him to come to God.

1-3, How did he hear about Elisha? (2-3)

***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.”***

* Bands of raiders from Aram were invading Israel. Ahab king of Israel spared the life of Ben-Hadad, king of Aram, and set him free on the basis of a treaty.
* However, the Arameans did not honor that treaty. When Ahab tried to enforce the return of Ramoth Gilead, he was killed in battle (1 Ki 22:35).
* And now bands from Aram boldly invaded Israelite towns and took captives. One of them was a young girl from Israel. She became a servant of Naaman’s wife.
* It seemed to be a misfortune. But there was God’s providence to send her as a slave to Naaman’s house.
* She could have complained to God and been bitter toward her captors. Instead, she had a compassionate heart toward her master.
* She said to Naaman’s wife, “If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” She used a subjunctive word.
* A seed of faith that God was working through Elisha was planted in Naaman’s wife, and she might have responded, “What! What did you say?”
* This became the good news to Naaman. We can learn from her that if we share the good news in any situation, God can use us powerfully.
* If she had kept the good news to herself due to bitterness, nothing would have happened. She would have remained a miserable slave.
* But when she accepted her situation as God’s leading, she could have compassion for her master, and share the good news with him.
* We have the good news of Jesus Christ. Whatever our situation may be, we can share that good news with those in need. Then we can experience personal victory and be a blessing to others regardless.

1-4, How did he prepare to go to Elisha with the help of his master ? (4-6)

 ***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.”***

* Naaman was humble enough to listen to a servant girl’s words. If he had ignored her, he would have forfeited the chance to experience God’s power.
* But in his desperate situation, he listened even to a slave girl’s words. Then he found a possibility for healing. So he brought this matter to the king.
* The king sent him to the king of Israel, together with a letter, ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of clothing.
* The letter read: “With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may heal him of his leprosy.” It sounds like a command, not a request.
1. Read verses 7-10. How did the king of Israel reply when he received the letter from the king of Aram? (7) What did Elisha do for the king? (8) When Naaman stopped at Elisha’s door, what did he ask Naaman to do through his messenger? (9-10)

2-1, Read verses 7-10.

 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? Have 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.”

2-2, How did the king of Israel reply when he received the letter from the king of Aram? (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!”***

* 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!”
* Leprosy was incurable and only God is the only One who could cure that. The king of Israel should have remembered Elisha, the prophet of God, who blessed him with victory in battle.
* However, the king had forgotten about this. With no sense of God’s history, he interpreted the letter as provocation to attack and war.
* The king of Israel is like those who lack personal faith. He fell into agony and frustration. He did not have faith in God. He was always negative. So Naaman’s costly journey seemed to end in vain.

2-3, What did Elisha do for the king? (8)

***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? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.”***

* First of all, Elisha saw this as an opportunity to reveal the God of Israel to both the anguished Israelite king and the Gentiles as well. He wanted the king to know that the Lord is God! Israel’s mission was to reveal God to the nations.
* If this one important person from Aram met the God of Israel, it would have a great impact on his nation just as Jesus had to go through Samaria and serve a woman to revive the whole town in John 4.
* So Elisha took the initiative to invite Naaman to come to him. Elisha was sure that God could heal Naaman’s leprosy.

2-4, When Naaman stopped at Elisha’s door, what did he ask Naaman to do through his messenger? (9-10)

 ***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.”***

* Despite a special guest and his formidable army, Elisha did not come out to greet him. He only 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.”
* Elisha must have known very well who Naaman was and how great he was as a hero of wars. Elisha wanted to help him curb his pride. Otherwise, it was impossible for Naaman to be healed.
* God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Out of a shepherd’s heart, Elisha helped Naaman humble himself before God.
* Elisha asked Naaman to wash in the Jordan River seven times, the number of perfection. Naaman needed to obey perfectly.

James 4:6 says,

 That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

1. Read verses 11-14. How did Naaman respond to Elisha? (11-12) What made him change his mind? (13) What happened to him when he denied himself and obeyed what Elisha had said? (14)

3-1, Read verses 11-14.

 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.

3-2, How did Naaman respond to Elisha? (11-12)

***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.***

* Here we see why Naaman could not obey. He had his own idea about how to be healed, rooted in his pride. He thought Elisha should come out to meet him, wave his hand over the spot, and heal him.
* When it did not happen that way, he felt that Elisha ignored him. Furthermore, he thought the God of Israel was Elisha’s God, and just one of many gods.
* He was like modern people who buy different religions and virtually invent their own gods. Additionally, he had a strong national pride as an Aramean.
* He could not accept the direction of God’s servant because he was proud. So he became angry and went away. Naaman nearly lost the chance to be healed due to his pride and anger.

3-3, What made him change his mind? (13)

***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’!”***

* Naaman’s servants were sorry to see their master making such a mistake. So they decided to help him by any means. This required courage.
* They could be severely punished. Nevertheless, they advised Naaman. They seem to genuinely love him by calling him “my father.”
* They further said, “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’!”
* The servants did not blindly obey, but helped Naaman to do what was right. They were really faithful.

3-4, What happened to him when he denied himself and obeyed what Elisha had said? (14)

***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.***

* When Naaman heard his servant’s advice, he came back to his senses. He realized that he was going in the wrong direction due to his pride.
* So he immediately turned around. He went to Jordan. He denied his own thoughts and obeyed God’s direction 100%. This is true repentance.
* When he dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, his rotten flesh was restored and became clean, like that of a young boy. He became a new man. He experienced the power of the living God.

**Conclusion**

 We can learn important lessons today. As Naaman admitted that he had leprosy, we must admit that we are sinners. If we deny that we are sinners, we will not receive God’s grace. But if we confess our sins, Jesus promises to cleanse and purify us (1 Jn 1:9). Naaman believed the good news that he could be healed. We must also believe the good news that Jesus heals us from sin sickness. Naaman denied his own idea and obeyed simply. So must we. However, it is not easy for us to give up our own ideas. But we must give up this idea and accept God’s idea. God’s ways and thoughts are higher than ours, as the heavens are above the earth (Isa 55:9). God sent his one and only Son Jesus to die on a cross for our sins. If we turn away from ourselves and just look at the cross of Jesus, we will be healed. Whoever looks to Jesus will be healed. **One Word: Wash and be cleansed!**