

NAAMAN'S HEALING

2 Kings 5:1-27

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Naaman, Prophet Elisha, and Gehazi

Key-location: Israel

Key-repetitions:

- Naaman was an important man: commander of the army (2 Kn 5:1); highly regarded by his king (2 Kin 5:1); the wealth Naaman took to Israel (2 Kin 5:5).
- Elisha had a message: he sent word to Israel's king (2 Kin 5:8); sent a servant with a message for Naaman (2 Kin 5:8); he answered Naaman (2 Kin 5:16, 19); he condemned the actions of Gehazi and told him of his punishment (2 Kin 5:26-27).
- River: Elisha told Naaman to immerse seven times in the Jordan River (2 Kin 5:10); Naaman argued that the rivers of Damascus were cleaner than Israel's (2 Kin 5:12); Naaman immersed himself in the Jordan River seven times (2 Kin 5:14).

Key-attitudes:

- King of Aram's high respect for Naaman.
- Naaman's desperation for a cure from leprosy.
- Israel's king's desperation when he received the letter from the king of Aram.
- Naaman's anger at the prophet for sending him a message to immerse himself seven times in the Jordan River.
- Naaman's servant's concern for his master.
- Naaman's gratitude after being healed.
- Gehazi's greed.

Initial-situation:

When Prophet Elijah was taken to heaven, Elisha became his successor and began his prophetic ministry in the nation of Israel.

Initial-problem:

Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram, had leprosy.

Final-situation:

Elisha's servant, Gehazi, walked away from Elisha's presence, and his skin was leprous, as white as snow.

BIBLE STORY

Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. The king highly regarded Naaman. Naaman was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

The Arameans had captured an Israelite girl who became a slave to Naaman's wife. The Israelite slave told her mistress, "If my master could see the prophet in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy."

Naaman reported to his king what the Israelite slave girl said. The king told Naaman to go to Israel. Naaman took about 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold and ten sets of clothes. The king of Aram prepared a letter for the king of Israel which read, "I'm sending my servant Naaman to you, with this letter, so that you may cure him of leprosy."

Israel's king read the letter; he ripped 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? He's trying to pick a fight with me!"

Prophet Elisha sent word to the king of Israel, "Why did you rip your robes? Have the man come to me and he'll learn that there's a prophet in Israel" (2 Kin 5:1-8).

Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a servant who told Naaman, "Go, immerse yourself seven times in the Jordan River, and your skin will be healed and you'll be cleansed."

Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would personally come out and stand before me and call on the name of the Lord his God. I thought he would wave his hand over the diseased spot and cure me of my leprosy. Aren't the rivers of Damascus cleaner than any of Israel's rivers? Couldn't I wash in them? Then I'd be clean." Naaman turned and went off in a rage.

Naaman's servants told him, "My father, if the prophet had asked you to do something hard and heroic, wouldn't you have done it? So why not this simple, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" Naaman went down and immersed himself in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman's skin was healed and became clean like that of a young boy.

Naaman and his attendants returned to the man of God. Naaman stood before Prophet Elisha and said, "Now I know that there's no God anywhere in the world except the God in Israel. Please accept a gift from me."

Elisha answered, "As surely as the Lord lives, whom I serve, I'll accept nothing from you." Naaman insisted; Elisha refused.

Naaman requested, "Please give me as much dirt as a pair of mules can carry, because I'll never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the Lord. But there's one thing for which I need God to forgive me: My master goes to the temple of Rimmon to worship. When he goes, he'll lean on my arm. When he bows down, I must bow in that temple. May the Lord forgive me for this."

Elisha said, "Go in peace" (2 Kin 5:9-19).

Gehazi, Elisha's servant, said to himself, "My master Elisha was too easy on Naaman by not accepting gifts from him. I'll run after Naaman and get something from him."

Servant Gehazi hurried after Naaman. Naaman saw Gehazi running toward him; Naaman got down from the chariot and asked, "Is something wrong?"

Gehazi answered, "Everything is all right, but something came up. My master sent me to say, 'Two young men from the company of prophets just showed up from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them 75 pounds of silver and two sets of clothing.'"

Naaman said, "By all means, take 150 pounds of silver. He tied up the silver in two bags, with two sets of clothing. He sent two servants to carry the gifts. Gehazi took the things from Naaman and stored them away in his own house. Then servant Gehazi returned and stood before his master Elisha.

Elisha asked, "Where have you been, Gehazi?"

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

Elisha replied, "This isn't the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants! Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever." Then servant Gehazi walked away from Elisha's presence, and his skin was leprous, as white as snow (2 Kin 5:20-26).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was Naaman cured from his leprosy?
2. What does Naaman's cure teach us about the way God treats important people?
3. Why did Naaman become angry at Prophet Elisha?
4. How do God's faithful servants still act in ways that upset people who are seeking something from God?
5. Why did Elisha refuse payment from Naaman?
6. Why was Gehazi punished?
7. How are we tempted to be greedy like Gehazi?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **A person who is in a humble position can still spread God's word.** Naaman's slave girl was an Israelite, kidnapped from her country. Yet, she told Naaman's wife about the prophet in Israel (2 Kin 5:3-4).
2. **A person who desires for God to act in his favor, must humble himself.** Naaman the hero was a proud man, and he expected the prophet of God to give him special treatment (2 Kin 5:11-13). All people are equal before God. The Lord

does not show partiality; therefore, each person must humble himself in the presence of the Lord.

3. **God's requirement for people often seems too simple.** Naaman had trouble accepting God's cure: wash in a dirty river and be clean (2 Kin 5:11-14).
4. **God's favor cannot be purchased.** Elisha refused Naaman's gifts to show that God's favor cannot be purchased (2 Kin 5:16).
5. **God's servant becomes a mercenary if he gives in to temptation to seek personal gain ahead of serving God.** Gehazi had been a faithful servant to Elisha. But when he took the opportunity to get rich by asking for the reward Elisha had refused, he became a mercenary (2 Kin 5:20-27). One cannot serve both God and money (Mat 6:24).
6. **The mercenary religious leader wants to use his God-given position for his own financial gain; however, he will be punished by the Lord God.** Gehazi wanted to profit from Naaman's cure (2 Kin 5:19-27). Gehazi, Elisha's disciple, can be compared to Judas, Jesus' disciple. Both had lingering and intimate contact with God's messengers. However, each sought to use his privileged religious position for his own financial gain. Some examples of mercenary religious leaders are: Balaam (Nm 22-24, 31:16); Gehazi (2 Kin 5:19-27); Judas (Jn 12:4-6); Simon, the magician (Ac 8:18-20).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Interaction with Characters in the Story:

Invite listeners to interact with characters in the story with a question. What would like to say:

- To the Israelite slave girl who told her master's wife about the prophet in Israel?
- To Naaman when he was angry because Prophet Elisha sent out a servant to tell him to immerse seven times in the Jordan River?
- To Naaman's servant who counseled him to obey Prophet Elisha?
- To Elisha's servant, Gehazi, when he is on his way to obtain gifts from Naaman?