

BE A BLESSING

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December 7, 2014

Congregational reading: 2 Kings 5:1-8

Sermon in a sentence: Despite the circumstances we may be enduring, let us seek to be a blessing to those around us.

Scriptures (NKJV): 2 Kings 5:1-14

2 Kings 5:1-14 NKJV Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, *but* a leper. ² And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. ³ Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master *were* with the prophet who *is* in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." ⁴ And *Naaman* went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who *is* from the land of Israel." ⁵ Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand *shekels* of gold, and ten changes of clothing. ⁶ Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy. ⁷ And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "*Am* I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me." ⁸ So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he

shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.” 9 Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha’s house. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and *you shall* be clean.” 11 But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, “Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out *to me*, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.’ 12 *Are* not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, “My father, *if* the prophet had told you *to do* something great, would you not have done *it*? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’” 14 So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

The story of the slave-girl in Naaman’s house certainly warrants a very close look.

Syria (or Aram, depending on the translation you read), had been a thorn in Israel’s side for many years, going all the way back to David and Solomon (1 Kings 11:23-25). Many wars had been fought, many had been killed on both sides of the conflict, and the hatred between them was fierce. (God Himself used the Syrians at various times to bring judgment upon Israel (2 Kings 5:1)).

As we consider this young girl, what would her most recent experiences have been like?

- Captured by a hated enemy
- Seen and experienced the atrocities of war

- Likely grieving the death of family members
- Alone and scared in a strange land
- No hope for her future – she was now a slave
- Likely had experienced and seen her fellow slaves mistreated by their captors
- No doubt wondering why God had not stepped in to help Israel in their time of need

Yet, in the middle of this crisis, her young eyes were filled with compassion as she saw the plight of her new owner, Naaman, a man being consumed by leprosy.

Many of us would have quickly adopted a “serves you right” attitude if we saw someone in his condition.

- He was the commander of the Syrian army – the army that had just captured and enslaved Israel.
- He was the one responsible for the death of so many of this girl’s people – a horrific carnage.

Naaman was a man of such power and status that most likely there was no way she could even talk to him. But because of her compassionate heart, she reached out to speak to her mistress on behalf of her husband.

This girl has a lot to teach us!

- Her attention was not only focused on herself and her needs
- She clearly had no desire to see ‘an evil man’ suffer for his sins
- Her personal pain did not cause her to gloat over Naaman’s disease
- Even though she could not speak directly to him, she still found a way to get the message through
- Even though she did not have the power to fix the problem, she expressed the *desire* that

Naaman would get to the one who could help him

- **She was willing to do what she could!**

Her few, simple, heartfelt words of compassion set a chain of events in motion that completely changed Naaman's life and destiny.

- **Even getting the message 'second-hand' through his wife, Naaman had enough faith in what the girl had to say to take it to the king (v.4).**
- **The king had enough faith in Naaman's 'third-hand' message that he wrote a letter to the king of Israel on his behalf (v.5).**
- **Naaman had enough faith that he took an incredible gift with him to reward the prophet: 750 lbs. of silver and 150 lbs. of gold, plus 10 changes of clothes (Armani or Canali, no doubt)! The current value of these items is just over \$3.5MM¹ (v.5)!**
- **Naaman was healed of his disease (v.14).**
- **He became a God-fearing gentile, sacrificing to the God of Israel (v.17).**
- **No doubt this slave-girl was handsomely rewarded for the part she played in these events.**
- **God received the glory due Him!**

We have no idea what God can and will do if we simply allow His compassion to flow through us and speak of His awesome power. God can, and will bless and change lives around us if we are willing to speak up, and look beyond ourselves, our circumstances and our situations!

¹ Current Canadian silver price (Dec. 3, 2014): \$18.63/oz.

Current Canadian gold price (Dec. 3, 2014): \$1,374.74/oz.