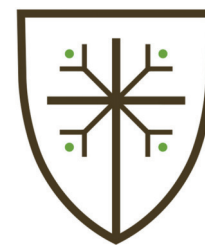




ELISHA

Renewal in the Spirit

SERMON NOTES



June 23, 2024

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"What Path Are You On?"

PREACHER

Rev. Craig Chapman

TEXTS

2 Kings 5:15-27

Romans 6:20-23

Luke 18:18-27

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Sometimes it isn't easy to tell when we've first taken the wrong path. How can a strong community of God's people help with this?
2. Have you known someone in your life (or have you yourself) who has experienced this encounter with God that we see in Naaman? What life changes did the encounter produce?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Craig continued our series on the prophet Elisha with part two of the story of Naaman. Last week, we heard about the healing of Naaman. He was possibly the most unlikely person on earth at the time to encounter God, the archenemy of Israel. But he had one problem he couldn't fix and was willing to do anything to fix – leprosy. This week, we heard about someone who took a different path than Naaman and the marks of knowing that we are on the right path.

Meeting

Last week, Naaman showed us the power of an encounter with God and a response of faith. This week, he shows us what a changed life looks like for a believer after meeting God. First, his thinking towards God was changed. He proclaims that there is no God in all the earth but the God of Israel. And from this faith comes a change in his treatment of possessions. In this week's story, instead of using his money just to get what he wants, Naaman offers his money as a gift out of gratitude. He also experiences a change in how he thinks about himself. He refers to himself as "your servant." Instead of everyone serving him, he is now a servant of God. And finally, we see a change in his priority for his life. He goes back to his position, his job, but he doesn't want to keep his faith private. He asks for Israeli dirt on which to build an altar in order that he might sacrifice to the one true God of Israel in a pagan land. He shows his faith publicly.

God's grace has become central in Naaman's life just as it does in our own lives. We are called as Christians to winsomely identify with Jesus, faithfully reflecting him to the world. And just as it did for Naaman, suffering can wake us up to our illusion of self-sufficiency and draw us closer to God.

Missing

Naaman showed us the path of meeting God, but Gehazi shows us the path to missing God. Gehazi was an apprentice prophet to Elisha, with unparalleled access and exposure to God and his law. And yet, he was prideful, self-righteous, prejudiced. We see him looking down on Naaman as a foreigner and then exploiting him and seeking to exploit his healing and his new faith for selfish gain. He shows a disregard for the things of the Lord and a life that seems to be marked by the path of Satan, away from God. The punishment meted on Gehazi was God making the outside match the inside.

Not Missing

So, how do we stay on this path of righteousness in Christ? What are the means of NOT missing God? Another character we see in Naaman's story is the servant girl. A Jewish slave in captivity to Naaman, this servant paid the price of usefulness, exercising costly forgiveness to the one who had wronged her. Despite that wrong, she bore the cost and continues to walk in the path of the God of Israel, pointing others, even Naaman to Him. We also have a suffering servant available to us, the one to whom this servant girl points, Christ himself. He bore what we deserved. If you've met him, you too can reflect him and introduce him to someone else who need to meet him by walking in Christlikeness every day.