



First Baptist Church Selmer

FIRM FOUNDATION • NAAMAN • 2 KINGS 5:1-14; LUKE 16:10 • 11/12/2023

MAIN POINT

Faithfulness in the small things reveals a heart bent towards God.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What was the first regular chore or responsibility you remember having growing up?

How did you do at it? What do you think doing that small task taught you about responsibility?

What about now? What are some of the little things you have to do everyday? How do you usually approach these things?

Our lives are filled with small decisions. Most of the time, we look at these small things as a to-do list—just things that must be accomplished so we can move onto bigger things. But in the kingdom of God, “small” looks different. In fact, God often asks us for faithful obedience in the little things. When we choose to be faithful in the small things, it shows that our hearts are bent towards God.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 2 KINGS 5:1-14.

1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. 2 Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." 4 So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel." 5 And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy." 7 And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

8 But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel." 9 So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and 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, and you shall be clean." 11 But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. 12 Are not Abana and 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 But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'" 14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (ESV)

Put yourself in Naaman's place. How would you feel knowing that you held a position of power and authority and yet suffered from an incurable disease you could do nothing about?

Have you ever felt like that? Frustrated that there was something in your life you could not control or fix? How can those times be beneficial in our relationship with God?

Control is really an illusion. We can pursue our wildest dreams, and maybe even see them come to pass, and yet we are reminded time and time again that we are not in true

control of our lives. In those times, we can either choose to be frustrated, or we can choose to press further into faith in the God who is in control.

What can you glean about the servant girl based on these verses?

Does it surprise you that she wanted to help Naaman? Why or why not?

What must have this girl believed to be true about God in order to tell Naaman how he could be helped?

How do her actions remind you of what Jesus did for us in the gospel?

Let's not forget the fact that this girl was a slave, taken from her homeland forcibly. She could have been bitter about her circumstances, but instead, she chose the path of love. Her faith in God's providence and goodness is what enabled her to seek the good of those who had previously not sought good for her. She reminds us of Jesus who, though He was crucified at the hands of men, willingly allowed it to happen to Himself because He loved them despite their sin.

What was Naaman's attitude in going to Israel?

How does his response to Elisha reveal Naaman's opinion about himself?

Why does an opinion like that keep us from God's healing and intimacy in our own lives?

Naaman was still under the spell of his own self-importance. Rather than having an attitude of humility and need, he was filled up with his own pride. When we come to God, there is only one way for us to do so—acknowledging our need. When we do, we will find a God ready to listen and come to our aid.

What are some ways you can remind yourself of your own need before God?

How did Naaman's pride keep him from the small act of obedience the prophet required of Him?

How might that be true in our own lives?

When we are full of ourselves, the temptation is to constantly be looking for some task from the Lord that fits with our sense of self-importance. But God is calling us to a consistent life of faithfulness that's demonstrated not in the big, but in the small.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 16:10.

10 *"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. (ESV)*

How does this verse relate to the story of Naaman? When have you seen this verse come to pass in your own life?

When we are faithful in the small things, we will be entrusted with much more because when in the little things, we show ourselves to be obedient, we also show that we have the kind of heart God is looking for.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What small step of obedience is God calling you toward today?

Who is someone in your life who has been faithful in the small things that you can encourage this week?

How are you going to remind yourself this week that the little things matter to God?

PRAYER

Pray to close your group asking God to help you be faithful in the small things. Ask Him to help you know that these things matter greatly in the kingdom.

COMMENTARY

| 2 KINGS 5:1-14

5:1 Naaman, the story's main character, is introduced as a great man who struggles to overcome a physical affliction. He is successful in his military career, for he commands Syria's army, a unit that allows Damascus to dominate the region. His king duly praises him for his work. He exhibits courage. Only one issue mars his life: he is a leper. This leprosy may not have been an extremely advanced type, since he could continue his work; but it was serious enough to him, as the text indicates later.

The author states that the Lord gave Naaman his victories. At first, this claim may seem startling because Naaman is not an Israelite. However, 1 and 2 Kings emphasize repeatedly God's sovereignty over all nations and all people. The Lord has already laid claim to ownership of Syria's political future (1 Kgs 19:15). Surely he can work on behalf of a Syrian, if only to discipline Israel for idolatry (cf. 2 Kgs 13:3). The Lord also has sent the prophets earlier to non-Israelites (1 Kings 17:7–24), so it is not surprising for him to deal with Naaman here.

5:2–3 A rather obscure source becomes the key to Naaman's healing. Raiding parties into Israel have provided a servant girl for Naaman's wife. This girl tells her mistress that Naaman could be cured if he would see "the prophet who is in Samaria." She is an Israelite, he is an Aramean; she is a "little maiden", he a "great man"; she is a captive servant, he a commander; he has fame in the king's estimation, ... she has none, for she simply "waited upon" ... Naaman's wife (cf. Deut 1:38; 1 Sam 19:7). Still, she shares the knowledge that her master needs most. Power and glory cannot save Naaman, but this information can.

Perhaps the book's first readers would have noted that the girl in the text is an exile too. Despite her captivity, she is not bitter or unhelpful. Rather, she shares what she knows about the Lord and the prophet out of concern for Naaman and her mistress and desire to see God's glory magnified. In this way she acts like Daniel, Mordecai, Ezra, Nehemiah, and other exiles who care for the spiritual and physical well-being of their conquerors.

5:4–7 Anxious for any possible avenue of healing, Naaman tells his king what the girl has said. Elisha's fame has spread from the lowest rung of society clear to the palace. Syria's king acts the only way he knows—like a king. He writes a letter of introduction and demand, loads Naaman down with gifts, and sends his commander off to be healed. He does not know that true prophets do not work for money, nor are they paid by the king, nor does the king have authority over them. Thus, sending Naaman to Israel's king does Naaman no good.

Israel's king certainly understands the futility of the letter, for he knows he is no healer. He too thinks like a king and suspects that Syria is looking for an excuse to renew old hostilities. He has no idea that deep personal pain and a child's pure motives have caused this trip.

5:8–14 Elisha views Naaman's presence as an opportunity to prove there is a real prophet in Israel, which is the same as saying there is a real God in Israel. Like the servant girl in 5:2–3, he decides to use this difficult situation to help Naaman. His attitude also helps the

king of Israel, since Elisha intends to show Naaman that while the monarch does not heal, someone in Israel can cure him.

When the Syrian arrives with his impressive entourage, the prophet does not come to meet him. Instead, he sends a messenger to instruct him to wash seven times in the Jordan if he wants to be healed. Why this aloof approach to the Syrian's problem? Jones suggests Elisha "may have been demonstrating that he was not a wonderworker who expected payment, or else indicating he wished no political involvement with Syria, or again be [sic] deliberately testing Naaman's faith." Certainly it is a great test of humble faith and one that Naaman understandably misinterprets as an insult. National pride and personal expectations of a spectacular, magical display lead the commander to stomp away in rage.

Once again it is Naaman's servants who come to his rescue. They attack their master's pride with common sense. He would do something difficult, they reason, so why not try this rather small possible cure? What can it hurt? Naaman follows their advice and is healed. His quest for healing has been fulfilled.