

Naaman's Story

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Readings: 2 Kings 5; Luke 4:16-27

Bullet points from sermon

- Naaman was a highly esteemed leader blessed by God before he even knew Him. He had special qualities, including the willingness to listen to his servants.
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- He had leprosy which would slowly affect his function to do his job but which also had huge associated stigma.
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- He sets off to Israel for a cure with a huge entourage and massive presents. The Israeli King sees it as a personal threat, exposing his inadequacies, and doesn't even think to refer him to Elisha.
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- Elisha doesn't even see Naaman, tells him to wash in the Jordan and refuses to accept a gift, while Naaman reacts strongly but calms down after listening to his servants. Key points: This is a free gift, like our salvation, that Naaman can't contribute to. Washing in the Jordan exposes two issues: the need for Naaman to take off his proud commanders clothing and come with nothing to offer before God, and that the extent of his problem needs to be fully exposed (his leprosy). This has parallels to how we accept the free gift of salvation.
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- Gehazi can't cope with the wealth on offer and sets off to get some, compromising the free gift and himself. This parallels Christ's strong reaction against those who sought to make money in the temple, compromising the free gift and misrepresenting God.
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- Jesus' comments in Luke 4 suggest another dimension to the story. He was in Nazareth and his own refused to recognise him-they refuse to recognise the presence and the power of God. This was exactly what the Israeli King and Gehazi were guilty of.
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- The passage immediately before 2 Kings 5 show God's heart for how we are to relate to him post-salvation experience: he wants to take all we have to do wonderful and seemingly impossible things as he brings what he has to the equation. What we have is important to him when it comes to the journey he wants to take us on. All we need to do is bring all we have to the table and surrender it to him.