

### General Naaman Seeks Healing from Leprosy

#### 2 Kings 5:1-7

2 Kings 5:1-7 – *“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. 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. 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.”*

*And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, “This is what the girl from the land of Israel said.” Then the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So Naaman departed. He took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. 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.*

*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.”*

#### Background Notes

This chapter tells the story of Naaman, the military general who was cured of leprosy through the ministry of Elisha the prophet. In verses 1-7 we see how God used a faithful young girl to accomplish His purposes.

This event took place in the 9th century BC. Naaman was the commander of the army of the king of Aram, or Syria (v1). Syria was the country directly north of Israel, as it is today. In fact, Damascus was the capital of Syria then, just as Damascus is the capital of Syria today.

Naaman was the field marshal, or general, over the entire Syrian army - quite a prestigious position. He was not only a powerful military leader, but he was also a man of honor. He was well liked by his commander-in-chief, the king of Syria.

But Naaman had a very serious problem: he had leprosy. His leprosy was probably in the early stages, and he could cover it up. However, it was only a matter of time before Naaman would have to step down from his position as commander of the army, and probably be excluded from society. Ultimately, the leprosy would take his life.

The Syrian army had gone out on raids and had brought back a young Israeli girl as a captive (v2). This young girl may have been a pre-teen, but she was probably a young teenager.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. God's plans are accomplished in mundane ways.

What's the meaning of the word "mundane"? Mundane means common, everyday, routine, even boring – yet God's plans are often accomplished in mundane ways! In other words, if you were to look at the ordinary events that are happening around you right now, you might think that there's no way God is accomplishing His plans through these events. They're just too ordinary, routine, mundane - but God's plans are accomplished in mundane ways.

And we see that here. How do we know that God was accomplishing His plan in the life and healing of Naaman here in 2 Kings? We know it because of what we read in Luke 4:27. In Luke 4 we have a sermon that the Lord Jesus gave in the synagogue of Nazareth. In reference to Elisha's ministry and the healing of Naaman, Jesus said, *"And many lepers were in Israel at the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."* The Lord's point was that when Naaman was healed, the grace of God was purposefully going beyond the borders of Israel to the Gentiles.

And the point of our Talk is that there's no doubt God's plans were being accomplished in the healing of Naaman the Syrian, the Gentile, from leprosy. But notice the mundane ways in which God accomplished these plans. The Syrian army sent out raiding parties – not at all unusual. They captured some Israelis, and a young girl was taken captive. She just happened to end up as a servant in Naaman's home.

Who would have ever thought that God was accomplishing His purposes and plans through these events – events that were ordinary in that day? And yet He was. God does the same thing today. God's plans are accomplished in mundane ways.

### 2. God's plans are accomplished through ordinary people.

The events of 2 Kings 5 had international consequences. The testimony of the God of Israel was making its way into the ranks of the Syrian army, right from the top down. And God used an ordinary, unnamed teenage girl as a major link in the chain of events! But the testimony of one faithful teenage girl affected a nation.

God's plans are accomplished through ordinary people. If it hadn't been for the faithful testimony of this Jewish girl, the prophet Elisha would not have had the opportunity to minister to Naaman, a general of the Syrian army.

Look around at your church. Do you see any superheroes? And yet God is accomplishing His plans through you! How many of you believe that God has plans for your church or ministry? Well, how is He accomplishing those plans? Through you! And you never know how important your testimony may be, even though you're just doing your mundane job. It could affect someone who might be greatly used by God in the future. Maybe you're teaching Sunday school, or

VBS, or counseling at a summer camp. Most of the “Billy Grahams” that God uses went to Sunday school or summer camps, and their teachers and counselors were ordinary believers. God’s plans are accomplished through ordinary people!

A Scripture on this subject is 1 Corinthians 1:26: *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.”* In other words, God calls ordinary people! Read the rest of that passage. There’s no doubt that God’s plans are accomplished through ordinary people.

## Practical Applications

### 1. Let’s be faithful, even though tragedy may happen to us.

Humanly speaking, what happened to this teenage girl was a tragedy. She was kidnapped. Her parents may have been killed before her very eyes. She was taken away to a foreign land. She may have been abused before ending up in Naaman’s house. She was forced to be a slave. But in spite of all the trauma and tragedy, she remained faithful to the Lord!

It reminds us of Joseph in Egypt. In spite of the tragedies that happened in his young life, yet he remained faithful to the Lord.

This teenage girl even witnessed to the enemy. She could have been bitter against her Syrian captors, and kept her knowledge of the prophet Elisha’s healing miracles to herself. But she didn’t. In Matthew 5:44 the Lord Jesus said, *“Love your enemies.”* She certainly demonstrated that.

A number of you here in my audience are teenage women, like the young Israeli teen. Suppose God allowed tragedy to come into your life. Would you remain faithful? Suppose God permitted one of us to be seriously injured in a car accident, through no fault of our own - and we ended up paralyzed. Why would God allow this to happen? We can’t understand it. Would we still be faithful to Him?

Or would we back away from God and say, “I don’t understand why You let this happen. You don’t answer me when I ask. I got a raw deal, so forget it. I’m not going to be faithful to You any more!”

Will we be faithful? Let’s be faithful, even though tragedy may happen to us.

## **2. Let's be faithful even though you may be misunderstood.**

The young girl in this story was faithful - but she was misunderstood. How was she misunderstood? After all, her suggestion was heeded, and Naaman was cured of his leprosy. That's true, but look at all the misunderstandings along the way.

When Naaman went to the king and told him the story, apparently he presented a garbled message. *"Naaman went in and told his master saying, 'This is what the girl who is from the land of Israel said' (v4).* But what did Naaman actually tell the king? Certainly he didn't communicate the accurate message, and the king misunderstood, because King Ben-Hadad thought he had to buy the healing for his general! So he sent money down to the king of Israel. And look how much he sent: *"ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and 10 changes of clothing."* That's 750 pounds of silver, a 150 pounds of gold! A lot of money!

Why did the king think he had to buy healing? Is that what the Israeli girl communicated? No! She was misunderstood. So Naaman took a letter from the king of Syria to the king of Israel: *"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."*

When Jehoram, the king of Israel, got this letter, he couldn't understand it. He was up for grabs! He tore his clothes, a sign of great distress, and he said, *"Who am I? Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy?"* He thought King Ben-Hadad was using this as an excuse to attack the northern kingdom of Israel!

So there were all kinds of misunderstandings before Naaman was cured. It wasn't the teenage girl's fault. She was a faithful witness, but the message was garbled all the way through.

We too will be misunderstood when we try to be faithful. You can be faithful at your school, in your neighborhood, where you work, and you might see the Lord answer your prayers. But you might face a lot of misunderstanding as well. Let's be faithful, even though we may be misunderstood.

Years ago I worked with a man who I thought had become a Christian. I worked with this guy for over a year, but somehow he misunderstood the clear Christian message, and he never really did become a Christian. In fact, through some other connections he ended up involved in a cult.

Misunderstanding can happen to all of us, and you can be sure that the enemy will do all he can to promote misinterpretation and misunderstanding of our message. So don't be surprised – there will be misunderstanding along the way. Let's be faithful, even though we may be misunderstood!