

March 4, 2024

Daily Reflections

Journeying through Lent



Center for Spiritual Development

CURE OF SYRIAN ARMY COMMANDER

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Today's First Reading

Naaman, the army commander of the king of Aram, was highly esteemed and respected by his master, for through him the LORD had brought victory to Aram. But valiant as he was, the man was a leper. Now the Arameans had captured in a raid on the land of Israel a little girl, who became the servant of Naaman's wife. "If only my master would present himself to the prophet in Samaria," she said to her mistress, "he would cure him of his leprosy."

Naaman went and told his lord just what the slave girl from the land of Israel had said. "Go," said the king of Aram. "I will send along a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman set out, taking along ten silver talents, six thousand gold pieces, and ten festal garments. To the king of Israel he brought the letter, which read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy." When he read the letter, the king of Israel tore his garments and exclaimed: "Am I a god with power over life and death, that this man should send someone to me to be cured of leprosy? Take note! You can see he is only looking for a quarrel with me!" When Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his garments, he sent word

to the king: "Why have you torn your garments? Let him come to me and find out that there is a prophet in Israel."

Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. The prophet sent him the message: "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean." But Naaman went away angry, saying, "I thought that he would surely come out and stand there to invoke the LORD his God, and would move his hand over the spot, and thus cure the leprosy. Are not the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be cleansed?" With this, he turned about in anger and left. But his servants came up and reasoned with him. "My father," they said, "if the prophet had told you to do something extraordinary, would you not have done it? All the more now, since he said to you, 'Wash and be clean,' should you do as he said." So Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. He returned with his whole retinue to the man of God. On his arrival he stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel."

2 KINGS 5:1-15

Reflection

Notice the two characters that begin this story of healing: Naaman, the commander of the Aramean/Syrian army who is a leper, and a young Israelite servant girl who belongs to Naaman's wife. The servant girl (who was probably captured during wartime) assures her mistress that if Naaman will present himself to the prophet Elisha, he will be cured of his leprosy. Instead Naaman followed hierarchical protocol by approaching the king of Israel, who denies having any power to cure. Elisha hears about the encounter and invites Naaman to come to him. Somewhat dramatically, Naaman "came with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house." The prophet told him to wash seven times in the River Jordan. Naaman responded in anger! He anticipated that he would have the prophet's personal attention, with Elisha at least coming out of his house and praying to his God, and then he would "move his hand over the spot and thus cure the leprosy." Naaman also complained that there were cleaner mountain springs in his homeland, so why bother with this trip to the muddy Jordan? It was his servants who persuaded him to do what Elisha had directed, despite its simplicity.

"So Naaman went down and plunged in the the Jordan seven times at

the word of the man of God. His flesh became like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.” Returning to Elisha’s house, Naaman stood before the prophet and said, ‘Now I know that there is no God in all earth, except in Israel.’ ”

The result of this experience was that the Syrian Army Commander not only came away cured of his leprosy, he also carried firsthand experience of the God of Israel.



"Jesus' baptism site, River Jordan." by jemasmith is licensed under CC BY 2.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/?ref=openverse>.

For Pondering

- What in this story speaks to your life?
 - Imagine yourself having a conversation with Naaman. What would you discuss? What questions would you ask? What would you share with him?
 - Recall a firsthand experience you've had with God that involved being cleansed of your personal "leprosy." In what ways does it connect with Naaman's story?
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For Prayer

PRAYER FOR HEALING

*God of wholeness,
God of healing,
hear our words,
accept our prayers.
Send a special blessing of wholeness
among all those who are in need
of your healing love.
Amen.*

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