

Naaman

Today I have chosen to talk about the story of Naaman when he was healed of Leprosy. You have already heard the story in the children's talk but for your reference it is from 2 Kings Chapter 5. Before I start I want to tell you a little story: A duck walks into a bar and says to the bartender, "I'd like to buy some peanuts." The bartender says, "Sorry, don't sell peanuts." The duck leaves. The next day, the duck returns and again says, "I want to buy some peanuts." The bartender replies, a bit gruffly this time, "I already told you I don't sell peanuts." The duck leaves. The next day, the duck comes in once again and yet again demands, "I want to buy some peanuts!" The outraged bartender yells back, "I told you, I don't sell peanuts! If you ask one more time, I'll nail you to the wall!" The duck leaves. The next day, the duck walks into the bar and before the bartender can say a word, the duck asks, "Do you have any nails?" The bartender looks taken aback and says quietly, "Sorry, don't have nails." The duck asks, "Well then, do you have any peanuts?" Just remember that we all need to be humbled...

I have 5 lessons to learn from Naaman

Liam –Erin I have these sores, I think it's Leprosy. Erin well the Leprosy mission is advertised today in the newsletter, go and see Elizabeth

5 Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

1. Naaman was a man held in high respect being the commander of an army. He was the person others looked to when in battle, and they had won battles. He was their leader and had to portray an image that he was in control and looking at him he seemed to have his life sorted out. He was a mighty man, BUT he was a leper. He had a problem and unless he dealt with it, he couldn't continue to portray his image. Can you relate? You may have everything in your favour – graduated from Otago University or Otago Polytech – both with very good reputations in education, you have a good family, good job, climbed to the top of your career...but underneath there is a condition to deal with. In order to get greater blessings from God, you need to deal with a condition that you're hiding. You feel like you can't go any further with making your life good. These blocks are the things you pray against or hope others won't find out about. But we can take the issues in our life to God, lay them at the foot of the cross, pray that wrongdoings will be healed. In doing this God will bless us and it sets a person apart from the others when God helps you deal with a condition. Without the obstacles you will just be ordinary.

Emilie comes up and gets on her hands and knees and prays.

⁷As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

2. Naaman had a unique problem, no one he knew of had been healed of leprosy. For Naaman it seemed like he was the only one in this position. Imagine that! He had no one to share with about what he was going through, no leprosy support group to learn what to expect, no Dr. Google to see the side effects, no medication to take. So why would he believe that God would heal him – he hadn't even seen anyone else healed of leprosy. But Naaman was willing to give this God thing a go, although reluctantly! AND he was healed. Do you have times when you are asking 'Am I the only person going through this?' We all go through times of feeling like this. Well you need to stop focusing on the problem and start focusing on God! You need to get on your knees and pray! Then when God is working through you change will happen and a solution to your problem will occur. We need to develop a faith that believes God can do the impossible. God was able to make Naaman a greater man, He can do the same for you. When we have faced great challenges we can be of great influence.

Chelsea comes up on her phone – Chelsea get off your phone, pokes tongue out at me and leaves

¹⁰Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

¹¹But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy.

¹²Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

¹³Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" ¹⁴So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

3. When God gives you an answer, don't argue, just do what you are told. How many times do we act like children that feel they have to push back on the answer given to them. Naaman gets upset to begin with because Elisha doesn't come out to speak to him but sends a servant. He's all like, I'm better than being spoken to by a servant, because of who I am, Elisha should have come out and seen me. And then he has to go and dip in the dirty, muddy Jordan River! Naaman is really acting like the millennials and young people of today, all self-righteous and not wanting to do anything to get there, or is that in all of us when we get on our high horse and won't come down. So Naaman's crew tell him to pull his head in and just do what he is told. How often do we need to humble ourselves? If it's not to become clean, then to ask for help or share our story. And sometimes we need to be surrounded by people who can tell us to pull our heads in and stop acting like such an idiot. That's why it's so important to have face to face contact with other people on a regular basis and not just over this fandangled thing called the internet or these cellular devices. Think about who the people are in your life who can tell you off, and who you can be humble with.

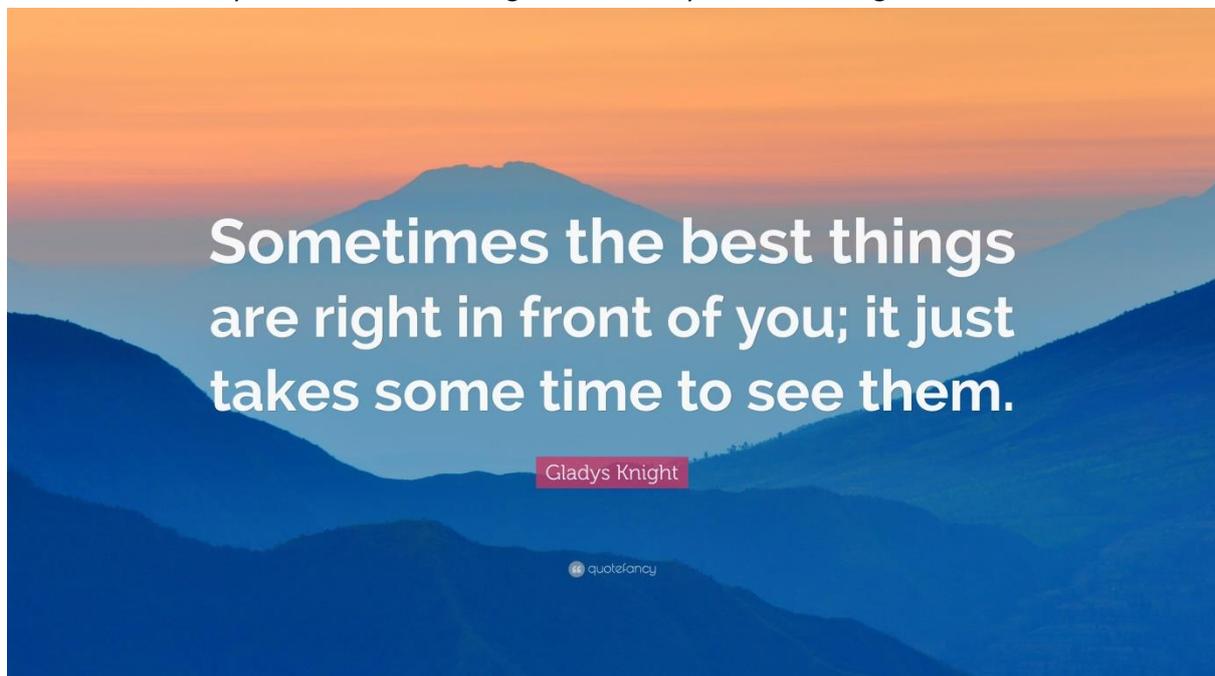
Elizabeth comes on grumpy saying I don't want to make the beds

4. The fourth lesson is that God puts you in your own place to minister, it is where He wants you to be.

² Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

⁴ Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. ⁵ "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

This young girl was close enough to Naaman to see his problem and able to express her thoughts to Naaman's wife. That's a pretty close relationship. The young girl could have gone out gossiping about Naaman's problem, saying how disgusting his skin looked, or she could have been really grumpy about being a servant and been taken from her home. But no she used her position in the household, obviously respected Naaman and his wife and used her faith in God to ultimately bring about another believer in God and he was someone who was influential. "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel." How often do we complain about our situations not realising that God has put us in them for a reason, or are we the only Christian in a group of people, like I know my daughter Jade is at the moment in LA. Something that has come to my attention this week is the price of rent in Auckland. This can be up to \$780 a week for a dilapidated house in Mangere. I also know that in Queenstown it can be \$800 to \$900 a week. These prices are outrages and forcing people to either not eat, overcrowd or to just not have a home to live in. Who is in the positions where they can say something about this and make a change? When we think about it are our situations really that bad? And is being a mentor for you? Just a thought here:



The final and 5th lesson is how Naaman was dipped in the river 7 times. This means he was cleansed and had healing, much like a baptism. Not only did Naaman's physical sores need healed, his heart needed healing as well.

I have always struggled with how to explain why I am a Christian. Apart from the basic verse of John 3:16, 'for whoever believes in me shall not die but have eternal life' I have found this difficult to explain. Recently I found another verse that sums it all up in 2 Corinthians 5:21 Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God. Jesus took away our sins with his death on the cross to have union with God. How good is that! Just as Naaman bathed in the river he had his sins removed and baptism is the outward showing of us wanting our sins removed.

So hopefully from today you have taken more away from the story of Naaman than just a man who got healed from leprosy. There are some challenges in here for you to think about and apply to your lives.

Quest children: leper with sores, hands and knees praying, child on phone, I don't want to make beds.