



Naaman: Cleansed in Water

These are basic Bible studies intended to help our teachers personally grasp the “big picture” of our VBS theme. Feel free to use anything here in connecting with your students.

Key text: 2 Kings 5

Naaman was a great man. Commander of the army of the king of Syria. A courageous warrior. But Naaman had gotten sick with leprosy, a terrible disease that no one could cure.

After one of their battles, a little girl from Israel had been carried off by the Syrians. Now she served Naaman’s wife. One day, that little girl told Naaman’s wife, “Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy” (2 Kings 5:3). When Naaman heard this, he asked permission from the king of Syria to travel and see this prophet of Israel. That prophet’s name was Elisha.

Naaman brought all sorts of silver, gold, and nice things with him and came first to the king of Israel. The king of Israel knew *he* couldn’t cure leprosy and thought maybe Naaman and the Syrians were just trying to start a fight with him. But when Elisha heard that Israel’s king was upset, he said, “Let Naaman come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel” (5:8).

When Naaman came with all of his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha’s house, Elisha sent a messenger with a simple message: “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean” (5:10). This made Naaman angry and he left! He thought that God’s prophet would come out and make a big show of curing him. And couldn’t Naaman have just stayed closer to home and washed himself in one of the bigger rivers of Syria? What was so special about the Jordan River?

It wasn’t that the Jordan River was somehow better or more special than all of the other rivers in the world, but what was special was that a prophet of God had told Naaman to “Wash, and be clean.” When Naaman decided to just do what Elisha said, “his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child” and he was healed.

The “trust and obey” connection:

- God can use all sorts of people in all sorts of places to accomplish his will. He used a little Israelite girl who had been carried far from home to tell Naaman what he needed to hear.
- Sometimes, we think we know better than God—“My way would be even better than what God has commanded”—but our job is just to trust and obey (Isa 55:6-11).
- Baptism is what washes our sins away and cleanses our consciences (Rom 6:3-4).

