

Point of the day: God has revealed Himself as the God who heals and God can and does heal today.

Memory Verse: "I am the Lord who heals you" Exodus 15:26

God wants to, and has the power to heal and God cares intimately about each one of us, wanting what is the best for us all. The Bible is clear that we live in a fallen world in which the whole world is subject to sickness and decay. We live in the in between times - waiting for a time when there will be "no more death, sadness, crying or pain, because all the old ways are gone" Revelation 21:4, yet we need to be aware that God wants our wholeness to begin now.

In today's story we meet a man called Naaman who needed God and needed healing and had to be obedient before he received it.....

STORY (2 Kings 5:1-19)

Naaman was the commander of the whole army of the country of Aram. He was very rich.

He had many servants. Even his wife had a servant girl. She was a little girl from the country of Israel. She had been captured from her home and brought to the country of Aram to be a slave in Naaman's house. Naaman and his family did not believe in God but the little girl did. Even though she was far away from her parents and from Israel, she remembered the things that her parents had taught her when she was very little. She remembered Elisha, the prophet, and all of the good things he did for God.

Even though Naaman was a commander of the army and very rich, he had a very big problem. He had a terrible disease called leprosy. Leprosy starts out as white spots on the skin. Then the white spots start becoming sorer. If the leprosy spots were on a person's hands then their hands could become so sore with leprosy that they could fall off. The spots would spread all over your body and finally you would die. It was a horrible thing to have leprosy because there was no medicine that could make it better.

No one wanted to be around someone with leprosy because they might get leprosy too. Naaman had to stay away from everyone. He could not be a soldier anymore and he could not be with his family. Everyone was sad about Naaman.

No one in the whole country of Aram knew how to help Naaman except the servant girl from Israel. She told her mistress, Naaman's wife, about her God and about Elisha the prophet. Elisha could do miracles because Elisha was a prophet of God. Maybe Naaman could go to Israel and see Elisha.

When Naaman's wife told him about Elisha, he became very excited. He decided to go to Israel and find out if what the girl said was true. Naaman and his servants had to ride very far to get to Israel. They went to King Joram's house and then to the house of Elisha.

When he got to Elisha's house, Naaman sat outside and waited. Naaman was a very important man so he expected Elisha to come outside and give him a very special greeting. Naaman waited but Elisha did not come outside. Instead, a servant came outside and told Naaman that Elisha had a message for him, "Elisha said that you should go and dip in the Jordan River seven times. If you do this then the Lord will take away your leprosy and you will be well."

Naaman was very angry. Didn't Elisha know that he was an important army commander? How dare Elisha tell him to go and wash in the dirty Jordan River! If he wanted to wash in a river then he could have done that back in the country of Aram. Naaman was so angry that he started to head for home.

"Please, sir," said Naaman's servants, "we really want you to be well again. You will die if the leprosy does not go away. It would be an easy thing to wash in the Jordan River seven times. We have come such a long way. Why don't you try it?"

Naaman wanted his leprosy to go away too, so he went to the Jordan River. He went to the river and washed. Then he washed again. He did this seven times just as Elisha had said. Naaman came up out of the water and looked at his skin. The leprosy spots were gone! His skin looked perfect! It was as soft and smooth as a little child's skin.

Naaman went straight back to Elisha's house. Naaman wanted to give Elisha all of the money, gold and silver and beautiful fabrics that he had brought from Aram. But Elisha would not accept the gifts. He had not done this for money. He had told Naaman how to be healed because he wanted Naaman to know that God is real.

"Elisha, since I have been healed of my leprosy, I know that the God of Israel is real. My wife's servant girl was right. From now on I will worship the Lord," promised Naaman. Naaman left and began his journey back to Aram.

On this day Naaman was healed but he also learned that there was a True God who loved and cared for him. His life was forever changed because of a young girl who used the opportunity that God had given her to speak up and share with her master about God.

You and I can make a difference in the lives of the people that God puts in our lives by using every opportunity to do what pleases Him. And to take opportunities to pray for people who are sick or hurting.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Has anything changed between then and now?
- Does God heal through medicine and doctors and nurses today instead?
- Do you know stories of people who have been healed?
- What about people who have not been healed or have died?
- How could Jesus bring them wholeness?
- Is there a wholeness or completeness that people can have in spite of suffering?
- Can God give us peace and love and trust in him?
- God is a God of love and longs for us to be whole and complete. Jesus said "I came to give life – life in all its fullness" John 10:10

PRAYER RESPONSE

Ask your child to think of people they know who need prayer for healing or wholeness. If they do not know anyone perhaps you could make some suggestions – people known to you who are ill, or people in the news.

CRAFT

Colour in the Jordan River scene (remember the water was muddy!) and carefully cut along the dotted lines.

Colour and cut out the figures of Naaman. Glue them onto the lollystick.

Retell the story of Naaman – dipping him 7 times in and out of the water before he was healed!



