

ESF, Lord's Day Service Message
6/28/2015

Overcoming Crisis in Life

2 Kings 5:1-14

¹ 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.

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." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. ⁶ The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

⁷ As 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!"

⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." ⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ Elisha 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."

¹¹ But 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. ¹² Are 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.

¹³ Naaman’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!” ¹⁴ So 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.

Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was the most powerful man next to the king. But he had a serious problem. He was a leper. He had money and power to have all the doctors and medicines available in those days. But there is no doctor or medicine to cure him of his leprosy. Because of this sickness his life became miserable. But he found the way of healing. It was the healing of the God of Israel. Through God’s healing his leprosy was completely cured.

Like Naaman, there may be a problem which puts our lives in crisis. Through Naaman’s example, God shows us a way to overcome the crisis.

Seek God First

Naaman was not a believer. He knew nothing about the God of Israel. He did not practice faith as the Israelites did. He had no idea of how to pray to God, how to worship God, and how to seek God’s help. So there was no way for him to find God’s healing.

But he had a slave girl in his home who was a believer. Although she was a slave, she had something her master Naaman did not have. It was

faith in God. Through her faith, she was able to give the most important gift to her master.

The slave girl witnessed to Naamna's wife *"If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."* What she believed in was not the prophet, but God who could heal sickness through the prophet. God used her witnessing to heal Naaman.

God still uses believers to witness to His healing. If you are a believer, don't underestimate what God can do through your witnessing. God has given you faith to bless many people. God has given you faith to share with those who do not know Him. God has given you faith to bring His healing to those who are suffering from hopeless diseases. Jesus promises that he will bring healing power through believers' witnessing in Mark 16:15-18: *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ...And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; ...they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."*

Witness God's blessing to the unbelievers.

If you are suffering from any hopeless disease, listen carefully and humbly to the witnesses of God's blessings around you. God's miraculous blessing for you through the witnesses of others is closer than you think. Don't ignore what God can do through the witnessing of ordinary people around you. Listen to believers' witnesses today. Even if they are poorer than you are, even if they are less educated than you are, even if they are inferior to you in many ways, listen to their witness.

When Naaman heard the slave girl's witness, it was difficult for him to believe it. But he decided to believe in God's healing. He came to Israel to see the prophet and seek God's healing.

Naaman would have gone through life trusting in himself and all his achievements. He had everything that a man would want today-fame,

power and wealth. But his life was in crisis because of an incurable disease. In the crisis, he became desperate and sought the God of Israel (5:15). And God healed him.

God will do the same for us today. God uses crises in life to wake us up and help us see what truly matters. Through crises in our lives God calls our attention to seek Him. In Jeremiah 29:13 God promises us, “*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*”

Are you facing a crisis today? Are you struggling with a hopeless problem today? Seek God first. Seek Him with all your heart. God is ready to be found by you.

Surrender your way to God’s way

Although Naaman listened to the witness of the slave girl, and came to Israel to seek God’s healing, he had one more obstacle to overcome. It was his ego and pride.

When he came to Elisha the prophet, he expected that Elisha might come out to treat him nicely. But Elisha did not treat him as he expected. Elisha did not come out from his house. He sent a messenger to Naaman. Through the messenger, Elisha told Naaman to go in the river Jordan and wash himself seven times.

As soon as Naaman heard these words, he felt insulted. He became angry and went off in a rage. He 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. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?*

As an army commander, Naaman did not know how to surrender himself to anybody. For him surrendering himself to somebody meant defeat.

But while he was fighting against leprosy; to be victorious over the disease, he had to surrender himself to God's prophet. It meant surrendering himself to God.

Because God's ways are usually different from our ways, and His ways are better than our ways, God wants us to surrender our ways to His ways.

In Isaiah 55:8-9, God says,

⁸ *For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
declares the LORD.*

⁹ *As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

That is why the prophet did not come out and treat Naaman as a VIP but sent a messenger and commanded him to wash in the Jordan seven times. When he surrendered himself to the command, God healed his leprosy.

Naaman's problem is often our problem as well. Mohamed Ali, when he was still Cassius Clay, was on an airplane. A flight attendant said, "Please fasten your seatbelt." He responded in pride, "Superman doesn't need a seatbelt." She responded, "Superman doesn't need an airplane either."

Very often, we come to God in the same way. We have our plan and we expect God to say YES to it. "Lord, give me a cure. Wave your hand and let the problem disappear. And I will be on my way." And when things do not turn out as we expect, we may get upset and angry. We may give up on seeking God. That is evidence of pride.

When God wants to bless a person, God always challenges the pride of the person. God encourages the person to surrender himself or herself to

His ways. 1 Peter 5: 6 says, *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*

God's amazing grace for you and me is not so far as we think. It is very near to us. Here through Naaman's case, God is teaching us a lesson of greatest victory: *Surrender yourself to me. Surrender your own ways to my ways. And I will pour my amazing healing into your life.*

When God wants to bless us, He uses people or situations to challenge our pride and encourage us to surrender our pride. Our pride is the first enemy we have to defeat if we want to receive God's blessing.

How can you surrender your pride?

Do not insist on your way when God does not treat you as you expect.

Do not give up on seeking God when He does not bless you as you wish.

Follow all God's instructions given to you even if you can't understand them.