

A Slave Girl Cares for Naaman

(2 Kings 5:1-16)

Introduction

[Teacher, bring a variety of spot removers to class: a bar of soap, laundry spot remover, carpet spot remover, glass cleaner, etc.] Have you seen your mom use one of these to clean spots in your house? [Hold up the glass cleaner and ask the children if they know what it is used for. Then use it to clean a window or mirror. Hold up the bar of soap and ask what it cleans, and so forth.]

All of these spot removers remove spots. The man in our Bible story today had a spot he wanted to remove. But it was a spot that none of these spot removers could clean. It was a spot that only God could clean. He had a spot of leprosy. Leprosy is a skin disease. In Bible times, leprosy couldn't be cured by men. Only God could cure leprosy.

Opening Prayer

Father, we are each born with a spot that we can't get out by ourselves. Teach us this morning how we can make our lives clean and right for You. We pray that You will fill us with the Holy Spirit who will give us the power we need to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Lesson

A man named Naaman lived in Aram (present day Syria), a country just north of Israel. Naaman was a general in the Aramean army. In fact, he was the army's highest-ranking officer. He was a man of high social standing and importance to the king of Aram.

He was a brave leader and a famous war hero, but he had a big problem.

2 Kings 5:1

The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the LORD had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy.

Leprosy is a skin disease that damages nerves and skin. It causes sores and terrible deformities. Today leprosy can be treated with medicine. But in Bible times, there was no cure for leprosy. People were terrified to go near anyone who had this disease because they were afraid they would get sick, too. It was contagious. So, when people got leprosy back in those days they were forced to go live in a place separate from the rest of the people. They called those places leper colonies. Once you were sent to this place you could never come back to live with the rest of the people again.

When Naaman found out he had leprosy, how do you think he felt? In spite of his high position and riches, he was in a seemingly hopeless situation.

What a terrible problem! But there is something much worse than leprosy. It is sin. You and I have sinned. In many ways sin is like leprosy. Each person born into this world has sin on the inside. That includes you and me. You were born wanting to do things your own way instead of God's way. What are some things you do your own way instead of doing what is right? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Yes, sin is anything that displeases God. Sin separates us from a holy God. (Isaiah 59:2). God must punish sin. That punishment is to be separated from Him forever. How awful! Sin is a terrible problem. It is even worse than leprosy. But God had a plan to save Naaman just as He has a plan to save you.

2 Kings 5:2

At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid.

Although the Arameans were officially at peace with Israel in those days, border raids were common. But one day, enemy soldiers did attack an Israelite town and captured a young Israelite girl, and took her away to be a slave. This Jewish girl worked for Naaman's wife.

The Israelite slave girl was sad that Naaman had this terrible disease. And she knew of a man who could help. That man was God's prophet, Elisha.

2 Kings 5:3

One day the girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy."

This young girl could have chosen to be bitterly angry at those who had kidnapped her from her family and made her a slave. But instead, she chose to care about them. When she found out that her master had leprosy, she could have said, "Good! He deserves it." But instead, she had compassion on him.

This little girl knew that God is all-powerful. She knew that God is the great, powerful God who made the birds that sing and the beautiful flowers and trees. She knew that this powerful God also really loved Naaman and cared about what happened to him. So, she told Naaman the good news.

2 Kings 5:4

So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said.

Naaman told his king what the little girl had said.

2 Kings 5:5

"Go and visit the prophet," the king of Aram told him. "I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel." So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing.

The Aramean King wrote a letter of recommendation to the king of Israel to introduce him to Naaman and explain the situation.

Naaman hurried home and packed for his trip. He loaded his chariots with gold and silver and beautiful clothing and then he started off for Israel.

Naaman took gifts of money and clothing to pay for the cure of his skin disease—leprosy. Naaman didn't know he could not buy the power to cure leprosy. Only the power of God could heal Naaman.

And that is a free gift from God.

Naaman drove his chariots filled with the gifts to Elisha's house and he waited for Elisha to come outside and make him well.

2 Kings 5:9

So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house.

But Elisha didn't come outside; he sent a messenger to talk to Naaman.

2 Kings 5:10

But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy."

When Naaman heard these instructions, he was furious! He had come to Elisha's house expecting something wonderful and exciting to happen. But Elisha didn't seem to notice the splendid horses and chariots that arrived outside his door. He just sent out his servant with a message. This was insulting to Naaman; he was a big important man where he had come from. And, what crazy instructions! "Go wash in the Jordan seven times." That sounded ridiculous to Naaman.

2 Kings 5:11

But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me!"

There was only one way Naaman could be healed, or cleansed, from leprosy. And God has only one way for you to be cleansed of your sin. That way is through His perfect Son, the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus took the punishment for your sin when He died on the cross. As He hung there on the cross, God placed on Him all the wrong things you have done. The Lord Jesus willingly suffered so you wouldn't have to. He gave His blood so your sins could be forgiven—so you could be made clean. The Bible says that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. That no one comes to the Father except by Him. (John 14:6)

There is only one way for you to be cleansed from your sin and that's by believing in what Jesus did for you on the cross.

And there was only one way for Naaman to be cleansed from his leprosy. But, his pride was injured! Naaman thought Elisha's instructions were foolish and he refused to follow them.

2 Kings 5:12

Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.

"Bathe in that muddy, smelly water?" shouted Naaman, "Never! We have much cleaner rivers in Damascus." And he marched off in a rage.

Sometimes God will ask you to do things that seem silly or hard. He might have you go up to a total stranger and tell them about what Jesus did for them on the cross. Or, he might have you say, "I'm sorry" to someone you've hurt. Remember, God's way is always best; God's way brings healing and life.

2 Kings 5:13

But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'"

Naaman's servants saw that their master's pride had been insulted, but they also knew that if Naaman did not do as the prophet said, he might never be well again. So they tried to reason with him. They said, "If the prophet had asked you to do something hard, wouldn't you have done it? You should certainly obey him when he asks you to do an easy thing." His servants must have loved him very much; they encouraged him to make the right choice.

2 Kings 5:14

So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed!

So Naaman humbled himself and followed the instructions of God's prophet. Naaman went to the River Jordan. While the servants watched, he walked down into the water. Naaman dipped under the water one time. The leprosy was still there. Down he went the second time. Still nothing happened. He went under the water the third time, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth. The ugly sores were still on his body. I bet he was just about to give up, wouldn't you?

But when he went under the water again and came up the seventh time, the leprosy was gone! Naaman was healed!

He was so excited, he hurried back to Elisha's house.

2 Kings 5:15

Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant."

Naaman wanted to show Elisha how much he appreciated what he had done for him.

2 Kings 5:16

But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts." And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused.

Elisha didn't want to take any credit for this miraculous healing. He knew it wasn't by his power that Naaman was healed. It was because Naaman finally humbled himself and trusted in God's way that he was cleansed from his leprosy. In the same way, you can be made clean from your sin by trusting in God's way of forgiveness and everlasting life.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Because Naaman trusted God's way, he didn't have to be sent away to live in the leper colony. By believing in God's way to have

everlasting life, you no longer have to face being separated from Him because of your sin. Do you believe the Lord Jesus died to cleanse you from your sin and to save you from the punishment of being separated from Him forever? Your faith in Jesus is God's spot remover.

Naaman promised to always worship the one true God. How glad Naaman was that he finally did what he was told even though it seemed silly! How glad Naaman was that Elisha and the slave girl cared for him and helped him!

Closing Prayer

Father, You show us Your power in many ways. We know that You are strong enough to take care of us. You are amazing! You are the great Physician. You are the only One who can heal us of our greatest sickness—sin. Thank You that You have made a way for us to be cleansed from our sin. We look forward to that day that we will be with You in heaven and can see You face-to-face. In Jesus' name, Amen.

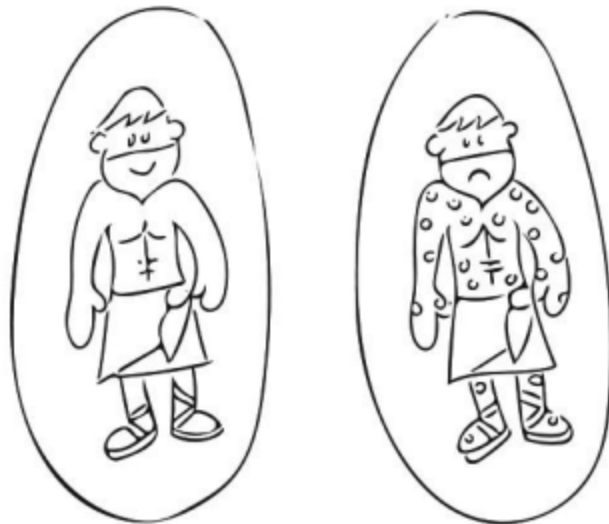
Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Naaman Cup Craft

Materials for each child:

- 5 oz. Dixy cup.
- Craft (or popsicle) stick.
- A Set of Naaman templates to cut out.



Procedure for each child:

1. Cut out the two Naaman characters – one “well” and one “unwell”.
2. Color both Naaman characters.
3. Stick the Naaman characters back-to-back on the craft stick.
4. Poke the stick through a slit cut in the bottom of the cup. [Teacher, pre cut the slit in the cup before class!]
5. Retell the story using the cup.



Game Center

Pass High, Pass Low

Materials: Two empty cardboard tubes.

Preparation: Draw a star on one of the two paper tubes.

Students stand in a circle and pass paper tubes in opposite directions around the circle according to your directions. When you say “Pass high,” students pass tubes over their heads. When you say “Pass low,” students squat down and pass tubes by sliding tubes along the floor. When you say “Pass behind,” students pass tubes behind their backs.

Students continue passing until you say, “Pass no more.” The student holding the tube with the star answers one of the Review Questions.

[Teacher, switch directions often and quickly to keep student's interest level high. And keep the game fun by participating in and enjoying the game yourself.]

Or, use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. Who was Naaman? (He was a general in the Aramean army.)
2. Naaman was a brave leader and a famous war hero, but he had a big problem. What was that? (He had leprosy.)
3. What is leprosy? (A skin disease that damages nerves and skin. It causes sores and terrible deformities.)
4. Why were people terrified to go near anyone who had leprosy? (Because it was contagious and there was no cure for it.)
5. Because it was contagious, where were people forced to live? (In a place that was separate from the rest of the people.)
6. How is leprosy like sin? (If you don't get cleansed from it you will have to live a separated life.)
7. How might the slave girl have felt when she was captured as a slave by Naaman's army? (She could have been bitter and angry.)
8. Despite the slave girl's feelings, what did she do to help Naaman? (She told Naaman about God's prophet, Elisha, and how he could help.)
9. Why do you think the girl helped Naaman? (She knew God is all-powerful and loving.)
10. When Naaman told his king what the little girl said, what did he do? (He wrote a letter of recommendation to the king of Israel.)
11. What did Naaman pack for his trip? (He loaded his chariots with gold and silver and beautiful clothing.)
12. What happened when Naaman got to Elisha's house? (Elisha didn't come out to greet Naaman; he sent his servant out.)
13. What instructions did Elisha's servant give Naaman? (Go wash in the Jordan seven times.)
14. What did Naaman think when Elisha told him to wash in the Jordan River? (He was angry and wouldn't do it.)
15. How did Naaman's servants show that they loved him? (They helped him change his mind and do what he was told.)
16. What is the only way for you to be cleansed from your sin? (Believe that what Jesus did for you on the cross took the punishment that you deserve.)
17. What did Naaman think about God after he was cured of leprosy? (God's power showed Naaman that He is God. He said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel.")
18. How did God show Naaman He is powerful? (He healed Naaman of his leprosy.)

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