

When the Process Doesn't Make Sense

8.24.25

Message 3

Cast of Characters

2 Kings

2 Kings 5 (CSB)

NAAMAN'S DISEASE HEALED

5 Naaman, commander of the army for the king of Aram, was a man important to his master and highly regarded because through him, the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was a valiant warrior, but he had a skin disease.

²Aram had gone on raids and brought back from the land of Israel a young girl who served Naaman's wife. ³She said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his skin disease."

⁴So Naaman went and told his master what the girl from the land of Israel had said. ⁵Therefore, the king of Aram said, "Go, and I will send a letter with you to the king of Israel."

So he went and took with him 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. ⁶He brought the letter to the king of Israel, and it read:

When this letter comes to you, note that I have sent you my servant Naaman for you to cure him of his skin disease.

⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and asked, "Am I God, killing and giving life, that this man expects me to cure a man of his skin disease? Recognize that he is only picking a fight with me."

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

¹⁰Then Elisha sent him a messenger, who said, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan and your skin will be restored and you will be clean."

¹¹But Naaman got angry and left, saying, "I was telling myself: He will surely come out, stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the skin disease. ¹²Aren't Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and left in a rage.

¹³But his servants approached and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more should you do it when he only tells you, 'Wash and be clean'?" ¹⁴So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the command of the man of God. Then his skin was restored and became like the skin of a small boy, and he was clean.

¹⁵Then Naaman and his whole company went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, "I know there's no God in the whole world except in Israel. Therefore, please accept a gift from your servant."

¹⁶But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, in whose presence I stand, I will not accept it." Naaman urged him to accept it, but he refused.

¹⁷Naaman responded, "If not, please let your servant be given as much soil as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will no longer offer a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but the LORD. ¹⁸However, in a particular matter may the LORD pardon your servant: When my master, the king of Aram, goes into the temple of Rimmon to bow in worship while he is leaning on my arm, and I have to bow in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant in this matter."

¹⁹So he said to him, "Go in peace."

GEHAZI'S GREED PUNISHED

After Naaman had traveled a short distance from Elisha, ²⁰Gehazi, the attendant of Elisha the man of God, thought, "My master has let this Aramean Naaman off lightly by not accepting from him what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him."

²¹ So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and asked, "Is everything all right?"

²² Gehazi said, "It's all right. My master has sent me to say, 'I have just now discovered that two young men from the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them seventy-five pounds of silver and two sets of clothing.' "

²³ But Naaman insisted, "Please, accept one hundred fifty pounds." He urged Gehazi and then packed one hundred fifty pounds of silver in two bags with two sets of clothing. Naaman gave them to two of his attendants who carried them ahead of Gehazi. ²⁴ When Gehazi came to the hill, he took the gifts from them and deposited them in the house. Then he dismissed the men, and they left.

²⁵ Gehazi came and stood by his master. "Where did you go, Gehazi?" Elisha asked him.

He replied, "Your servant didn't go anywhere."

²⁶ "And my heart didn't go when the man got down from his chariot to meet you," Elisha said. "Is this a time to accept silver and clothing, olive orchards and vineyards, flocks and herds, and male and female slaves?

²⁷ Therefore, Naaman's skin disease will cling to you and your descendants forever." So Gehazi went out from his presence diseased, resembling snow.

Intro. Sometimes the Will or Process of God Doesn't Make Sense.

A. If you have been a Christian for at least a day, God has led you into a world that seems upside down.

1. Repentance and Confession isn't logical, but it's the entrance into the Kingdom.
2. Loving your enemies and forgiving those who hurt you goes against the natural, but it is the daily bread of the believer.
3. I can assure you there will be many times in your life when what you feel like God is asking you to do is the opposite of what makes logical, rational sense.

B. Today's story is full of encounters that do not make sense.

1. Servant girls who lead their master to healing.
2. A Commander of Armies who baptizes himself seven times in a foreign river.
3. A Prophet who refuses an offering.
4. A Servant who exchanges anointing for financial gain.

C. This passage challenges my thinking.

1. In my pursuit of knowing God, I am still amazed at what God does.
2. Sometimes what He asks of us is logical and rational.
3. At other times, He asks us to obey and act in ways that are contrary to our way of thinking and our will.
4. My goal in my Christian life is always to tell God, "YES!"
 - a. Even when it makes no sense.
 - b. Even though what God is asking of me requires sacrificing my rights and privileges.

1. A Caring Servant Girl Helps Her Master

²Aram had gone on raids and brought back from the land of Israel a young girl who served Naaman's wife. ³She said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his skin disease."

⁴So Naaman went and told his master what the girl from the land of Israel had said.

A. The first action that doesn't make sense to me is a servant girl helping her master.

1. This is even more confusing when we realize this servant girl was a slave.

2. She had been captured by Naaman's army and made the personal property of the commander.

3. If anyone had the right to hate someone, it was her.

a. She had no other rights or privileges:

a. She would not likely marry.

b. Not likely have children.

c. She would work for Naaman, and probably for his wife and kids, until her last days.

d. She had to serve, but she didn't have to like it.

b. She had the right to hate.

B. Yet, she interceded for her master.

1. What a servant!!!!!!

2. Though she was a prisoner and slave, notice her response:

³"If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his skin disease."

C. This kind of faith and honor was rare during these times.

1. Jesus said this about the days of 1 & 2 Kings:

Luke 4:27-28 (CSB)

²⁷ And in the prophet Elisha's time, there were many in Israel who had leprosy, and yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

²⁸ When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged.

2. It was rare during this time to see the kind of honor and hospitality we saw in the life of the Shunamite.

3. It was rare to see the kind of faith we are witnessing in this servant girl.

4. Yet, these anonymous people were bold examples of righteousness in a wicked culture.

D. Are you Christlike in ungodly situations?

1. Does your environment determine the kind of Christian you are?

a. Environment is essential.

b. Yet, my faithfulness to the Lord and righteousness should not be determined by my situation.

2. Are you willing to do what is right, even for the people who have imprisoned you?

a. Are you interceding for those who have hurt you?

b. If you had the opportunity to point them to the healer, would you?

3. These sorts of things don't make sense.

a. And I feel obligated to say that I'm not encouraging you to stay in abusive relationships, nor does forgiveness mean reconciliation.

b. Jesus is calling all of us to a standard that is far above the standards of our world.

c. To bless those who curse you, and to pray for those who harm you.

1. To honor when honor feels foreign.

2. To show people mercy and grace when it would be reasonable to stay quiet in the background.

The actions of this servant girl do not make sense, yet she serves as a powerful example of honor, faith, grace and mercy.

What happens next doesn't make sense either.

2. Kings that aren't in control.

⁵Therefore, the king of Aram said, "Go, and I will send a letter with you to the king of Israel."

So he went and took with him 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing. ⁶He brought the letter to the king of Israel, and it read:

When this letter comes to you, note that I have sent you my servant Naaman for you to cure him of his skin disease.

⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and asked, "Am I God, killing and giving life, that this man expects me to cure a man of his skin disease? Recognize that he is only picking a fight with me."

A. The King of Aram and the King of Israel are bitter enemies.

1. They do not get along, and they won't get along.
2. They are bitter enemies.

B. For a moment, the King of Aram lowers his pride for the sake of his commander.

1. Notice how important and valued Naaman was:
2. Verse 1: Naaman, commander of the army for the king of Aram, was a man important to his master and highly regarded because through him, the LORD had given victory to Aram.
3. Naaman was successful because the God of Israel was with him, and God used him against the sinful people of Israel.
4. The King of Aram, for the sake of his servant, reached out to the enemy king for healing.
 - a. It would be like if Putin sent his leading general and a lot of money to Zelensky so that the general could be healed.
 - b. The situation does not make sense.

C. Am I God?

1. The King of Israel thinks it's a trap.
 - a. The King of Aram was legitimately concerned for his commander.
 - b. The King of Aram was seeking help from the wrong place.
2. Am I God, killing and giving life?
 - a. How often had this king made life and death decisions?
 - b. How often had he acted like he was a god, and now he confesses he is powerless.
3. Kings seek out kings to solve their problems.
 - a. Kings are used to being in charge, making things happen, and acting like gods.
 - b. Until they came to a situation that they were powerless to fix.
 - c. Do we not do the same!
 1. We act like kings and even like gods!
 2. We are in control of our destiny; our future lies wide open before us.
 3. We are our own masters.
4. Then tragedy happens.
 - a. The kid gets sick.
 - b. We lose our job.
 - c. Anxiety and depression descend from out of nowhere.
 - d. And we realize that we are neither god nor king.
5. In these moments we begin to learn this truth:
 - D. When we seek deliverance, healing, provision, or wisdom from outside of God's authority we fall short.

1. This echoes the words of Jehosaphat: Isn't there a prophet in Israel?

a. Is there not a God still at work in Israel?

b. Is not the same God we read about in the Gospels and Acts the same God today?

2. When we do not know God or honor God, we don't look for God.

a. We look everywhere else, to anything else, except Him.

b. It's like a kid who doesn't honor and respect his father:

1. The kid will not seek help from a person he doesn't honor and respect.

2. The kid will ask teachers, friends, internet personalities and anyone else, but they won't seek out someone they don't know or don't respect.

3. King Aram didn't know the God of Israel.

4. King of Israel didn't honor the God of Israel.

5. Therefore, neither sought the Lord.

c. And the person who was set up to suffer was Naaman.

E. Kings cannot do the prophet's job.

1. When Elisha heard this, Verse 8, he told the king to send Naaman to him.

2. This was always the answer.

a. Where did the servant girl say Naaman needed to go?

b. Go to the prophet, not the king.

c. When God tells us to go to the prophet, and we go to the king instead, we leave disappointed and unchanged.

d. The power to heal was not with the king but with the prophet.

3. Where do you go when you need what only God can provide?

- a. Doctors are great, but they have limitations.
 - b. There is wisdom in a multitude of counselors, but the counselor is not a substitute for the wisdom of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Are you asking others to fulfill roles they were not designed or anointed for?
4. What seems right to us might be wrong in the Kingdom.
- a. The King of Aram assumed the King of Israel had the power to heal.
 - b. The answer wasn't with the king but with the Lord's messenger.
 - c. Sometimes the people God uses don't make sense, and oftentimes the process doesn't make sense either.

3. The process doesn't make sense. Vs 12

¹⁰Then Elisha sent him a messenger, who said, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan and your skin will be restored and you will be clean."

¹¹But Naaman got angry and left, saying, "I was telling myself: He will surely come out, stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the skin disease. ¹²Aren't Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and left in a rage.

¹³But his servants approached and said to him, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more should you do it when he only tells you, 'Wash and be clean'?" ¹⁴So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the command of the man of God. Then his skin was restored and became like the skin of a small boy, and he was clean.

A. Naaman wasn't surprised that God would heal him through the prophet.

1. He was surprised by the process.
2. Naaman had a preconceived idea.

- a. Elisha would wave his hands and say a prayer and the healing would come.
- b. But Elisha said Go to the Jordan and dip yourself seven times in the water.
- c. Then the healing would come.

B. Why?

- 1. The healing wasn't in the waters but in the obedience.
- 2. The power wasn't in the water; it was in the honor.
- 3. The Jordan was an ugly river.
 - a. It would be like if you left the beautiful waters of the Current to baptize in the Missouri River.
 - b. Isn't our water better, nicer, and cleaner?
- 4. It was never about the water, it was about the honor.
 - a. Where honor is absent, so is faith.
 - b. God uses unusual processes to test and reveal our hearts.
 - c. Nothing exposes our heart faster than unrealized expectations.

C. Vs.11 is indicative of the wrong response:

- 1. Naaman got angry... because the process didn't align with his expectations.
- 2. We get angry with God when the process doesn't align with our expectations.
 - a. Often when I pray, I love to tell God how he can do things.
 - b. I love to suggest to Him ways to fix the very problems I'm praying about.
 - c. God rarely takes my suggestion.
- 3. The process displays my true thoughts about God.

- a. Do I really think He is good?
- b. Do I trust God, even though He tells me to do something that doesn't make sense?
- c. Is my hope in the Lord, or is it in the waters?
- d. Is the Jesus in the boat more powerful than the waves crashing the outside of the boat?
- e. Is the Spirit that is within me greater than the spirits that are out there?

D. Why did Naaman have to dip seven times?

- 1. The text doesn't clearly say.
- 2. But I think it has to do with obedience and clarity.
- 3. Would Naaman be obedient through the process?
- 4. Would Naaman have any doubt about who healed Him?

E. The healing didn't happen in the first act of obedience.

- 1. If he had quit at #2, he wouldn't have been obedient.
- 2. If he had quit at #6, he wouldn't have been obedient.
- 3. The healing came as Naaman proclaimed: Do it again!

4. The healing came as Naaman clung to the Word of the Lord and the process of the Lord.

4. The Result is Worship

¹⁵Then Naaman and his whole company went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, "I know there's no God in the whole world except in Israel. Therefore, please accept a gift from your servant."

¹⁶But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, in whose presence I stand, I will not accept it." Naaman urged him to accept it, but he refused.

¹⁷Naaman responded, "If not, please let your servant be given as much soil as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will no longer offer a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but the LORD. ¹⁸However, in a

particular matter may the LORD pardon your servant: When my master, the king of Aram, goes into the temple of Rimmon to bow in worship while he is leaning on my arm, and I have to bow in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant in this matter.”

¹⁹ So he said to him, “Go in peace.”

A. What is the greatest result of this miracle?

1. It isn't the healing of Naaman.
2. It's the worship of God in Israel and in a foreign land.
3. The result is that God was glorified.
4. The same with the Shunamite: the result was that she glorified God AND the boy lived.

B. If God brings you through the journey, and it doesn't end in worship, then the journey wasn't worth it.

1. The process must end with the right worship. Vs 15

2. Being obedient throughout the process but failing to worship God at the end means failing the process.

C. Notice this story from Jesus' ministry:

Luke 17:11–19 (CSB)

¹¹ While traveling to Jerusalem, he passed between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a village, ten men with leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

¹⁴ When he saw them, he told them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And while they were going, they were cleansed.

¹⁵ But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud voice, gave glory to God. ¹⁶ He fell facedown at his feet, thanking him. And he was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Then Jesus said, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Didn't any return to give glory to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ And he told him, “Get up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.”

1. All then were cleansed and received the miracle.
2. But only one gave Jesus praise and was rewarded for his faith.
3. And he was a Samaritan, a foreigner!

D. **The world shouldn't worship faster than the People of God.**

1. Unfortunately, the people of God are often the slowest to give glory to God.
2. It was true in the days of the Israelites and the Pharisees.
3. It feels true today.
4. Are you as quick to worship as you are to complain?

5. Lastly, You can't buy a gift.

¹⁵Then Naaman and his whole company went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, "I know there's no God in the whole world except in Israel. Therefore, please accept a gift from your servant."

¹⁶But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, in whose presence I stand, I will not accept it." Naaman urged him to accept it, but he refused.

A. Naaman wanted to honor the man of God, paying him for the healing he had received.

1. But Elisha would not accept the gift.
2. The anointing, the gift, cannot be bought and needs no external reward.

B. Elisha responded, "As the Lord lives, in whose presence I stand...."

1. What a bold statement of understanding.
2. Elisha valued His position with the Lord more highly than the gifts of foreign kings.
3. The heart of Naaman was pure, but the gift was purer.

C. **God's gifts are received, not earned.**

1. Naaman would have felt better if he could have paid Elisha or at least honored him in this way.

2. But the gifts of God are never earned.

D. I haven't earned:

1. The salvation God has given me.

2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts are not given by merit but by grace.

3. Someday, I'll enter a place prepared for me out of the abundance of God's love and unmerited favor.

E. What about obedience and faith?

1. Obedience and faith are my response to the gifts of God.

2. Obedience and faith are components of my worship; the praise in the process.

What do I do when the Process doesn't make sense?

A. If you know it's God, then you must obey.

1. If you are uncertain, take time to discern God's will.

2. Pray, fast, seek wisdom from multiple counselors.

3. But if you know what God is telling you to do, even if it doesn't make sense, you must obey.

4. Don't be like Jonah, who ran from the clear voice of God.

5. Don't be like Naaman, who resisted the clear direction to dip himself in the Jordan.

6. **Delayed obedience is disobedience.**

B. Remember, it isn't about you.

1. Naaman came to Israel because he was sick.

2. He went to Elisha to be healed.

3. He washed in the Jordan to be cleansed.
4. He went back to Aram to worship God.
5. Remember that the most important result of any miracle is that God is glorified.

C. Build Altars wherever you are.

1. That is what Naaman did!
2. He took some dirt from the land so he could build an altar in the land of the enemy.
3. Wherever you are, worship.

D. This morning, I encourage us to continue praising God, even while going through the process.