

GOD HEALS

2 KINGS 5:1-14

(Prepared by Gene Thompson)

1. What is the most overwhelming situation you have personally faced? (Some possible responses: it could come in almost any area of life but the death of a loved one or a serious illness would rank up near the top.)
2. How do illnesses affect our families? (Our routine of life changes; our priorities change drastically; we realize what is really important; etc.)
3. What emotions do we feel when we, or someone we love, is diagnosed with a serious illness? (Helpless; discouraged; thankful we have a Heavenly Father who loves and cares for us.)
4. What is the most common medical advice people ignore?
5. What excuses might a person give for ignoring their doctor's advice?

All of us are deeply affected at some time by a serious illness. We struggle with questions of why won't God heal this or what can I do to help or where can we go to get help? A catastrophic disease or some other permanent affliction can drive any of us to take extreme measures seeking a solution. We may go to conventional doctors, to chiropractors, to acupuncture practitioners, to faith healers, or to foreign doctors who offer experimental drugs. We sincerely pledge that we will do anything and expend any amount of money for a cure. But often one thing is lacking: faith in the grace of God.

Today we turn our attention to Elisha, the prophet who succeeded Elijah. As we examine the Scripture, look for ways that faith and following God's instructions are connected.

Faith is seen through obedience but God brings the healing.

(Note: It is NOT God's will for everyone to recover from severe illnesses. The mystery about who is healed and who isn't is in God's perfect plan.)

DESPERATE! Read 2 Kings 5:1-6

1. What do we learn about Naaman in these verses? (He was the commander or general of the Aram army; seemed to be a personal favorite to the king; a brave warrior and had led troops to many victories; notice the **LORD** had used him to bring about victories for Aram. **BUT** he was a leper! See Luke 4:27.)
2. What do we know about this Israelite girl? (She was a captured slave, but she had compassion and knowledge of a prophet.)

This slave girl had good reasons for disliking Naaman. Yet she showed mercy and compassion for him.

3. What indications do we see here that Naaman was desperate? (He most likely had tried every other known cure. He was willing to humble himself.)
4. How hard might it have been for Naaman to accept help? (He was a successful and respected warrior.)
5. What are some barriers that could have prevented Naaman from going to Israel? (Pride, fear, unbelief, etc.)
6. What diseases or physical difficulties fill people with dread, even today? (Cancer; dementia; brain diseases that slowly take one's strength.)
7. How do these illnesses of today compare to the skin disease of Naaman? (There was no known cure.) Naaman would have been desperate to find relief, not only because of the medical challenges but also because it caused him to be socially isolated. So, how desperate was Naaman for a cure? He was willing to take the word of someone who was a captured refugee, a young female servant, and a God-fearing Hebrew. Under any other circumstance, even one of these attributes would have caused Naaman to reject her advice. A servant girl and a king were both instrumental in moving Naaman toward the help he needed.
8. How does God use relationships to offer hope in the most desperate of times?

God used a servant girl's faith to draw Naaman closer to Him. **Naaman was about to receive two kinds of healing: physical and spiritual.** When we encounter God we always get much more than we bargained for!

DIRECTED! Read 2 Kings 5:7-10

1. How did King Jehoram interpret the letter Naaman brought? (He thought Aram's king was trying to find a reason to go to war with Israel.)
2. How can we remain kindhearted when our actions are misinterpreted? (We need to think the best of people, not the worst until proven differently.)
3. Who came to the rescue? (Elisha, the man of God, stepped in as the voice of faith and reason.)
4. How did Naaman approach Elisha's house? (Horses and chariots. This was no small group from Aram.)
5. What surprises you about Elisha's actions? (He sent out his servant to Naaman with a message as to what to do.)
6. What does the contrast between how the king of Israel and Elisha responded reveal about their trust in God? (The King thought immediately about what he could do not what God could do. Elisha knew what God could do and believed He would.)

Elisha had bold confidence based on his faith in God. He sent instructions for Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River.

DISAPPOINTED! Read 2 Kings 5:11-12

1. How often does God work the way you pictured it in your mind? (Almost never! His thoughts and ways are so much higher than ours we are incapable of thinking like Him.)
2. How can our preconceptions about how God ought to work hinder us from receiving what the Lord has for us? (We may be so caught up in ourselves that we don't even recognize it when God does act.)
3. How does real faith typically display itself in action? (Faith is demonstrated through our obedience. "Faith is the substance of things not seen!"—Heb. 11:1)

Faith is obedience beyond reason.

4. How does pride stand in the way of obedience? (When we think our solution is better than God's solution we may miss a miracle and certainly will miss God's best for us.)

Feeling insulted and angry, Naaman left Elisha's house, ignoring Elisha's instructions that would bring him healing.

DELIVERED! Read 2 Kings 5:13-14

If you are disappointed because your expectations have not been met, check your pride and follow God's plan.

1. What do these verses reveal about Naaman's servant? (He had courage to speak up like he did.)
2. What do these verses reveal to us about Naaman? (As a strong leader, he had surrounded himself with individuals who could speak up and disagree with him, and his inner circle provided good counsel. He was a humble man in this situation and listened to reason.)
3. What is the relationship between following God's simplest of instructions and faith? (We demonstrate our faith in God by following His instructions. God acts when we are obedient.)
4. What does following God's instructions say to us about how we should live our lives? (His instructions are simple but we stubbornly choose our own way.)
5. When Naaman humbled himself and followed Elisha's instructions what happened? (He dipped himself not once, not twice, not three times...but seven times before he was healed.)

God requires complete obedience.

As soon as Naaman was healed, he led everyone with him to see Elisha declaring, "I know there's no God in the whole world except in Israel." God used a sick body to heal a sin sick heart!

One writer says: "Faith in the face of fiery trials is the fruit of humility."

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE!

- God uses relationships to bring about His purposes.
 - Believers can view challenges as divine opportunities to demonstrate God's character.
 - Pride gets in the way of experiencing God's help.
 - Healing awaits those who are obedient to God's directions.
1. What can we say or do to show compassion in ways that honor God and respect people? Jesus is our model of compassion.
 2. Think about times when God turned a trial into a blessing in your life. How can you build on that experience as you face future challenges?

Pray, thanking the Lord that He is a God who heals in this life temporarily and completely in eternity.