



Resource Centre

From our Churches

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Naaman **A Monologue**

2 Kings 5:1-19

(Naaman puts on his camouflage/military jacket. His back is to the audience.)

(Faces the audience.) I've been a leper much of my life. Tested positive. Years ago. Chronic condition. Painful. Potentially life-threatening.

I'm an Aramean. You can probably tell by my skin colour, my accent. I'm certainly not an Israelite. Not a Jew. The only times I've been in Israel were on military invasions. We're arch enemies; Arameans and Hebrews. I couldn't tell you how many times we've attacked them. You know they have this strategic spit of land along the Mediterranean...

My name is Naaman. Yeah, you've heard of me? I'm a first-rank commander in the Aramean army. Chief of Defense. I only take orders from the king. And then not always. As his top warrior, I have free reign in battle. He knows that my success is his success...

But I've been a leper much of my life. Painful.

My God had no mercy on me. Things got worse instead of better. I lost my will, my drive, my... I'd wish to die in battle than live with the disease. I even contemplated suicide.

Yeah, I was desperate, so desperate I listened to the advice of my Hebrew slave girl. Imagine, me entertaining the opinion of my mistress' nanny, my own subject and prisoner-of-war. Of course, by then I had turned everywhere else...

The Israelite girl suggested I see a prophet from her country. I laughed, of course. A religious magician? On enemy soil? Then I cried. Well, not bitterly, but as much as a warrior can cry. To my own surprise, I took her word and went, still wanting to live. I took down the address of Elisha, this holy man, and I traveled to Israel. For healing. The irony still shocks me.

My slave girl had briefed me on the man, so to find him wearing a shoddy loin cloth, lying in a bare hut in a desolate valley was not a total surprise, though it was still rather shocking. It was certainly not a meeting of equals. Not that I expected the red carpet or royal gun salute, but I did feel over dressed with my military insignia and emblems and all. His poorly clad messenger, who greeted me, was unarmed.

I don't know if it was my stately convoy of horses and chariots, or his fear that we had again invaded, but the holy man ordered me to promptly leave his premises. The nerve of a half-dressed monk! I don't travel to Israel for nothing. I'm a first-rank commanding Aramean officer!

"Don't come to me for healing," this Elisha man told me. "Wash in the muddy, murky waters of the Jordan River." A ridiculous suggestion. You'd think for me he'd have come out of his hut, wave his arm and cure my disease. I was even willing to pay him any expenses up front, but apparently they don't have a two-tiered medical system like we do. Bathe in the Jordan? That was a hard pill to swallow. I could think of other places to wash. Cleaner water. The rivers of my homeland.

(Takes off jacket.) Dip seven times. Humiliating. Threatening. Lower oneself into enemy waters. Trust an opponent. Strip your clothes, your emblems, your rank. Stand naked, and dunk, once, twice, seven times. *(Drops jacket.)*

I emerged from the water a new man. Healed. Whole. Mud on my face, sure, but no pain. No illness. No leprosy. Healed by the God of Israel. A God unlike my own. A God I found in the other's river.