

The scripture assigned for this Sunday includes a passage from the book of 2 Kings. Rather than having the liturgist read it, I thought I'd tell you the story myself. So here we go...

A long time ago, there was a mighty warrior named Naaman. He commanded a powerful army and was admired for his bravery—even by the king of Aram, his homeland. But Naaman carried a hidden burden: he had a painful skin disease. And no one knew how to help him.

In Naaman's household there lived a young girl from Israel. She had been taken from her home and made a servant of Naaman's wife. Far from her family, she still trusted Yahweh—and remembered the prophet Elisha, who lived back in her homeland. One day she said to her mistress, "If only Naaman could see the prophet in Israel—I know he could be healed."

Naaman's wife shared what the servant girl had said with her husband. He was surprised—and intrigued, and he wondered if the girl could be right. So, Naaman went to the king of Aram, who wrote a letter to the king of Israel asking for help on Naaman's behalf.

When the king of Israel read the letter, he panicked. "Am I God, to heal a man?" he cried, tearing his royal robes in fear, convinced it must be a trap. But the prophet Elisha heard about the letter and sent a calm reply: "Don't be afraid. Send Naaman to me, and he will see there is a prophet in Israel."

When Naaman arrived at Elisha's house, Elisha didn't greet him in person. Instead, he sent his servant with a message: "Go wash in the Jordan River seven times, and your flesh will be restored." Naaman was furious. "I thought the prophet would come out, wave his hands, say something powerful, and cure me!" he scoffed. "Why would I wash in that muddy little stream? Aren't the rivers back home better?" Offended, he turned away in anger.

Then some of his servants—likely not much older than the young girl—approached him gently. "Master," they said, "if the prophet had asked you to do something difficult, wouldn't you have tried it? So why not try something simple?"

Naaman paused. He took a breath. And then—this man of status, used to giving orders—walked down to the river. And I imagine that as he stepped

into that muddy water something in him started to loosen. Something in him began to let go.

Seven times he dipped beneath the surface. And when he emerged, scripture says his skin was restored. But more than that—he was different inside. Humbled. Grateful. Changed. He went back to Elisha and said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel.”

His decision to step into that river reminds me of a song by the folk duo MaMuse, who sing of surrender not as a defeat, but as a beginning. The lyrics go like this:

I'm gonna dunk down, down into the river,
Gonna dunk down, all the way down, singin'...
Oh Lord, here I go letting go...

River, river, free and wild,
All these knots are comin' untied.
River, river, you humble me—
Here I come, come wash me clean.

That's the journey, isn't it? Whether we come in search of healing, direction, or peace, sometimes the transformation begins not with certainty, but with surrender. With letting go. With stepping into something that feels as small and muddy as a river—and discovering that God is already there, ready to wash us clean.

I wonder what stands out to you in this story? Maybe it's the miracle itself—the unexpected, restorative grace of God. Maybe you were surprised by Naaman's sense of entitlement—his anger that healing didn't come with spectacle or fanfare. Or Elisha's quiet confidence—he doesn't chase Naaman down or try to impress him, he simply offers the truth and lets it stand.

What strikes me the most is the wisdom of the young people. Their voices become the turning point. A child, enslaved and far from home, speaks with compassion. Another servant urges Naaman to take a simple step toward healing. The people with the least power become the ones who see clearly and speak boldly—and because they do, Naaman finds his way.

That's where this story connects with our Christian scripture today from Galatians 6. The young girl and the servants live out the very spirit Paul describes: restoring with gentleness, bearing another's burden, resisting pride, doing what is right without growing weary. Their humility becomes the vessel through which God's healing flows.

It's astonishing, really. The young girl, though captive, chooses hope over bitterness. She doesn't withhold what she knows; she simply points the way. And the servant, facing a furious commander, speaks respectfully and wisely, helping Naaman see more clearly. Both risk their own safety to serve someone who holds power over them. They embody the Spirit's work: to restore, to guide, and to heal. Meanwhile, Naaman is the embodiment of Paul's warning: "those who are nothing, yet think they are something." His pride clouds his vision. But, it's the gentle, faithful actions of the brave servants that clear the way for grace. The Realm of God draws near—not through force, but through a willingness to speak and to listen.

So I wonder: what lesson in this story feels most true for you? Are you someone who needs to listen differently—especially to voices you might usually overlook? Or are you someone who carries hidden wisdom; someone who needs to speak truth even if it's risky?

Maybe, you're simply longing for healing—in your body, your mind, your relationships, or the world—and this story reminds you to make space for grace. Because healing doesn't always come in the way we expect. It may arrive quietly, through unexpected people, asking something simple of us. Asking us to dunk down into the healing waters of God's grace.

God does not impose. God offers. And waits. And always, the invitation is the same: to make space for the holy, to listen deeply, to speak boldly and to respond with trust. May we welcome that invitation with open hearts. Amen.