



Near and Now

When I am Called in the Ordinary – Slave of Naaman’s Wife

By Amanda McVann

Warm-up Question

When has healing come from the most unexpected of places?

A walk around the neighborhood that leads to an unexpected, encouraging conversation; a bath after a long week that cleanses more than the body, but also the soul.



Photo by Gage Walker on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

She said to her mistress

Read [II Kings 5:1-19](#)

Bible Story Reflection

Naaman is a man of esteem, prestige, and privilege as an army commander of the king of Aram and as a respected, mighty warrior. However, these accolades do not prevent him from suffering from the pain and shame of leprosy – a skin condition that withers the skin and can be debilitating. After another successful raid by his army, an Israelite girl is enslaved and given over to Naaman's wife as her servant girl. She remarks how Naaman may be healed but only if he placed his trust in the words of a man who honored God: the prophet Elisha.

When he came to Elisha's house, Naaman brought along with him all the gifts and grandeur worthy of someone of his station. However, Elisha humbly sent out a messenger with a simple command: "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times." After all his travels and grand gestures to merely receive such a simple request, Naaman was incensed at the suggestion that his healing was something as simple as bathing – a ritual practice he has no doubt done many times before to no avail. "What good can possibly come of this? Surely there are better, greater rivers to bathe in than the common Jordan?" But just as he was determined to leave and walk away, Naaman's servants spoke up and encouraged him to *try* – and when he did his life changed.

Despite most of the passage focusing on Naaman and his renown, nothing would have been possible if not for the courage of a few ordinary individuals found at the margins of the page: an enslaved Israelite girl and a handful of servants. Their social status was honored rather than dismissed by Naaman, a man of great honor and respect, who listened to their guidance, became healed, and pledged his loyalty to serving not just any king but the King of Kings.

It can often feel as though our roles in life are insignificant or overlooked, but nothing is ever wasted or in vain to God. Whether it be our skills and talents, our specific roles or vocation, or our innermost yearnings, God sees, knows, and values all of it. Even when we are called to extend grace towards others – especially those who've wronged us – God honors our strength to forgive. For God is capable of turning hardened hearts of stone into flesh and healing the deepest of wounds with love.

Discussion Questions

1. What aspects of Naaman do you connect with?
2. How does knowing Naaman suffers from leprosy affect your view of him?
3. Why did the Israelite girl share how Naaman could be healed? Why did she help an enemy?
4. Why did Elisha not go out to meet with Naaman?
5. Why must Naaman bathe in the Jordan River versus other rivers? What is significant about the Jordan River?
6. When you think of water, what words, feelings, or images come to mind?
7. When do you feel most refreshed and renewed? What changes do you see in yourself afterwards?
8. Why did Naaman's servants encourage him to still obey Elisha?
9. When has trusting God felt the most improbable or difficult for you?
10. How might we serve God in places or in circumstances where that is discouraged?

Activity Suggestions

Think of someone who you are praying for to pursue a transformative relationship with God. Take a few moments to pray over their lives and that God would encounter them in a personal way.

Write a letter to someone who's wronged you. Explain why what they've done has hurt you, why you can or cannot forgive them, and then end it with a prayer for yourself and the other person.

Remember a time when you were waiting in a season for a change. Draw what that season felt like and then what it felt like once it passed.

Prayer Concerns

Those waiting to be healed from disease or chronic illness that persists; those waiting to hear from God in a season of disappointment; those waiting for their lives to turn around and be renewed.

Closing Prayer

Help me, O God, to see the ways that I can serve you the ordinary experiences of my life today. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

