

Intro: Difficult time, cold bed. Purchased electric blanket. “Pre-heat” and toast. Ahhh. Warm bed, life is well. BUT, shorter and cold spot. It was all perfect, and then my feet hit it.

Need: No one’s life goes 100% to plan. No secret that life doesn’t always work out as planned. We have to deal with unmet expectations. Wanted something as a child or spouse. mail order catalogs – LL Bean. Mail. Life. Prayer. The question isn’t will God ever move in an unexpected way, but how will we respond when He does?

Preview: We’re going to look at Naaman the Syrian in 2 Kings 5. Notecard report on Naaman? One of only a few guys mentioned in OT and NT.

Question: How do we respond when God does the unexpected. **PRAY**

I. It’s easy for us to feel that God owes us something (*Ind.*) (1-6)

****READ 1-6...**something should leap out at you. He has influence. He has leverage. *Unnamed advantage over people.* He can exert force in situations because of who he is.

A. Naaman was a great and mighty warrior (1)

1. History. We’re never told directly who the king is but most think it’s Joram (Jehorem) (most of Elisha’s ministry). 2nd son of Ahab-Jezebel.

a. End 1 Kings, Ahab dies in battle at the hands of armies of king of Aram, Ben-Hadad II.

b. Probably Naaman who leads this. National hero. *strong resume – Tom Brady 9-23-2001, second year, Jets, 3 superbows, 2 MVPs.*

2. In fact, the text states that he was greatly honored by the king of Aram (Lifted up his face – bow before king, tell you to rise or would step down from throne and lift you up himself.)

B. He was extremely wealthy given amount of money he had access to. (5b)

1. Silver: 340kg (+750lbs), 1 talent=3000shekels. Average wage was 10sh/yr. That means that just in silver he brought 3000years of wages.

2. Gold: 70kg (I weigh 75kg), 1shekel=1 ton of grain. Enough for 6000 tons of grain.

3. Clothing. Most people only had 1 or 2 changes of clothes their whole lives. He brings 10.

C. He had very powerful friends (4, 5a, 6)

1. King of Aram was the fellow who bestowed so much honor on him. He had just whipped Israel, presumably other nations as well. Truly a very powerful man of his time.

2. Host of people needed in transport as is alluded to later in the text. And necessary.

3. Military escort needed to transport such wealth. *Irish armored trucks accompanied by gun-wielding soldiers. I wouldn’t rob them.*

4. Letter from king (4, 5a, 6). NOT someone you want to mess with.

5. Do you think Naaman went to Israel with some expectations? Do you think he planned on returning to Syria with leprosy? Not at all. He expected service with a smile. *Mandy and I in Aspen at same hotel as Arnold Swarchzenegger. I asked for things, had bags carried, etc. and I expected it to be done because of my “position” even though it was fake.*

NAAMAN WAS THE REAL DEAL.

D. We’re not as rich or powerful as Naaman, but we bring our lists to God just the same.

1. We bring expectations just the same based on our accolades. We recount what we’ve done for God in the hopes that He will feel obliged to do our bidding. *Me as a child, mom, toy in store based on my good behavior...I deserved it.*

2. Like Naaman, we expect God to move in a certain way bc of “leverage” we feel we bring.

II. When it comes to God moving, He has all the leverage and cannot be manipulated (*Ind.*) (7-12)

******* How do you think the King of Israel will respond? **READ 7-8...**scared stiff. Picking fight

A. God is no respecter of persons (*Develop Inductively at end of 3*) (7-9)

1. Tearing of clothes was the epitome of emotional suffering and anguish

2. Irony of Joram’s response in 7-8. Back to 2-3. Servant girl captured in battle who believes that God is able to heal Naaman and the very King of Israel does not.

3. Elisha’s response (8). God isn’t impressed with this powerful man...he is just a man, an insignificant fly that God could dust off in a moment. *End of Job.* Our accolades don’t give us any more leverage to manipulate God than did Naaman and his wealth and power.

B. So Naaman goes to see Elisha (10-12a)

1. *President at the door would you answer it? READ 10-12a and stop at 12a.* Elisha sends his servant. This is not what you do when someone of higher “rank” comes to see you. **BUT GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.**
2. Instructs him to dip in Jordan river. This is something that is very disgusting for someone of Naaman’s stature. The Jordan is not a very clean river. **GOD NO RESPECTER...**
3. Shatters Naaman’s expectations (**11**). Picture of fanfare and honor, but Elisha says here’s the terms...take it or leave it. **GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.**

C. God won’t always move the way we want Him to. He can do whatever He wants however He wants it...it’s His prerogative. No matter what...He has all the leverage.

1. Without looking at the text, how will Naaman respond? Faced with a choice. Will he humble himself and head to the Jordan, or will he go home...with his leprosy? (**12b**). He turns and leaves. **Story slows** here as it approaches climax (9-12). God didn’t move the way he wanted, so he left. *child & tantrum.*
2. We face same choice. Walk away in anger or humble ourselves and submit to His plan. Have you ever walked away in stubborn anger because you felt God owed you? Ever known someone who did? *Carrie walking away from faith bc of divorce. Taking the ball and going home.*

III. God’s blessing comes through humble submission to His plan and authority, not manipulation (*Ind. C*) (**13-15**)

***Story doesn’t end here for Naaman

- A. Servants intercede to him to use his brain and consider how simple the instructions of the prophet were (**13**). Naaman reasons that it’s better to humble himself before God and be cured of leprosy than to continue with the horrible disease.
- B. When he submits and dips, He is healed completely and becomes a worshipper (**14-15**)
 1. Not just restored to normal middle-age skin but the skin of a small boy...complete healing. *Infants’ skin so sensitive that you have to use special detergent so they don’t get a rash.* Now that’s what I call a healing!
 2. Note the response. He is a changed man. He worships Yahweh. In fact down in 17, he asks to take as much earth as 2 mules can carry so that he can bow on Yahweh’s soil back in Aram. *Again, note the irony,* now this Syrian gentile knows there is a God in Israel. In fact, Jesus mentions Naaman in **Luke 4** saying if there were a faithful Israelite in Elisha’s day, he would have healed him. Implication being that since Naaman was healed, there were none. This irritates the crowd Jesus is speaking to.
- C. We enjoy God’s blessing as we humbly submit to His plan and authority.
 1. God’s plan is supreme over ours. *Not a politician.* God won’t compete with us for priority. He loves us all as believers unconditionally, and we are secure. But His blessing and favor come to those who humbly submit to His plan for His glory’s sake.
 2. Key is belief that God’s way is best. If we don’t believe that God knows best, we will never submit to His plan. This was key for Naaman, and is key for us. His glory more important than my comfort. *Jobs, prayers, integrity*

Conc: Summarize points. Easy to believe our acts of obedience are like points that we can redeem for stuff from God. But that’s not how God works. He only blesses those who submit themselves to His plan, regardless of how it does or does not gel with ours. Next time tempted to walk away in anger, take out Bible, read text, remember how foolish you thought Naaman was in verse 12.

Image: Mandy and I in Ireland. Our job and God’s job. All for His glory. Maybe His purpose is different than we expect. I hope not, but maybe.

Final Word: God’s way is best way. What do we do when He doesn’t move the way we expect? Walk away or humbly submit? Will we turn away or follow. That’s what we have to live with.