


# Naaman: A Case Study on Faith

Part 2

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

2021.9.26



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Pastor Doug noted that "To meet God there has to be a change in your thinking. The Biblical term is repentance. To repent is to change your mind." (See **I.** in today's [Sermon Summary](#).) Encountering God is generally an attractive idea but repentance often is caricatured or ridiculed. Why do you think that is?

Why do you think that there is a necessary connection between repentance and meeting God?

How has your thinking about God changed over the years? How has it helped you encounter God?

- Pastor Doug noted that encountering God changes one's relationship with possessions (see **II.**). In Matthew 6:24, what relationship did Jesus say exists between possessions and God?

What is it about possessions that makes them the chief rival to God in our lives?

How have you seen your attitudes regarding possessions change as a result of encountering God?

- Which is harder for you: generosity with possessions or humbly serving others (see **III.**)? Why that?

- Naaman gave God the central place in every part of his life—and it could have cost him dearly (see **IV.**)! Read John 15:18–21. How has devotion to Jesus caused tension at home or at work?

Naaman devised a strategy for navigating relationships made difficult by his devotion to Yahweh. What strategies have you employed for minimizing friction with those who don't share your faith?

Tell about a situation in which you compromised your faith in order to avoid personal cost.

## Application-Challenge

What could help you act more faithfully in the future?

- Don't allow your suffering to sideline you. Forgive those who have hurt you.
- Point others to the God of grace who forgives and makes us part of his family.
- Look in faith to the ultimate suffering servant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

# Sermon Summary (Key Text: 2 Kings 5:2-3, 14-27)

Last week we met Naaman, an Syrian general, who sought—and found—salvation in the One True God. As we continue his story, we're going to learn that being religious and having a changed heart are not the same thing. Elisha's apprentice, Gehazi, was extremely religious—and is in stark contrast to Naaman. Naaman, with no accurate religious background, met God. Gehazi, with all of his religious training, missed God. Let's look at the **marks of someone who has met God**, using Naaman as our example.

**I. Naaman had a powerful change in his thinking that led to a change in trust** (v. 15). Had Naaman merely said, "Now I know *your* God is more powerful than *my* god," that wouldn't have indicated a huge change in his religious worldview, because everyone outside of Israel believed that there were many gods out there—some more powerful than others. This shift in thinking is a bigger miracle than his healing from leprosy! To meet God, there has to be a change in your thinking. The Biblical term is repentance. To repent is to change your mind; "I was trusting in this to save me, now I am trusting in the God of the Bible."

**II. Naaman had a new attitude toward earthly possessions** (v. 15b-16). Elisha wouldn't take his money before because it may have been a bribe; now Naaman urges him to take it in appreciation for the great gift God gave him. One of the marks of a person who has experienced the grace of God is a radical increase in their spirit of generosity (Luke 19:8).

**III. Naaman humbled himself and exhibited a servant-heart** (v. 15). Naaman was a man who was used to being served by others. For him to suddenly say, "I am your servant now," shows a fundamental change of heart (see Mark 10:45).

**IV. Naaman made God central to every part of his life** (v. 17-19). Naaman's strange request requires a bit of explaining. Naaman is going back to a land where a false god is worshipped—but now he exclusively worships Yahweh, the One True God. Back then, many believed that no god could be worshiped except in its own land or on an altar built with the dirt of that land—so back home he planned to build an altar to Yahweh on Yahweh's dirt! But he had another problem: Naaman knew that his king would also expect him to give at least token worship to Syria's false god. Naaman wanted to center his life on the God of Israel. He wasn't going to hide his new faith. No doubt, his cleansing from leprosy would provide for many God honoring conversations in the future. He was trying to find some work-faith balance. He wanted to honor God in all that he did, but he didn't know how to completely disassociate himself from the work-related trappings involving the national worship of this Syrian god. It would take great courage to worship the God of Israel in a pagan land like Syria. And it would require great wisdom to conduct his required work duties without the outward appearance of compromising his new faith. Elisha approved of Naaman's solution. We have that same challenge today: "being *in* the world, but not *of* it" (John 17:11, 14-15). How do we maintain our Christian testimony and values in a world that does not honor those values (Daniel 1:12-16)?

Elisha's servant, Gehazi, reveals the **marks of someone who missed God**.

**I. Gehazi was proud, while Naaman was humble** (v. 20). Gehazi appears of look down on Naaman because of his race, and in his mind, that gives him warrant to exploit him. Naaman displayed remarkable humility by coming to Israel—with whom they were at war—to seek healing (and to do so in a dinky river!). Then, after his healing, he identified himself as Elisha's servant. In contrast, Gehazi, a prophet in training, proudly looked down on Naaman and sought to exploit him.

**II. The grace of God makes you a better person—but religion can make you a worse person than if you had no religion at all!** Many people have incredibly ugly souls. They're cruel, shallow, nasty people. Sometimes people with incredibly ugly souls have unbelievably beautiful, healthy bodies. There are a lot of people like that. On the other hand, there are many beautiful souls, many loving spirits inside people who have broken, disfigured, or just unattractive bodies. I think that Gehazi getting leprosy simply is God putting the world right. In just one instance, God is revealing on the outside what is inside of Gehazi. It was a just punishment. There are a lot of "Gehazis" in our churches today (Matthew 7:21-23).

So, how can we be sure to meet God and not miss him? **The hero of this story—a young Jewish slave girl**—shows us how (v. 2-3). She had so many strikes against her: she's the wrong race (an Israelite, living in Syria); she's a slave (no money, no rights); she's a young woman in a patriarchal society that venerated age. She's at the very bottom; her whole life has been robbed. And her master, Naaman—the supreme military commander of Syria—was responsible for her dead-end life. It would have been so easy to be bitter and vindictive. Instead her heart is full of compassion. How can this be? The answer can only be "costly forgiveness." She forgave her captors from her heart; this suffering servant pointed Naaman to God. How do we meet God rather than miss him? Jesus—the ultimate suffering servant—said as he hung on the cross: "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing." (Isaiah 53) Don't allow your suffering to sideline you. Like this little girl forgive those who have hurt you. Like this little girl, point others to a God of grace who wants to forgive them and make them part of his family. Allow this suffering servant girl to point you to the ultimate suffering servant, the Lord Jesus.

**"Five Question Bible Study"** (see page below) *is a simple way to study any topic. We can use it to learn five ways to meet with God...*

**Monday**—Read Romans 10:17. What "chain of events" results in faith?

**Tuesday**—Read Revelation 1:3. What is promised to those who "read and heed"?

**Wednesday**—Read Acts 17:11. What earns a person the title of "noble-minded"?

**Thursday**—Read Psalm 119:11. How exactly could you "treasure God's Word in your heart"?

**Friday**—Read Psalm 1:2-3. What is the outcome of "delighting in and meditating on" God's Word?

**Saturday**—***In preparation for worshipping the risen Lord with your church family,***  
read **1 Peter 1:13-25.**



**THIS SATURDAY!**

**LAST CALL!!!**

## **PointMan** Breakfast at the fire pit!

- Saturday, October 2
- 9<sup>00</sup>-10<sup>30</sup>am
- Just \$10
- Bring a camp chair
- Chick-fil-a breakfast (gluten free option available)
- To register: **tcc.org** Keyword: **firepit**

