**2 Kings 5:1-14 (ESV)**

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. **2** Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman’s wife. **3** She said to her mistress, “Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” **4** So Naaman went in and told his lord, “Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel.” **5** And the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.” So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. **6** And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.” **7** And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me.” **8** But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel.” **9** So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha’s house. **10** And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.” **11** But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, “Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. **12** Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage. **13** But his servants came near and said to him, “My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” **14** So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

**“No Need For Dramatics”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. Our society runs on dramatics from what makes good news, to blockbuster hits, to buying that Valentine she is sure to love. Having to live in this supercharged culture of excitement has consequences. It has led to downplaying daily life into being a chore. It has marginalized the meaning of marriage between a man and a woman. It has made many forget about the purpose of Church. Dull and boring are typical words people use not merely about God’s Word, but also for their jobs and even families. Dramatics has undone, or at least covered up, the ordinary blessings God already gives us in a sinful world.

Having the account of Namaan healed from leprosy helps to deal with the hyperactive life we also face today. It is strange that 2 Kings, a historical book about the Jewish nation, would show God’s love for someone on the outside. Matter a fact, Namaan was commander of the Syrian Army, the very nation that had suppressed Israel. Jesus referenced what this meant when He came as Savior. He said, “And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:27). There is a twofold benefit from our reading. It speaks hope to anyone caught up in life, like Namaan, to listen to God’s Word. Just as to abide in the Word is the greatest blessing we have in the Church, the new Israel. What God gives by His Word is salvation from a world full of dramatics.

Where the Syrian king sent Namaan with a letter and gobs of worldly goods, God just used a slave girl to proclaim salvation. She had every right to hate the mighty people of Syria. They had taken her away from the land of Israel and all that she called home. Justice would be to let Namaan remain enslaved to his leprosy just as she had this life unwanted of being a slave girl. Yet, these sinners did not harden her heart. She said to her mistress, “Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” It was in that moment, God used a young person to give hope to this hopeless adult. She put to shame all the bitterness and resentment any Israelite would have had against the Syrians. Instead of waging a war of silence, she spoke of the God who saves sinners.

The miracle of healing leprosy is amazing in Scripture, but antibiotics can simply take care of it today. Is there anything left once the glory of miracles goes somewhere else? Worse than leprosy, original sin is a disease enslaving humanity. It corrupts our flesh distorting life in this world and brings death. Our Lutheran Fathers say, “This damage is so unspeakable that it may not be recognized by a rational process, but only from God’s Word” (Tappert 467:9). Like Namaan, glory and success in this life cannot cover up the sinful nature. Only the baptized have the truth of what God reveals by Holy Scripture. Jesus speaks bluntly about our leprosy, but also of Him being the cure for sinners. There are plenty of reasons to be silent. Yet, like the slave girl, we have the greater blessing as the baptized in all circumstances. It is to make salvation known to those in a sinful world.

What the slave girl revealed of God’s love sent Namaan back to the country suppressed by the Syrians. Israel would have noticed the presence of the commander and the large procession that followed him. The king of Israel was beside himself after reading the letter. “…He tore his clothes and said, ‘Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me.” Unlike the slave girl, the king of Israel put on a scene. He did not speak of the prophet, but fell into despair and distrust. His kingship got in the way of how God worked for Israel by the authority of His Word. It is what made Elisha send the message declaring, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel.” Namaan did not need governance from men, but God’s Word of salvation for a man.

The glory of man, the praise of works, the power of leaders does not compare to Christ’s Word in His church. Of course, we have all fallen prey to denying the rightful place for such preaching. Like the king of Israel, we cry out in doubt against the Word. Yet, Jesus is greater than Elisha or any of the prophets. As the Word become flesh, He promises us confidence to confess His presence as Savior among a sinful world, even a church gone astray. The Son of God prays for His baptized. He says to the Father, “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:16-18). This is why Christ still calls and sends pastors out among His Church. St. Paul warned the Corinthians of bad communion practice and other problems against the Word. At the same time, the servant of Christ made his love evident, “…I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.”

The saving promise for Namaan was certainly hard to hear from the prophet Elisha. Not only was it degrading for a commander to wait outside the door. When he heard the cure for his Leprosy, it was too easy and modest to make any difference. So it is when anyone who hears the Word without repentance and faith to the God who saves sinners. Since there was no dramatics, Namaan became dramatic. He walked off in anger and it turned into rage. He said, “Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.” Thankfully, the servants he had were faithful and able to hear the Word. They protected this poor sinner from himself saying, ““My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” So he went and this mighty man of Syria saw the God of Israel deliver him from dramatics of life to trust His Word of life.

 Jesus deals with us the same way. There was nothing special with healing the leper in the Gospel reading. He just said, “I will; be clean.” It is no different from the pastor saying, “In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins.” What Jesus gives out of love is truly His body and blood for forgiveness of yours sins. The way God dealt with us by water in baptism is no less dramatic than His preaching and the administering of the sacrament. So where is the drama? Well, it is in our life as sinners. It is in Christ suffering and crying out from the cross judged on our behalf before God. St. Paul said, “But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).” This is what the servants of Christ say to anyone unimpressed by the way God works in a sinful world. These are the treasures hidden in the cross of Jesus our savior. He receives the glory and we get all the benefits of forgiveness, life, and salvation. What God gives by His Word saves us from a world full of dramatics. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with you hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting, Amen.