

Listening: 2 Kings 5:1-19 (MSG)

Naaman was general of the army under the king of Aram. He was important to his master, who held him in the highest esteem because it was by him that GOD had given victory to Aram: a truly great man, but afflicted with a grievous skin disease. It so happened that Aram, on one of its raiding expeditions against Israel, captured a young girl who became a maid to Naaman's wife. One day she said to her mistress, "Oh, if only my master could meet the prophet of Samaria, he would be healed of his skin disease."

Naaman went straight to his master and reported what the girl from Israel had said.

"Well then, go," said the king of Aram. "And I'll send a letter of introduction to the king of Israel."

So he went off, taking with him about 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothes.

Naaman delivered the letter to the king of Israel. The letter read, "When you get this letter, you'll know that I've personally sent my servant Naaman to you; heal him of his skin disease."

When the king of Israel read the letter, he was terribly upset, ripping his robe to pieces. He said, "Am I a god with the power to bring death or life that I get orders to heal this man from his disease? What's going on here? That king's trying to pick a fight, that's what!"

Elisha the man of God heard what had happened, that the king of Israel was so distressed that he'd ripped his robe to shreds. He sent word to the king, "Why are you so upset, ripping your robe like this? Send him to me so he'll learn that there's a prophet in Israel."

So Naaman with his horses and chariots arrived in style and stopped at Elisha's door.

Elisha sent out a servant to meet him with this message: "Go to the River Jordan and immerse

yourself seven times. Your skin will be healed and you'll be as good as new."

Naaman lost his temper. He turned on his heel saying, "I thought he'd personally come out and meet me, call on the name of GOD, wave his hand over the diseased spot, and get rid of the disease. The Damascus rivers, Abana and Pharpar, are cleaner by far than any of the rivers in Israel. Why not bathe in them? I'd at least get clean." He stomped off, mad as a hornet.

But his servants caught up with him and said, "Father, if the prophet had asked you to do something hard and heroic, wouldn't you have done it? So why not this simple "wash and be clean"?"

So he did it. He went down and immersed himself in the Jordan seven times, following the orders of the Holy Man. His skin was healed; it was like the skin of a little baby. He was as good as new.

He then went back to the Holy Man, he and his entourage, stood before him, and said, "I now know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is no God anywhere on earth other than the God of Israel. In gratitude let me give you a gift."

"As GOD lives," Elisha replied, "the God whom I serve, I'll take nothing from you." Naaman tried his best to get him to take something, but he wouldn't do it.

"If you won't take anything," said Naaman, "let me ask you for something: Give me a load of dirt, as much as a team of donkeys can carry, because I'm never again going to worship any god other than GOD. But there's one thing for which I need GOD's pardon: When my master, leaning on my arm, enters the shrine of Rimmon and worships there, and I'm with him there, worshipping Rimmon, may you see to it that GOD forgive me for this."

Elisha said, "Everything will be all right. Go in peace."

Questions

Where do you see evidence of listening? (i.e. who really knew somebody? What did they "hear"?)

What was the result of this listening/knowing?

Where did listening not occur? What do you think prevented it?

What do you think it costs to listen this well?