

# Feel Really, Really Clean for The First Time In Your Life (2 Kings 5:1-19a)

Way back in the days of black and white, in 1959 Proctor and Gamble launched a revolutionary new soap called "Zest". Within weeks it was a top-selling brand because something about the advertising slogan used to promote it really caught the public imagination.....

The advertising slogan said, "**For the first time in your life, feel really clean.**"

From our Scripture verses, Naaman found that the gospel, strikes that same deep chord in all of us. The moment we take the plunge into God's remedy for sin, we experience the truth of that attractive slogan! "**For the first time in your life, feel really clean.**"

Naaman's story is probably the most familiar story in the life and times of Elisha the prophet! It contains everything we love in a good story. It is a story that begins by building up a wonderful picture of the characters in your imagination. Then a note of tragedy... followed by a ray of hope...and finally a life lived happily ever after. It is the story structure of great fables and fairy-tales and Hollywood blockbusters. The story of Naaman runs exactly like that. First, we have a graphic word picture of Naaman himself,

**Now Naaman was a commander of the army of the king of Aram**

**He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram, He was a valiant soldier.**

then comes the tragic announcement that he was a leper (verse 1b), then a ray of hope (verse 3), **the servant girl said to her mistress "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria.....He would cure him of leprosy.** And finally (by verse 14) we see a miraculous healing.

**So, he (Naaman) went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.** Naaman was a GREAT man... **but** he was a leper".

(5:1) Do you know anyone like that? successful "yes" but underneath there's tragedy and sorrow. The story of many people is that they come into this world, labour and toil, live and die, without ever achieving anything of great importance, humanly speaking. Most of us will never hear our names talked about widely. Most people never read about themselves in the newspaper. Most people remain forever ordinary and obscure folk throughout life.

HOWEVER, there are others who rise to fame..... quickly making a name for themselves drinking deep of the cup of success. Their names are household names and their achievements are known by all, their names appear on 'A' lists and the rich list in all the Magazines! Naaman was just such a person. He was an 'A' lister! He was a hero of David Beckham-like proportions in the land of Syria. Naaman was a five star General and he was the King's right-hand counsellor.

Naaman was an honourable man and could be depended upon and trusted, scripture says he was Highly Regarded. He was not born onto the rich list, or even born the child of 'A list' parents. At some critical point in the history of his country, Naaman had come to the rescue and turned the tide of battle.

Instantly he had gone from zero to hero in the nation of Syria. Our world today loves **fame** - Naaman had it. Our world today loves a **fortune** Naaman had it. Our world today loves a **future**... Naaman had that too. BUT we know too that money, fame and power do not satisfy because they are incapable of meeting our deepest needs, yet many people spend a lifetime chasing after them!

Naaman's life is a picture of God's Grace to us all, especially in these uncertain times. As Naaman's life was turned from Mr Ordinary to Mr Celebrity, I wonder if you have found a new hero in this time of lockdown. As a country we have applauded the NHS and frontline workers, and rightly so. But is there someone that you have seen that has gone above the call of duty? There is a young lady working in Tesco, and right from the start of the lockdown she has been cleaning the shelves and the covers for the price tickets. Day after day she cleans without a grumble (not that I've seen anyway) I asked her if she was fed up with cleaning, her answer "it's my contribution to keep everyone safe" and a great job she is making of it.

We are slowly coming out of lockdown, let us praise God and give Him thanks for all that He has done and continues to do. Stay Safe.

Blessings

Mike