

## CHILDREN'S SERMON: NAAMAN

Have you ever heard of a man named Naaman?

He's not a very famous man today. But when he lived, a long, long time ago, he was a very important man.

In fact, there's even a story about him in the bible. It's a book called 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings that's all about the kings of Israel.

Naaman wasn't a king, though, and he wasn't from Israel, although he did visit the King of Israel once ...

This morning, in just a minute, after we hear the psalm sung, we're going to read his story out of the Bible; but I'd thought I'd give you a sneak peak and tell you the story first and then when we read it from the Bible, you'll know what's going on, even before your parents do.

So. A long, long time ago there was a man named Naaman who lived in a country called Aramia. Naaman was in charge of the army there, and a good friend of the Aramean King. He was very popular because God helped the Aramean armies win their battles through Naaman's leadership – so, if it hadn't been for Naaman, the Aramean people might have lost more battles.

But, as popular as Naaman was, and as important as he was to the Arameans, there was also something wrong. He had a skin disease called leprosy. Have any of you had the chicken pox? I think leprosy was probably a little like the chicken pox because everyone could see that you had it, but it was a little different because it never went away.

One day though, Naaman heard about a man in Israel who they said could cure leprosy. So, Naaman went to his king to ask if he could go see this man. And, because he was a friend of the king, the king said yes and sent Naaman to Israel with a letter and some money to pay for the healing.

When Naaman came to Israel the first person he went to see was the King of Israel and he gave the Israelite king the letter from *his* king and said 'can you help me? I have a bad skin disease and want it to be healed!'

But the Israelite king was really upset because he didn't know how to cure Naaman and he didn't want the country Naaman was from to be upset with him or go to war with him, so he tore his clothes as a sign of how much he wished he could help but couldn't.

Fortunately, a prophet (do you know what a prophet is? A prophet is someone who speaks for God), so a prophet named Elisha heard what was going on and sent a message saying *he* could help. So ... Naaman went to see Elisha.

Only, Elisha wouldn't come out to see Naaman, he sent a messenger who told Naaman to go wash in a local river.

Well, this made Naaman very angry. He had brought a letter from his king after all, and lots of money, and he could have washed in a river at home. He didn't understand at all.

Do you know what happened though?

Some of Naaman's servants convinced him to try it. They said, 'Naaman, what could it hurt? Maybe it's worth trying.' So, Naaman went and washed in the river and you know what happened? His skin disease went away.

What do you think?

Let's say a prayer. Dear God, thank you for healing Naaman. And, thank you for prophets and wise people who help us know you better. Help us be open to doing the strange, simple things you ask of us. And thank you for stories that teach us about you. Amen.