

Series Title: The Domino Effect

Message Title: Deciding to Stay

Date: 1/28/2024

2 Kings 5:1, 4-7

5 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."

The life you want may not come through the avenue you think!

Paul probably didn't anticipate that his biggest impact would come from the letters he wrote from prison. Joseph couldn't have anticipated that his wrongful imprisonment would save a whole nation from starvation in a future famine.

Can you think of examples from your own life where God used faithfulness in small things to yield big results for His Kingdom?

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

⇒ **Jesus is to be the one we seek first, not just in priority, but in pattern.** ⇨

What does it look like, in practical terms, to have a *pattern* of putting Jesus first?

2 Kings 5:8-12

⁸ When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." ⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

¹¹ But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

⇒ ***Naaman is looking for a right now, but Elisha gave him a ritual.*** ⇨

Why do many of us prefer to encounter God's power "right now" rather than submit to the process God has already revealed?

Decide to Embrace Faithfulness

Some things are the "same old thing" that we don't need to continue! Can you list some examples? (Fear, disfunction, shame, stagnation, defeatist mindset).

Other things, we do need to reaffirm our commitment towards; what might these be? (Kingdom priorities and patterns, but what more specifically...?)

Proverbs 3:3-4

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

A life of faithfulness, living in a pattern and priority of seeking first the things of the Kingdom changes everything, but not instantly! Naaman, was used to instant action in response to his desires and commands. But God's response was to call him to slow faithfulness.

John 15:5-11

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown

into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you **remain** in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

What does it mean to *remain* in Jesus?

Is it possible to exhibit faithfulness, but miss out on connectedness with Jesus?

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

A fruit tree does not struggle to bear fruit, but it naturally brings fruit when it is properly supplied with the water and nutrients it needs to thrive. If the irrigation system is interrupted, the fruit will suffer.

Isaiah 30:15-16

This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and trust is your strength. But you would have none of it. You said, 'No, we will get our help from Egypt. They will give us swift horses for riding into battle! But the only swiftness you are going to see is the swiftness of your enemies chasing you!

The *pattern* and *process* of returning to Jesus and resting in Him must be our *priority*. The true path to victory, is in peace, quietness, and trust. But strengthening those core values requires *connection*.

What can we do in our everyday lives that will put us in a position of resting, quietness, and trust?

- Are there obstacles that get in the way of making these things a daily habit?
- What are some things that we can change or eliminate to carve out the space we need to cultivate our connection with Jesus?

What does it mean to seek God's face rather than his hand? Why should we prioritize seeking his face?

2 Kings 5:13-15

¹³ Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!" ¹⁴ So he 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.

¹⁵ Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant."

Naaman's servants (the nearest thing he had to community) helped him course correct and become obedient to the process God had prescribed for his healing. The result was a dramatic healing, with praise and glory returned to God.

Is there any way your own Christ-centered community can help encourage you in the path of consistent, faithful obedience this season?

Upcoming Announcements:

February 4 - Connect Class Step 1

February 4 - Rally Night (Youth & Young Adults 18-24)

February 5-7 - Pray First

February 11 - GAME DAY (#Get in the Game)

February 24 - Men's Breakfast (Women's Event coming in April!!)

February 25 - Water Baptisms