

Naaman's Wife's Servant Girl

Naaman the leper (2 Kings 5) is fairly well-known as an example of someone who resisted the word of God at first, but eventually humbled himself, obeyed God's word, and benefitted tremendously as a result. But how did this Syrian army commander know where to go for help with his terminal disease? A young Israelite girl whom he and his soldiers had taken as a captive clued him in about the miracles of the prophet Elisha in Israel's capital city, Samaria. What that little girl did speaks volumes about numerous issues that we face today. Her story deserves far more attention than it usually receives.

Think first about the obvious: she was an Israelite, Naaman was a Syrian, and Syria and Israel were enemy nations. So why would an Israelite girl tell a Syrian man who to see in order to be healed of a disease that was killing him by inches? Worldly thinking would say, "Let him suffer! He deserves it! He's a miserable pagan, so let him remain sick; the sooner he dies, the better!" This young girl didn't know about Jesus, who would be born over 900 years later, but she demonstrated the spirit of Christ's teaching, "Love your enemies."

Not only was she an Israelite, she was a captive, carried away from her homeland by Naaman and his soldiers on one of their raids into the land of Israel. In order for her to be taken captive, it's very likely that her father had been killed. Her mother may have been killed or taken captive also. Now this girl has been made to be the handmaid of Naaman's wife. Her situation reminds us a bit of Joseph serving as a slave in Potiphar's household in Egypt, but at least Joseph knew that his father wasn't dead! If you were a child, carried off to a foreign land, possibly having seen one or both parents slaughtered by your captors, how would you feel about it? Nevertheless, this young lady addressed her mistress respectfully and spoke in the best interest of her master, Naaman.

Finally, this servant girl took her faith with her to her new residence. Nothing indicates that she blamed God for her circumstances, and she clearly kept her confidence in God's ability to work through the prophet Elisha.

We are not in conditions of forced servitude in a foreign land. But sometimes we may not think we're being treated fairly. We might think other people aren't treating us right, or the government isn't treating us right. Sometimes those complaints might even be legitimate! How should we behave?

First, we need to put bitterness aside, replacing it with sincere love. And that's far easier said than done. But the young Israelite servant girl did it, and so can we.

Second, be respectful even (especially) to those with whom you disagree strenuously. In the current climate this applies especially to government officials from the President on down to the local dog-catcher. And BTW that applies not only to the current administration but to all previous administrations!

Finally, maintain your faith no matter what your circumstances. The Lord has promised never to leave us or forsake us. The question is, will we remain faithful, or will we allow circumstances we don't like to weaken or destroy our faith. I hope none of us will ever experience circumstances as severe as the little Israelite servant girl endured, but if we do, I hope we imitate her attitude and her behavior.