

NAAMAN IS CURED

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 2 KINGS 5



God welcomes repentant sinners but casts out the hypocrites.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Naaman, the Gentile, was a leper – A little Israelite girl captured in a raid told Naaman's wife that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal Naaman's leprosy. Naaman, a commander in the Syrian army, talked to the king about this. The King of Syria sent him out with gifts of silver, gold and clothing along with a letter to the king of Israel requesting help for Naaman. Naaman left for Israel. His leprosy must not have been a mild case because he took ten changes of clothing for the journey. When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes. He thought that the king of Syria was using the whole matter to draw Israel into a war. Elisha heard that the king was upset, so he sent a message to remind the king that there was a prophet of the Lord in Israel who could seek God on behalf of the nation and speak accordingly.

God healed Naaman's leprosy – God's care for Naaman, an enemy of Israel, demonstrated God's compassion for people outside the borders of Israel. To emphasize that it is the Lord (not the prophet) who heals, Elisha didn't even step foot out of his house. Instead, he sent his servant with a message to Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan. Naaman became angry, but his servants encouraged him to heed the word of the prophet. When Naaman finally obeyed, he was healed. He returned to give Elisha great gifts. In a demonstration of humility and knowing that it was the Lord who healed, Elisha refused the gifts. Naaman requested permission to take soil from Israel. It would be a sign that, though he may be forced to enter the pagan temple with his master, he would only worship the God of Israel. Elisha granted his request, and Naaman returned home.

Gehazi falls away – When Gehazi, Elisha's servant, saw Elisha refuse the rich gifts, he determined to get some for himself. Motivated by his greed, Gehazi made up a story claiming Elisha sent him to request some silver and garments for two traveling prophets. Naaman was glad to fill the modest request. After hiding the gifts, Gehazi returned to Elisha, who questioned him. Instead of telling the truth, Gehazi lied. He should have known he could not hide his sin from God. Though Gehazi denied going anywhere, Elisha knew what happened and pronounced judgment on Gehazi. Gehazi received Naaman's leprosy. In addition to mentioning the silver and garments, Elisha also spoke of vineyards, orchards, sheep, oxen, and servants (2 Kings 5:26). It seems Gehazi had been profiting deceitfully from others as well. Gehazi did not repent or ask forgiveness, but simply left white with leprosy.

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Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Just as God healed Naaman, so we look to God for our healing. Peter tells us that we can be healed because of the finished work of Christ.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

Healing is possible for us because of what Jesus did on the cross. We look to God for our healing from the spiritual sickness of sin, as well as physical sickness.

Elisha's cleansing of Naaman's leprosy points forward to Jesus and the healing of the lepers in His ministry.

In Luke 4:27 Jesus refers back to Naaman telling us that the lepers of Israel were not cleansed but Naaman the Syrian was. Naaman foreshadowed the plan of God to reach the Gentiles with the grace of the Gospel.



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ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Psalm 111

Connecting the passage to Christ:

The Psalmist declares that God provides redemption for His people. In Romans 3:24, we are told that God's redemption comes through Jesus Christ. In verse 9 the psalmist talks about redemption and a covenant which lasts forever. Whenever we read of God's redemption in the Old Testament it is pointing forward to Jesus.

Questions for reflection:

- Is there any redemption for the people of God apart from Christ? (No, faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross is God's only plan for redeeming man.)
- How does Romans 3:24 shed light on Psalm 111:9? (Romans 3:24 tells us that our redemption comes in Jesus Christ.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

YOU CAN'T BUY GOD'S FAVOR

Supplies

costume jewelry and an eccentric outfit for a female teacher to play a very rich person

This ad lib skit is meant to demonstrate that God wants our hearts and that we can't buy God's favor.

Just after reading today's Bible story to the class, an eccentric rich lady comes into the room interrupting the lesson.

Suggested dialogue progression:

Rich Lady: Excuse me, but is this a church?

Teacher: Yes. Can I help you?

Rich Lady: I hope so. I need to buy a healing and I would love to know how much heaven costs.

Teacher: You want to buy heaven?

Rich Lady: No, that would be too expensive, I'm sure. I just want to buy my way into heaven.

Teacher: Well, you can't buy a healing unless you need an operation, then you should be talking to a doctor about that.

Rich Lady: No, the doctors can't cure my arthritis. They just tell me it's old age. What I need is a healing; better yet, just give me a ticket to heaven.

Teacher: I'm sorry, you can't buy a ticket to heaven.

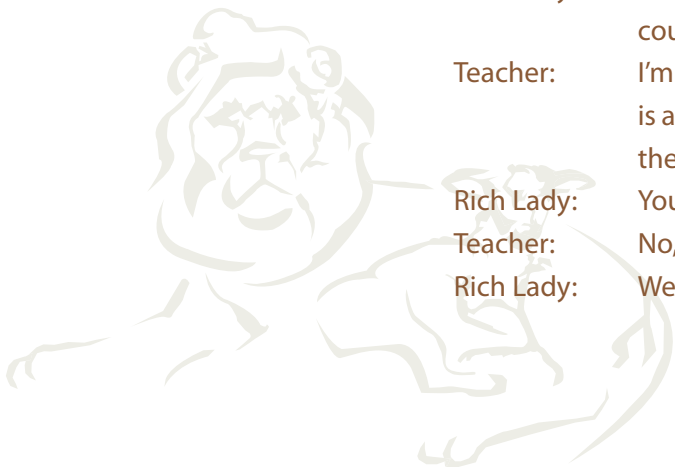
Rich Lady: Don't be shy, name your price. Forget negotiating, I own half the country.

Teacher: I'm sorry, but you just can't buy a ticket to heaven at any price. God is after our hearts not our money. God already owns all the riches of the whole world. (Teacher shares the gospel with the lady.)

Rich Lady: You mean to tell me my money is worthless?

Teacher: No, you could give it to the poor.

Rich Lady: Well, I never heard of such a . . . (She walks out.)



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Then ask the class the following questions:

- What did the lady trust in? (She was trusting in her money, not the Lord.)
- What role did money play in our Bible story for each of the three main characters? (Naaman thought he could purchase a healing or at least influence Elisha with it. Elisha would not accept money because he knew that God and His work cannot be bought. Gehazi loved money more than God and it caused him to stumble into deceit.)
- How can money be a snare for us? (We can be snared just as easily as Gehazi, it is easy to love money or the things money can buy more than we love God and following His Word.)
- How should Gehazi's judgment help us in fighting the temptation to love money more than God? (Gehazi's judgment should put the fear of God into our lives, knowing how seriously God takes these issues.)
- What should we do if we are convicted of the sins Gehazi committed? (We should repent to God and to those we have sinned against, remember the Gospel, and ask God to forgive us.)



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PEEK-A-BOO

This short exercise demonstrates the absurdity that we can hide our sin from God.

Tell the class that there is an amazing thing about two-year-olds. If they cover their eyes with their hands so they can't see you, they think they disappear. That's right. Most of them go through this stage. You say to them, "I can see you" and they cover their eyes. If you are kind to them, you just play along saying, "Where did you go?" Then when they peek out from behind their hands you finish off the exercise by saying, "There you are!" Two-year-old children love it.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What would you think of a person who actually still believed that if they covered their eyes they would disappear? (We would think they were silly because that is a childish thought and everyone can see they are still there.)
- What would you say to a person who thought they got away with a crime just because nobody saw them do it? (God sees everything, so no one ever gets away with a crime.)
- What lesson did Gehazi learn the hard way? (Gehazi learned that you can't hide something from God just by hiding it from others.)



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FROM NAMAAN'S POINT OF VIEW

Supplies:

a few props to play the role and story of Namaan

Tell the whole story from Namaan's perspective. This will allow you to add details the children may not know such as what leprosy is (open sores) or what the journey from Syria down to Israel would have been like (going over mountains). This should peak the children's interest in the story.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What did you learn about God from this story? (God is all-powerful and can heal. God works through men as a means of grace to others. God judges sin and can see everything we do, etc.)
- What is amazing about God reaching out to Naaman? (Namaan was not an Israelite. This is a foretaste of God's plan of salvation for both Jew and Gentile. In fact, in the end it is Gehhazi, the Jew, who is judged and the Gentile who is set free.)

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Gehazi sneaking around with two talents of silver and two robes.



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FOR OLDER GRADES

Supplies:

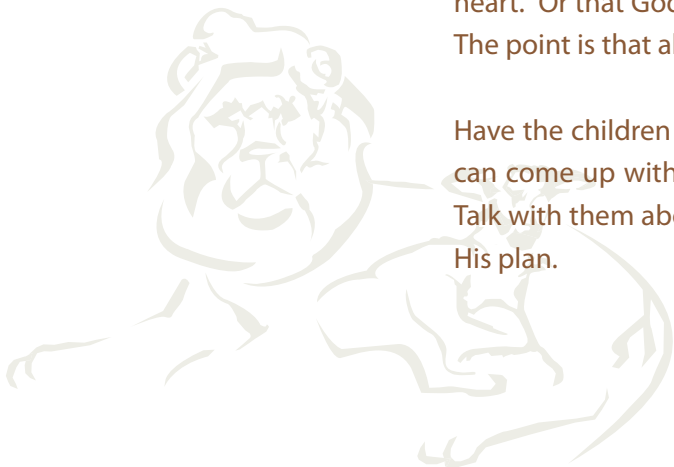
paper and pencils

God works all things together for His good purpose. Have the children each read through the story and make a list of all the details God worked together to fulfill His plan in this story.

1. God brought Naaman leprosy so that he would need to be healed. It was through his desire to be healed that Naaman was introduced to the true God. Although the leprosy was a curse, God used it for good.
2. God gave Naaman success on the battlefield. It was through his success that Naaman had access to the king of Syria who wrote a letter and provided for Naaman's trip to Israel.
3. God allowed a little girl to be captured so that Naaman could find out about the prophet Elisha.
4. God had the king of Syria leave out Elisha's name from the letter so that the king would think he was the one to heal Naaman. This gave an opportunity to the king to grow in his faith and was the reason he tore his clothes, a sign of distress that found its way back to Elisha.
5. God gave Naaman servants with the wisdom to encourage Naaman to obey the word of the Lord through Elisha. Had Naaman gone away angry and not obeying, he would not have been healed.
6. God used the riches extended to Elisha to make the point that God needs no payment and He cannot be bought.
7. God also brought judgment upon Gehazi's sinful heart. Gehazi lied to Naaman and Elisha, and God pronounced upon Gehazi the same leprosy that Naaman had.

One could say God gave Naaman leprosy so that He could judge the evil in Gehazi's heart. Or that God allowed a little girl to be captured to bring healing to Naaman. The point is that all things are directed by God for His purposes.

Have the children share as many of the interconnecting parts of the story as they can come up with. One change and the whole story would have been different. Talk with them about how God uses the smallest details in our lives to accomplish His plan.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

Leprosy – This is a disease caused by bacteria which affects both the skin and internal organs. Leprosy often starts as a white patch on the face and can spread quickly, leading to boil-like sores. Eventually deformity can result from loss of tissue surrounding the bones on the hands and feet. There was no known cure for leprosy and there were stringent quarantines imposed as a part of the Mosaic law, see Leviticus 13. Therefore, a judgment of leprosy meant being cast out of the community whereas a healing meant a welcome back to the community.

