

A LITTLE JEWISH MAID WHO MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE (2 KINGS 5)

As the fifth chapter of Second Kings opens, Naaman, a decorated Syrian captain, faced the cruelest and most powerful enemy in the ancient world. He faced the disfiguring, dissociating, and deadly disease of leprosy (2 Kings 5:1). Leprosy had besieged Naaman's body. It was encircling him and cutting off all hope of escape.

Eventually, he would be too weak to fight. However, as Naaman waited for his body to succumb to the siege, a little Jewish maid revealed the way for Naaman to overcome his enemy (5:2-3). Though this Jewish maid was little, she made a big difference in Naaman's life. Hopefully, by considering and copying her example, we can do the same for those in our lives today.

Her Contentment

The little Jewish maid was "brought away captive out of the land of Israel" (2 Kings 5:2). While just a child, Syrian raiders ripped her away from her family. Can't you just imagine her terror-filled heart and her tear-filled eyes? Was she snatched away while playing in the yard? Had her father or mother died trying to save her? Did someone sneak into her bedroom and steal her away in the night?

Although we don't know the answer to these questions, we can be sure that her capture was terrifying and traumatic. Likely, it took her a great deal of time to adjust to her new life in Syria. No doubt, she longed for home. However, like Paul, she learned to be content in her present state. She knew how to be abased, and how to abound. She knew what it was to be full and to be hungry (Philippians 4:11-12; cf. 1 Timothy 6:6-8).

When the little Jewish maid first appears in Scripture she is waiting on Naaman's wife (2 Kings 5:2). She is serving, rather than sulking; comforting rather than complaining; and, thinking of others, rather than of herself. She was thinking about her master's condition and not about her own (2 Kings 5:3). What a great example she is of the characteristic of contentment.

I believe that we all need to learn a lesson about contentment from this little Jewish maid. Whatever our age, and whatever our circumstances, we probably struggle with contentment. At fourteen years of age, Jason Lehman captured the discontentment that fills our world in the following poem:

It was spring, but it was summer I wanted,
The warm days, and the great outdoors.

It was summer, but it was fall I wanted,
The colorful leaves, and the cool, dry air.

It was fall, but it was winter I wanted,
The beautiful snow, and the joy of the holiday season.

It was winter, but it was spring I wanted,
The warmth and the blossoming of nature.

I was a child, but it was adulthood I wanted,
The freedom and respect.

I was 20, but it was 30 I wanted,
To be mature, and sophisticated.

I was middle-aged, but it was 20 I wanted,
The youth and the free spirit.

I was retired, but it was middle age I wanted,
The presence of mind without limitations.

My life is over, and I never got what I wanted.

If we are not careful, we will spend our whole lives as this poem suggests without ever getting what we wanted. We need to learn contentment before it is too late.

It has been noted that modern discontentment is blurring the line between needs and wants. Please consider the following observation:

"In actual practice, virtually everything has become a 'need.' Thus, men 'need' better jobs, fancier cars, and bigger homes; women 'need' careers outside the home, and, paradoxically, 'need' children; young people 'need'

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A DAD

Text: _____

I. It Takes _____

Notes:

II. It Takes _____

Notes:

III. It Takes _____

Notes:

THEY TRUSTED A TAINTED GOD

Text: _____

I. Tainted Because of a Lack of _____

Notes:

II. Tainted Because of a Lack of _____

Notes:

III. Tainted Because of a Lack of _____

Notes:

unending sexual encounters to liberate their repressed egos; children ‘need’ the freedom to express themselves outside the ‘bondage’ of parental control.”

Maybe, this little Jewish maid can help us all to get our priorities in order. If she could be content in her circumstances, surely we can be content in ours.

Her Concern

In talking with her mistress, the little maid expressed her concern for her master. She declared, “Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria!” (2 Kings 5:3). Although Naaman was the captain of the army that had evidently carried her away, she did not delight in the disease that now disfigured his countenance and threatened his life. She was compassionate, not vindictive. She wanted him to recover, not to suffer. She wanted him to get well, not for her to get even.

Please note that the little Jewish maid told her mistress about the prophet in Samaria (5:3). She could have simply sat on this information. However, she didn’t. She displayed genuine compassion and concern. Like the Good Samaritan, she didn’t just pass by on the other side of the road. She had compassion on Naaman and did what she could to help him (Luke 10:33). She loved Naaman, her neighbor, as she loved herself (Matthew 22:39).

I believe that we can all learn a lesson about concern and compassion from this little Jewish maid. Her compassion made a difference, and so can ours (Jude 22). We all need to strive to be tenderhearted (Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 3:16-17) and to treat others as we would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12). Rather than rejoicing in the evil that befalls our enemies, we should love them, help them, and pray for them (Matthew 5:43-44).

Her Confidence

Although some bad things had happened to this little Jewish maid, her faith in God had not been shaken. The faith of others might have been overthrown under these conditions, but not hers (2 Timothy 2:18-19; Matthew 7:24-27). Her faith was rooted and grounded in the promises of God (Colossians 1:23; 2 Timothy 1:12; Acts 20:24). She was fully convinced that there was a prophet in Samaria who could heal her master of the dreaded disease of leprosy (2 Kings 5:3). Please consider how much greater her faith was than that of the king of Israel (2 Kings 5:5-8). The king of Israel seems to have been unaware that there was a prophet in Israel. However, the little Jewish maid remembered him. Furthermore, the king rent his clothes, but she rested in hope.

I believe that we can all learn a lesson from this little Jewish maid’s faith. Like the disciples, we should ask the Lord to “increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). We need to be fully persuaded that God can perform what He has promised (Romans 4:21; Hebrews 6:18; John 6:69).

As you recall, during his public ministry, Jesus set a little child in the midst of the disciples and told them that they had to become like the child in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18:2; Mark 9:36). I believe that the writer of Second Kings has done the same for us with this little maid. Let us become like her.

-Wade Webster

GOD AS OUR FATHER

In Scripture, God takes on numerous roles so as to illustrate His role in our lives. He is pictured as a Shepherd, a Potter, an Habitation, a Man of war, a Builder, an Husbandman, etc. Each picture is provided with a specific purpose to clue man in to the manifold manner by which God has worked and does work in our lives. However, I am firmly convinced that God is not any more lovingly pictured in our lives than as our Father.

Dan Winkler recorded the story of a farmer and friend:

“The farmer’s weathervane read: ‘God is love.’ What do you mean by that weathervane,’ asked a passerby. ‘Are you suggesting that God’s feelings for us are unstable, like the weather?’ ‘Oh, no,’ said the farmer, ‘that weathervane reminds me that God loves me no matter which way the winds of life might chance to blow.’”

Can a more accurate picture of a true father’s love be portrayed any better? It certainly cannot as it pertains to the heavenly Father. God’s love for His children is unsurpassable, infinite, and eternal. Whatever may betide, we can rest in the calm assurance of God’s love as our Father. And is that not the way fatherhood in general is supposed to work? Any child should never have to question whether or not their father loves them. It should be assumed and expected, just like the love of God. But that love is not an island. It is not something that resides only within the recesses of the heart. It is, rather, something that is living and active. And when you consider the love of a father and the love of the Father, there are something things that naturally accompany those reflections:

God as our Father provides. Fathers are given the Divine responsibility of being providers for their family. In fact, Paul wrote that “if any provideth not for his own, and specially his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). It is not just a request, but an expectation. God as our Father has certainly done His part in providing. God has provided man with life even in accordance to His own image (Genesis 1:26-27). In conjunction with that life, God provided man with another form of life that He knew would be necessary to man’s happiness and success—woman (Genesis 2:20-22). The life God has provided was perfectly designed and created to fit the exact purpose conceived within His own mind. God provided for man all those things that are necessary for living—food, water, raiment, shelter, etc. Granted, these blessings do not appear miraculously on our doorsteps as some would like, but through His providence, God ensures that those seeking the kingdom first have everything they need (Matthew 6:25-34). God has provided the structure that man so desperately needs to not only survive but thrive in this life in preparation for the life to come. Law has always been laid before the feet of the world so that the clear expectations of God are known. How blessed we are to have a God who, as a Father, provides for His people!

God as our Father protects. Is it not true that children often look at their fathers as symbols of strength and defense? Thus when they have a scary dream or believe that a monster is hiding in their closet, they run to their fathers. Man was once in the most frightening position he could possibly fathom. He was guilty of sin and without hope. However, God immediately began working both to promise a Messiah and make provision for a Messiah (Genesis 3:15, etc.). And while God has and does work to provide for His children a measure of physical protection, His foremost concern is with providing us with the spiritual protection our souls need. Therefore, “when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). There is no where else and no one else to whom we could go, but thankfully we need look no further for the protection we seek.

God, pictured as our Father. In Luke 15, Jesus tells of the prodigal son who prematurely took his inheritance, wasted it in a far country, and then sought only to return home as a servant, believing he no longer had the right to be considered his father’s son. When, though, his father saw him returning, his long lost son, he welcomed him home in a royal fashion. That is a picture of God’s love for us, a love that is so broad, long, deep and high that we cannot possibly fathom its entirety. While we may sit back and impersonally admire the prodigal for having a father so understanding, we sometimes forget that this is merely a picture of the real love that our real Father has for us!

Certainly, we could not ask for a better Father than our heavenly Father. One day we will receive that royal welcome home, in the home of the soul. Won’t it be wonderful there?!

-Andy Brewer
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