

It's Simple, but It's Not Easy

We are in what I would like to call Uncharted Territory.

- There are defining moments that leave us no choice but to change the way we live.
- Everyone is doing their best to find a “new” normal.
- We can't rush back to the old normal, when God may want to do a new thing.

Uncharted: not shown or located on a map; unexplored; unknown, as a place or region.

- No precedent. Nothing that says, “You are HERE and here is the way to get THERE”.

There are many areas in life that are simple in thought, but not easy in action.

In 2 Kings, there is a story of a man named Naaman, a Gentile from Syria.

2 Kings 5:1–15 (NLT)

1 The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the commander of his army, because through him the Lord had given Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy.

He is known as a mighty man of valor, BUT he had a problem: leprosy.

- All of his victories and accolades couldn't hide this diagnosis.
- No matter how good and successful Naaman was in life, he was a leper.
- We all have a BUT, in our life...an area where we would like to change.

2 At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid.

3 One day the girl said to her mistress, “I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy.”

4 So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said.

This young Israelite girl is the hero of this story.

- Without her faith, Naaman's story ends in death.
- Even though she was far from home, she wasn't far from God.
- Her “normal” was different but her faith was strong.
- “Are we willing to listen when God speaks through unconventional sources?”

5 “Go and visit the prophet,” the king of Aram told him. “I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel.” So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing.

6 The letter to the king of Israel said: “With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy.”

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7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, "Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? Why is this man asking me to heal someone with leprosy? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me."

Naaman's gift was worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

- He thought he could attain healing through his riches.
- Every gift we receive from God is because of His grace not our goodness.

So he goes to the king, and the king says, "Am I God?"

- The king of Israel is saying, "This is above my paygrade."
- Have you ever felt that way? Someone brings you a problem that reveals inadequacies.

Are you taking your problems everywhere but to the One who can deliver?

- You may have heard this statement, "Don't take no as an answer from a person who can't say yes".
- Man's no doesn't overrule God's yes.

8 But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: "Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel."

9 So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house.

10 But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy."

Elisha responded in faith, not fear.

- The king didn't have a relationship with God, so it ended up being a crisis.
- Elisha had already seen God move in miraculous ways.
- Elijah taken to heaven, Jordan parted, water purified, food multiplied, dead boy raised.
- Elisha saw an opening for the power of heaven to touch the Earth.

Elisha gives SIMPLE & UNCOMPLICATED instructions to be healed of the leprosy.

- There isn't a cure, but you can be cleansed.
- Go was 7 times in the Jordan and you will be cleansed. (RESTORATION)

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11 But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the Lord his God and heal me!

12 Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.

Naaman's response to this SIMPLE request is revealing.

- Revealed that while he had leprosy on the outside, he had pride on the inside.
- What happens when God gives us the answer we NEED but it's not the answer we WANT?

Naaman had some faulty expectations.

- I thought...and I expected.
- Naaman, knew the diagnosis, so he tried to write his own prescription.
- God isn't bound to your expectations, He is only bound to His Word.
- Naaman wanted the show: WAVE YOUR HAND AND CALL ON GOD!

Here is why our expectations can be dangerous.

- Many times, our expectations can be the constraints that we put on God.
- Transformation rarely happens on our terms.

In pre-marriage counselor gave us this advice: Challenge your expectations.

- Be mindful not to let your expectations turn into demands.
- Healthy expectations are those that are communicated.
- Unmet expectations can easily lead to offense.

It's hard to be grateful when you are offended.

- Offences are fences that we build between others and us.
- Anytime pride is corrected, it gets offended!

The root of pride is insecurity.

- You may not be prideful, but if you're an insecure person, then you too are easily offended!

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- As a matter of fact, pride will take up some offenses that aren't even theirs.
- Don't ask what is it with them!
- Ask, "what is it in me that opens the door for the offense to come in so easily?"

Let me explain to you what the word offense means in the Bible!

- It LITERALLY means "a stumbling stone"!
- Skandalizo: It's where we get our word scandal!
- Some families have stumbled around for generations due to an offense.

We see the potential of offense John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, being in prison.

- John asks, "Are you the One we've been expecting, or are we looking for another?"

Luke 7:22-23 (NKJV)

22 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

23 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

It's either an offense and causes you to stumble

- Or it's a stepping stone that cause you to go higher and farther!
- You either stepover it or you stumble (stumbling stone) over it.

You can talk to yourself about it and you can talk to others about it.

- You can pick it up and carry it around with you (Backpack)
- Or you can choose to forgive. Which means to "release fully".

Hebrews 8:12 (NLT)

12 And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

Hebrews 10:17 (NLT)

17 Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds."

God makes a choice in His will to not remember them

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- Remember means to bring them to mind to use against us.
- God doesn't just forget! Remember He knows everything!

He makes a choice not to bring them up again

- Something might trigger the thought
- But you don't have to rehearse it and dwell on it
- You can't receive what God has for you, without letting go of the things behind you!

Naaman almost walks away from the plans that God had for him.

- But Naaman had people that spoke into his life.

13 But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be clean!'"

14 So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed!

15 Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman 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 had some truth-telling people on his staff who gave him perspective. (We need it!).

- If it were a great deed, he would do it.
- But a simple step of faith that was easy hard.
- Naaman had to humbled himself before he could be healed.

With every single time he dipped into the Jordan River, he put his faith in action.

- He had to finish the process.
- The ancient word dipped means "plunged".
- This signified total obedience to the divine word.

Naaman returns to Elisha a 2nd time after encountering God and being healed.

- Naaman came for a cure but came back cleansed.
- His first proclamation was a thought ABOUT God, but once he encountered God he says, "Now I know"!

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When you encounter God you should KNOW Him.

- Know His: Love | Grace | Hope | Healing | Peace | Joy
- God doesn't just change us on the outside, He transforms us on the inside.

Luke 4:27 (NKJV)

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

Naaman was chosen by God in the same way we are as His followers.

- It is the Word of God we obey and apply that brings change in our lives.
- Is there any area of our life that isn't healed because we aren't humble?

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River.

- The King of kings, and the Lord of lords, didn't think he was too great to be baptized in the Jordan River.
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