

ONE WOMAN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE
Or
THE DIFFERENCE ONE CAN MAKE
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. As. 2Kgs.5 Opens, Naaman, a decorated Syrian captain, faced the cruelest and most powerful and dangerous enemy in the ancient world.
 - a. The disfiguring, dissociating, and deadly disease of leprosy, 2Kgs.5:1.
 - b. Leprosy had besieged his body, encircling him and cutting off all hope of escape.
 - c. Eventually, he would be too weak to fight as a soldier.
2. However, as Naaman hopelessly waited for his body too subcome to the siege of this dreaded, deadly disease, a little Jewish maid stepped forth revealing the way for him to overcome this deadly enemy, 5:2,3.
3. Though this Jewish made was little, and only an insignificant Jewish captive, a lowly servant to her mistress, Naaman's wife, she made a big difference in this important, decorated Syrian soldier's life.
4. Hopefully by considering and imitating her example, we can perhaps do something of the same in our present-day lives.
5. Les us study her attitude, life and example to see.

II. DISCUSSION

A. CONSIDER HER ATTITUDE AND CONTENTMENT INSPITE OF HER CONDITION AS A CAPTIME ISRALITE, 5:2.

1. While just a child, Syrian raiders had ripped her away from her family, brought her to a strange land, and placed her in bondage as a lowly servant to her master.
2. Can't you begin to image her terror-fill heart as a child and her tear-filled eyes as she sorrowed over what had happened to her and what the future might hold for her?
3. Was she snatched away while playing in the yard?
4. Had her parents died trying to save her?
5. Did someone sneak into her bedroom and steal her away during the night.

6. Although we do not know the answer to these questions and others we might raise, we can be sure her capture was terrifying and traumatic!
7. Likely, it took her awhile to adjust to her new and difficult life in Syria, while at the same time being home-sick.
8. However, like Paul, she learned to be content in her present state and even how to be a valuable asset to her mistress and to Naaman.
9. When this little Jewish maid first appears in Scripture she is waiting on Naaman's wife as a servant, 5:2.
 - a. She is serving, rather than sulking.
 - b. She comforting, rather than complaining.
 - c. She is thinking of others, rather than only of herself; about her master's terrible condition, rather than her own, 5:3.
 - d. What a great example she is of characteristic contentment Cf. 1Tim.6:6-8; Heb.13:5,6.
 - e. Though we may struggle with it, we can learn contentment.
10. Note the following poem written by Jason Lehman, a fourteen year old, who captured the discontentment that fills our world:

It is spring, but 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 was over, and I never
Got what I wanted.

11. 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.
12. It has been noted that modern discontentment is blurring the line between “needs” and “wants”. Consider the following observation:
 - a. “In actual practice, virtually everything has become a ‘need’, or so men think.
 - b. Thus, men ‘need’ fancier cars, and bigger homes; women ‘need’ careers outside the home, and paradoxically, ‘need’ children; children ‘need’ their freedom to express themselves outside the ‘bondage’ of parental control.”
13. Perhaps, this little Jewish girl can show us the way to get and keep our priorities in order. If she could be content in her circumstances, surely we can be content in ours.

B. NOW CONSIDER HER TOTALLY UNSELFISH CONCERN FOR ANOTHER.

1. In talking with her mistress, Naaman's wife, this little maid, seeing her master's hopeless condition, expressed her unselfish concern for him, 5:3.
 - a. Although her present master was the captain of the army that had captured her and made her a lowly servant, she did not delight in the disease that now disfigured his countenance and threatened his life, nor did she withhold her knowledge of his possible cure.
 - b. She told her mistress about the prophet in Samaria who could "recover" him from his leprosy, 5:3.
 - (1) She was compassionate, not vindictive.
 - (2) She wanted him to recover, not continue to suffer.
 - (3) She wanted him to get well, not get even.
 - (4) She simply could have set on the important information she had; but she didn't.
 - (5) She displayed genuine compassion and concern.
 - (6) Like the Good Samaritan, she didn't just pass by on the other side of the road, Lk.10:33-37.
 - (7) Therefore, according to N.T. teaching in Lk.10:25-37, she loved Naaman, her neighbor, as she loved herself.
2. Surely, all of us can learn a lesson about unselfish concern and compassion from this little Jewish maid, an Israelite captive.
 - a. Her concern and compassion made a big difference, and according to Jude 22 ours will also.
 - b. All of us need to strive to be tenderhearted as we are taught in Eph.4:32; 1Jno.3:17.
 - c. Always do as this little maid did and act in harmony with we call the "golden rule" of the Bible as taught in Mt.7:12.
 - d. Furthermore, Jesus has demanded of us that rather than rejoicing in the evil that befalls our enemies, or being embittered by their treatment of us, we should love them, help them, and pray for them, Mt.5:43,44.

C. NOW LET US COMPARE HER FAITH AND CONFIDENC IN GOD AND GOD'S PROPHET WITH THAT OF THE KING AND NAAMAN.

1. Although some bad things had happened to this little Jewish maid, her faith God was still firmly fixed on God and his prophet.
 - a. She was fully convinced that God had a prophet in Samaria who could “recover” Naaman from this dreaded, deadly disease of leprosy, 2Kgs.5:3.
2. Now consider how much greater her faith was than that of the king of Isarel, 5:4-8.
 - a. The king of Israel seems to have been wholly unaware there was such a prophet in Israel.
 - b. However, the little Jewish maid knew there was one.
 - c. Furthermore, consider this: the king of Israel rent his clothes in despair over what he thought was expected of him, while she rested in hope over what she knew the prophet of God could and would do.
3. Again, compare her faith with that of Naaman’s , 2Kgs.5:9-14.

III. CONCLUSION

1. What great lessons to be learned from this little Jewish maid, this woman of Israel, and her attitude and contentment, her unselfish concern for another, as well as her firm faith and confidence in God and his prophet in spite of being held in slavery.
2. What we need to do is not only maintain our faith, but do as the Lord’s disciples did on one occasion: ask the Lord to “increase our faith,” Lk.17:5.
3. we need to be and continue to be fully persuaded that God can perform what he has promised, Rom.4:21; Heb.6:17,18; Phil.4:19; Heb.13:5,6.

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