

Coach House Church BEACONS

WASH AND WASH AGAIN

16TH JUNE 2020

When I was a child , together with my sister , we liked nothing more than to play outside in the mud. I bet my mum was not as keen as us ..

When you think about mud ,what do you associate it with? Is it dirt, something you try to stay away from or something like nourishment, or healing ? Mud treatments in a good spa are a very pleasant experience aren't they?

In my head mud has a negative connotation . I imagine a car that has become stuck in it, a child that had too much fun in the garden after the rain , the dogs paw prints on the sofa . Mud is generally a bit of nuisance, but let's remember it does have some uses. It's really useful if you are making an advertisement for a new brand of mop.

During Jesus' time on the earth , there was a man who had never seen mud - this was because he had been born blind . He never saw his parents, or the sky, or anything else in the world around him. In the Jewish culture they believed that when something like this happened, it meant that someone in his family, or perhaps the man himself, had sinned and God was showing his displeasure by taking away his eyesight .So, on top of blindness , the man had to live with the social stigma and judgement .

When Jesus' disciples met the man, they were of this mindset and wanted to know who had sinned ; who's fault was it for this man's blindness. Jesus' answer was not what they expected. John 9:3 says :” neither this man nor his parents sinned Jesus said, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him “ This means that Jesus knew he would heal this man. In a very open way Jesus was testifying that he was the Messiah. The Prophets from old had predicted in the Old

Testament that when the Messiah comes there will be certain miracles that only He would be able to perform. This was one of them.

The Bible tells us that when Jesus met the man he spat in the dirt, mixed it around to make some mud and smeared it on the mans eyes ; then he told the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Think about how you would feel in this situation. You went to Jesus expecting to be healed. He started the process , not the way you expected, dirt isn't normally used to make something clean.

But it hasn't worked and now He wants you to finish the job. At this point you might feel like giving up. But it's worth a try, There's nothing to loose . This man wasn't put off by the unusual instruction, he trusted that Jesus knew what he was doing, he saw past the very ordinaryness of the situation and he went and washed in the pool of Siloam. The result was just as Jesus had said it would be. The man was healed and, for the first time in his life, was able to see .

In the Old Testament we see another example of someone healed in a very ordinary way. Naaman who was a commander in the army of the king of Aram. Aram was one of Israel's enemies.

He was a very important man but , he was ill - he had leprosy . Leprosy is an infectious skin disease, in those days incurable and, whoever had it had to self-isolate, and live separately from the community as they believed it could spread simply by being near someone who had it.

His wife had a slave girl, a little girl who had been taken from her home in Israel by force and now found herself a long way from home in the service of one of her country's enemies. Despite her unjust situation she still cared about her master to the point that she shared what she had. A piece of information. She knew that there was a prophet of the Lord in Israel who could heal him. Naaman could have dismissed this as a trick or just a slave girls fantasy but something in him told him to investigate further. So Naaman went to his king and told him what he had learned. He asked the king to allow him to go into the enemy territory to seek out the prophet that the slave girl had spoken about. The king, miraculously, allowed Naaman to go and even wrote letters to the king of Israel telling him to heal his general of leprosy . These events are recorded in 2 Kings chapter 5 .

Now when Naaman got to Israel he first went to the king of Israel believing that only the most important person would be able to perform the healing. The king of Israel thought that the king of Aram was looking for a quarrel with him and wage war against him. "Who could cure an incurable infection except God himself?" He exclaimed and got really distressed

At that time a man called Elisha was the prophet in the land of Israel and heard about the king's distress, and the reason why. So he sent word to the king to send the general from Aram around to his house. When Naaman arrived at the prophet's front door Elisha sent his servant out to meet him with a message. He was to go and wash in the river Jordan seven times and he would be healed from his leprosy.

Naaman was not very happy about this, in fact we are told that he got really angry. You see he had come to the prophet with his own ideas about how to be healed. He was expecting the prophet to put his hands on him and chant and pray in some sort of ritual, like he was used to seeing in his home country. He was expecting people to fuss around him and not just to be sent to have a few dips in the local river. The prophet himself did not even come out to talk to him. Didn't he know how important Naaman was?

The general had to be calmed down by his servants who then convinced him to do whatever the prophet said, and just because it wasn't a difficult task didn't mean he should not do it. In the end the general went and washed himself seven times in the Jordan as Elisha had told him to. The result was that the leprosy that was devouring his body was gone. His skin was clean of the sores which he had been covering with bandages.

Naaman went back to the prophet and in 2Kings 5:15 tells us what he said " Now I know there is no God in all the world except in Israel" . He had probably prayed to his own gods for healing, perhaps on many occasions without anything happening. His own gods had probably made lavish demands of him. But now, by such simple means he was healed. Better than his healing though was the fact that he had found that the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the only real God !

In the last few months we have been hearing the message " wash your hands " very often . And it has a special meaning . It means that we need to be vigilant and keep ourselves safe from the virus that is raging in our world today. It's a simple thing . Not hard at all to achieve but it can save our lives and the lives of the people around us.

In both stories we looked at today , people were asked to go and wash - a very mundane thing to do but with life changing consequences.

What is God asking you to do today ? Are you willing to obey ? Once you obey whatever the Lord is asking you to do , you can then enjoy his blessing, his healing .

Obedience to God brings with it humility. Accepting God's way is admitting that the ways of the Lord are always better the ours ; we don't have to understand his ways always to obey Him. We have to have faith and believe that the Lord is who He says he is and that He will do what He says he'll do.

Micah 6:8 tells us " He has shown you, oh mortal , what is good . And what does the Lord require of you ? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God "

It does not take a mighty hero like Naaman to do the simple , mundane things God is asking you to do. He never asks for something He knows you can't do or achieve

If you know the Lord for yourself, have a think, what does this verse mean in your own life. This is between you and the Lord.

If you don't know Jesus, all he is asking of you is that you believe and have faith in him in exchange for your salvation. Don't be like Naaman who thought that the way to the cure was not significant enough .

Jesus has done the heavy lifting for us, He has taken our debt and carried our sins to the cross . He has done the significant and painful part for us.

Don't let your reaction to the way of the faith keep you from the cure you need most .

Let's pray

Lord open our hearts and let us hear what you are asking us to do today.

Give us the humility and the strength to obey you. In Jesus name

Amen



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