Sin: The Contaminator

Key Scriptures:*2 Kings 5:1-27*
Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper.
2 And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. 3 Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." 4 And Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel."
5 Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So he departed and took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.
6 Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy. 7 And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me." 8 So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel...

Key Point:
"The greatest danger of sin is not just what it does to us, but what it does to our ability to recognize what it is doing to us."

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you ever received advice or instructions that seemed too simple to be helpful, only to discover later that they were exactly what you needed?

Reflect, Think, & Share: Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.

- What does Naaman's situation teach us about the difference between outward success and our true spiritual condition? Why can it be easy to overlook our deepest needs when life seems to be going well?
- What are some ways people can become accustomed to sin until it no longer troubles their conscience? Why is that especially dangerous?
- What does the servant girl's response (v. 2-3) teach us about grace, forgiveness, and showing compassion to those who have wronged us?
- Why do you think Naaman approached being healed by using his wealth and connections? How do we sometimes approach God as though we can earn His favor or make a deal with Him?
- How many reasons can you come up with as to why Naaman became angry with Elisha's approach to Naaman's healing? (v. 8-12)
- How does pride interfere with a person's ability to receive grace?
- Why is the idea that there is one Savior and one gospel offensive to people? How would you explain that this is not arrogance on the part of Christians, but a claim about the remedy God has provided?
- After Naaman was healed, he declared that the God of Israel was the true God. What changes do you notice in Naaman's attitude and priorities? How should an encounter with God's grace change the way we live and what we worship?
- There is a contrast between the servant girl and Elisha's servant Gehazi: what do they teach us about the different way's a heart can respond to God's grace?
- What does Gehazi's story teach us about the danger of hidden sin and the difference between being near the things of God and having a heart transformed by God?

Start doing: Naaman could not cure himself. He had to humble himself and receive what God provided. We cannot cure our own sin either. What would it look like for you to depend more fully on the grace and cleansing that Jesus provides?

Prayer: Do you have any specific decisions or areas of life where you could use prayer from others? If you feel comfortable, share these issues with your study group so that they can pray with you and for you.

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