

Triad of Faith – II Kings 5:1-14

I. Introduction:

- A. Let's start with a silly question: Where on the map of God is your faith?
1. If it was required that you pinpoint its exact location on a spiritual map, where would your faith be?
 2. I don't know if it is true in real life, but in fiction, when the authorities want to find the bad guy, sometimes they use three cell towers to find his mobile phone.
 3. When they triangulate the data, drawing lines between the towers, voila, they know where he is.
- B. In the scripture before us we can see the faith of three individuals.
1. I think that its safe to say that our faith lays somewhere within the triangulation of these three examples.
 2. Please remember that our purpose in these lessons is not to entertain.
 - a. This is not one of those silly internet, or magazine articles, which claims to prove how smart you are or even if you'll be ready to retire at the age of sixty-five.
 - b. This is far more important. Where is your faith? How strong or how high and godly is your faith?
 3. I need to strengthen my faith. I need to bring what I know about our sovereign God into my daily life.
 4. I want to glorify His name. And the Bible tells me that my ability to trust Him is a part of that process.
 5. I would like each of us – all of us – to live in real, practical, Spirit-blessed faith in the Lord.
 6. The more we lean on Him, trusting Him to direct and empower us, the more we will be able to complete our primary Christian responsibility.
 7. And **if** – recognizing that our faith is more like Naaman's than Elisha's – is something which might help us to grow in this area of our lives, then I want us to be put to the test.
- C. We see the faith of three people in this scripture. Which one most resembles you?

II. Let's start with the faith of the **HEBREW MAID**.

- A. Elisha's mentor, Elijah, had been commissioned by God to anoint a new king over the country of Syria.
1. The king mentioned in **verse 1** was probably that man, Hazael.
 2. And if you remember, Elijah's heart broke during that anointing ceremony, because he knew what horrible things the Syrians were going to do in carrying out God's judgment on Israel.
 3. One of the least of those terrible things was the capture and enslavement of Israeli citizens.
 4. Among those Jewish slaves, either taken directly by Naaman or sold as a servant to his wife, was a young Hebrew girl.
 5. She is described as a **"little maid"** – two words which indicate her age, not her stature.
 6. They tell us that she was young, but we can't be sure exactly how young.
 7. Balancing the nature of her service and the words she used, I'd say she was an adolescent – certainly no more than in her early teens.
- B. Before her enslavement, this little girl had heard about God's prophet Elisha. Maybe she had even met him.
1. He had already become famous, performing several well-known miracles – recorded in chapters 2, 3 & 4.
 2. With the resilience of her youth, and under the apparent kindness of her mistress, she seemed to be adapting to her situation quite well. Her child-like faith was undeterred by her circumstances.
 3. Maybe she didn't know enough to realize that she was supposed to be miserable and mad at God that she was a slave.
 4. In my imagination, she happened one day to find Mrs. Naaman crying over her husband's deteriorating health.
 5. And with the innocence of youth she just blurred out, ***"Would God my lord (your husband) were with (Elisha) the prophet that is in Samaria. For he would recover (or heal) him of his leprosy."***
- C. Wow! Out of the mouth of babes. There is not the hint of doubt here.
1. In the simplicity of her faith, she was convinced that Elisha **would** heal her master, if they could meet.
 2. This young lady had no right to make a bold statement like this. No adult would have considered saying it.

3. What right does she have to guarantee that it was God's will, or Elisha's privilege, to heal this man?
4. The idea is ludicrous. It is preposterous.
5. Why would the God of Israel, or His prophet, be interested in helping Israel's enemy?
6. In her innocence she didn't consider any of these negative thoughts.
7. She simply knew – she confidently believed – that Elisha's God could do the unthinkable, the unimaginable

D. This is the epitome of the kind of faith I'd like to possess.

1. It may be against logic, but our God is greater than human logic.
2. It is unreasonable, but the Lord **can do** the unreasonable, and He sometimes **will do** the unreasonable, when He, and only He, would be glorified in the process.

E. If this little girl was here today she might blurt out and say, *"If President Biden would bow before Jesus, he would be cured of his leprosy."*

1. Of course, this is the sort of thing any Christian **might** say – **theoretically**.
2. But this girl would actually pray for his salvation & then expect to hear about it on Fox News tomorrow.
3. This is outstanding and unusual faith.
4. This sort of uncorrupted faith might insist that her mother's friend with brain cancer would be cured if she would just ask the Lord. Then the next day she'd ask Mom if she had heard from her friend.
5. Her prayers for rain would lead her to go into the closet looking for her umbrella.

F. The God of this little girl wasn't a chapter in a book of theology.

1. He wasn't merely the subject of a recent sermon.
2. For her, Jehovah could empower her prophet – her pastor – to knock down walls and to set igloos on fire.
3. According to her faith, her church back in Samaria, could become the center of a national revival.
4. She trusted that her God, Jehovah, could save the soul of even the hardest hearted heathen, or even a whole nation of heathen.

G. Oh, how I pray that God would give me this kind of trust and faith. *"Lord, help thou mine unbelief."*

III. But what if we compare her faith with the faith of GOD'S PROPHET?

A. In **chapter 2** we learn that Elisha knew his old seminary professor, Elijah, was soon to leave his post.

1. Elisha stuck to him like glue during the last few hours of his life.
2. And when the Spirit led them to the eastern district of Israel, with no bridge or boat to help them,
 - a. Elijah twisted up his cloak, slapping it down on the water of the Jordan,
 - b. and the two men crossed the river bed on dry ground, just as Israel had done so many years before.
3. Elisha was learning to trust God the way that Elijah learned to trust God.
4. When the younger man was miraculously left alone, and he needed to re-cross Jordan, by faith, he used the same technique that Elijah employed.
5. What had been no faith at all, had earlier become a small faith, but it was growing by leaps and bounds.
6. Now, Elisha could trust the Lord for almost anything – military victories, miraculous provisions of food, healing poisonous food and bad water, and even the raising of the dead.
7. Even though leprosy was considered to be a form of living death, Elisha believed that the God who created life in the first place could restore it at His will, even though that was a miracle he had not yet seen.

B. Again, this the size and strength of the faith I'd like to have.

1. I have little desire to heal cancer or raise dead bodies, but I do believe that my God could do these things.
2. And I beg the Lord to give me faith to trust that He will do it. (Rachel)
3. I have no desire to make the sun stand still, or to instantly travel from Gaza to Azotus.
4. But I do long to have the power to lead spiritually dead souls to eternal life in Christ – not just once in a while, but constantly.
5. I yearn to have the soggy sacrifice of my life – and of our church – set in flames by fire from heaven.

- C. That day when the mantle of Elijah fell onto his shoulders, Elisha was ready to take up his service of God on the western side of the river, so he walked up to the Jordan with the expectation of crossing on dry ground.
1. And as he twisted Elijah's mantle up like a rope, he uttered an interesting prayer: *"Where is the LORD God of Elijah?"*
 2. Why can't we adapt this thought to our needs today?
 3. *"Where is Jehovah, the God of Elijah, the God of Elisha, the God of the Apostle Paul?"*
 4. *Lord, we need you just as much today as any of those prophets in the Bible needed you.*
 5. *Lord, show us your mighty hand once again. Part the waters again. Glorify yourself once again."*
- D. Naaman rode up to Elisha's house in Gilgal, there in the valley of the Jordan, riding his fancy Cadillac chariot.
1. He thought that he was being quite humble when he personally got out and stood before Elisha's door.
 2. But all that God's prophet did was to command him to step those few hundred yards over to the Jordan and dip himself – baptize himself – seven times.
 3. The prophet declared that on his seventh descent under the water he would be healed.
- E. What gave Elisha the confidence that the Syrian would be healed? I assume that the Lord told him.
1. And that message was communicated to Naaman through Elisha's faith. Elisha had to believe the Lord.
 2. No one really has a right to give the sort of command that Elisha did except it initially came from God.
 3. So I'm not going to join the charismatic heretics, telling people they will become rich if they baptize their wallets. And I'm not going to tell the dying man to look into my eyes to be instantly cured.
 4. I am only going to do the things, and declare the things, which God has specifically told me.
 5. And I am only looking to find those directions in the pages of God's Word.
- F. Elisha had the faith and confidence to repeat what the Lord had told him.
1. That is real faith. That is Biblical faith.
 2. Jehovah is still the God of this universe, and He can still do miraculous things, like saving the soul of a wretched sinner, or healing the broken bones of a crippled church.
 3. There is much to admire and emulate in the faith of the Hebrew maid.
 4. But as mature Christians, I think that the faith of Elisha would be better.

IV. But what about the faith of NAAMAN?

- A. We are told in **verse** 1 that Naaman was a great man in the eyes of his earthly king, probably because of his valour and courage.
1. He was also apparently honored and respected by others in his nation, because of his military skills.
 2. And we are told that Jehovah was the One who enabled him to give deliverance to Syria.
 3. Ultimately any victory, or conversely any defeat, come out of the will of the Lord.
 4. But of course that didn't make Naaman a child of God or a man of faith.
 5. Furthermore Naaman's victories and national awards didn't keep him from contracting leprosy.
 6. His flesh was literally falling off his body, disfiguring his face and hands, and perhaps starting to steal way his eye sight.
 7. He was dying, as everyone else is dying, but it was far more obvious in him.
- B. Most likely he had visited all the best known physicians in Syria, but no one could help him.
1. He probably tried all the old wives cures and applied all the new and experimental creams.
 2. But then his wife told him what her servant girl had said, and this was passed on to Hazael, the king.
 3. Apparently, **Israel's** king, had become a vassal to Syria, and Hazael ordered that him to arrange for the healing of Naaman – or else.
 4. But Israel's king didn't even have the same degree of faith as Hazael.
 5. It doesn't appear that he even notified Elisha. All he did was fall apart in a panic.
 6. I'm not even sure how the prophet heard about Naaman. Perhaps the Lord revealed it to him.
 7. Elisha went to the king and ordered him to send Naaman to him.

- C. There must have been a tiny bit of faith both in Hazael and in Naaman to undertake this trip to Samaria.
1. But this was not saving faith. It was not Biblical faith.
 2. Naaman didn't have enough faith to humble him sufficiently to walk into the muddy Jordan River.
 - a. I think there is a lesson here which perhaps we should address more fully later.
 - b. The kind of faith we need to have is never far removed from utter humility and absolute surrender.
 - c. True faith leaves no room for human pride. It is impossible to be proud of true faith.
 3. Having come to the end of human hope, Naaman may have had a tiny bit of faith, but he didn't have much humility. He had spent all of that currency in coming to Israel in the first place.
- D. Hearing Elisha's directions, *"Naaman was wrath, & went away, & said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come to me, & stand, & call on the name of the Lord his God, & strike his hand over the place, & recover the leper."*
1. He said, *"I thought that this great faith healer would put on a show over my disease."*
 2. *I thought that he would utter some sort of magic words – prayerful words.*
 3. *I thought that he would honor me, since I've given him the honor of treating me."*
 4. Naaman turned away in a rage, uttering whatever curse words were available in his language at that time.
 5. But then some his servants encouraged his closest advisor to talk to him.
 6. Perhaps there was a tiny bit of faith in the man who tried to fan the flames of Naaman's faith. Maybe not.
- E. With his advisor's encouragement the great general reconsidered the prophet's words.
1. It may have been out of desperation; it may have been nothing more than his last hope of healing.
 2. There may have been only the tiniest bit of faith involved, and a corrupted form of faith at that.
 3. But he did as he was told *"and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."*
 4. His skin became, as some might say, *"as smooth as a baby's bottom."*
 5. *"And he returned to the man of God, he all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel."*
- F. This is what it is all about. This is the purpose that God blesses human faith.
1. This is why I yearn for the faith of Elisha – that sinners might admit that there is a God in this world.
 2. I pray that Post Falls would know that there is a Saviour working here in our church.
 3. I would like to know that sinful lives – heathen, idolatrous, wicked lives – are being changed, because new hearts are being planted in those wicked chests.
 4. Oh that our church was filled with people like Naaman.
 5. Unfortunately, he was a convert who didn't join Elisha's church. He didn't become a disciple of Christ.
 6. He didn't grow in the Lord while sitting under the constant teaching of the Word of God.
 7. He made his profession of faith, but then went home to serve the Lord in a corrupt and worldly way.
 8. Nevertheless, there is a hope that He is with Christ today.
- G. Can you imagine what Naaman's homecoming was like?
1. I hope that his wife was filled with joy; that there was a loving relationship there.
 2. And what became of that little maid? Was there any honor given to her?
 3. As a slave girl, my guess that she didn't get much more than a tip of the hat from Naaman.
 4. But you know, we shouldn't expect much more than that in this world.
 5. Society doesn't really care if the lost are converted from wickedness to righteousness.
 6. But again, personal exaltation shouldn't ever be our goal.
- H. If the Lord is glorified, that is the point. That should be our desire.
1. To know that we have done our part – that we have used our faith to be a blessing to someone – that should satisfy us.
 2. But first and foremost, to know that God is pleased with our service and with the manner in which we have served Him, that should fill us with joy.
 3. Oh that our faith would become more and more like Elisha's.