The Weak Know True Strength January 5, 2020

*2 Kings 5:1-7 Series: Help When You Feel Helpless*

If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito. – Betty Reese

Intro: Rethinking brokenness through wabi sabi and kintsugi.

1. When you’re strong and see your weakness, you can get help. (Naaman)
2. A string of successes can leave you feeling invincible.

v. 1 *commander of the army of the king of Syria*

v. 1 *a great man with his master and in high favor*

v. 1 *by him the LORD had given victory to Syria*

v. 1 *He was a mighty man of valor …*

1. It often takes a crisis to force us to re-evaluate our lives.

v. 1 *the LORD had given victory*

Harold Burchett: God’s dilemma is this – how to bless a man without ruining him.

v. 1 *but he was a leper*

1. The humble respond to the help God offers.

v. 4 *So Naaman went in and told his lord, “Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel.”*

* The concept of wabi sabi celebrates imperfection. What are some ways that our culture denies imperfection and celebrates (even false or superficial) perfection?
* Why would it have been hard (and humbling) for Naaman to get advice from his slave girl?
* What can you do to avoid confusing God’s blessing with your superiority?
1. When you’re strong and see your weakness, you can get mad. (king of Israel)
2. An enormous gift and a huge request create a massive dilemma.

v. 5 *So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.*

v. 6 *When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.*

1. Everybody else believed in the prophet, why didn’t he?

v. 7 *when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes*

v. 7 *Am I God, to kill and to make alive…?*

v. 7 *see how he is seeking a quarrel with me*

1. With humility and faith, he might have seen things differently.
* What might some reasons be that the slave girl immediately thought of the prophet while the king didn’t?
* If he had trusted in God and listened to the prophet, how might the king have seen blessing in this development instead of frustration?
* What are some areas in your life that you need help to see through eyes of faith?
1. When you’re weak and see God’s strength, you can make a difference. (slave girl)
2. In the world’s eyes, we can be seen as weak and insignificant.

v. 2 *Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl*

v. 2 *a little girl from the land of Israel*

v. 2 *she worked in the service of Naaman's wife*

v. 4 *the girl from the land of Israel*

1. Faith in God overcomes bitterness at the world’s labels.

v. 3 *Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria!*

Matthew 5:46 … *if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*

Ephesians 6:5 *Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ*

1. Faith in God empowers our witness and enables our impact.

v. 3 *He would cure him of his leprosy.*

1 Corinthians 1:27 *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong …*

D.L. Moody: If this world is going to be reached, I am convinced that it must be done by men and women of average talent. After all, there are comparatively few people in the world who have great talents.

* If you were the little girl carried off in the raid as a slave, how would you begin to deal with the injustice you faced?
* How does this passage relate to your work or relationships?
* Who are the Naamans in your life whom God might have you pray for and impact?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study 2 Kings 5:8-14.

Notes