

The Power of Living Water

2Kings Ch 5 v 1-15

Jonah Ch 1-4 (familiarise yourselves with this story)

Having already established that this living water is synonymous with God's word the Bible relates how this word flows on from one prophet to another. In 2 Kings Ch 5 we read about how Elisha acted as mediator showing once more God's power through water. Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, suffered from a dreadful skin disease. When Elisha heard of this he asked Naaman to come to his home. Elisha did not even speak to Naaman face to face but sent a servant to tell him to go and wash seven times in the River Jordan and he would be completely cured of his disease. Naaman was quite taken aback by this seemingly quick dismissal. He thought at least Elisha would see him in person, pray with him or touch him in some way and anyway what was special about the River Jordan? Why was it better than the rivers near to his home? Naaman's servants persuaded him to obey Elisha and having followed the instructions his skin became healthy once more. Elisha would accept no gift in return even though Naaman was insistent. "Go in peace", Elisha said. So Naaman left promising never to worship any god except The Lord.

There can be no "watery" story in the Bible that shows the power of God's word more than that which relates the adventures of Jonah. He was the prophet who tried to disobey God's command yet lived to pass on his message to the next generation. We read that God spoke directly to Jonah telling him to go to Nineveh, the capital of the great empire of Assyria, Israel's deadly enemy and tell the people there how displeased he was with them. Jonah did not want to obey God and tried to run away, setting off by boat in the opposite direction. The ship he set sail on encountered a great storm and the sailors believed Jonah to be the cause of the storm. Jonah had to admit what he was doing and as the wind got worse he pleaded with the sailors to throw him overboard and that then, and only then, the waves would subside. Immediately they did this the waters became calm. The sailors recognising God's power, offered a sacrifice to him and promised to serve him in future. However, Jonah was not forgotten. A large fish swallowed him up from where he prayed to God for forgiveness. After three days Jonah was delivered on to dry land. Then, having been asked by God a second time, he went straight to Nineveh. This time the people believed God's message and were sorry for their behaviour. When God saw they were truly repentant he changed his mind and did not punish them as he had originally intended to.

Both these stories show how God requires obedience from everyone, not just his chosen prophets but also from the ordinary people of the day. Naaman was cured and Jonah was saved when they obeyed the Lord.

For Discussion

1. Elisha asked Naaman to do an easy little thing. Do we obey God in little things or do we dismiss them as being inconsequential?
2. Jonah's task was a big challenge. Do we feel that God ask big things of us that could be life changing?
3. Thinking of things under the sea, is music from the film Titanic in your collection?

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