

God's Way, not Our Way

READING

2 Kings 5

1 Samuel 15

John 13

John 17

In this everyone will perceive that you are disciples to me, if you have love for one another.”

In 2 Kings 5 we read a story of a Syrian general, Naaman, who caught leprosy. He tried all the physicians, healers, crackpots and cures he could find in Syria, but without success.

His wife's young hand-maid, a Jewish captive slave from the previous war, made the comment to her mistress that back in Israel they have prophets of God who can actually cure this kind of thing.

Off he went.

He went to the king of Israel, and finally to Elisha the prophet.

Elisha said, “wash 7 times the Jordan and you'll be healed”.

Naaman stormed off, back to Syria, fuming that they have better rivers than that in Syria! (I'd say he said, “Nah, man”... but that's a bit corny, so I won't).

But his servants talked him into it... You came all this way, may as well at least try it.

He did. He was healed.

In 1 Samuel 15 we read how Saul was sent to wipe out their enemy the Amalekites.

He totally defeated them, but even though Yahweh had told them to destroy everything, men, women, children, cattle, sheep... wipe them out totally...

Saul spared the king, and he also brought back the best of the sheep and the cattle to make an offering to Yahweh.

Yahweh was very angry. He had raised Saul up from nothing to become king of Israel, and when he asked him to do this one thing, Saul had a better idea.

There is a powerful statement here. “To obey is better than sacrifice”

Yahweh has more delight in obedience than he has in all our sacrifices and burnt offerings.

To the point that he was really angry with Saul for disobeying him and keeping some animals to make a sacrifice. To the point that because of this rebellion, he removed Saul as king of Israel.

What about us? The church?

In John 13, Yeshua told us to love one another the way he loved us, so that the world would know that we are his disciples.

Jesus even prayed for it in John 17. That our oneness with each other would show the world that what we are saying is true, and they would then trust in Yeshua.

Do we do it?

Do we even know one another?

Most churches I've seen... they tolerate one another.

Like Saul, we have better ideas. We've come up with better ways to reach the world.

We have professional music, great preachers, big impressive ~~temples~~ buildings, fantastic online presence, even TV shows. All to show everyone how great God is, and that we are his disciples.

English lessons, play groups, afternoon teas, ... anything to get them in the door.

All of those ideas, every single one of them comes from the world.

They come from big business, from marketing.

And they all stop us having to love one another.

Honestly I can imagine Yahweh in heaven, beating his head, crying out with tears rolling down his face...

“Will you just do it the way I told you to!”