

# livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

## Reading 1 2 Kgs 5:14-17

Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of Elisha, the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean of his leprosy.

Naaman returned with his whole retinue to the man of God. On his arrival he stood before Elisha and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel. Please accept a gift from your servant."

Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives whom I serve, I will not take it;" and despite Naaman's urging, he still refused. Naaman said: "If you will not accept, please let me, your servant, have two mule-loads of earth, for I will no longer offer holocaust or sacrifice to any other god except to the LORD."

## Reading 2 2 Tm 2:8-13

Beloved:

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David: such is my gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal.

But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

## Reflection Process / Questions

- 10 mins Reading - underline a word or idea that strikes you
  - 10 mins Writing - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
  - 10 mins Sharing / Praying - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
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- Our readings today have 2 characters who suffer from Leprosy. Lepers were excluded from living in the community. People didn't want to catch the disease. It was also commonly believed that leprosy was a sign of being punished by God and that the leper was both morally and ritually unclean. Having to live alone and outside the town (Lev 13,46) caused incredible loneliness and constant rejection. What are the modern forms of leprosy causing loneliness and rejection today? What might your form of 'leprosy' be?
  - Naaman was from Syria (a foreigner), he was a general in the Syrian Army (an enemy), and had leprosy (to be excluded). Israel and Syria were not friendly toward each other. Possibly from a previous conquest Naaman had even taken a Jewish girl to be a slave in his own household. Everyone would have been against Naaman! Consider the courage of Naaman in going to Israel to a holy man named 'Elisha'. What obstacles has he had to overcome for healing? He insists on taking soil from Israel home to build an Altar. What sign of thanksgiving could you 'build' to offer worship to God for healing and forgiveness?

## Gospel Lk 17:11-19

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests."

As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."



"Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."  
Luke 17:19

- Scholars suggest that St Paul's letter to Timothy was written while he was in prison. St Paul was 'in chains', treated as a criminal, ultimately for his preaching the gospel of inclusion by God in Christ to the gentiles. He invites young Timothy to also be willing to persevere and suffer for this mission. What would you be willing to endure 'chains' for? Do you consider yourself a revolutionary to over-turn the patterns of exclusion in society?
- Gospel stories are like 'ice-bergs'. 90% of the story is beneath the surface. Underneath the story of the lepers are further stories of exclusion, hurt, isolation. The Samaritan figure is like Naaman in the first reading, a hated foreigner. Past events had caused Samaritans not to acknowledge Jerusalem and the Temple as the place of true worship. Healing from leprosy required a 'certificate of health' by the Priest and only when this was given would a 'leper' be accepted back into the community. The 10 lepers are obviously so keen to see the priest that they lose sight of who did the healing - Jesus. Have you had some 'high' moments in life and forgot to return and 'give thanks' to God. Write or share or pray a 'thank-you' list to God noticing things in your life you do not normally say 'thanks' to God for.
- God wishes to include and bring to faith the most unlikely of characters. Naaman and the Samaritan leper show God wishes to include rather than exclude. What does this teach us about God? How might this adjust your 'image of God'? Which unlikely character in your workplace might God be inviting you to 'bring to faith'? What misconceptions do you and they need to let go of so that God's welcome and inclusion can be realised?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?