

**October 9, 2022 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Rev. Jen Nagel, University Lutheran Church of Hope**

**2 Kings 5:1-15c, 2 Timothy 2:8-15**  
**Luke 17:11-19**

**Grace and peace to you, beloved ones, grace and peace. Amen.**

**You heard me mention already that today we've got an I Wonder, I Notice sermon.**

Some of you are familiar with this practice.

For others it's new, so let me explain.

Today we all get "in" on the preaching!

**For a number of weeks** I've been on the lookout for a good passage, a juicy story, that we could dig into.

This morning we've actually got two that would work well:

The gospel, with those ten folks whose leprosy is healed.

And another healing story, the reading, from 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, about Naaman, who also suffered from leprosy.

**It's Naaman that we'll focus on today, for there's so much to wonder about, to notice.**

There are a number of characters to explore:

Naaman, the commander of the army

And Naaman's wife

His wife's servant girl

The King of Aram

And also Naaman's servant

And then there's the king of Israel

And the holy man, the prophet Elisha

**As we explore this healing story and wonder about what it means for us, today,**

it's good to keep in mind the different forms that healing takes.

Certainly Naaman's leprosy is a physical condition, but stigma surely played a role.

In our lives we think about physical health as well as mental health, and the stigma.

But let's remember also of the health of communities, the health of society.

I think about healing that is wholistic, that restores us in body, in mind, and in spirit.

**You've heard Seneca read about Naaman already.**

In a few minutes I'll read the passage again, slowly.

Your job is to interrupt me—and I mean it.

But don't just interrupt, **interrupt using a phrase that begins either**

“I wonder... (whatever you wonder).”

or “I notice...(whatever you notice).”

I'll repeat what you say so that it's amplified and all can hear it better.

With masks and distance and my ears, I simply ask that you speak up, and forgive me if I ask you to repeat.

Also, if you are on Zoom, feel free to use the chat line.

One of the tech people will interject your wondering, your noticing.

After your holy interruption, another person may jump in with something they wonder or notice,

or I'll continue until another interruption arises.

**So today it may sound like this at the beginning,**

“Naaman, commander of the army...”

I wonder what the job description for the commander of the army is.

Or I notice that this guy must be strong, powerful.

**Remember, only two rules...**

**1. There are no wrong answers, let the Spirit lead us.**

You may feel like you don't know enough, but really those can be the best interruptions.

Your job is to interrupt... It only works if you do.

**2. Use the structure.**

Begin your interruption with: I wonder... or I notice...

**Ready? Are your voices ready? My name is Jen; what's your name?**

**[READ 2 Kings 5:1-15c]**

**Thank you!**

It's such a cool thing to hear you wondering and noticing.

I have a secret hope that you'll go home today,

or maybe out to lunch and you'll keep wondering, you'll keep noticing.

Nearly any one of these notes or wonders alone could become the Sunday sermon.

Instead we get a whole bunch of them.

The Spirit stirs and moves and has her way with us.

**Let me lift up just a couple that I've noticed and that some of you touched on too.**

**I notice the important role of the servants.**

There is Naaman's wife's servant girl who initiates.... everything.

And there is Naaman's servant who speaks truth in a way that Naaman can hear.

On days when we're feeling small, like supporting actors, without a lot of power,

I wonder how we can remember these pivotal roles

and how healing happens because of their faith, their relationships,  
their involvement, their voice, their subtle and strategic input.

**I notice how God's healing can't be bought.**

Naaman comes prepared with all sorts of resources.

So desperate he is.

So steeped in transactions.

We pay this, they give us that.

We do this, they do that for us.

But God's healing is beyond his control... and that leads me to the next one:

**I notice Naaman's power, his sense of privilege, his reluctance to let go of his expectations.**

And how, in the end, Naaman's healing happens across cultures,

in a way that Naaman didn't expect or even believe possible,

in the river that isn't familiar to Naaman, that isn't his own,

by the power of a prophet and a God from another community, another land.

**I wonder how we are healed across boundaries,**

despite our righteous push back,

healed in our vulnerability,

healed by the grace that meets us where we least expect it and scarcely can accept it. I wonder...

**Dear ones, preachers, thank you for adding your reflections today.**

May holy healing find you and find us,

may grace surround you,

may God meet you where you are and take you where you need to go.

And, let the people say, Amen.