

## The Little Maid and Naaman II

### What the Little Maid did say....

What did she say? She said 'If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria. He would cure him of his leprosy.' She pointed Naaman to Elisha, God's prophet in Israel, who served the true God. Her statement to Naaman's wife was a statement of faith in God, that nothing is too difficult for God.

In Ch. 4, we have 4 miracle stories of Elisha: the miraculous provision of oil for the widow so she needn't sell her children into slavery; the raising from the dead of the Shunammite's boy; the removal of deadly poison from the soup about to be eaten by students in the school of the prophets; and the miraculous multiplication of a few loaves and some ears of grain into food sufficient for 100 starving people. Elisha performs miracles which show God's absolute power over death, disease, deadly poison, and desperate financial and family circumstances. He is the God who delivers! Elisha serves the God of the possible, who revealed Himself to Jeremiah in Jer. 32.26 saying 'Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me?'

The little maid's witness reveals the importance of parenting. She had learned in her humble home that God's people were to be a light to the nations, drawing all peoples, including one's bitterest enemies, to God in worship and love.

**EGW PK 245.** *'There is no higher trust than that committed to fathers and mothers in the care and training of their children.'*

**Deut. 11.18-21.** The little maid's parents have been faithful parents, carefully instructing their daughter in the knowledge of God, in His Word, and in His character. The little maid had learned the character of God so well that when disaster struck and she was kidnapped, rather than sinking into bitter vindictiveness, she could minister to her captors, she could be an agent of healing and conversion for the enemies of God's people.

**EGW Conflict and Courage 227.** *'He who sent . . . the little Israelite maiden to the help of Naaman, the Syrian captain, sends men and women and youth today as His representatives to those in need of divine help and guidance.'*

**EGW Child Guidance 484.** *'We know not in what line our children may be called to serve. They may spend their lives within the circle of the home; they may engage in life's common vocations or go as teachers of the gospel to heathen lands; but all are alike called to be missionaries for God, ministers of mercy to the world. They are to obtain an education that will help them to stand by the side of Christ in unselfish service.'*

Parents today, grandparents, and all who help in the nurture of a child - we are raising them not merely to love God, but to be His missionaries, faithfully witnessing about their heavenly Father wherever life takes them and in whatever circumstances they find themselves. This is a solemn responsibility. We raise them so that whilst we do not know where they will go, we know with whom they will go.

### What the Little Maid didn't say....

There is much she could have said about Israel other than talk about Elisha and point to God. In her parents' lifetime, Ahab was king, a wicked king. He married Jezebel, a Lebanese princess, who imported Baal worship into Israel. Hundreds of prophets of Baal were supported from the public purse. Jezebel had hunted down and killed most of God's prophets. A huge temple for Baal worship with an altar of Baal had been built in Samaria.

Elijah had despairingly told God that he was the only one left who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Golden calves had been installed in the north / south to prevent people going to Jerusalem to worship at the temple of the true God.

The overwhelming majority of Israelites had abandoned God and followed the popular false gods of their time. To worship God was to be part of a tiny minority, living in fear of persecution or execution. Ahab and Jezebel had arranged for the murder of Naboth, a God-fearing Israelite who had refused to sell his land to Ahab. The justice system in Israel had been completely corrupted. The rich oppressed the poor, who had nowhere to turn for justice. Israelite society was rotten, from top to bottom....

When Ahab died, he was succeeded in turn by 2 wicked sons, Ahaziah and Jehoram, neither of whom recognized God, both of whom introduced wickedness and evil practices to the people of Israel.

There was much the little maid could have said, and justifiably so, but she didn't. Criticism of God's people and gleefully relating what is happening amongst God's people to non-believers never leads to their conversion – it merely hardens them in their unbelief.

Had the little maid waxed lyrical about all the apostasies of God's people and the failures of the leaders of God's people, Naaman would never have been converted – he would merely have been confirmed in his unbelief. He would have remained a leper, a man of war, a pagan, dying without hope.

**EGW COL 45.** *'Satan has many helpers. Many who profess to be Christians are aiding the tempter to catch away the seeds of truth from other hearts. Many who listen to the preaching of the word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or a political speaker. The message that should be regarded as the word of the Lord to them is dwelt upon with trifling or sarcastic comment. The minister's character, motives, and actions, and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated, and this in the hearing of the unconverted. Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children. Thus are destroyed respect for God's messengers, and reverence for their message. And many are taught to regard lightly God's word itself. Thus in the homes of professed Christians many youth are educated to be infidels. And the parents question why their children are so little interested in the gospel, and so ready to doubt the truth of the Bible.'*

Parents – be careful what you say. If you have genuine reason for concern, speak privately, but not before little ears, or you may find you are raising heathen in your home.

## **Conclusion.**

'Please Miss, my God lives higher up'. So said the little girl to her Soviet teacher who claimed that Yuri Gagarin did not see God while in orbit. 'If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.' So said the little maid to Naaman's wife.

What did these two children have in common? These were the words spoken by children raised in God-fearing families.

Both families lived in a godless age, both families lived in societies where the worship of the true God was suppressed, both families lived in societies where to publicly proclaim faith in the true God was very dangerous, both families lived in an era where God-fearing parents had excuses not to nurture the fear of God in their children, yet both families took seriously their God-given responsibilities to raise God-fearing children.

As we ponder the story of the little maid, we are all called to reflect on what we speak about. By our words, do we build up, or tear down? Does what we share with non-believers draw them closer to God, or confirm them in scornful disbelief?

Do people learn of the loving character of God or the troublesome saints of God?

**Ephesians 4:29-5:2** <sup>29</sup>Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, <sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, <sup>2</sup>and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Jesus said ‘by their fruit shall ye know them.’ The fruit of the little maid’s walk with God was the physical healing and eternal salvation of Naaman, a pagan and diseased man of violence. By God’s grace, in what we say, and what we don’t say, may the fruit of our walk with God be the healing and salvation of all those whom God places in our path.