

**Last week we started to explore this powerful route to freedom...**

**Breakdown – Breakthrough – Breakout... A quick recap...**

**Breakdown;** where everything is a mess... the STUFF (sad, tragic, ugly, fears and failures) of life

**Breakthrough...** where we're fighting for our freedom

**Breakout...** where we experience the victory (smashing success)

**Question... why doesn't God just start with breakouts? If God can bring breakout anytime, why does He make us wait?**

In the Gospel of John we see this happening to Mary and Martha while they are waiting on Jesus to come and heal their sick brother Lazarus. When Jesus finally shows up, Lazarus is dead and Jesus is accused of taking too long. Jesus comes and tells them to remove the stone covering the tomb and commands Lazarus to come out.

**Waiting for God to move is hard...**

Maybe we don't like waiting because... Waiting reveals our character, our motives and the way we feel. Waiting has a way of rubbing off the rough edges of our lives... it transforms our character. We may not always understand why we have to wait, but the good news is that God never asks us to wait without Him. Waiting is a discipline, actively pursuing Him, which trains us to be like Him.

**Hebrews 12:11 says,**

*"For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*

**What is God asking us to remove for life to come out? What are we willing to wait on God for?**

**Let's pray...**

**Breakthroughs are faith in action... this is what we can learn from the story of Naaman**

**2nd Kings 5:1-15**

**Naaman is one determined man...**he wants a breakout... he wants to be cured... this is a man used to winning battles but he is losing to this disease!

**He travels from Aram** (present-day Syria) to Israel, a trip of approximately 135 miles. He travels from Jerusalem (most likely) after leaving the king of Israel (Joram), to Samaria (to Elisha's house) was a trip of about 40 miles.

When Naaman shows up at Elisha's house with all his horses and chariots (symbols of power and authority), the prophet sends someone else out to give instructions.

*"Go wash seven times in the Jordan River. Then you'll be completely cured."*

## **Verses 11-12**

Naaman gets angry, he walks off, grumbling, “Why couldn’t he come out and talk to me? I thought for sure he would stand in front of me and pray to the Lord his God, then wave his hand over my skin and cure me. The rivers in Damascus (my home, my stomping grounds, my comfort zone) are just as good as any river in Israel. I could have washed in them and been cured.” This isn’t the way I planned this going down!

**God messes with the way we like to do things!** God has a curious habit of asking for simple obedience, throughout Scripture He asks us to let go of the one thing that holding us back from a breakout... it is true in this story.

**Here are some of Naaman’s struggles with these instructions...**

**Naaman knows you just don’t just wash away leprosy...**and if you wanted to be clean, the muddy Jordan river isn’t your first choice. He knows it’s not about the water... that he needs divine help and his gods in Syria were no help.

**It makes no sense to take part of a Jewish cleansing ritual (and it was, hinted on conversion, one of the steps)...** it would be embarrassing to be healed this way. After all, we’re a superior military force... we can take what we want... why should I lower myself to behave like a Jew... it’s a huge strike to Naaman’s ego. Have I traveled all this way to look foolish?

**Naaman is used to life and death situations,** he’s a skilled general... he knows all about warfare and fighting... **he is not accustomed to surrendering his way.** And this is exactly what God requires from him... it’s his choice.

**Remain in breakdown mode or breakthrough into breakout mode.**

**What you choose to step into matters!** The truth is this... you’re always heading somewhere... why not the right direction? If we want breakout, victory, healing, deliverance... we must step towards God... into His purpose and will! And leave our behind!

**Not only does what you choose to step into matters... What you choose to return to matters!** He could have gone back home to Damascus, back to what he knows best... it’s very interesting... the name Damascus means “earthly power”. Naaman could have chosen to go back to something that couldn’t save him.

**We don’t get to pick the river (the method) to our breakout...** because we have no clue to what is best for us. I think I do... but I don’t! **The path from breakdown to breakthrough and to breakout requires faith...** We must continuously learn to trust God’s way and His timing.

**God doesn’t do things the way I think so work...**

**Back to the story...** the servants come to their master and plead with him...

## Verse 13

*“Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something difficult, you would have done it. So why don't you do what he said? Go wash and be clean.”*

**Clean = cured, purified and set apart –**

**Basically asking him...** Would you rather die from something or live for something?

**Verse 14** Naaman swallowed his pride... and obeyed Elisha's instructions.

*“Naaman walked down to the Jordan; he waded out into the water and stooped down in it seven times, just as Elisha had told him. Right away, he was cured, and his skin became as smooth as a child's.”*

**Naaman walked down to the Jordan...** This makes it seem that all Naaman had to do was turn around and jump into a muddy river... here's another reason for Naaman's anger. The river Jordan was about 25 miles away! He's already travel hundreds of miles... this had to frustrate him.

**How far are you willing to go to be free?** To be clean? To be set apart from everything that holds you back?

**God doesn't always make sense but He always makes a way**

## Psalm 34:19

*“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.”*

**The text states that his skin became as smooth as a child's skin.** It wasn't the skin of a battled harden general or old man... it was restored to brand new skin!

## Interesting fact...Luke 4:27

*“And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian.”*

**Jesus inserts this fact here to remind everybody that even when men think you are unworthy of salvation** (and Gentiles were) God can bring healing/deliverance/salvation to them.

**Breakthroughs are cleansing Agents**

## 2 Corinthians 5:17

*“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”*

**If we want to be clean, we have to be willing to step into what God has for us and away from what He doesn't!**

Naaman had to take off his armor... expose his disease and what it did to him. Humbling... yes... but obedience to God cleansed him and set him free.

**Next week... What does it mean to walk in new skin?**