

MONDAY, MARCH 4

Father, if the prophet had commended you to do something difficult, would you not have done it?

2 Kings 5:13b



In today's reading from 2 Kings, we meet Naaman, a foreign commander who suffered from leprosy. Through his wife's Israeli servant, Naaman learns of Elisha the prophet and seeks a cure for his lifelong disease. The cure Elisha eventually offers is disconcertingly simple: he instructs Naaman to wash in the Jordan seven times so as to be healed.

Rather than welcome this news, Naaman is enraged by the simplicity of Elisha's instructions. He was expecting a task as all-encompassing and consuming as his disease. His servants point out the irony in this, saying "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it?" Naaman's healing comes about in part

because he sets aside his expectations and accepts the simplicity of Elisha's instructions.

I think this is just the message we need for this moment in Lent. For some, Lent is a time of profound sacrifice, fervent prayer and self-examination—and this is certainly appropriate. The way of the cross is serious work, and Lent is a time of living more deeply into that. And yet we are also following the One who said "my yoke is easy and my burden is light" and whose life and witness was marked by penitence but also feasting and joy. Sometimes healing can come through the simplest paths.

Today's readings

Psalm 42:1–7 | 2 Kings 5:1–15b | Luke 4:23–30

Do we sometimes make the journey more complicated than it needs to be? How might embracing simplicity and trusting in God's guidance lead us to healing and a deeper connection with the way of the cross?