

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany, Year B

The Collect:

O God, the strength of all who put their trust in you: Mercifully accept our prayers; and because in our weakness we can do nothing good without you, give us the help of your grace, that in keeping your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First Lesson: 2 Kings 5:1-14

¹Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favour with his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. ²Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³She said to her mistress, 'If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.' ⁴So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. ⁵And the king of Aram said, 'Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel.'

He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. ⁶He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, 'When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy.' ⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, 'Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me.'

⁸But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, 'Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.' ⁹So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. ¹⁰Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, 'Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean.' ¹¹But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, 'I thought

that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?’ He turned and went away in a rage. ¹³ But his servants approached and said to him, ‘Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, “Wash, and be clean”?’ ¹⁴ So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

Psalm: Psalm 30

- ¹ I will exalt you, O Lord,
because you have lifted me up *
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.
- ² O Lord my God, I cried out to you, *
and you restored me to health.
- ³ You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead; *
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.
- ⁴ Sing to the Lord, you servants of his; *
give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.
- ⁵ For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, *
his favor for a lifetime.
- ⁶ Weeping may spend the night, *
but joy comes in the morning.
- ⁷ While I felt secure, I said,
“I shall never be disturbed. *
You, Lord, with your favor, made me as strong as
the mountains.”
- ⁸ Then you hid your face, *
and I was filled with fear.
- ⁹ I cried to you, O Lord; *
I pleaded with the Lord, saying,
- ¹⁰ “What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the Pit? *
will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?

¹¹ Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; *

O Lord, be my helper.”

¹² You have turned my wailing into dancing; *

you have put off my sack-cloth and clothed me with joy.

¹³ Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing; *

O Lord my God, I will give you thanks for ever.

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. ²⁵ Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we an imperishable one. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; ²⁷ but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

⁴⁰ A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, ‘If you choose, you can make me clean.’ ⁴¹ Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³ After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, ⁴⁴ saying to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ ⁴⁵ But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

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