

Just Do It!

[2 Kings 5:1-14](#), [Mark 1:40-45](#)

Just do it. Nike embraced this slogan when it introduced the swoosh logo that literally swept the world. According to Nike company lore, one of the most famous and easily recognized slogans in advertising history was coined at a 1988 meeting of Nike's ad agency Weiden and Kennedy and a group of Nike employees. Dan Weiden, speaking admiringly of Nike's can-do attitude, reportedly said, "You Nike guys, you just do it." The rest, as they say, is (advertising) history. Just do it.

I find some interesting parallels between the scripture read for us from 2 Kings and the one from the gospel of Mark. In both cases, someone was suffering from what was referred to as leprosy – some type of skin ailment. Those with this condition were considered unclean and therefore usually considered outcasts in their village. In the first story, Naaman was

described as a great commander and had achieved great victories in battle, yet because he suffered from this illness, he was to be separated and held at bay from the rest of the people. Naaman then received word that there was hope to be found with Elisha, the prophet of Israel, the man of God. Elisha sent word for Naaman to come to Elisha, ‘that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.’ This provides a measure of hope to Naaman, hence he breaks out all the good stuff in order to win the favor of the prophet.

Can you imagine Naaman’s disappointment when Elisha doesn’t even come out to greet him? He makes a difficult journey bringing gifts from Naaman’s king. He’s not feeling well and the prophet doesn’t even take the effort to greet him. Naaman becomes absolutely indignant. It appears Naaman had already decided how his cure would take place. Naaman had decided that God would respond to him in a specific way. In

some way, Naaman believed he could control God by receiving a miracle on Naaman's terms. In 2 Kings 5:11 Naaman says, '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!' Naaman surely had this whole thing planned out! Naaman was told to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman even objected to that – he named other rivers that were better.

Why would Naaman become angry when his cure was within his grasp? Why do we at times become angry or disappointed when God presents us with a solution that doesn't align with our plans? There is a scene from the movie Shrek where the princess (in every sense of the word) is chastising Shrek for not slaying the dragon who was guarding her. Shrek was sent to rescue the princess and does in fact do this, but not the way the princess had it all planned out. She too becomes

angry that Shrek isn't following her idea of a perfect rescue. At this point I am reminded of the Nike slogan – just do it.

Naaman was fortunate to have servants that were able to see the big picture. They reminded Naaman that what he was told to do was not hard – just wash in the Jordan River and be clean. More importantly, Naaman finally listens and does what Elisha told him to do, washes seven times in the Jordan River, and his skin was restored to that of a young boy.

What would have happened if Naaman had stopped at 5 washes? What would have happened if Naaman would not have gone to the Jordan River but to another one? He would not have received the gift from God in its entirety. This ties us to the second story as presented in the gospel of Mark. A man also suffering from leprosy approached Jesus and said, 'if you choose, you can make me clean.' Jesus responded by healing the man of his leprosy, but he didn't stop there. In Palestine at

that time, someone was excommunicated if they contracted a skin disease such as leprosy. As mentioned before, the person was considered unclean and could not be a part of the community in any way. Jesus healed this man and told him to go and show himself to the priest and present the appropriate sacrifice in the temple so he could reenter society. Jesus was not only interested in healing this man's illness; he was interested in helping this man once again have a glimmer of hope to provide for himself and his family. Just do it.

In both scriptures there is a call to action – just do it. In order to move forward in action, we need to first hear the instructions from God. We need to hear God's call for us so we can get an idea of where we are suppose to go or what we are suppose to do. Next, we need to process the message so our brains are synchronized with our ears. We interpret the message received and start the planning process. Finally, we take action

and put the message and interpretation and planning into a firm direction and move forward following God's guidance.

Does anyone recall our vision and mission statements for Mount Tabor? Throughout last summer we met with church leaders and members to get an idea of what areas of ministry we want to focus as a congregation. All of us are feeling the call of God in this community. God put us together at this time to not spin in circles but to connect with our community in very real ways. So what are our vision and mission statements?

Vision: To help members of our community find a personal relationship with Jesus Christ .

Mission: As Christ's followers in this world, we will serve God through:

- Celebrating God's gifts by enhancing our worship service.
- Reaching out to our children and young people by providing safe and fun activities for families, enhancing our Sunday School, and incorporating children and youth in music programs for worship.

- Establishing good communication with our community through the use of our website, flyers, newsletters, presence at community events, and increased use of signage for special events.

So how are we with our ‘just do it’ portion? I believe we have heard God’s call. Through our vision and mission statements we have processed that call and put down a plan. It’s exciting to be a part of the action piece of the plan.

We are sailing quickly into the Lenten season filled with activities and special services as ways for us to reconnect with our Source through remembering the journey Jesus took to the cross, and the blessed celebration of the resurrection. We are connecting with our community through special activities. We are enhancing our worship through incorporating the prayers, music and sermon together to send a unified message each Sunday. We are working on enhancing our musical offerings – I don’t want to spoil the surprise but stay tuned for more action on

this front. I am pleased to announce a Youth Sunday being planned for May 3. We do not have many children and youth but I believe we can work with the ones we have to help enhance their experience with Christ as well as to enhance ours as we are reminded of our role to help influence future generations.

So let us keep our ear attuned for God's will for us as a congregation. Let us keep our minds focused on God so we can understand and plan ways to make our vision statement a reality. We are called to help members of our community find a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Let's just do it. Amen.