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I feel a bit disoriented today. I set my clock back last night, but since I'm an early riser and my body didn't know I could sleep in longer this morning, I was awake *very* early. By the time church is over I'll need a nap.

Some studies have shown that messing with the time can lead to adverse consequences, such as car accidents. Some suggest that messing with our sleep patterns can result in more accidents, while others suggest that having more daylight in the morning reduces the number of accidents.

Other studies have shown that the change of time can increase work-place accidents, heart attacks, and headaches.

Whoever came up with the idea of moving the time back and forth, anyway?

Benjamin Franklin suggested the idea back in 1784, as a way to economize on sunlight and burn fewer candles during winter mornings and nights, but the practice did not become steadily official in the United States until Congress passed the Uniform Time Act in 1966, with the same intention of saving energy.¹

Since we no longer burn candles for light and we now have more efficient light bulbs, maybe it's time to leave time alone.

Naaman lived 2800 years ago and didn't have to worry about setting his clock back, but he did get frustrated over the issue of time. Naaman worked for the king of Aram (AIR-uhm), which is the location of our modern Syria. From the perspective of the writer of 2 Kings, Naaman was an outsider, one who did not follow the God of Israel, and yet, amazingly the story focuses on him as the one who went seeking God!

On one of the raids in Israel, they captured a young girl, who became a servant to Naaman's wife. The young girl noticed Naaman's skin disease, sometimes called leprosy or Hansen's disease, which results in an inflammation of the skin and inability to feel pain, and therefore can result in injuries to hands or feet. The young girl commented to Naaman's wife, "I wish that he could go see God's prophet who lives back home in Israel, for he could cure him of this disease.

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His wife passed on the message to her husband, and Naaman sought permission from the King of Aram to go and find this cure. The king wrote a letter to the king of Israel and sent a bunch of gifts. When Naaman presented the letter and gifts to the King of Israel, the king became upset, knowing he didn't have the power to cure him. He thought the other king was trying to start a fight.

It's ironic that the King of Israel didn't even recognize the solution for the illness or suggest he visit the prophet Elisha. Have you ever found yourself in that situation, a time when you noticed someone in need but didn't even think about offering a prayer or our church as an option? Sometimes we take our faith or our lifestyle for granted, forgetting that many struggle with basic needs every day, forgetting that many are searching for meaning and hoping for words of kindness. Have you ever felt too busy to offer someone a spark of hope in the midst of their struggles, feeling as though you didn't have enough time?

In the novel *The Time Keeper*, author Mitch Albom imagines when the first person began keeping track of time. The fictitious character named Dor discovered how to measure time by watching the movement of the sun on a stick in the ground and by measuring water dripping from a hole in a bowl. In doing so, he became Father Time, who later regretted inventing time.

He explained how once we began to chime the hour, we lost the ability to be satisfied. There was always a quest for more minutes, more hours, faster progress to accomplish more in each day. The simple joy of living between sunrises was gone.

"Everything [humans do] today to be efficient to fill the hour?" Dor said. "It does not satisfy. It only makes [them] hungry to do more. [Humans] want to own [their] existence. But no one owns time...When you are measuring life, you are not living it."²

It seems that Naaman experienced the same frustration about managing time, for when the

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prophet Elisha heard about the King of Israel's inability to offer any healing, he sent a message to the king to have Naaman to come and visit him. When Naaman arrived at Elisha's house, the prophet sent a message to him: "Go wash seven times in the Jordan river and your skin will be restored."

Naaman was furious with the response, for he expected Elisha to come outside, wave his hand over his skin, and speak some mystical words. Then Naaman exclaimed, "I could have washed in the rivers back home! Why did I take the time to come all the way here?" I imagine he was thinking, *I want to be healed right now, in the way I think it ought to be done, not later after traveling back home. I wasted my time traveling all the way here.*

Naaman's response reminds me of the times I've been impatient. How many times have we expected God to work in our lives in a certain way, thinking we can tell God exactly how to do something and in what timeframe to get it done? Sometimes it's in those unexpected ways that God moves in our lives that we discover something.

Naaman's servants suggested, "If the prophet had told you to do something difficult, wouldn't you have done it? All he said to you was, 'Wash and become clean'" (2 Kings 5:13). When Naaman finally followed the instructions, he discovered his skin was healed.

Like Naaman, sometimes we might find ourselves facing suggestions we don't understand, such as a pastor's son who had been playing outside in the dirt. When he came inside his mother said

that he should wash his hands because there were germs living in all that dirt. He refused and complained, "Germs and Jesus! Germs and Jesus! That's all I ever hear around this house, and I've never seen either one."³

Just as the little boy had never seen germs and didn't understand why he needed to wash up, and we can't see time and may wonder why we need to change our clocks, Naaman wondered why he needed to wash up to be cured of his skin disease. Even if we don't fully understand how God works in

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the world, we know that God is striving to bring about the best possibilities, but sometimes we might need to help one another discern when it's time to wash up and trust God.

That was the case with Sid. He had a troubled life, for nothing seemed to go right. He'd lost his job, his girlfriend left him, and he said to his friend, "I'm all washed up. What's the point?"

His friend replied, "I know you've had a series of setbacks in your life, but that's not the end. There's always a new possibility."

Sid replied, "Where can I find a new possibility?"

His friend replied, "Come with me Sunday morning, and I will show you." The next morning Sid got into his friend's car, not sure where they were heading. When they arrived at church, Sid complained, "I didn't know this is what you had in mind. I'm not really a religious person."

"Neither am I," replied Sid's friend, "but I've discovered this community of faith gives me hope. When I was down, they lifted me up. I even decided to be baptized."

"Why?" asked Sid. "I just don't get it. It doesn't make sense to me. I don't have time for all this church stuff."

His friend replied, "When I thought I was all washed up and had nowhere to go, I discovered that God could wash me and give me a new start. I realized that God always has time for me, and I realized I have time for God."

Ever feel all washed up?

Celebrate your baptism when God invited you to wash up—and know that God never gives up on you.

¹ Laura Poppick, "5 Weird Effects of Daylight Saving Time," www.livescience.com/40903-daylight-saving-time-affects-your-body.html

² Mitch Albom, "the time keeper," 2012, 207-8.

³ Hodgkin, Michael. *1002 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking: Fresh, Timely, Compelling Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers, and Speakers* (Kindle Locations 1036-1038). Zondervan. Kindle Edition, #38.