

The Evangelistic Little Girl and Naaman the War Hero

by James Jennings

This sermon delves into the story of Naaman from 2 Kings 5, focusing on the evangelistic little girl and our powerful God. It explores the characters of Naaman, the lost man with false views, the faith-filled evangelistic little girl, Elisha the preacher, and Naaman's response to God's healing. The sermon challenges listeners to examine which character they identify with and emphasizes the importance of faith, evangelism, humility, and true repentance.

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Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1, Luke 17:15, Matthew 9:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Luke 4:27, Isaiah 1:18, Exodus 20:24

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Description

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Transcript

Go ahead and turn to 2 Kings 5. There are many ways I could title this message, but I'm going to call it The Evangelistic Little Girl and Our Powerful God. And what we're going to do is read the entire chapter just so it's all fresh in your minds. And then we're going to go ahead and look at at least five characters in chronological order.

And then in the end, I'm going to simply ask you a question. Which character most describes you this morning? So let's read 2 Kings 5. Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and he was in high favor. Because by him, the Lord had given victory to Syria.

He was a mighty man of valor. But, he was a leper. Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel.

And she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, would that my Lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria. He would cure him of his leprosy.

So Naaman went in and told his lord. Thus, he bespoke the girl from the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand keckles of gold, and ten changes of clothing. They estimate at least a million bucks worth of stuff. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel which read, when this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman, My servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.

And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, am I God to kill and to make alive? That this man send word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me. But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king saying, why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house.

And Elisha sent a messenger to him saying, go and wash in the Jordan seven times and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean. But Naaman was angry and he went away saying, behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abnon and Parphar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

But, his servants came near and said to him, my father, it is a great word. The prophet has spoken to you. Will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, wash and be clean? So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan according to the word of the man of God.

And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child. And he was clean. Then he returned to the man of God.

He and all his company. And he came and he stood before him and he said, behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel. So accept now a present from your servant.

But he said, Elisha, as the Lord lives before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it, but he refused. The Naaman said, if not, please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the Lord.

In this matter, may the Lord pardon your servant. When my master goeth into the house of Rimnon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimnon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimnon, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter. He said to him, go in peace.

But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said, see, my master spared this Naaman, the Syrian, and not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him. So Gehazi followed Naaman, and when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and he said, is all well? And he said, all is well.

My master has sent me to say, there have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing. And Naaman said, be pleased to accept two talents, and he urged them and tied up two talents of silver and two bags with two changes of clothing and laid them on two of his servants.

And they carried them before Gehazi, and when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. He went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, where have you been, Gehazi? And he said, your servant went nowhere.

But he said to him, did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a kind to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants? Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever. So he went out from his presence a leper like snow. Let's pray.

Father, please, would You help me to cover the material in the time we have? Lord, give me grace. Be with my mouth, my mind. Lord, be with my hearers.

We need You. Draw near to us. In Christ's name, we seek Your help, Amen.

So Naaman, the leper. And in the end, it's Gehazi, the leper. Luke 24 says our Old Testaments, Christ interpreted to His disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

There are things in this chapter concerning Christ. Jeff, in the first hour, John 5.46, Moses wrote of me. This Old Testament has shadows and types that point to the fullness, the reality.

And we want to gather from here some of those things. The Bible front to back is dealing with our relationship to God. It's dealing with that.

You go through the whole Bible, you find it's constantly dealing with our relationship to God. And in this chapter, we see characters introduced with things to imitate, things to flee from, and we see someone who is a leper get healed. And in the same way, some of you here who don't know Christ this morning, you've got that leprosy of sin.

You might not be going to Christ for some of the very same reasons Naaman gave. And I hope to tear those down that you will find cleansing today in the blood of the Lamb. So first character we're going to look at is Naaman.

And you could just say Naaman is the lost man. He is the lost man. And we see him in verse 1. How was this man viewed in the eyes of the world? Was he important? Very, right? Great man with his Master.

High favor. And was a mighty man of valor. He was great.

But what was the one problem? What's the one but in his life? Everything will be perfect, but what? He's got leprosy. He's a leper. And isn't that how it is in the world? You've got the Jeff Bezos who's the richest man in the world who's going through a divorce right now.

You've got all these things, but there's this but. But. Leprosy.

But. Sin. Sin.

And what's ironic is why was Naaman ultimately a great man? Who gave him victory in battle? The Lord. Look what it says. Because by Him, the Lord had given victory to Syria.

So the only reason He's even a great man is because the Lord took this man and gave him victory. So even the great men in the world, the rich men, whoever is considered of high honor in the world, the only

reason they're there is because God has set them there. God has given them victory to put them in that position.

As we know, nothing is perfect because of sin. Sin has entered the world. Death has entered the world.

And here this man Naaman has leprosy. And just for a moment, let's think about leprosy. It's called Hansen's disease today.

But that leprosy in the Bible is a lot broader than what modern day leprosy is. And when we think about leprosy in the Bible, in Leviticus 13, you'd see if a man was in Israel and he had disease, he was to walk around crying out what? Unclean. Unclean.

I mean, imagine leaving the building today and you see a guy walking through the parking lot in torn clothes. Torn clothes. The hair of his head is hanging loose.

And he's covering his upper lip. And he's saying, unclean, unclean, unclean. This is a shameful thing to have.

We know of Uzziah, the king, who disobeyed the Lord. He went in to offer incense. And it says he was a leper and he lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the Lord.

Leprosy excludes you. In leprosy, it damages the body. Answers in Genesis says some leprosy patients have had their fingers eaten by rats in their sleep because they were totally unaware of it happening.

The lack of pain receptors could not warn them of danger. It is a blessing to feel pain. Imagine laying there at night and you don't have the pain receptors to feel that your hand is being eaten off by a rat.

But that's how every sinner is. They're laying there in their sin. Their conscience is being seared.

They're losing sensitivity to what is right and wrong. False prophets are saying peace when there is no peace. And they're just laying there being eaten by their sin and they don't even recognize it.

What does leprosy point to? The physical, disfiguring, and rapid destructive power of leprosy is just a subtle picture of sin. Just subtle. Sin is far more destructive.

Sin's consequences. It's not the physical body dying. It's the body being cast into hell.

So, Naaman was a great man, but he was a leper. And there are many men in the world who are great men, but they are sinners condemned by God, right? And the healing of leprosy, what does that point to? We know what Jesus said in Matthew 9 just about His healing, His miracles. He says, that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He then said to the paralytic, rise, pick up your bed, and go home. As Jesus Christ came doing miracles, healing people, it's to tell this lost world Christ can do something greater than heal the body. He can forgive you of all of your sin.

And that is man's great problem, great leprosy. And we even see in v. 8 in our chapter, Elisha, the man of God, heard that He had torn his clothes. He said to the king saying, why have you torn your clothes? Let Him come now to me that He may know that there is a prophet in Israel.

So whether the Old Testament or the New Testament, it's about knowing that there's one true God and He has ultimately the power to heal of sin. So, that's Naaman. We're going to look at him in a minute in another scene you could say.

Naaman, this famous war hero, but he's a leper. What means does God use to lead to his leprosy being taken away? How does He find out? How does He find out that you can even be healed of leprosy? A what? A little girl. What can a little girl do? Yeah, a lot more than you might expect.

I was reading some book recently that was talking about a captain of a ship I think in the 1800's. The boy was 12 years old. Twelve years old.

This is amazing. Verse 2 is incredible. If you read it over, you miss the glory.

So much glory is in verse 2. And I was telling my wife, we don't even know the little girl's name. If we did, I said we would name a daughter after her. It doesn't get put there.

Well, think of this little girl. I'm calling her the faith-filled evangelist. The faith-filled evangelist.

How old is she? I mean, the little there is not referring to height and stature. It seems referring to age. Some would say she's 10 years old.

Look, whether she's 8, whether she's 10, whether she's 15, I can't tell you dogmatically, but she's a little girl. Nonetheless, she's a little girl. A little damsel, as another version says.

Now, let's look. How in God's providence did she end up at Naaman's house? How did she get there? Was it through a good event or a bad event? Bad. Look at the text.

The Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl. They had abducted a little girl. They kidnapped a little girl.

I can't say these things dogmatically, but let's use our imagination for a moment. Do you think this little girl was just out by herself or maybe one of these raids was upon a town she was in? I would suspect her being a little girl. She was around her family.

What do you think happened to her family? Probably killed. We've got to use our imagination. I don't know.

Probably. They're doing these raids and killing and pillaging. And obviously, you take a little girl, what did she do? She became a servant.

You don't take all the older people who are unmoldable. You kill them. You take the little ones who you can maybe mold and lead to go and worship your false gods, to comply.

They can't defend themselves. So this little girl was carried off, kidnapped, abducted. And John Piper has wrote a poem on this little girl.

And it's chilling the imagination of how it could have went down. And again, we're going to use our imagination. But I want to read what he wrote.

This is written in the perspective of the little girl is now older and she's looking back and recalling the story to her granddaughter. And I'm just going to read part of it. Piper says this, And then it came.

They thundered through the eastern wilderness and slew. The men with swords, I saw your great-grandfather guard the little gate of our small house. It took ten men to bring my father down.

And then they burned the place. And one of them grabbed mother by the hair and him and threw her down the open well. They only wanted kids to sell for slaves, that's all.

The rest they stabbed or chased away. I kicked and bit and jabbed and broke loose long enough to yell and knocked the bucket down the well. Then something hit me on the head.

I woke up in a Syrian bed. That's one way to think about it. It says this little girl was carried off.

She was taken from her homeland to a foreign land. What a thing. Now let's think about why we should be amazed about this little girl.

I want to give you some reasons. First is this, her faith survived a serious trial. And we see that.

She's the one who tells Naaman about this prophet. Look at it. Her faith is still there.

Whatever happened, whether she lost her family or not, she's not there in the homeland. She's been taken. And she still is believing in the Lord.

And you know what makes this even more amazing? What was the general attitude in Israel at this point? Was it like a really stable generation of people believing God? No. Just flip back to chapter 1. Look at chapter 1. It is dark. Verse 2, chapter 1. Now, Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria and lay sick.

So he sent messengers telling them, go inquire of who? Beelzebub! Not the Lord! The Lord? The God of Ekron? Wait, what? Whether I shall recover from this sickness? But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, the Tishbite, arise, go up to meet the messengers of the city of Samaria and say to them, is it because there's no God in Israel that you're going to inquire of Beelzebub, the God of Ekron? Now therefore, thus says the Lord, you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die. Wow, that's the type of era she's in. So, being in Israel really wouldn't have necessarily helped her faith because saints are pretty dark there right now, right? But here she's taken from that land, kidnapped, abducted, taken to a foreign land, and she's believing God.

That is remarkable. Second, this little girl displays incredible love to her enemies. Naaman was the commander of the army of Syria.

Look, whether he was actually there when they carried her off, or whether it was his men on a raid carrying it off, he had some involvement. He's this commander. And obviously, he got her to be a servant in his house.

So he's got some connection. He's not some far distant person in the tragedy that this little girl endured to get all the way over to where she's at. And how did she treat Naaman? Did she hide the cure from Naaman? She didn't.

She loved her enemies. You could say it appears she's forgiven them. If she's sitting there with bitterness and unforgiveness towards Naaman for what had happened, do you think she's going to tell him about how to be cured of leprosy? No way.

So I think it's right to say there's forgiveness, not bitterness. And she didn't conceal this cure from Naaman. 1 Thessalonians 5.15 See that you repay.

No one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. Third thing about this little girl that should shock us. She as a servant, she had such a good testimony among the lost that they believed her words.

She goes to Naaman's wife and she says about how to be cured of leprosy. Go to Elisha, this prophet, and Naaman's wife doesn't look at her and say, oh, you foolish little girl. He actually takes heed to it, or she does, and goes to her husband.

And how does the husband respond? What an insult, honey. Why are you telling me what the little girl from Israel is saying? Does Naaman respond that way? No, he doesn't. He goes all the way to the king and he even mentions the little girl before the king.

So this girl's conduct among the Gentiles, as 1 Peter says, is pretty honorable. I think that's implied there. Think of this.

Is what you say given that much credit? All you kids, there's stuff in here for you to think about. Even as a little girl, can you go to someone else and say something and it be received with such credibility because of your life? A fourth thing, and this to me is the most remarkable. Don't miss this.

Don't miss this point, please. The fourth thing that should amaze us about this little girl is this. She confidently believed God to do a miracle of healing that had not occurred once in her entire generation.

Think of this. Were lepers being healed every month? No. You know how we know? Luke 4. Don't turn there.

Let me read this. Luke 4.27. And there were many lepers in Israel. So is it common? Are there many? Yes.

In the time of the prophet Elisha, there were many lepers. None of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian. You catch that? The one single leper healed in this entire generation and era of Elisha was Naaman.

And what led to Naaman being cured was a little girl who had been kidnapped from Israel, endured the trial, believed God, and told Naaman confidently that he would be healed. Look at what she says. Verse 3, she said to her mistress, would that my Lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria.

Does it say He might cure him of his leprosy? He would. No hesitation. Utter confidence.

And it wasn't like this was happening at all. That is incredible. Look, there are things in our generation that are not normative.

They're not happening on a normal pattern. Maybe whatever it is hasn't happened in the last 100 years. Well, that little girl's in the same spot.

And she was in circumstances of a severe trial being taken from her family. Her family probably killed. And she still believed God.

And God heard her faith and healed this man. This is incredible. I was thinking about the testimony of Helen Rosevere.

She was dealing with a dying premature baby who needed warmth. But the hot water bottle they would have used to make a homespun incubator had burst, so they didn't have a hot water bottle. The girl's in trouble.

A small girl at this orphanage prayed for God to send not only a hot water bottle, but a doll for the baby as well. And what happened? A large parcel arrived which had been sent from out of the country five months earlier. And it arrived on just the right day.

And what did the girl ask? For a bottle? And that came a hot water bottle and she asked for a doll. And guess what? A doll was in the bottom of that box as well. God heard that little girl.

And God heard this little girl. And isn't that so much of our problem? We're too mature for our own good and we lose the simplicity of faith in taking God at His Word. Now, I want to consider the next character and that is God.

Think of this, our God will act for His namesake. Imagine if Naaman went. Imagine if he went all the way to Syria and he gets to Elisha.

And Elisha just can't do anything. And then Naaman goes all the way back. And imagine that little girl standing there seeing him come back still a leper.

How discouraging could that be? Does God put her to shame for believing Him? He doesn't. The Lord, as it says in Matthew, He says, I will do it according to your faith. You believe God, He will act.

As we see here. And for the sake of His name, the Lord is jealous for His namesake. Moses argued like that before the Lord.

Instead, this little girl who said He would cure him, at some point, she saw her Master come home a cleansed man. And think of the encouragement of that for her faith. So, number one, our God will act for His namesake.

Number two, think of this, this shows our God is merciful. An Israelite of God's people was abducted by the Syrians. Her family no doubt slaughtered.

And she is the one used of the Lord to not just lead Naaman to being healed of leprosy, but as I'm going to argue later, led to Naaman believing in the true God and worshiping Him. That's merciful of the Lord. The Lord takes an Israelite, one of the chosen people as it is said there, and He takes them all the way over here to reach this lost person.

Another thing we learn of our God, a third thing, is our God uses the weak. The weak. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1, consider your calling, brothers.

Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many of noble birth.

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. Who gave the message to Naaman? A foreigner who was a little girl.

Right? When Egypt is in dire trouble, who did they turn to? This famine is going to come upon. They turned to a foreigner who was in prison. Right? Where's Christ come from? Jeff mentioned in the first hour, Christ growing up in Nazareth.

What good is going to come from Nazareth? You see, the Lord uses the weak. He uses the weak. But man and his pride is not... they're not listening.

They're looking for other ways. So a fourth character, we've looked at Naaman, the lost man, the little girl, the evangelist. We've looked at our God.

Now let's just consider Elisha the preacher. Elisha. In verses 8-10, we've already read it.

But when Elisha the man of God heard the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king saying, why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel. Did Elisha have faith? He was not timid. Don't send the man here.

God might not do something. He believed the Lord. Send him to me.

And why did you tear your clothes? Why, king, did you not point him to me initially? Did not the king know of Elisha? And he doesn't even direct him to him. Appears some unbelief there in this king. Both of these kings, they didn't have the answer.

Where did the answer come from? Did it come from the king of Israel? Did it come from the king of Syria? This little girl knew more than they did. Elisha was a very good preacher. Number one, he did not show this man special treatment and flatter his pride.

I mean, guys, imagine here. Look what it says. Okay, he took a million bucks basically.

Where does it say it? The chariots? Verse 5? Where does it describe his entourage? I'm missing it. 9, thank you. So Naaman came with his horses.

So horses, real expensive escalades maybe. Chariots, limos. He stood at the door of Elisha's house.

Just imagine with me here, you all who can see through that window, if you saw all these black painted cars, incredibly expensive, pulling up. And then you saw this thing on the back with all these gold bricks. What would be our response? You know what Elisha's response is? Josh, can you go out there and just tell them, go to that river over there and wash and you'll be clean.

Didn't show special treatment. Didn't go out there and show honor to that man in any way different than he'd show honor to a little beggar. Because you know what? That would put a stumbling block before Naaman.

You go flatter a man's pride because he's important and he's coming to you for spiritual counsel, and you know about the money he has and you know about his position, and he showed up with this whole thing right there. You don't want to get in the way. You want to be pointing people to the cure to the Lord Jesus Christ, not get in the way.

You know, the Bible, it shows us there's no special cases in the Bible. You could be the richest man in the world. You could own the whole world.

You're dead in your sins. There's one cure. You could own nothing in the world.

There's one cure. Christ. That's it.

And secondly, Elisha clearly was not seeing himself as important. One problem people could have is when they're dealing with someone, they think they're an important factor of that person. No, we're just pointing to Christ.

You think of the centurion. He said, Lord, I'm not worthy to have You come under my roof. Only say the Word and My servant will be healed.

And that's basically what Elisha did. He just said a word. Go down to the river and dip seven times and you will be cleansed.

But how are some people? They're persistent. You know, I've got to speak to Paul Washer. Paul Washer's got the answer.

I've just got to get to him. I've got to see him face to face. And that lesser known person is just telling them about Christ and they're not even hearing that person.

Now, I've got to get to the big guys. If those big guys flatter that person because of how much they think they've got to get to them, it's going to hinder them from coming to Christ. They need to realize they're nothing.

They're not important. Elisha, thirdly, as mentioned, he didn't withhold healing from a foreigner. He was not like Jonah who didn't want the Ninevites to be saved.

Fourth thing, Elisha displayed no greed and false motive. That is very commendable. A man who probably was bringing a million bucks.

Did Elisha receive that? Multiple opportunities to do so and he rejected it each time. Elisha was not in this for the money. Matthew 10, Jesus says heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons, you receive without paying, give without pay.

He did that. And Christ hadn't spoken those words, but he was in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ right there acting as Christ would. A fifth thing, Elisha did not distort the message.

Elisha saw, as we point out in v. 8, let him come now to me that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel. Elisha knew there's something more going on here than a man being healed of leprosy. He needs to know that there's a prophet in Israel.

He needs to see that our God is the true God. And Elisha didn't distort the message and that he did not change it based on Naaman being offended. Okay, let's move on here.

Time is racing by. Here a question is about Elisha. Last question about Elisha, this character.

Why was Elisha this man of God that he was? What do you think? There's a verse in here, v. 16. Look at this. But he said, as the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none.

Before whom I stand. We want to be men who live in the presence of God, the audience of One, realizing I'm always standing before God. Look, God's in the room.

You're not going to take money. And He's always there. He's omniscient.

He's omnipresent. He's everywhere. He sees everything.

This man was living in the fear of God just like Joseph in Genesis 39. That's why he didn't sleep with Potiphar's wife. He knew God was there.

That's why he didn't take the riches there. He knew God was there. He wanted to be pleasing to the Lord.

So, next character, Naaman. We're looking at Naaman again. And here, he's the lost man who's got false views.

V. 9-12, Naaman came with his horses, chariots. He stood at the door. And then we read what Elijah's servant says.

V. 11, Naaman was angry. He went away. Look what he says.

V. 11, he says, Behold, I thought... I thought I was on my way there imagining how this all would fall out. How God would save. What the experience would look and feel like.

And guess what? I got there and it was different. And the feeling that I thought would come didn't come. Things didn't happen as I expected.

This dramatic experience. Naaman had a false view of how God heals and saves. Look, that's a big problem today.

People have got a false view. They're like Naaman. I thought it was going to look like this.

I thought I was going to feel this. As the Holman Standard says, I was telling myself. So Naaman is going there telling himself this is how it's going to look.

This is how it's going to feel. And when it didn't happen as he wanted it to happen, he went away angry in rage. Lost men have a plan, but they expect God to save them by, and when He doesn't do it their way, they refuse Him.

He brought money. He obviously was thinking about offering money. And then look at v. 12.

It's like Naaman, he gets to the point where he recognizes, okay, I'm probably going to have to wash. It's not going to be Elijah walking outside waving his hand. But even there, v. 12, are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better? So he's thinking, alright, if I've got to wash, I'm not going to go in that river.

There's other rivers that are better. So it's like he still is stumbling over the message. This pride.

What was it all rooted in? Pride. Proud man wants to share how they think God should save men and they want God to conform to their way. Guess what? Is God going to conform to your way of salvation? Absolutely not.

He's not going to. And men respond in anger and rage. I mean, think of the rich young ruler.

He went going before Christ, appearingly genuinely convicted, but Jesus said one thing you lack, go sell all you have and follow Me. And he went away sad. Why would he come to Him in the beginning? He was

thinking maybe that won't be required of me.

He had a thought. Maybe I won't have to forsake all to follow Jesus Christ. And there are people in our generation who will tell you that.

They can say you can hang on to all of the idols, love and worship them. Now I know some of you are thinking further on in this passage when I make that statement, but we'll look at that in a minute. Pride.

Jesus said, truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. You've got to think simple-minded like a child. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11, 3, I'm afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

The Gospel humbles pride, man. It says Jesus says it's finished. He doesn't need you to do anything to add to the work of the atonement.

He's done it all. The wedding feast, what does it say? Come, everything is what? Ready, prepared. I don't need you to come and add something to it.

It's all ready. Just come as you are. That's the Gospel call.

And Christ will change you and you will not leave as you were. You will be new. The way the ESV renders it, his servants say to him, has He actually said? Even as a Christian sometimes, let's just pause and think.

Has Christ actually said? It's finished. I mean, that's incredible. That is remarkable that it's all been done by our Messiah, the Chosen One, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we see here in other characters the servants of Naaman in v. 13. I mean, here Naaman turns away and goes enraged. And it says his servants, not one, but it's plural.

There's multiple servants. They came near and they said to him, my father, it is a great word that the Prophet has spoken to you. Will you not do it? Has He actually said to you, wash and be clean? What a mercy for Naaman to have that.

It's kind of like some of you, you might leave the building one Sunday after hearing the truth, and you've got this wrong reasoning. You're angry at what the preacher said. And you're sitting there in the car.

And here someone is. They're not a war hero. They're a servant.

They're a lot less significant than you are. And they're whispering in the backseat of that car thinking, did that preacher actually say that it's finished? All you've got to do is trust Christ? Did He actually say that? And you're driving away and you're kind of thinking, wait a minute, that is remarkable. And what did Naaman do? Well, he came to his senses.

Verse 14, he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan according to the Word of the Man of God. And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child. And he was clean.

Remarkable. Well, Naaman is healed. How much time do we have? Let me real fast think of what else to mention.

I guess let's think of Naaman. So after hearing his servants, he came to his senses. What happened to Naaman? Did he just get healed? Or did he get, in New Testament terms, saved? Did he just get healed? Or in New Testament terms, get saved? First point, let's think of this.

Luke 17, the ten lepers that got healed. What did one do? What's the term it uses? Returned. Do you see that word here? It says he returned.

Luke 17, he returned and gave praise to God. Naaman, did he have any reason to go back to Elisha? No, he could have got healed and booked it back to Syria, right? He hadn't even met this man yet. The guy was in his house the first time and sent the servant out.

He goes back to Elisha. So the first thing here is Naaman returned. Verse 15, then he returned like those in Luke 17.

One returned to Christ. Here this man returns. That's encouraging to me.

And it's clear on his return trip from being washed to Elisha, he's got a lot of thinking going on in his mind. As we're about to see, he's processing a lot of things. He gets there.

Here's a second thing that's encouraging. He publicly professes that our Lord is Lord alone. Verse 15, Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.

Now if you look at verse 15, he returned to the Man of God. He and all His company. And he came and stood before Him.

It sounds like his whole company is there witnessing this. It's not just him in a private room with Elisha. He is there and he's publicly professing there's no God but this God in Israel.

It's a pretty powerful profession in front of these soldiers who he is the commander of. He says that. A third thing that's encouraging here that it seems like he's genuinely in New Testament terms come to see by faith the true God, is that he wants to offer sacrifices to the Lord alone.

He says here, verse 17, Naaman said, If not, please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth. For from now on, your servant will not offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any god but the Lord. So he's wanting to offer sacrifices.

He's wanting to be pleasing to the Lord. And there's different takes on verse 17 when it says the servant two mule loads of earth. Some would say that he wanted earth from Israel to go and build an altar by which to offer those sacrifices to.

That's one take. The other take is when he says, If not, please let there be given to your servant, that's referring to Gehazi, two mule loads of earth, that's referring to the money he brought. For now on, your servant will not offer burnt offerings.

That's the second take. I go with the first one. I think he's wanting dirt to go and build this altar and make sacrifices to the Lord.

It says in Exodus that there should be an altar of earth made. So that idea's in the Bible. A fourth thing that's encouraging that Naaman was not just physically healed, but came to truly follow the Lord, is that he asked for forgiveness two times.

Look at v. 18. In this matter, may the Lord pardon your servant. That's number one.

Then at the end of that, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter. Two times. Pardon me.

Pardon me. Now v. 18 is a controversial verse. Let's think of it this way.

Is he asking for pardon for future sin? Is that what's happening? When you read it in the ESV, in this matter, may the Lord pardon your servant. When my Master goes into the house of Remnon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself on the house of Remnon, when I bow myself on the house of Remnon, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter. It sounds like He's saying in the future, I'm going to go back to this land and for whatever reason, I'm going to be in there before Remnon and my Master's going to lean on me and I'm also going to bow at the same time.

Forgive me for doing that which is happening in the future. That's one take. Now this is bothersome.

One, you'd hope He'd refuse that. Two, in the context, He just talks about not offering sacrifice to any god but the Lord. And He just said there's no god in all the earth but in Israel.

And He's saying this apparently with all of His men hearing it. So it does not in any way appear like this is some closet conversion, so to speak, where He's not outwardly wanting to honor the Lord. And if He's taking the earth to build an altar, you don't put an altar in your house and burn on that.

You burn your house down if you do that. It's outside. People are seeing it.

Now, we're going to look at a second meaning. But whatever this meaning, this text must not be used to justify and teach that you can serve two masters. And this text cannot be justified to mean that you can become as a Muslim a Christian and keep going to your mosque and bowing down to Allah while saying you're a Christian.

The Bible as a whole condemns any idea like that that some of the modern missions movements teach. So is it future sin that He's asking forgiveness for? Or is it past sin? Is it past sin? I'm going to read the literal reading of this verse. This is from the LITV.

It's a literal rendering of this verse. 2 Kings 5.18 For this thing, Jehovah, be propitious to Thy servant in the coming in of My Lord into the house of Rimnon to bow Myself there. And He was supported by My hand.

And I bowed Myself in the house of Rimnon for My bowing Myself in the house of Rimnon, Jehovah, be propitious, I pray Thee to Thy servant in this thing. You catch that? The literal renders it as He's asking for pardon for past sin. And He was supported for My bowing.

Happened in the past. That's how it literally reads. Someone might say, well, wait a minute, He was a leper.

No way would His Master want to lean on Him then. Well, we don't know when He got His leprosy and we don't know how long ago He was in that house bowing before Rimnon. But clearly, it was on His conscience.

And if you look up this debate, you're going to find many commentators who will say things like this. By no rule of right reasoning nor by any legitimate mode of interpretation can it be stated that Naaman is asking for pardon for offenses which he may commit or that he could ask or the prophet grant indulgence to bow

himself in the temple of Rimmon, thus performing a decided act of homage, the very essence of that worship which immediately before, he solemnly assured the prophet he would never practice. The original may legitimately be read and ought to be read in the past and not in the future tense.

Another one says, when my Master goeth into the house of Rimmon or rather went or hath gone, namely, formerly, for the Hebrew text of the whole verse may be properly rendered in the past time, and as Naaman in the preceding verses had declared that he would worship no other god but Jehovah, this translation seems evidently the true one. So I'm not mentioning some crazy idea that a lot of people do not hold to. So what then? Is he asking for pardon for future sin? Is he asking for pardon for past sin? Look, whatever one you take, I would tell you this, it should amaze you that his conscience is so sensitive that that's even on his mind.

Alright? If somehow it is referring to something in the future, it's on his mind. Here, he just washed. And he's going back to Elisha.

And this crosses his mind on that journey. If it's future, he's bothered. He doesn't want to do that.

It bothers his conscience. That's encouraging. And my take would be, I think, the context and the literal, I tend to think he's talking about past sin.

I think that makes sense. Verse 19, Elisha's response is, go in peace. Go in peace.

Meaning, this past thing you have done where you bowed before Rimmon, go in peace. It's okay. You're pardoned for that.

That's the take I take on that. So, well, I better close. There's different things, but let's just think in closing.

Which character fits you this morning? Are you the little girl? In horrible circumstances, probably nothing compared to being kidnapped, remember the song. Behind a frowning providence, she hides a smiling face. If you're in the midst of a pretty dark providence, are you looking for God's purpose in it? This little girl did not bury her head in the sand.

She had faith and told this man of how he could be healed. Are you evangelistic to your enemies? Do you evangelize those who hate you? Those who've harmed you? Are you caring for them even though they're not your people? Do your words hold weight? Little children, you want to be like that. You want people to be able to take you serious that when you say something, they give credibility to your words.

Do you have faith and believe God to do the impossible? I mean, that really challenged me. You could say, sure, a chapter earlier, Elisha raised a man from the dead. Well, being healed of leprosy is a lesser thing.

Still, this is the only healing in this entire time. And it happened because this little girl believed God. You know, Tim mentioned this recently.

I was asking Mac about it the other night. But John Knox, well-known man, his son-in-law, this man dies in what? The 1700s? Four days. John Knox's son-in-law is there with this dead man praying.

And the man was raised from the dead. And you could say, well, that shouldn't be happening today. Look, being raised from the dead is not as amazing as being raised from spiritual death.

But look, we go to our Bibles. Christ says He didn't do many mighty miracles there because of their unbelief. And this little girl, there's no one being healed of leprosy.

And guess what? She believed God. And God heard. That's a challenge.

It's very challenging. And she was a little girl. She went through hard tragedy.

In our time, there are many things that are supernatural that are not normative. And there's a lot of heresy out there. There's a lot of charismania.

There's a lot of garbage out there. But we should take heart this passage to believe God to do the supernatural for His name's sake. And children, how would you respond? Listen up, kids.

Listen up. How would you respond if you were that little girl? If that group of people, they came and most likely they killed your family? Your whole family gone. And you're taken to a foreign land.

No mommy, no daddy. They're gone. How would you respond in that foreign land? They take you from the United States all the way over to Syria.

How would you respond? How would you respond? Would you still be believing in the God whom your parents talked about? This in some way says something about her parents. I mean, the apple usually doesn't fall too far from the tree. They were probably talking about the Lord and Elisha and the things that had happened.

And she knew about these things. Would you be there loving your enemies, not full of bitterness, telling them about the truth? We should not have low expectations of what our children can do. If a worldly 12-year-old boy can be the captain of a ship 200 years ago, why can't our 10-year-old, 12-year-old kids if they're converted be evangelists? Telling others about Christ.

And parents, this shows us there's nothing more important than our kids knowing the living God. We have no idea what severe trial might separate us from our kids. I'm sitting there in my living room looking at my kids thinking, what if something happened and I was stripped from them? And they were taken.

And I never saw them again. Am I pouring into them the truth and living a life that is consistent to where they would believe God in that foreign land? So are you that little girl believing the Lord? Are you lost naming? Are you someone here who's angry at the preacher? You're angry at the simplicity of the message? You come to God with false expectations of how you will be saved. There's only one physician who can heal you of the leprosy of your sin and it's Jesus Christ by grace through faith.

You've got to believe Him. You've got to trust Him. He will heal you freely without price.

God actually says wash and be clean. If you're lost, you're thinking I should fill this or that, or you're telling yourself this must happen, throw those excuses away and believe on Christ. If you're lost, don't enrage.

Leave here today rejecting the truth. One day, that leprosy of your sin will kill you and you will perish. Christ brings Naaman up and Luke 4 to condemn the Jews for their rejection of Him.

If we too with all the light we have in our full Bible reject the light, how much worse are we than the Syrian who with much less light it seems came to faith? So, are you Elisha? Do you have people coming to you for help? Are you free of doing it for financial gain? Are you putting a show on and coming out the door, so

to speak? Or are you simply directing them where to go? Jeff Thomas says this of Elisha. Elisha wanted Naaman to return to the king of Syria and all his family, friends, and the army officers and say to them, the God of Israel took nothing from me but my leprosy. My gold and silver and the expensive garments were absolutely useless in dealing with Jehovah.

He gave me everything and He took nothing from me in return. Is our Gospel that free? We've got to rip false ideas down. Bringing your feelings.

Bringing this experience. Bringing your work. Bringing whatever it is.

It's Christ alone. Well, we'll close there. We want to be like Naaman's servants.

We want to tell people Christ actually says, believe, you will be saved. So the kind providence of God is greatly displayed in this chapter. A kidnapped little girl was so full of truth and faith that she endured in this trial and not only that, she loved her enemies and boldly told them of the healing that there was even though no one had been healed in this time of leprosy.

And Naaman, it appears, not only gets healed, but sees the Lord's supreme power and determines to follow Him. In the midst of this, our Lord acts on behalf of the faith of the little girl to direct Naaman to Elisha. It's amazing.

One of the psalms we sing, cause our faith to rise in our eyes to see. May it be so. Let's pray.

Lord, we do pray, cause our faith to rise. Lord, in some ways, we have it so easy. We've not been stripped from all we know and love.

We've not been taken to another realm, another land. Lord, help us. You've put us in this situation that we're in.

Give us more faith. Cause our eyes to see. Lord, we pray that You would save many lepers who are in their sin.

Lord, that they would not be eaten by that disease of sin, but they would be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. Lord, thank You. Lord, thank You for being a kind and merciful God to save us Gentiles from the wrath to come.

Lord, thank You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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