

# How Proud are You? Why People Don't Believe

*Naaman's Leprosy Healed*

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**Bible Text:** 2 Kings 5:13

**Preached on:** Tuesday, October 21, 2008

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The following sermon was delivered at Trinity Baptist Church in Montville, New Jersey during the 2008 Pastor's Conference. The preacher is Pastor Ted Donnelly from Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church in Newtown Abbey, Northern Ireland.

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There are many reasons why people won't believe the Christian message which we call the gospel or the good news, of one of the most—of the most—fundamental change that is possible for human beings, what the Bible calls salvation.

I have been a minister for over 40 years now and I have heard most of the reasons. And I have come to believe that there is one particular reason why people don't want to be Christians. It is a common reason and yet it is one that people are reluctant to admit or perhaps they don't realize it. And it is simply this. They are too proud. They are too proud.

Now, they make all sorts of excuses. Perhaps they say they don't need Jesus Christ. Or they say that the Bible has been disproved by science, lots of reasons. But very often the underlying reality is pride. And for any of you here tonight who aren't yet Christians, I wonder, could the reason be that, in fact, perhaps without realizing it, you are too proud to be saved, too proud to accept the staggering benefits that Jesus Christ can bring you?

And it is a strange sort of thing because in a lot of other areas in life we do admit that we have significant needs. We are not ashamed.

I spent a couple of hours the other morning in a Borders bookstore and I went to the self help section, a very, very large section where all the needs that human beings could possibly have are catered for by buying a book. It seemed to me as if you can tone up and alter the shape of almost every part of your body. And there seem to be books for each individual part of the body. How someone could order those some of those books without blushing I do not know, but apparently they sell. And there are seminars and self help courses of every kind. People are making fortunes with helping people to deal with their needs. And people are willing to take a lot of trouble and spend a lot of money to have needs met in their lives. But people somehow seem reluctant to admit that they

have a spiritual need. And yet every single one of you knows deep in your heart that you have a soul.

There is really no such thing as an Atheist. You know you are more than an animal. You know there is more to you as a human being than that. There is something that God has implanted in you. Why is it that people are unready to admit that they have spiritual needs?

And this evening we are going to look at a man who lived a long time ago, a man who was proud, so proud that he nearly blew it, if he hadn't listened to a piece of wise, loving advice. And that is really our text this evening. And if you have a Bible you will find it in 2 Kings chapter five and verse 13. And because this book is the Bible, this is the living Word of the living God which is coming to you this evening. Listen to what this man's servants said to him.

“My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’?”

The man concerned was called Naaman. He was a five star general. He was commander in chief. We would have called him in our country the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the military forces of Benhadad who was king of Aram or Syria as we call it.

The date was about 850 years before Christ. And at that time Syria was a powerful nation, the dominant power in the Near East. And this Naaman, this general was an extremely important individual. The chapter tells us that he was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master. He was a mighty man of valor. By him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He had won, apparently, some spectacular battle, destroying his nation's enemies.

The Jewish rabbis—and some of their traditions are very old—claim that it was Naaman who had shot dead Ahab king of Israel on the battlefield. Whether that is true or not we don't know. At any rate he was a prominent, successful, wealthy man, the man who had everything. You name it, he had it.

And then at the end of the verse deadly, devastating, killer phrase that counsels out everything that had gone before. But, a leper, but, a leper. And that terrifying final phrase makes all else worthless and empty. He was a great and honorable man, but what good was it? He was a leper. He was a mighty man of valor. But he was a leper. He had won victory in battle, but he was a leper. He was a leper. And whether that is what we call leprosy or not it is, perhaps, doubtful that it was Hanson's disease, it was some terrifying illness. Leprosy disfigured people. It made them ugly. Leprosy isolated people. It drove them into a hell of loneliness. Leprosy ultimately killed people.

And in the Bible that disease is a visual aid, a picture of sin. For sin is an ugly thing and it makes us ugly and horrible. And sin isolates us and sin destroys us.

And this, friends, is our immediate link with that Syrian military man nearly 3000 years ago. He was a leper and you and I, every one of us in God's sight, are lepers. The Bible says, "All have sinned." The Bible says that you were born a rebel against God. The first great commandment is this: "You shall love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." And you haven't done that. And you know you haven't. And neither have I.

And the second great command is, "You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself." And you haven't done that either. We love people sometimes to a certain extent, but never as we love ourselves. And many people we do not love at all.

So we are lepers. We are sinners. And that grim reality, as it did for Naaman, undermine and devalues tonight everything else that you are, everything that you have, everything that you own, everything that you accomplish. And after everything good that you can say about yourself, comes that deadly phrase, "But he was a sinner, but she was a sinner."

All of us by birth.

And yet this God whom you have rebelled against has been kind to you. You have had opportunities to hear the gospel, the good news of how to be saved from sin. Many of you have heard it many times. And if you have never heard it before, you are going to hear it this evening. God in his kindness, in spite of your rebellion, in spite of your sin, is coming to you tonight and saying, "Listen, you could be delivered from it. You could be set free from it."

And God was kind to Naaman. By a very strange providence Naaman had a prisoner of war in his home, a young girl, the Bible says. She had been cruelly snatched away from her family, from her hometown, from her native land, taken away as a prisoner by brutal barbarian soldiers. We don't know what had been done to her. Perhaps they hadn't been kind. Perhaps they hadn't been gentle. And now she finds herself far from home as a slave of the man who had destroyed her country, perhaps killed her parents, perhaps devastated her village.

What a remarkable girl she was. She wasn't bitter. She wasn't angry. She felt sorry for her master. Her young heart was moved with pity for this man with his terrible disease. And this young girl had a mighty faith, a powerful believer.

Verse three. "She said to her mistress, 'If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy.'"

Now that is strong faith. Elisha, whom she is talking about, had never ever cured anyone of leprosy before. It had never happened. She had never seen it happen. Israel was full of lepers. The Scripture tells us elsewhere, but not one of them had been cleansed. And yet somehow this young girl had such a faith in God and in the servant of God that if my master could meet him God would heal him.

And Naaman, this mighty general, was so desperate, he was so sick of this rotten, obscene disease that was eating away his face and his hands and his body that he listened to this little slave. And he traveled to Israel and he went to the prophet and the prophet told him how to be cured. Good news.

And what did he do? He turned and went away in a rage.

Astonishing, isn't it?

Why would you do that? Why would you go all that way to get a desperate need satisfied and when you are told the answer, turn away in a rage? And yet that is exactly what many people still do today. They come among Christians. They hear the message of God's salvation. They hear the gospel. Some of them actually do turn away in a rage. They become angry. Others listen, shrug their shoulders and go away unchanged, untouched as if they had never heard the best of all news.

I wonder, will you do that this evening? I really hope that you won't.

And why do they do that? Let's look at the psychology of Naaman. And, perhaps as we do, you will see a little bit of yourself in the mirror of his reaction to the message of salvation from his appalling need.

Why was he angry? Why was he annoyed and upset? Why did he turn away?

Naaman had two problems with the gospel. The first was this. It was too humbling. It was too humbling. The emphasis throughout the whole chapter is on how great he was, how important he was, how prestigious a figure he was. It is underlined for us again and again, the commander of the army, a great and honorable man, a mighty man of valor.

Here is a man who operates at the very highest levels of society. He goes from the King of Samara, King Benhadad to King Jehoram, the King of Israel. This man doesn't deal with underlings. He goes right to the top and takes a royal warrant for his healing.

The most important to have visited Israel for many years and how does God's prophet treat this VIP? Very casually, to say the least. He doesn't even travel to the palace to meet him. He says in verse eight, "Let him come to me and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

Elisha is not willing to step one inch out of his way. And give Naaman credit. Whatever he may have thought of this initially, he did it. He went to Elisha's village. And, again, we are meant to catch the impressiveness of his arrival at Elisha's home. That is a significant phrase. "Naaman went with his horses and chariots."

And the narrator is saying there, in British terms that would be a Bentley or a Rolls Royce. I don't know what your top of the range cars would be. People didn't have horses and chariots. This was absolute luxury traveling in the highest level. There probably

hadn't been a chariot in this little village for many years and this man rolls up. And you can imagine all the little boys talking together and going out to see the new make of chariot. Fabulous. There is a man that has got a chariot in our village.

Elisha doesn't even come to the door. Elisha sent a messenger to him. He is not interested enough to open his door. And the message is, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times."

Here is the leader of the superpower that is dominating his power. And it is strange because when you read about Elisha's life he seems a very gentle man. He seems gentler than Elijah, his predecessor. He seems accessible and approachable and friendly. He is not a person who stands on his dignity. He is not an intimidating figure. And yet here he seems reserved, curt, almost rude. And that is what Naaman thought.

Verse 11. "Naaman became furious, and went away and said, 'Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me.'"

And in the original language which is Hebrew those words "to me" are very emphatic. They are stressed, "to me being who I am."

He was humiliated. He was embarrassed. And he said to himself, "I am not going to obey the instructions of someone who treats me in such a cavalier fashion, who is so unimpressed with my dignity."

One commentator puts it perfectly. Naaman wished to be treated like a great man who happened to be a leper. Elisha treated him like a leper who happened to be a great man.

Elisha didn't say, "There is a great man at my door." He said, "There is a leper at my door."

And it was just too humbling, too humiliating.

And, my dear friends, that is exactly what still bothers people about the gospel of Christ because it puts everyone on the same level. And the Bible says there is no difference. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Two hundred and fifty years ago there was a mighty preacher called George Whitefield and one of his friends was the Countess of Huntingdon, a member of the English nobility, a godly woman. And she would throw open her prestigious home in the center of London and she would invite the aristocracy, the top people in England to come and listen to this preacher. And once she invited one of the greatest noble women in the land, the Duchess of Buckingham.

Let me quote from the letter which the Duchess of Buckingham wrote to her the next day. It sounds like something out of Jane Austen.

She says, “What I heard was most repulsive and strongly tainted with impertinence and disrespect towards one’s superiors. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl in the earth.”

Monstrous, outraged. And there are many like here. When they are told that they have got a spiritual need they are insulted and they are angry. They don’t do it with physical needs.

The doctor says, “Well, I am afraid you have got blood pressure, high blood pressure.”

They don’t say, “How dare you?”

“I am afraid you have got a cancer.”

“Go and wash your mouth out with soap at once.”

They listen. And they are concerned and they take it seriously. And yet when they hear of spiritual need they are annoyed.

And, my dear friend, if you are not a Christian, be sure you understand this with absolute clarity. In the presence of God you are a lost sinner. That is who you are and, ultimately, before God this evening, nothing else matters. It doesn’t matter who you are or where you come from or your status or your wealth or your education or your respectability or your morality, nothing. He was a leper. He was a sinner.

And if you are to be saved you must acknowledge that and you must come to God in exactly the same way as everyone else. And you must say, “Lord, I have rebelled against you. I have broken your commandments. I am needy and I am ruined and I am helpless.”

Several years ago my wife and I had the joy of visiting Israel for the first time and one of the places we visited was the so called church of the nativity in Bethlehem, the site of Christ’s birth.

We didn’t like it much. It was too grand. There was too much gold and marble and incense and glitter. But one thing struck us. The door to the church of the nativity it was that height and to get in you have to bend right down, you have to bend your head and bend low and you can’t get in if you won’t bend low. And that is the entrance to the Christian life. It is an open door, but it is a low door. Some people are too proud to do that.

But then Naaman had another objection. Not only was the message too humbling, but it was too simple. It was too simple. And his servants, can’t you see how they understood that?

“If the prophet had told you to do something great...” I am sorry this word “great” occurs in this verse. For I have a friend in this building who thinks the way I pronounce the word

“great” is very amusing and I am going to hear it echoed for the next two or three days as ad nauseum. But anyway, it was great. He wanted to be asked to do some great thing.

“If he had asked you to do something great, would you not have done it?” He was mentally prepared for that. That was his focus and a very serious disease. This is a major thing. The remedy, no doubt, will be complicated and complex and difficult and I have to gear myself up to do something very great and onerous in order to be saved.

Look at the enormous amount of money he took with him. Ten talents of silver. That is 750 pounds of silver, 6000 shekels of gold. That’s 2400 ounces of gold.

Last week gold was selling at about 900 dollars an ounce. He has got about five million dollars in cash in his hand that he is prepared to hand over for a cure. That is how serious he was. He went to the king. That is how serious he was. He was willing to pay an absolute fortune for a cure.

And Elisha doesn’t want anything. And he says, “This can’t be real.”

Or perhaps he thought there will be a dramatic ritual. Maybe that is the way it will be.

Verse 11. “I said to myself, ‘He will surely stand and call on the name of the Lord his God and wave his hand over the place, trumpets and drums and heal the leprosy. And everybody will clap, dramatic, ritual, prayers, incense, the works.’”

Or at least some heroic task, some great thing that it would take a Naaman to accomplish, that it would take a purple heart winner to accomplish.

None of these.

Elisha says, “Go and have a wash. Go and wash. Why don’t you have a bath, Naaman? Go and wash.”

“Are you kidding? Friend, I wash every day and I have the crystal clear water of the Abana piped into my house and golden bowls to wash in and scented water and I don’t need to wallow about in the muddy little stream of the Jordan. I thought you were serious. I thought you were a significant person. Do you know who I am? I have come all this way. I have brought all this money and I am treated like a nobody and I am put off with a humiliating command like a sweaty slave. This is nonsense.”

And it still is for many people.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

That is the gospel. Confess your sin, turn from your sin, look to Jesus and ask him to be your Savior and your Lord. And there is nothing to pay. And there is nothing to achieve. And there is nothing to do and there are no rituals necessary and there are no ceremonies.

And if you do that, all your sins will be dealt with, past, present and future. And God will make you a new person with new desires in your heart and a new power inside you that will change you and you will know his peace and you will have everlasting life.

And people say, "It can't be as simple as that."

People like complicated things, expensive things.

I teach in a theological college. Several years ago we thought we should try to attract more people to the teaching. So we decided that we would reduce our tuition costs to an absolute minimum so that people would come. The expense wouldn't keep them away.

A few weeks later we got a letter from a prospective student. "I was interested in your college. I have compared your fees with another college which shall be nameless in our land." Their fees were about 10 times the size of ours. And he said, "Having compared the fees I have come to the conclusion that their courses are obviously more valuable than your courses so I will not, in fact, be coming to your measly, cheap little college."

Well, I say... I added the last bit, but that was the gist of it.

People like complicated things. Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard, science fiction writer started the church of Scientology in the 1950s. His book *Dianetics*, people are governed, he says, by eight dynamics. And if you come to them you will be trained by therapists to subdue your angrams which are your past traumas by stages of auditing. This will free your spiritual essence and build awareness. You will be tested by a device called an e-meter which will be used as a guide as to your progress. Several hundred hours of this auditing will be necessary at enormous expense.

When the candidate has arrived at the state of clear with all the angrams disposed of, there another 15 levels which have to be passed through. The infallible scripture of the movement are Ron L. Hubbard's writings and tapes and young scientologists have to take a vow of service or a billion years.

Eight million members in 70 countries world wide including some famous movie stars.

You couldn't make it up. People love it. People love it.

The Christian gospel is the simplest of all religions. No fasting, no penances, no yoga, no prayer wheels. You bow your head and your heart and your will to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And perhaps, friends, if I were to bring you some complex daunting challenge that would cost you in time and effort you would be attracted to that.

But the simple gospel, that is why many reject it. It is too humbling. And it is too simple.



And I understand that because when I was 19 years of age that is what I thought. That is why I rejected the gospel. It was too humbling and I was too arrogant. And it was too simple and I thought I was too clever.

So I can understand if you are thinking that this evening and I am not here to scold you or berate you or knock you down. I want to speak to you the way Naaman's servant spoke to him. "My father," they said. "My father." There is their affection for their master. There is their sensitivity.

"My dear friend, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he says to you, 'Wash and be clean?'"

"Think about it, master," they said. "Does it make sense to reject the gospel because of hurt pride? Does that make sense?"

If you were physically ill, seriously ill and you had to go to hospital, one of the first things you lose in hospital is your dignity. The garments that they make you wear are neither flattering nor dignified. The procedures to which your body will be subjected are the antithesis of dignity. They are often invasive and humiliating. How many people say, "I am not going to let them do...."?

"No. I am ill. I am seriously ill. And whatever it takes, whatever it takes, I will submit to gladly, gladly, if I will be healed."

Does it make sense to reject the message because it is too simple?

Let me ask you this. Is it not true that the great realities of life are simple, supremely simple? The most lasting things, the most valuable things... what are your memories? If you think back over your past, what are the things that stand out? Do you think of the evening you played with a new electronic gadget? I doubt it. We think of our parents or their children when they were small and going for a walk and sitting by the fire. You take a piece of fresh bread and cheese and you eat it and it is simple. You listen to a piece of music and it is simple. And you go for a walk. I go for a walk each morning here and you look at the glory of the autumn leaves and the sun coming up and the blue sky. It is simple, a simple thing. It is available to everybody. It is not complicated. It is wonderful.

The most important thing that has happened to me in the past two weeks is I have new little granddaughter. In fact, purely by coincidence...

For those of you who are visitors the people in this church hurry past me because if they walk slowly and stop I make them look at the photographs.

What is more simple than that? The great things are simple. And when God has a gospel for every century and for every nation and for every culture and for all kinds of people,

form the greatest intellectuals to the unlettered ignoramuses, it is going to be simple, simple.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And why should it not be simple? How could it be anything else? My dear friends, these are, in fact, the most wonderful aspects of the gospel that it is humbling and it is simple. And that is exactly why you should believe it and should accept it.

Think about it for a moment. Why is the gospel designed to humble people? Is it that God wants us to feel bad? Is it that God likes to make us grovel? No, no.

It is to make room for God. Naaman had to realize that it was God with whom he had to do, that God alone could heal him. The king couldn't heal him and the prophet couldn't heal him. That is why Elisha didn't come out. And his money couldn't heal him. That is why Elisha wouldn't take it. And his own efforts wouldn't heal him. That is why he didn't ask him to do anything.

God alone could heal him. That is why Elisha didn't bow to him and grovel and pay him respect. That is why Elisha didn't appear on the scene at all, because he wanted the focus to be where it belonged on the unseen God.

“Naaman, it is God you have got to deal with. It is God you have got to look to. He alone can help you.”

That is why he was told to wash seven times in the Jordan. In the Scriptures seven times is a stamp of the work of God. And Naaman got the point. We didn't read verse 15, but I read it now. Here is what he said.

“Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel,” and at the Jordan, Naaman met God and was healed by God.

And, my dear friend, your pride is your sin. It is not a concomitant of your sin. It is not a complicating factor. It is your sin. Your sin is that you have got yourself in the wrong place, yourself in God's place and you have got to get yourself out of God's place so that God will be in his place.

And I dare not feed your pride. That would be like feeding the tumor that is killing you. I would be harming you. I wouldn't be helping you. I would be making you worse.

My dear friend, if you are not a Christian, it is God you have got to deal with. It is God you have offended. It is God before whom you are guilty. It is the living, almighty God who alone can save you. It is not an accident that the gospel humbles us. That is salvation. That is the beginning of salvation, being humbled. God gives grace to the humble. Yourself is dislocated. It is in the wrong place. And it needs to be put back into place so that God may be in his place.

Why does the gospel seem so simple? Why does God not ask any great thing from us? I wonder what the reason is. He doesn't ask any great thing from us. Is it because salvation is a superficial, trivial matter, no big deal, easy accomplished? Bow your head, murmur a prayer. You will be saved. There is no need for big things. There is no need for great things.

Not at all.

Why does God not ask any great thing of us? Because someone else has done the great thing. Someone else has done the great thing. The greatest person there has ever been has done the greatest thing there has ever been.

You see, my friend, it is not that great things don't need to be done for you to be saved. They do need to be done. The forgiveness of one sin apart from Christ is an utter impossibility. The God who said, "Let there be a universe," that God could not say, "Let there be forgiveness."

Apart from Christ he couldn't forgive. He couldn't forgive even one sin because he would no longer be righteous. He would no longer be just. Enormous things need to be done. And the gospel is that they have been done. They have been done. And the task of the Church is to tell you of the great person who has done the great thing. And, basically, that is it. We preach Christ crucified, the great person who has done the great thing.

And I want to apologize to you, if you are not a Christian this evening, for the times when we in the Church get it all muddled and confused and stodgy and disinteresting and you listen to us and you don't know what we are talking about and we are not clear enough and we are not excited enough and we are not simple enough and we don't say there is a great person Jesus and he has done a great thing and if you believe in him, that great thing will be yours.

The Lord Jesus Christ, he is the great person. The eternal Son of God who, being the eternal Son of God, became man and so was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

And that Son of God came down to earth and was born of Mary and he lived a life on earth of complete, total radiant obedience to God's law in every detail, the only perfect human being there has ever been and never ever broke God's law in one respect.

And then he was nailed to a cross and he died in agony for the sins of his people, paying for them. And that thing was so great, so infinite, so profound and amazing that the holy angels in heaven longed to look into it and discover it. And it was so great that the sun in the heavens hid his face and the earth was covered in darkness. And it was so great that when he died there was an earthquake and the tombs burst open and the dead came back

to life and the whole cosmos shook and trembled at the great, great thing that Jesus did when he died for sinners.

That is why God doesn't ask anything from us. You know that in your heart, don't you? You know that even if you are an unbeliever. What difference could a prayer make or an anointing or a gift or a good deed? How could those things, how could they begin to deal with all that you and I have done? That is religion. And this is Christianity. And they are two completely different things.

Not only will God not ask anything from us, he won't allow us to do anything. He won't let us do anything. He stops us because that would be an insult to his Son. That would be saying what his Son did wasn't enough. It would be taking away from his perfect work.

And if the gospel is simple for us, it is only simple because God has made it so in profound, majestic, mysterious, infinite wisdom and love.

The great person who has done the great thing, and that great thing dominates history. And every time you write down on a piece of paper 2008 you are writing with your pen the great thing of all history is the Lord Jesus Christ and his coming to earth. And every time the date clicks up on your computer and you see that it is 2008, it is saying that is the great thing. That is the greatest thing there has ever been or ever will be in this world, the death of Jesus for sinners.

And it affects not only the present, but the future. It affects the past.

There wasn't anything magical in the water of the Jordan River. Naaman was healed because the great thing that Christ would do cast its shadow backwards and all those who were saved in the Old Testament were saved because of the great thing by the great person. That is why the world continues. It is because of Christ and his work that the sun shines, that little children laugh, that you look into the face of your wife. It is because of Christ that the world hasn't been burnt up. It is because of Christ that you are not screaming in hell at this minute. It is because of Christ that you can walk out of here and go back to your comfortable home, the great thing, the great thing.

And Naaman was healed by obeying God's command and believing God's promise. Wash and be clean. And he washed and he was clean. He went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan according to the saying of the man of God. Naaman came to his senses. He said, "What a fool I am in my pride and my anger and my self esteem."

And here is something simple. And it is obvious. And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child. All the ugliness went away and all the sores and all the sadness and all the pain and all the filth and all the horribleness. It went away. And he had soft, downy, milky skin, like the skin of a little baby. And he came out clean.

And that is what the gospel does for our souls, our ugly corrupted souls.

And that is what we must do. Obey the command. And believe the promise.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

My friend, you might do much, you would do much to retain your physical life. Why not, then, when God says to you tonight, “Wash and be clean,” not in water, but in the blood shed at Calvary, come to Christ. Come in your own heart, your own mind. Tell him your awareness of your sin and your guilt and say, “Lord Jesus, I believe that you lived a perfect life that it might be credited to sinners and you died an atoning death that you might pay for sins. And I ask you to be my Savior and I promise to serve you as my Lord and you will be clean.”

Some of you here have heard this message many times. Perhaps some of you young people in this church and you haven't yet come to Jesus Christ. How many more times do you need to hear it? Why will you not come tonight? Is it your pride? How foolish is that? How foolish is that? You may not have another opportunity. God may not call you again. What is it that is keeping you back? Why would you not come?

For some of you it may be your first time in this building. I don't know. You may not know anybody here. You may be the person from outside. Well, Naaman was the person from outside.

Jesus tells us in Luke that there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian. He came from nowhere. And God saved him by his mercy. It may so easily be you. I urge you. Put aside your pride. Let God humble you. Come to Christ and receive his cleansing. Amen.

Let us bow our heads for a brief prayer.

*Thank you, Father, for providing a Savior in your Son, that greatest of all persons who has done the greatest of all things. Thank you for Jesus, for his glory, his beauty, his kindness and his mercy and his compassion as here tonight through my voice he invites sinners to himself. Thank you for the simplicity of the gospel. Thank you that we are called to believe and to be saved. Oh Lord, help us to put aside our foolish pride, our sinful selves and come simply to Christ coming like little children that he may receive us. And, Father, help every one of us to come to him again tonight.*

*We have all got things in our lives that aren't right and that aren't clean and we want to be clean. Dear Lord Jesus, you alone can make us clean. Wash us and we shall be whiter than snow. And we shall give you throughout our lives and throughout eternity all the praise and all the glory. Amen.*