

Naaman's Pride

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 April 2018

Preacher: Mark Macleod

[0 : 00] Well, with God's help, let's turn back to that passage which we read together in 2 Kings, chapter 5. I really want to look at that whole narrative that we read together under the title of Naaman's Pride.

Human pride, it is one of, I think, the biggest barriers to the power of the gospel. Pride and the gospel, they're just not in any way compatible, are they? Pride and the gospel, in many ways, they are a contradiction. They are a contradiction in terms because they say different things.

Pride comes to us and says, you are strong. Pride says, you are able to look after yourself. Pride says, you don't need any help from anyone.

You don't need any help from anyone in anything. Pride says all of these things. But the gospel says something very different indeed.

[1 : 12] The gospel tells us we are weak. The gospel tells us we are helpless. The gospel tells us that we are frail people.

And it tells us that we are sinners. And more than that, it says, in order to be saved from that sin, what you must do is you must humbly accept that there is nothing you can do to be saved.

But rather, you must humbly fall and bow before the feet of another. Another who is able to heal you and to cleanse you from your sin.

Because, you see, a proud person will never do that. A proud person will never bow the knee. A proud person will never bow the knee before the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, friends, that's exactly how we must come to the gospel. With a spirit of humility. That's how we must come. Acknowledging that fact that we can't do anything.

[2 : 20] As difficult as that might be. And for some people that is very difficult. To accept that they are helpless. To accept that they can't do anything. But that is the only way. Through that humility and acknowledging our helplessness.

That's the only way we can come to the gospel. Because if we come in any other way. With any other attitude. Then the gospel will have no effect on us whatsoever.

And that's a solemn thought indeed. And the narrative that's before us here tonight. It's one that's primarily about this very issue. You see, this is a man who is looking for healing.

Isn't it? He's a man looking for healing. But something gets in the way. Something keeps getting in the way. His pride. His pride is a massive problem here. His pride keeps getting in the way.

And what we see in this narrative. Is a humbling process. It's the Lord entering into this man's providence. And he begins to humble him. And what you see here in this narrative.

[3 : 23] Is this man learning humility. He starts off with this pride within him. And eventually he learns humility. And he receives this cleansing from God.

And what I really want to do tonight. Is go through this narrative. Seeing that process taking place. Let's see the process of this man learning humility.

But as we'll see at the end. Even though he's learning humility. Pride never really leaves Naaman. But we'll come on to that towards the end of the sermon.

So the narrative centers around this man Naaman. And we read there in verse 1. That he was commander of the army of the king of Syria.

He was a great man with his master. And in high favor. Because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. So this man is a pretty impressive figure isn't he?

[4 : 20] He's quite an impressive figure indeed. A very powerful figure. The kind of man that would be full of pride. The kind of man you'd expect to walk with his chest out.

And his head held very high. The kind of man who probably thought he was invincible. As though he could do no wrong. As though he could not be defeated at all.

And bear in mind here. That we're not actually talking about an Israelite. This isn't an Israelite.

We're used to hearing about the great Israelite warriors. But this is not an Israelite.

We read there he is a commander of the Syrian army. It's the enemy of Israel. But interestingly we read in that first verse there.

That the Lord is the one who actually gave victory to this commander. And victory to Syria. That's interesting isn't it? And that's a reminder to us.

[5 : 17] Of the extent of our God's power. And indeed the extent of our God's sovereignty here. He is sovereign over everything. God is not just sovereign over Israel.

You see God is not just in control of the events that are happening to Israel. That's not what you find in scripture. You come to scripture and you find that the Lord is sovereign over the political and indeed the foreign affairs of the other nations as well.

He's not in that sense just the God of Israel. In the sense of his sovereignty. He is sovereign over everything. And here we see him actually giving victory. In this instance here to Syria.

And you read of that kind of thing at other stages in the biblical narrative as well. There's other times when God actually is working amongst the foreign nations in different ways.

Sometimes he's giving them victory. Often over Israel. Usually because of some kind of sin that Israel have committed. And the Lord comes and he judges them and he disciplines Israel.

[6 : 21] And often that's how he does that. By giving victory to the other nations as we see here. And the same is true today.

In our day and age. You know God is obviously sovereign over the church. We know that. The church is the spiritual Israel. And God is sovereign over the church.

Absolutely. He is ruling over his church. But his sovereignty of course stretches much further than that. His sovereignty stretches right throughout the known world. And indeed the political affairs of this world.

And the foreign affairs of this world. The Lord is over it all. It's quite remarkable when you turn on your news. And you see all the things that are going on. And you see perhaps the turmoil going on in Russia.

And perhaps the confusion in things like North Korea. And other places like that. And you watch all that. And you wonder what's going on with everything. And then you're reminded. That the Lord is actually sovereign over all of these things.

[7 : 21] We might not understand it. We might not understand exactly what's going on. But nonetheless the Lord is sovereign over it all. Now that's not to say that the Lord is the instigator of turmoil and war.

Not at all. The Lord is not the instigator. Man is responsible. Ultimately man is responsible for all the warfare and everything that goes on in this world. But yet the Lord mysteriously is sovereign over it all.

He is over it all. So we can't point the finger of blame at him. But yet at the same time we say that he is sovereign over everything. And that's what you see here at the beginning of this passage.

You see the extent of the Lord's sovereignty. He is sovereign in these big events of what wars Syria are winning. But you also see that the Lord is sovereign in the small details as well.

Because look at verse 2. We are introduced there in verse 2 to this young servant girl. You see during one of Syria's raids on Israel.

[8 : 29] We're given this small detail of a little servant girl who's captured. This little servant girl who you think when you read it that's a minor detail. That's such a minor detail in a warfare.

You see a little girl being taken captive. But yet it's recorded here. And it's recorded because the Lord is at work here. Even in these small details. Because the Lord is about to use this little girl in quite an amazing way.

This little girl was going to have a considerable influence over this man Nehman. You see the Lord he's not just over the big things. Like giving Syria victory.

He's also in the small details. And you see the Lord's hand in placing this little servant girl into the household of this man Nehman.

Or to be precise in the service of Nehman's wife. And the dilemma that's in this narrative. The problem in this narrative is that Nehman for all his power and strength and might.

[9 : 35] He is a leper. That's the big issue here. He's a leper. And that's quite something in that day and age. You know if you had to get any disease. This is the last one you wanted in the ancient world.

Leprosy. It's a kind of skin disease. Now it manifests itself in lots of different ways. It was actually a very general term. Leprosy. So we don't know exactly what kind of leprosy this was. But we know this that whatever kind it was it was a source of shame. Because it was a social stigma to be known as a leper or to have leprosy. And that wasn't just through in Israel. We're perhaps more familiar with that in Israel. It was through right throughout the known world. Leprosy was something that brought shame to someone. And you can imagine that that would have been pretty hard for Nehman to take.

Because as I mentioned there. Nehman strikes you as a very proud man. A very powerful man. And here he is struck with possibly the worst kind of illness that he could get in terms of his pride.

[10 : 37] He's struck with leprosy. And it's almost like the Lord is beginning this humbling process even there. By allowing this particular disease to come over him.

Because sometimes when we are steeped in pride. And when we are steeped in this kind of self-reliance. The Lord has to sometimes take extreme measures to break in.

To break into the hardness of our hearts. To break down that pride within us. And he can do that in different ways. And he can do that using different providences. He can bring different providences your way.

And sometimes, sometimes he does it just like this. He does it through our health. And that's exactly what he does here with Nehman.

Nehman has this disease of leprosy. This skin disease. And he obviously can't get any relief.

Obviously in Syria there's no way of curing this.

[11 : 37] He's probably tried everything possible in Syria. But there's no relief at all. And then we notice the compassion of that young Israelite servant girl.

In verse 3 there. It's quite remarkable. You put yourself in her shoes. Remember. The Syrians had gone into Israel. The Syrians had taken her captive.

Probably they murdered her parents more than likely. At the very least. They separated this little girl from her parents. And they took this little girl. And they took her into Syria as a prisoner.

As a servant. Now you imagine being that little girl. And you imagine. The commander of the army of your enemies being struck with leprosy. How would you feel? How would you feel knowing what this man has done to your family?

Knowing what this man has done to your land? I imagine. Many of us would be quite glad. Quite glad to see Nehman suffer with this disease of leprosy.

[12 : 38] But not this girl. Not this girl. She doesn't do that at all. She is full of compassion. Isn't she? Truly living out the law of God in practice. Not just loving her neighbor.

Loving her enemy. That's exactly what she's doing there. Loving her enemy. And she comes to her mistress. Nehman's wife. And he tells her. There's a prophet in Samaria.

There's a prophet in Samaria. That will be able to heal Nehman's leprosy. Now that's quite remarkable indeed.

You see. You don't just see her compassion. You also see her faith. It's remarkable. The faith of this little girl here. She knows that this prophet in Israel.

She knows that this prophet is able to heal Nehman of this leprosy that he is suffering from here. And you see her faith because of the risk that's attached to what she's saying here.

[13 : 41] You think about it for a moment. Because if she told her master. If she told her master. I know someone who can heal you. And if he was then to listen to her and say.

Okay. I'm going to go and try and find this person. And if he was to go out to Israel. And if he was to find this person. Whoever it was. And if he wasn't actually healed.

Can you imagine how angry he'd be? Can you imagine how angry he'd be when he'd come back?

Can you imagine the repercussions that there would have been for the servant girl? Oh you told me that I would be healed and I'm not.

I suspect that if she were wrong and if Nehman wasn't healed. This servant girl probably more than likely would have been killed. You see her faith.

She is so sure. So sure. It would have been easy for her to say nothing. Easy to say nothing. But she doesn't. She is so sure that the prophet of God is able to cleanse Nehman that she says it.

[14:40] No fear. Full of faith in the power of God. An amazing girl. No. She really is. As we go through this chapter. You're going to see that not many people come out of this chapter in a good light.

Not many at all. Not even Nehman really. But this young girl does. You see her faith. Her compassion. She is a remarkable picture of a believer.

And that's interesting because Israel at this point they are in a bad way as a nation. In a very bad way. Not only politically but spiritually they are very much in a bad way.

They've fallen into all sorts of apostasy. Things are at a low ebb in terms of spiritual things. But even in the face of that context there.

We still have individuals like this little young girl here. Who exemplifies true godliness. She knew about Elisha.

[15:38] She knew because more than likely she was from a godly home. A godly family. And she shows her faith. And she shows her compassion here. But you see even in the midst of the worst kind of idolatry and apostasy.

Even when things are that bad in the church of God. Even then God still has his faithful remnant. And he always will. No matter how low spiritual things come to in the church.

Even in our own day. God will always have his remnant. No matter how low it comes in terms of numbers. In all these things the Lord will always have his remnant.

And here he has his remnant. And one of them is this little girl. And in God's providence. Rather than leaving her in Israel. Where she might be a force for good.

He takes her out of there. And he puts her into Syria. And you and I would have been watching that. Thinking God what are you doing? Taking one of the godly remnant away from Israel.

[16:40] When they need these godly people. That's what the Lord did. In his providence. And of course he did it for a reason. And Naaman here he takes the word of this little servant girl.

He accepts it. Which is quite amazing in and of itself. For this proud man to take the word of a servant girl. And then he goes to the king of Syria. And he gets permission to look for this prophet. And the king of Syria actually writes him a letter of commendation. To send him on his way to the king of Israel. And you see. The king of Syria.

And Naaman. You see they've made an assumption. They've made an assumption that. If there is such a powerful prophet in Israel. Who can heal diseases like this.

Then the king of Israel must know about him. Must know about him. Surely the king knows about him. But of course as we read the narrative. We see that the king of Israel doesn't have a clue about Elisha.

[17:43] They assumed wrongly. But Naaman goes. And you see there in verse 7 there. When the king of Israel is presented with this letter from the king of Syria.

What does he do? What does he do? He tears his clothes. Because he didn't know of anyone who could heal someone like this. He didn't know of anyone who could do such a thing.

And he assumes that this is some kind of political maneuver of some kind. To try and start off a new quarrel with Israel. So he thinks the king of Syria is at it.

At it. Trying to stir up some kind of trouble. Or to perhaps increase the level of trouble that there already was. And you'll notice the irony here.

The king of Israel. He's supposed to be the political leader. And he's supposed to be as well the spiritual leader. He's meant to lead the people of God in all of these ways.

[18:40] But sometimes the leaders of God's people aren't necessarily the holy ones. Sometimes the leaders of God's people are not the ones who are spiritually aware.

And that's what you see here. You see this godly servant girl. She knew about Elisha. She knew about the prophet of God. But the king of Israel who should have known.

He doesn't. He doesn't. You see. He may have had the power. He may have had the position. He may have had the authority and the influence. He didn't have God.

He didn't know God. And he didn't know the prophet of God either. And likewise. We have to be careful as well. Never assume.

That those in positions of leadership and authority in the church. Are necessarily the godly ones. You know very often. Very often it's those who are in the background. Those who are not in positions of honor or leadership.

[19 : 41] Those like this little servant girl. Very often it's those people who are the most godly. And here we see that. And then in verse 8.

Somehow we don't know. Elisha finds out about this request for healing. He finds out. And he invites Naaman to his house.

He invites Naaman to come to the house of the prophet. And here you see this humbling process continuing. Because first of all Naaman goes to the palace of the king. He goes to the palace of the king.

And he expected to find healing there. He expected for the king to summon the prophet. And for him to be healed there and then. In the palace of the king. But now where is he? Now we find him at the house of the prophet.

And we don't know exactly what kind of house Elisha had. But I guarantee you. It would not have been a palace. It would not have been a palace. Prophets did not live in palaces.

[20 : 39] And here you have Naaman. Pulling up to the humble abode. Of this prophet here. And there you have a picture. Of this great commander.

With his horses. And with his chariot. And with his entourage no doubt. And he is there outside this humble house. The house of the prophet. This is the kind of man that only goes to palaces.

But now he is outside the house of the prophet. And he comes down from his chariot. And I don't know if he knocks on the door. Or what he does. But he stands at the door of Elisha. And what happens?

Well in some way. There is a hint of humor here. Because Elisha doesn't even come to the door. He doesn't even come to the door. What does Elisha do? He sends a messenger.

He sends a messenger. To go and meet this great man. And the messenger comes. And the messenger tells Naaman. That Elisha told him to wash seven times in the Jordan.

[21 : 38] And then he would be healed. And Naaman is not happy. He is absolutely livid. He is full of, as we read there, rage.

Here is the commander of the army of Syria. This man of prestige. This man of great honor. And he comes to the house of this humble prophet. And the prophet doesn't even come to the door.

The prophet sends a messenger. To speak to him. And you see. This is like a slap in the face to Naaman. It's like a slap in his pride.

His pride is dented by this. You know he can't get over what's going on here. You see. God is trying to humble this man. He's trying to humble this man.

And he puts him through various processes. Like this. To try and humble him. But time and time again. Naaman's pride gets in the way. He can't believe that the prophet.

[22 : 36] God hasn't even come out. To speak to him. Himself. And of course. That's what some people are still like. Today. There's many a proud heart.

That will resist the power. Of the gospel. And they'll come to God. And in prayer. They'll almost blaspheme. And say. God if you want to get me.

If you want to make me believe in you God. Then you're going to have to come to me face to face. You're going to have to speak to me directly. Prove your existence to me God. Prove your existence to me.

I don't want to hear your word through a messenger. I don't want to hear your word through a minister. I don't want to hear your word through anyone else. I want you God. I want you to speak to me. I wonder if anyone's ever thought like that.

Or prayed like that. Well. At the end of the day. What is that but the pride of the human heart? Isn't it? We won't hear God through a messenger.

[23 : 37] Oh we want him face to face. And we'll tell him that. And we're blaspheming. Even in the act of asking. Pride. Pride within us. The pride. Of the human heart.

And that's what Naaman's like. And Naaman responds to the words of the messenger there. In a very aggressive manner. In verse 12. And he's mocking the waters of Israel.

And he's saying the rivers of Damascus. They're far better than the waters of Israel. The waters of Israel are powerless. They're nothing. Nothing compared to the waters of Damascus.

And his tone there. It's as though he's saying. I'm not going to lower myself. To put myself in the waters of Israel. I'm not going to lower myself. To bathe there.

Just because some servant told me to. See his pride is still there. His pride coming to the fore. Once more.

[24 : 34] You see he's been asked to do something here. That's designed by God to humble him. And that's what very often. The providences that come our way. That's very often what they're designed to do.

To humble us. And that's what's going on here. Designed to humble him. But he doesn't allow it. Oh a man of his stature. A man of his honor and power and strength.

He's not going to bathe in the waters of Israel. And again. How many people respond to the gospel. Just like that. You see.

When the gospel is preached. It asks us to bow down before Jesus. It asks us to come before him. And put our trust in him. But the problem is.

In the eyes of the world. Jesus is a picture of weakness. Jesus is a picture of powerlessness. Because in the eyes of the world.

[25 : 32] He's just some common criminal. That's who Jesus is. He's a common criminal. Who lived 2000 years ago. And who died on the cross. For some failed revolution attempt.

He has no power. He has no authority. He is nothing in the eyes of the world. He is right now. In a tomb somewhere. Dry bones. Lying there. That is exactly what the world thinks.

And to bow the knee to such a Jesus. As that. Is to bring on ridicule. To bring on shame and humiliation. To yourself.

In the eyes of the world. And when the gospel asks us. To bow before Jesus. When the gospel asks us. To put our faith and trust in him. As our savior.

For many people. And maybe you in here today. For many people. Their pride just won't allow them. Their pride will not allow them. To bend the knee before Jesus.

[26 : 31] You see. The thought of the world. Seeing them bend the knee to this Jesus. It's too much. Of a humiliation for them. Maybe it's too much of a humiliation for you.

You see here. For Naaman. For Naaman. It was too much of a humiliation. To wash in the waters of Israel. No way. No way. And for many today.

Sadly. It is too much. Of a humiliation. To come to Christ. Seeking salvation. I hope and pray. Tonight. That that is not the case with you.

That you will not allow. Your pride. To stop you. From falling. At the feet. Of the Lord. Jesus. Christ. And by putting. Our faith in Christ. By doing that.

We are accepting. That we are weak. Accepting that we are. Helpless. But that's exactly. What we need to do. In order. To be saved. In order.

[27 : 27] To receive. This gift. Of salvation. And. This might be. A bit. Dangerous territory here. And. I don't mean to be sexist.

But. I think this is. Quite probably. A bigger problem. For men. Than it is for women. I mean. It's a problem for everyone. Generally. Speaking.

But I think men struggle. With this issue of. Pride. Perhaps more than women. Maybe I'm wrong in that. Whether it be. Men accepting. Help from a doctor. Whether it be.

Men accepting. Help from a counselor. Very often. Pride is a barrier. As I say. It's evident in both. But more apparent. Sometimes in men. And I wonder. If that's.

Also the case. With. The gospel. Itself. Is. Our pride. Such. A barrier. For us. As men. That we won't. Put our faith.

[28 : 21] In someone else. Is it too much. For us. To be seen as weak. Is it too much. For us. To be seen as weak. And to come. Before. The feet of another. I hope.

Very much. That I am. Wrong in that. So. Naaman's pride. Here. Is still. A barrier. To him. And God. Is chipping away. At this pride. But it hasn't.

Disappeared. You see. He started off. With pride. And he's. God's chipping away. But it hasn't gone. It hasn't. Disappeared. Entirely. And in verse. Thirteen. And onwards. Naaman's own servants.

Then they try and. Convince him. They try and. Convince him. To accept. This offer. And they. They basically say. If he had asked you. To do something hard.

You would have done it. So why not do this easy thing. Why not. Just go and. And wash. And. Be cleansed. And again. You know. How many people. Are like that.

[29 : 14] With the gospel. You know. We want salvation. To be something difficult. Almost. We want salvation. To be something. We jump through hoops. To achieve. Again. For our pride.

Because. If salvation was about works.

And if we were saved. We could then say. Oh. I've done enough. I've attended enough. Church services. I've. Attended enough. Prayer meetings. I've prayed enough. I've done enough. Now. I've done enough. And I'm deserving. To be saved. You see. We make it about ourselves. Make it about ourselves. And our own pride. Pride. And similarly. If salvation was about. How much we knew.

About how much theology we knew. Or about how much of the bible we knew. Again. The same problem is there. If we were saved. We'd say. Oh. I'm saved. Because I've learned enough of theology. I know the confession of faith.

I know large chunks of the bible. And again. It's all about pride. You see. If it was about these things. It would. Feed our pride. But of course. Salvation is not about any of these things.

[30 : 13] It's simply a matter of accepting. And receiving. This free gift. From the Lord. Jesus Christ. And putting our faith. And trust.

In him. And for some people. That's just too easy. For some people. That's just too straightforward. You see. Some people. Are not humble enough. To accept.

The free. Offer. Of the gospel. But. Amazingly. Naaman's servants. They eventually convince him. And he goes. And he washes in the Jordan.

Seven times. And. His skin then is completely. Clean. And. He finally. Let's go of his pride. Or at least. Let's go of it. To a degree. And he finds.

Salvation there. Or he finds. Cleansing there. In the waters. Of Israel. And then. What does Naaman do? Then he goes back. To Elisha.

[31 : 08] Goes back. To Elisha. And this time. He stands. Before Elisha. And you see there. In verse 15. That he confesses. His faith. In the one. True living God. He says. Behold.

I know. That there is. No God. In all the earth. But in Israel. So accept. Now. A present. From your servant. But Elisha. Won't receive.

A thing. He won't receive. A thing. You see. Naaman's pride. Has reduced. Somewhat. But it has not. Disappeared. Entirely.

It's still there. He wants to pay. He wants to pay. For this gift. Of healing. And Elisha. Saying. No way. No way. Am I receiving. Anything from you. Not a chance.

Lest you say. You've earned this. Lest you say. You've somehow. Purchased this. Not at all. It is a gift. And it is. A free gift. I will not receive. A thing.

[32 : 03] You see. His pride. Is still there. His pride. Has not. Disappeared. And it's amazing. How that happens. You know. Christians. In here tonight.

You know this. More than anyone. It's amazing. How pride. Follows us. Into the life. Of faith. We thought. When we'd be saved. That'd be it. Pride. No longer an issue. But that's not.

How it works out. Is it? Pride. Follows us. It follows us. Even. Into. The life. Of faith. Itself. And you see it here. With Nehemiah. Pride hasn't gone.

Pride hasn't gone. And you see it there. In verse 17. And 18. There you see. Nehemiah. He's telling. Elisha. That. From now on. He's only going to worship.

The one God. The God of Israel. And for that reason. He rather bizarrely. Asks for some soil. An unusual. Thing to ask for. He wants.

[32 : 57] The soil of Israel. Now he obviously thinks. That. In order to worship. God. He needs to worship. On Israelite soil. Now that's nonsense. That's not the case at all. That's what he thinks.

And Elisha doesn't really. Respond to that. But. What's. Even more bizarre. Is what you find. In verse 18. And this is a. A tricky section. Look at verse 18.

In this matter. So he's speaking to. Elisha here. In this matter. May the Lord. Pardon your servant. And he says. When my master.

Goes into the house of. Rummen. A false god. To worship there. Leaning on my arm. And I bow myself. In the house of. Rummen. So an act of worship. Bowing in the house of.

Rummen. When I bow myself. In the house of. Rummen. The Lord. Pardon your servant. In this matter. That's unbelievable. He's basically.

[33 : 53] Here asking. For permission. To be. Continually involved. In idol worship. He's saying. Let me carry on. With this idol worship. Or my heart. Won't be in it. I'll be really.

Worshipping the true God. But let me continue. In this act. And I hope we can all see. Just how. Utterly. Ridiculous. That is. Absolutely. Wrong. In every.

Possible. Way. This is. It's almost akin. To a Muslim. Being converted. And then saying. I'm a believer. The Lord Jesus Christ. But I want to keep.

Going to the mosque. I want to keep. Engaging in Friday prayers. I want to. Do all the things. That Muslims do. And it's as though. He's saying to God. Forgive me. For all these things. But I'm going to continue.

With them. And I hope. We can see. How wrong. How wrong. That is. It is a clear breach. If nothing else. Of the first. Two. Commandments. And.

[34 : 46] By the way. Elisha. Doesn't actually. Respond. To Naaman's. Request here. He doesn't actually. Respond. Because see the words. In verse 19 there. When Elisha says.

Go. In peace. That is not. An affirmation. Of Naaman's. Request. Not at all. Some people take it like that. Some people say. Oh well. Elisha said.

Go in peace. So that must mean. He's giving his amen. To what Naaman has asked for. In this. Compromising. Request here. But that is. Absolutely. Not the point.

You see. That phrase there. Go in peace. That's to do with something else. You see. There's an underlying tension. In this whole narrative. These two nations. Are at war. Israel and Syria.

And there's this underlying tension. Right throughout the whole narrative. As to. How this whole thing. Is going to end. When they depart. From one another. Is there going to be trouble. Or is there going to be peace.

[35 : 42] That's the tension. That's there. And that's. Why you have those words. Go in peace. So Elisha. He's not affirming. Naaman's request. Not at all.

He wouldn't dare to affirm. Such a. An idolatrous. Request as that. So there is absolutely. No question about it. That request there. From Naaman. Is wrong. And Elisha.

Is not at all. Putting. His. Amen. To it. And I want to make that. Abundantly clear. Because some people. Will use things like this. To justify certain things.

Certain practices. Oh Naaman was okay. To carry on with a sinful practice. No he wasn't. And Elisha is not. Saying that. At all. You see. Naaman's.

Pride here. It has been reduced. To a degree. But as I've kept saying. It hasn't. Disappeared. Entirely. You see. His pride is still there.

[36 : 37] So that he won't go back to Syria. And swallow his pride. And tell people. I now worship the God of Israel. I now worship the God of the Jews. He won't do that.

His pride. It's bothering him. His pride. Won't allow him to do that. Instead he wants to go back. And pretend like nothing happened. Pretend like life is just normal.

Carrying on with all his usual routines. And I wonder. Tonight. If any of us in here are like that. I wonder if there are people in here. Who are converted.

Who have their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Who believe in God. But yet. You go back to your homes. You go back to your work. And all the other spheres of your life.

And you pretend as though nothing happened. You pretend as though there's no change in your life. You hide. You hide your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37 : 33] That's exactly what Naaman is trying to do here. And why is it? What's the root cause? It's his pride. And it's the same with us. When we hide our faith.

What else is it but our pride? Fear of man. Fear of what others might say. Fear indeed of what others might think. Because you see. Even the believer has issues with pride.

The Lord humbles us to save us. He does that. And praise the Lord that he does that. He humbles us to save us. But we still have this issue with pride.

You know we allow the fear of man to come in. We allow what other people think to come in all the time. And pride. It raises and rears its head time and time again.

We try and crush it down. And it's a very hard enemy to keep down. Pride. In very many ways it's the foundation of all sin. And pride comes up. No matter how many times we push it down.

[38 : 29] It comes up and it causes us all kinds of problems. But we must pray to the Lord. That he would give us the strength. To mortify that sin. To mortify that sin of pride.

Pray that we would be able to humble ourselves daily. And to submit to our Lord and his law. Because I'll tell you this. If you start acting like Naaman. And if you start compromising.

And putting these compromising requests to God. And prayer like this man is doing to Elisha. I guarantee you. It's not going to go well for you. I guarantee you that that will cause all sorts of problems.

In your life of faith. So in many ways this whole narrative. Is about pride. Naaman's pride. And I suppose there's two lessons.

In that narrative. And the first lesson. Is that God must break our pride. To bring us to himself. And that's true. God must break our pride.

[39 : 33] To bring us to saving faith. But secondly. We also see here. That for the believer. This battle of pride is not over. It's not over.

And we must remember that. In many ways. We don't need reminded. We experience it. All the time. It's a battle that continues. But we must pray to the Lord.

That he would continue to humble us. That we would continue to do everything we can. To mortify that sin. And whenever we see it growing up. Whenever we see it rearing its head.

We must quash it. And mortify it. There and then. Because if we allow that to rise up. It will cause you problems. As I said. Individually. It will cause you problems.

In your families. It will cause you problems. In your church. It will cause you problems. In your neighborhood. Your community. Pride is deadly. And it follows us. Into the life of faith.

[40 : 26] And we must make sure. We do everything we can. To prevent it. Let's pray.