

Harris Creek Baptist Church  
Nate Hilgenkamp  
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Naaman and Elisha  
2 Kings 5:1-19

Well, there are two different kinds of people in this world. There is a group of people who doesn't mind or even enjoys the dentist. And then there's this whole other group of people, us normal people, who thinks they're total weirdos because we hate the dentist, and we'll do anything possible to not go to one. So, honestly confession time. I hadn't really been to the dentist in a long time because it's traumatizing. I don't enjoy it; I don't like it. Until I woke up one morning in late April, about 4:30 in the morning, and I had a toothache. But it wasn't just like an isolated, individual toothache. It was the like the entire left side of my mouth was throbbing which was weird because nothing had happened before. I had done exactly what I remembered the dentist telling me to do. I brushed my teeth twice a week just like he said. And I hadn't been in any pain, there'd been no problems, so I figured maybe I'd kind of just grow out of this. Maybe I was sleeping on my cheek weird, maybe something was up. So, I tried to go back to sleep, and I couldn't. It just got worse. I tried to eat something, energize myself, it only got worse. So, I went and looked in our medicine cabinet, thought about taking Tylenol but I thought you know real men don't take medicine. So, I didn't take any Tylenol and I got myself ready for work. As I drove to work it only got worse.

So, as I was driving, I had to pull around and stop at Walgreens to buy a \$15 bottle of Tylenol and take some Tylenol because real men, smart men, take medicine at home. Stupid men have to spend a bunch more to buy medicine at Walgreens. I eventually did get a little bit better, but I still did go to the dentist that afternoon. I asked them what the problem was. They took an x-ray, and he came back, and he was like, "Nate you have a cavity. And it's not just a cavity, this thing is massive. In fact, there is so much decay going on in your tooth that it's actually eating away at your nerve. So, the reason the whole side of your face is throbbing is because it's eating away at the roots of your tooth." And you never want to hear those words "roots" and "tooth". So, I said, "tell me what this means". And he was like, "Well, you're going to have to have a root canal. And a root canal means I'm going to take this power saw to your tooth essentially. I'm going to shave it down, and I'm going to get this drill and I'm going to drill a hole in the middle of your tooth. Then I'm going to take an instrument and suck out the nerves in the roots of your tooth."

And I threw up on the side of the bed. I cannot do this. So, I asked, "how long will I be out for? How long under for during this surgery?" And he was like, "oh no - you're not under. You're awake the whole time." And I'm like I'm not doing that. I'm not doing that! I took Tylenol this morning and I got better. Why can't I just take Tylenol every day the rest of my life, I think that's better. He's like, "Nate, you don't want to do that." And I was like, "Okay what if you just pull out my tooth right now? I got twenty other teeth, thirty other teeth, I don't know how many other. I don't really need this tooth. Let's just yank it out right now. I would rather do

that than get a root canal. And he was like “Nate, you don’t want to do that. Really, the only way to get better is to get a root canal.” So, I did it. [pause] I was expecting applause. Yes, thank you. Thank you. I was like man, that was hard. That was traumatizing for me. I deserve some sort of respect.

And I say that story for two reasons. One, I had the root canal a week after my wife gave birth, so no one really checked on me. Everyone was asking, “How is your wife? How’s your wife?” And I was like, “she’s going to be fine! I was sore all last night after my root canal.” Everyone cared about her so it’s not too late to have a meal train for me. It’s not too late to send a get-well-soon card. I still sometimes when chewing have a little bit of soreness. So, I share that for some sympathy. But I also share that story because what happens when the very thing that will make you well is the last thing you want to do? What happens when the very thing that will heal you is the last thing you want to do?

That was true with my root canal. The very last thing I wanted to do was to get a root canal. But that was the only thing that would make me better, so I did. But in life, what happens when the very thing that will make you well is the last thing you want to do. Do you do it? I think more often than not, we don’t. Because we’d rather live with our pain than to go through the pain of doing that thing we don’t want to do. Let me give you some examples. How about, when you know the very thing that would heal your marriage is to ask for forgiveness, even for the thing you said last night, but that’s the last thing you want to do. Do you do it? Or how about in your struggle with pornography, you know the very thing that would heal you would be to get rid of your iPhone and get a brick phone, but that’s the last thing you want to do. Do you do it? Or how about when you’re struggling with how much you’re spending, you’re overextended, and you’re in credit card debt. And you know the very thing that would make you well is to get rid of your credit cards, but it’s the last thing you want to do. Do you do it? Cause you see many times when the very thing that would heal us is the last thing we want to do, we just don’t do it. We’d rather live with our pain than to go through the pain of doing that which we don’t want to do.

This morning we’re going to look at a story in Scripture of a man who had that option. He was sick with an illness and the very thing that would make him well was the last thing he wanted to do. We’re going to see what decision he made. Was he going to do it or was he going to live with his sickness and his illness? We are going to be looking at the story of Naaman. The story of Naaman is found in 2 Kings 5. So, if you have your Bible open it up, turn it on, to 2 Kings 5. And if you don’t know where that is, let me help you out. You probably have not been in 2 Kings in a while. 2 Kings is right after 1 Kings. So just find 1 Kings and go to 2 Kings. Okay, that wasn’t really helpful. How about this? 2 Kings is right before 1 Chronicles. So, just go to 1 Chronicles and then...okay, that wasn’t helpful. Y’all don’t know the difference between 1 Chronicles and 1 Corinthians. Good luck finding 2 Kings. 2 Kings 5. That’s where we’re going to be this morning as we’re in this summer sermons series called BC.

We’re going through some of the most famous stories in the Old Testament. We’ve looked at Adam and Eve. We’ve looked at Moses. We’ve looked at Abraham. Last week we looked at Daniel, and this week we’re looking at Naaman.... he doesn’t seem to belong. All those other guys, they are famous. But Naaman, you probably don’t even know where we’re going. You don’t know this story. So, why Naaman? Why Naaman today?

Well, it's because JP told me I could speak on whatever I want. No, really, I just like this story. So, I hope you do too, otherwise it's going to be a long thirty minutes. So, let's see what you think starting in 2 Kings 5:1. It says this about Naaman. **"Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy."** See Naaman was this guy who was perfect in every way *but*... See even in this one verse, this one sentence, it lists off all these amazing characteristics about him, all these awesome traits. This is the guy who everyone wanted to be. In fact, in this one verse, let me just read off all the things we learned about Naaman. He was commander of the King's army, he was a great man, highly regarded, valiant soldier, *but* he's got this one thing. *But* he had leprosy. He had everything going on you could imagine but he had leprosy.

Leprosy was this skin disease that would start small. It would start as like a gray spot on your skin, but it would steadily grow all across your body until your whole body was gray. I mean, truthfully, if it grew through your whole body, you'd end up looking like a zombie. Like that's what this illness, this disease would look like. As it spread, those gray spots would deaden the nerve endings on your skin so you couldn't feel anything. Someone could touch you and you wouldn't feel it. There were moments where people would fall asleep, and they wouldn't even wake up as rats would be chewing off their fingers because they've lost all sense of feel and touch. It's a horrible disease. It's a disgusting disease. And although it would start small, it would steadily grow, and it would steadily destroy, and eventually it would bring death.

See, for Naaman, it just brought extreme clarity to his life. Because he was no longer concerned about everything else going on in his life. It didn't matter if he was highly successful or well known. The only thing that mattered now was this disease. The only thing that mattered now for Naaman was killing this disease or else it was going to kill him. And this leads us to point number one. The first thing we can learn from this story of Naaman is point number one.

### *1. A Diagnosis Removes Distractions*

We've all likely felt this at some point in our life. Maybe you've had cancer, maybe a family member has had cancer, a friend has had cancer. Whenever you hear a diagnosis like that, everything else just kind of fades to black. Nothing else really matters as much. You don't care as much about growing your business. You don't care as much about the weeds in your yard. You only care about that which is trying to kill you or your friend whose ever been diagnosed with cancer. This was true for Naaman. As soon as he heard this diagnosis, nothing else mattered. He was no longer concerned about what he was going to wear to the next party at the King's house. He was no longer concerned about the next battle his army might have. The only thing that mattered to Naaman was killing that which was trying to kill him because his diagnosis removed all distractions in his life.

But just imagine, like just imagine if Naaman got that diagnosis and he thought "ah I'll be fine." Imagine I'm Naaman. I'm commander of the King's army. I'm highly regarded. I'm well known. I've defeated every enemy before. I'm going to defeat this enemy again all on my own. What would happen? Well, he would die because leprosy is going to do what leprosy is going to do. It didn't matter who he was, didn't matter what he'd done. Leprosy had no regard for him

because leprosy was going to kill him unless he did something about it. Because leprosy will do the same thing to anyone who gets it. It will steadily grow, and it will steadily destroy, and it will eventually lead to death.

Now, think about those three things I just said. Leprosy will steadily grow, steadily destroy, and eventually lead to death. Does that remind you of anything? All across Scripture, interesting fact, sin, and leprosy are tied together. They're frequently compared to one another because they have the same characteristics. They might start small, but they will steadily grow, steadily destroy, and then as James 1:15 says, **"...sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."** You see the danger that Naaman had with his leprosy is so similar to the danger we have with our sin today. We've been diagnosed with a disease. We've been diagnosed with sin. And this disease is going to kill us unless we do something about it. But here's our problem, that diagnosis isn't all that distracting to us. Like what would be more distracting to you today? If I told you that you were diagnosed with leprosy or if you were diagnosed with sin? Like 10 out of 10 times we would probably be way more concerned if we were diagnosed with leprosy because we start thinking about what's going to happen to our bodies. We think about what was going to happen in the next few years if we were going to die. But if I'm diagnosed with sin, sin is a word we've heard before. Like we've been in church for a while. We know what sin is and we're just kind of used to it. We know we've got sin and we're fine with it. And we're used to cohabitating with something that is actively killing us. We're kind of fine with sin because we don't really believe what the Scripture says about sin. Even right now you're probably like, Nate, you're probably exaggerating. In the back of your mind, you're not taking it that seriously because we're used to sin. We're used to this brokenness.

And one of the reasons why I love this story of Naaman is this first verse. We sound like Naaman. We've got a lot of good things going on in our life. We've also got this other thing, this other thing that is trying to decay the rest of our life, that is trying to destroy the rest of our life. And we sound a lot more like Naaman than we think. Because if 2 Kings 5:1 were written about you this is maybe what it would say. Maybe it sounds like this if you were in Scripture. He's a successful businessman, he's highly regarded, but he consistently neglects his family. Or maybe she's his faithful wife, she's highly disciplined, but she's just angry all the time - specifically around her kids. Or he's a great friend, he serves others well, but he's hiding a secret addiction. Or maybe she's a talented artist, she's well resourced, but she's highly materialistic. Like don't you feel that? I know I feel that.

We all have that *'but'* in our life. Doesn't matter how many good things you've got going on in your life. You still have this thing going on in your life, this sin, this evil and if you don't deal with it, it's going to grow and eventually overwhelm and overtake the rest of your life. The problem is we're not distracted by it because we've been lulled to sleep with our own goodness. We've been lulled to sleep with how well known we are. We're lulled to sleep with how great of a job we're doing at our work. We're lulled to sleep about how good of a mom or dad we are. And that's what we focus on. Meanwhile there's this other thing in the background, there's this disease that is steadily growing, and if you don't do something about it it's going to kill your marriage; it's going to kill your peace; it's going to kill every good thing in your life because that's what sin does! It steadily grows; it steadily destroys, and eventually, if you're not careful, it will lead to death! Because friends, if you're not actively killing sin, it will kill you. You're

either broken over your sin now or it will break you later. This is what Scripture tells us about our sin. I just pray that we would wake up to it. I pray that we would wake up to it. Because if we're not careful it will bring destruction to our life. I pray that we will be distracted by this diagnosis.

And thankfully Naaman is distracted. He realizes that this leprosy disease has the power to destroy and kill his life. So, he decides to do something about it. He gathers up all his resources and tries to find someone, anyone, who can heal his leprosy. And he hears there's this man of God, this prophet in Israel, named Elisha. People said crazy things about him like he could actually heal his leprosy. Naaman was this commander of this army in Syria, which was a way away from Israel, but Naaman was going to do whatever he possibly could to be healed. So, he got on his horses and chariots and rode all the way over to Elisha. And 2 Kings 5 tells us he gathered up 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and 10 sets of clothing. It must have been Lululemon or something. It's actually in there because clothing in that day and age was hard to find, especially that many. So, when we picture Naaman approaching Elisha's house, just picture pompous circumstances. Like he's bringing all he's got. He's showing off all he is. This is Naaman, commander of the king's army. He's an important guy and he's going to buy his way into healing. After traveling miles and miles and miles to get to Elisha's house this is what we read next in verse 9.

2 Kings 5: 9 - **“So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored, and you will be cleansed.”** Now, I love this. I love this part. I just do. So Naaman's traveled all this way, miles and miles and miles. He's got horses and chariots and gold and silver, and he's got all this going on. And what does Elisha do? He doesn't even get off his butt. He stays on his couch and sends out an intern. He sends out an intern to talk to him. And Scripture says that as he sent out his intern he stayed in his house. When you read house, it's far less house than it is tent. Like whenever Naaman sees this messenger approaching, he can easily see past this messenger to see Elisha sitting on his couch watching Netflix and this is hugely, like big deal, majorly insulting. Naaman has traveled all this way, with all this money, with all this authority and Elisha doesn't even get up to meet him. Instead, he insults him by sending out this messenger. And this is what this messenger says to Naaman. **“Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored, and you will be cleansed.” But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?” So, he turned and went off in a rage.”**

Isn't that confusing? Like are you not confused by that? Naaman is given the opportunity of a lifetime. He's got leprosy but now he's also got this cure. He's been given a cure from Elisha. This is exactly what he needed. This is exactly what he wanted. And all he has to do is go jump in the Jordan river. Like if that's all he has to do, why is he so angry? Why does he leave in a rage? It's because the very thing that was going to bring him healing is the very thing he didn't want to do. Because Naaman's reaction actually makes sense here we've just got to get in his head. He was the commander of the king's army; he was an important man. He's got lots of

authority and this Jordan river is slimy and it's small. Whenever you think of it think less river and more creek. I've never been there but we have a couple people on staff who have, and I asked them about it, and they said it's one of the most underwhelming things you'll ever see if you go to Israel. It's not impressive at all. In fact, here's a picture of it. This is a modern-day picture of the Jordan river. I mean that's like chocolate milk. It's disgusting. That's not a river, that's a creek.

So, for Naaman to go in there, man, that would have been humiliating. Like that's not impressive, it's dirty, it's nasty. That would be like if President Biden would go in the Brazos. It would be beneath him. Like I don't even go into the Brazos without a hazmat suit on let alone the President of the United States. And this was what it was like for Naaman but it's more than that because this river was not just dirty. It was a foreign river. You got to understand this. This Jordan river was in Israel territory meanwhile he was the commander of Syria's army. So, for Naaman to be seen bathing in the Jordan river would have been scandalous. Like this would have been the thing that TMZ Israel back in the day would have loved. This would have been the thing that would have been on the front pages of those newspapers and magazines as you're checking out at HEB. That's what this would be. It would have been humiliating. "Naaman seen bathing in the Jordan" It just wouldn't have gone over well. It would have been absolutely humiliating for Naaman. And since this was the last thing, he wanted to do, he turned around in a rage. Because it seemed like all Elisha wanted to do was humiliate this guy. Does it not? I mean he doesn't go out to meet him, which was humiliating. He sends a messenger, which was humiliating. And then, he sends him to the Jordan river which was humiliating. It's like everything he's trying to do is humiliate Naaman. So that day Naaman left ticked off because after the leprosy had taken everything good in his life the only thing left Naaman had left was his pride and that was the very thing Elisha was trying to root out.

## *2. Pride Prevents A Cure*

The second thing we can learn from Naaman is pride prevents a cure. This was the thing that was going to prevent Naaman from healing. Because you see he showed up that day and he expected it go to go the way his whole life had gone - exactly according to plan. Cause you see he's the commander of the king's army. He's used to giving out orders, not taking them. He was going to show up, he was going to tell Elisha what to do, he was going to pay him a large sum, and then he was going to be healed. This is how things were going to go. But everything went the opposite of how he expected them to. Rather than being honored, he was dishonored. Rather than being healed on the spot, he was sent to the Jordan river. And since things didn't go how he thought they would go, he just took his ball and went home. He was angry because things didn't go how he thought they would. Just look at what he said. This is why he was so angry. Naaman's words himself, **"I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy."** I thought Elisha would come out to greet me. That's why I'm mad. I thought Elisha would come out with a wand like Harry Potter, wave it over my spot, and I would be healed. I'm angry because things didn't go how I thought they would.

Now, how often do our frustrations and anger with God sound just like that? Almost every single time I've been angry with God, it sounds just like that. God, I thought you would...I

thought by now God would have given me a wife...I thought by now God would have healed my marriage...I thought by now God would have healed that sickness in my family...I thought that by now He would have given me better finances. Our disappointments in life are the exact same. Our disappointments with God are the exact same. When things don't go how we think they should, we get frustrated. And see this is a very important moment in this story. Because in this moment we realize that the biggest threat to Naaman's life has shifted. Because before this moment if I had asked you what's the biggest threat to Naaman's life? You would have said it's his leprosy. Obviously. His leprosy was the biggest threat to his life. It was going to take him out. But now, he's got a cure to his leprosy and the biggest threat to his life has now shifted because it's not his leprosy. It's his pride. His pride is now the biggest threat to his life. He has a cure to his leprosy and his pride is getting in the way.

I want to go back in time. Like don't you—I read this, and I want to get to Naaman and shake him and be like “Naaman get over yourself! I don't care if it didn't go the way you thought it'd go. I don't care if you don't go in the Jordan river. That's the only way you're going to get healed. I don't care what you think. I don't care what you want. Get over yourself because if the only way to get you healed is by doing that then just do it!” Don't you feel that? Man, I feel that way with Naaman. But truthfully, I feel that way oftentimes with you guys. Because I deal with college students primarily with my job and this is only a college ministry problem (sarcasm). You guys would never do this. Y'all have more maturity than this. As a pastor, people come up to ask for advice in different situations and ask for help. And it will go oftentimes like this. A college student will come up to me and say, “Hey I'm dating this guy and he's just not leading me towards Jesus. We're crossing boundaries physically. He's frequently hung over on Saturdays, so we never go to church on Sundays. I just don't really know what to do. Can you help?” And I'm like, “Sure. Dump that fool. Like get rid of him. Yeah, he's not good enough for you. He's not going to help you. He's not going to get better. Get rid of him.” And here's what's amazing. They leave sad because it's the very thing they don't want to do. I'm confused I'm like I thought you wanted help. I thought you did. But you only wanted help the way you wanted to be helped.

Or how about this. I have other people who come up and say, “Hey, I struggle with comparison. I see what everyone else makes. I see what everyone else looks like. I see the vacations that they get to take. And it turns into anxiety, and I can't sleep at night. And I'm just really, really struggling with comparison.” And I say, “Man I think maybe the best thing for you to do is to delete Instagram, delete Snapchat, get off social media for a time if not permanently.” And then the craziest thing happens. They leave sad because it's the exact thing they don't want to do. Or how about this! People will come up to me and they'll say, “Hey, I'm really struggling with my finances. I'm spending more than I make. I'm overextended. I'm in credit card debt. What should I do that?” And I say, “Okay easy. You tell your Life Group. Let them be involved in it. Have someone, at least one person, really involved having them hold you accountable.” And then they leave sad because they don't want anyone prying in their business. It's the last thing they want to do. And I'm just confused. I'm like I thought you wanted help. But oh! You only wanted to be helped how you thought you could be helped.

But here's what you've got to understand. When you're sick, you don't get to determine what will make you well. You have to submit to the doctor's orders; submit to the dentist's orders. I

mean I don't know everything. I need help in a lot of different areas. But I can try to help people, but they will only listen if it's how they want to be helped. You see we look and sound a whole lot more like Naaman than what we think. We look at him and laugh and scoff at his decisions. I'm telling you this is what it will look like in your life as well. When the very thing that will heal you is the last thing you want to do, oftentimes we just don't do it.

And your pride is getting in the way of your healing. This is why Scripture says in James 4:6, you may have been confused by this verse, but this is why it says this. **"...God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."** Now, that's a harsh verse. It's a somewhat confusing verse. God opposes the proud? Like God, creator God, strong, mighty God stands in opposition to the prideful. He will fight against the prideful. Why does he do that? It's because your pride will kill you. And if He doesn't crush your pride, if He doesn't kill your pride, it will crush you. This is why in this story Naaman's leprosy was perhaps the biggest example of God's grace and kindness to his life. Diseases aren't always this way, certainly not, but in this moment, leprosy was God's kindness to Naaman. Naaman's leprosy exposed a deeper problem. It exposed his pride. And while leprosy had a chance of killing his body, his pride had a chance of killing his soul. And unless something changed, he was on the path to destruction. So, God stepped in and opposed him here. He made him come to grips with his reality.

So, let's see what happens next in this story as Naaman leaves in a rage what happens next. Verse 13. **"Naaman's servants went to him and said, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?'"** Like would you not have done it if he had asked you to cut the toenails off of a dragon? Would you not have done it if he had asked you to climb the tallest mountain? Would you have not done it if it would have made you feel deserving of being healed, feel like you were important? Would you not have done some great thing? How much more this lesser thing! **"How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'"** So, he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said... Now, what do you think he would say? What do you think you would say? You've just been healed from leprosy. Your life was about to be over. Leprosy was growing and destroying your life. You were about to be isolated from the rest of society and you've just been healed from your leprosy, and you go back to the man who healed you. What do you think you'd say?

I think the first thing I would say is "thank you for healing me from my leprosy. I was dead and now I'm alive." Like this disease...I would just be talking about my leprosy. "Thank you for healing me from my leprosy. It was disgusting; it was gross. It was going to ruin my life. Like thank you for healing me from my leprosy." But here's what's fascinating. Naaman doesn't once bring up his leprosy. Not once. Because he was far more excited, far more enthralled with his internal healing than he was his external one. Because if you remember Naaman showed up that day feeling like he was a bigshot. He felt like he was important. Naaman showed up that day thinking he was a god. But in humbling himself to doing the thing he didn't want to do; he left that day meeting the true God. And everything about his life has now been changed. He's far more excited about his internal healing than his external one. Because here is what he actually says to Elisha. **"Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please**



**accept a gift from your servant.”** See Naaman’s been healed only because he was humbled. Naaman was healed only because he was humbled. Which leads us to point number three.

### *3. Healing Requires Humility*

Really in any area of your life, if you want to be healed you have to submit yourself, you have to humble yourself to the doctor’s orders. You have to humble yourself and submit yourself to the dentist’s orders. If you want to be healed, it requires humility. This was true for Naaman as well. He had to humble himself to the advice of his servant. He had to humble himself to go bathe in the Jordan river. He was only healed because he was humbled. Because he did the very thing he didn’t want to do. But the most important healing that day was not his external healing. It was his internal one. While his leprosy was healed, there was a greater healing that took place. Because he’s changed. He’s a different guy. If you read the whole passage on your own, he’s one man when he comes in and he’s different man when he comes out. The whole experience has changed him. It didn’t just change his leprosy. It changed who he was. He came in an arrogant man, a pompous man, a man who thought he had everything going on. He came in as a commander, but he left as a grateful servant.

In fact, look at what he says over and over and over again after he’s been healed. Five times in three verses. This is what he says. When you read it, it’s almost awkward? He says it so many times. But this is what Naaman says. The same phrase over and over and over again. **“...So please accept a gift from your servant.”** Verse fifteen. **“...please let me, your servant, ...for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the LORD.”** That’s verse seventeen. **“But may the LORD forgive your servant for...”** verse eighteen **...may the LORD forgive your servant for this.”** It’s like he’s saying I’m not who I thought I was. He is overwhelmed by this idea that I am not who I thought I was. I thought I knew what was best. I thought I had everything going on. But that’s not who I am. I’m not a commander, I’m a servant. What changed him? Like what changed Naaman? Was it the magical waters of the Jordan river? Or what changed him?

What changed him was doing what he didn’t want to do. Because he heard God’s commands. He heard God’s orders, but he didn’t want to do them because they didn’t make sense to him. But he had the humility to submit to orders that didn’t make sense and when he did, he was healed, and it changed him. Made him realize he didn’t know best. There was a God who knew more, who had understanding that was high above the heavens compared to his own understanding. He submitted to something he didn’t understand. And if you’ve been following Jesus at all, if you know the Bible at all, there are going to be things in there, commands that don’t make sense to you. There’s going to be commands on sexuality and gender. There’s going to be commands on generosity. There’s going to be commands on service. There’s going to be commands on the way you treat your wife. There’s going to be all sorts of things that God tells you and you don’t get it. Like it doesn’t line up with what you would want or what you would think. But here’s what happens. It’s the same thing with Naaman. When you submit to them, when you humble yourself to them, you’ll begin to see why. You’ll see God in a greater way whenever you submit and apply God’s commands to you.

In fact, Andy Stanley—he's a pastor out in Atlanta, Georgia—he summarizes this passage in this short, pithy way. He says, "To understand why, submit and apply." To understand why, submit and apply. Naaman didn't understand why these orders were given to him. They didn't make sense. But since he submitted himself to them because he humbled himself to them, he understood why. Same with every single one of God's commands. If you want to understand why they're there, submit and apply. Don't let your pride get in the way. Because when we are humbled before God, we humbly submit to his commands and his orders we'll see Him bring about a healing because he knows better than we do.

So, in this story we see three things. We see that

1. *A Diagnosis Removes Distraction*
2. *Pride Prevents A Cure*
3. *Healing Requires Humility.*

You know I love this story because Naaman that day, he wasn't showing up looking for God. He didn't show up at Elisha's house hoping to meet God. He showed up looking for a cure and as a search for a cure went about, he met God. Because God was the cure that he needed. I think there are so many people in this room today or a lot of people online and you're not even really sure why you're here. You're not really even looking for God. You're just looking for something. You don't know what. You're looking for advice. You're looking for encouragement. You're looking for something. You know you need help, but you don't know what it is. Let me say it clearly. What you're looking for is found in Jesus. Jesus is the cure for your soul, he's the balm for your wounds, he's the cast for your brokenness, he's the medicine for your spiritual sickness. Jesus is what you're looking for.

And God's command to you, his advice to you, is the same as Elisha's was to Naaman. See Elisha told Naaman to go and dip in the Jordan river and that's where he'd be cleansed. The same theme is true for us. While God doesn't call us to go to the Jordan River to be cleansed, he says wash yourself in the river of Christ's blood and you'll be cleansed. Plunge in the river of my blood and I will cleanse you. It's the same command because what the old hymn says is so true. *There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.* You see the same way that Naaman was healed is the same way that we are. The good news is we don't have to travel to a river. This river isn't a physical one. It's one that is available right now because whenever you're cleansed from your sin, this is what it feels like. It feels like you're being dripped in a river, dropped in a river.

This is why we get baptized. I've been buried with Christ in death and then I've been washed clean from my sin because of His blood which is available to us right now. But the problem is there's a difference between Naaman's river experience and our river experience. Because you see Naaman didn't want to go to the Jordan River that day because the Jordan River was dirty. But it's different for us. We don't want to go to the river of Christ's blood because that means admitting that *we are* dirty. And for many of us, that thing that will bring us healing, that's the last thing we want to do. We don't want to say that we've missed it. We don't want to admit our mistakes. We don't want to say that we're dirty or broken because we're prideful people. I mean as Americans, we're prideful individuals. We're strong-willed people. We're competent people.

And those same traits that have built an amazing nation, a great nation that I'm so grateful for, those same traits have a shadow side. Because those very same things—our pride, our arrogance, our competency, will keep us from Jesus. Because the only thing that you need to have Jesus is need. All you need is a need to approach Jesus. And for many of us that's more painful than going through a root canal. That's more embarrassing than dipping ourselves in the Jordan River. That's the very thing we don't want to do. We don't want to look weak. We don't want to look broken. We'd rather save ourselves than have Jesus save us. But friends, take a lesson from Naaman. Do not let your pride keep you from a cure. Because the only way you're going to find healing is through humility. You can't save yourself. You don't know what's best, only Jesus can.

Okay, so friends right now let's learn from this lesson of Naaman. Let's learn from his story. Let's humble ourselves before a mighty God. A God who knows better, who wants better. Let's admit our brokenness, let's admit our stains, let's admit our sins, and let's ask Him to heal us. And in fact, that's the very thing He's eager to do. Our God is eager to restore, He's eager to heal, He's eager to forgive because He's a good God who wants best for His servants. Let's trust Him today.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for the story of Naaman. It's not just a story that happened thousands and thousands of years ago but there are things in this story where we can see our same mistakes as Naaman made. Father I ask that you humble us, right now. That we'd learn to trust you, that you're a good God. Even when You tell us to do things that don't make sense, that don't line up in our minds, may we submit to you because we believe that you want our healing, you want our good. And Father just like you brought about exposure for Naaman's pride through his leprosy, God I ask that you expose us right now. Open us up. Wake us up. Give us eyes to see the areas of our life that are bringing death and decay. May we be aware of them, and may they distract us so that we want nothing to do them. May we take them and may we hand them over to you, knowing that you're not a God that's going to keep us far off. You're not a God who is embarrassed by our sin or overwhelmed by our sin, but instead you take it, and you make us white as snow. You are not looking to humiliate us, but you are looking to heal us, and you are a Father who wants to bring his kids close. So would you do that now! Would we humbly submit before a good God who loves us and who wants what's best for us?

So, God, thank you that you're not an inept God. You're a God who can bring healing, who can bring forgiveness, and who can bring life from diseases that cause death. God, we admit our need to you now. We cannot do it on our own. We need a Savior. Would you save us now? It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.