

Week of Meetings 1986-05

by Stan Ford

The sermon explores Naaman's story as a powerful illustration of the need for healing from sin and the importance of seeking God's help with humility.

Duration: 58:30

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:17, Psalm 55:22, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Gospel Message", "Spiritual Cleansing"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power and importance of the gospel story. He uses a catchy chorus to convey the message that Jesus came to save sinners. The preacher encourages both adults and children to participate in singing the chorus. He then introduces the story of Mr. Neyman, highlighting his miserable condition and mistaken conceptions. The preacher challenges the audience to reflect on their own mistaken conceptions and the need for cleansing.

Transcript

It's been a joy for us to be here, and we thank you for your kindness and fellowship in having us here. Valuable prayers for the days ahead. If the Lord will, Mary goes home to England tomorrow, so I'll have to get the big handkerchief out.

But we're hoping to stay over, if the Lord will, just for a couple of weeks. There'll be a week in Columbia, and then down to, well, wherever it is I'm going, and then back to Augusta before going home. It was a joy to be with you for your fellowship supper, or whatever you call it today.

You've got some good cooks. If they want a job, I'll give them a good recommendation. I will.

But knowing this, that we were having this fellowship gathering, and knowing there'll be some boys and girls with us, I thought that this evening I'd like to talk, I'm not just going to speak to the boys and girls, but I'd like to talk about a story that they know. I think it's one of the most well-known stories in the Old Testament for boys and girls. Now, let's see if we can guess which one it is.

It's the story of a man whose name begins with the letter, oh, doesn't begin with, yes? Noah! Noah's not Noah. Fine. Right! Naaman.

Oh, please. These boys and girls have heard the story of Naaman a score of times in London. You older folks have heard it all your life, haven't you? But the wonder on it is that it's still true.

And I'll tell you something else about it. That one day when heaven and earth have passed away, because the scripture says God's word will not pass away then, we are going to read the story of Naaman in glory. And I think that's a wonderful thing.

So I want to talk about Naaman today. And if you would please, let's turn over into the book of Kings. And we will read together that familiar story, 2 Kings, chapter 5, if we may.

2 Kings, chapter 5. Now, Naaman, captain of the host of the... Oh, by the way, I'm sorry. I get told off for moving away from this thing. It appears they're recording it or doing something with it.

But I'm ever so sorry about that. So I've got to stay up here, see. I expect I'll forget it in about two minutes.

Now, Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria. He was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid.

And she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid, that is of the land of Israel.

And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten tons of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes and said, Am I God to kill and to make alive, that this man defend unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. Now the Lord will just bless that portion of the story, and the remainder of it we'll consider in a moment or two. But let's sing a chorus or two.

We've got five minutes just to sing one or two choruses. And we're going to sing number ninety-two, please. Number ninety-two.

Our good organist, pianist, is in good fettle tonight, so all will be well. Number ninety-two. All your anxiety, all your care, bring to the mercy seat, leave it there.

Never a burden he cannot bear, never a friend like Jesus. Number ninety-two, please. Thank you.

All your anxiety, all your care, I must have a word with the ladies who do the cooking. Don't give them such big helpings next week. You're not singing as well as you did last night.

Come on, let's try it again. Please, please, and really sing it out. How about you young folk on the front row? Didn't you know it very well? Did you? Well, aren't you glad you've come? You've learnt something.

Ah, let's try it all together then. Thank you. All your anxiety, all your care, bring to the mercy seat, leave it there.

But isn't it good cancel? What wonderful cancel to come to the mercy seat and to know that we can cast our burdens upon the Lord. Now let's try another, if we may. Number fifty-seven.

Number fifty-seven, please. Lead me to some soul today. Lead me to some soul today.

No need for me to remind you that this little chorus was composed as the result of the words of Mr. Moody. You remember Mr. Moody used to say, Lord, let me speak to one soul every day. How about it this time? Oh, lead me to one soul today.

Let's try just the ladies, shall we? Just the ladies, please. Thank you. Lead me to some soul today.

Friends of mine. Fifty-one for our last little chorus. Number fifty-one, if we may.

You'll never know real peace till you know Jesus. Number fifty-one, please. You? You'll never know real peace till you know Jesus.

Amen. Very good. Now we haven't finished our singing.

Ah, but I haven't got the music. Oh, well, sister. Oh, drop your hat again.

Fine. I will remember her as a hat dropper. You know, because there are a lot of new boys and girls here.

I think we ought to sing a little children's song. Now I'll tell you what I think. Boys and girls say to me, understand, have you got a new chorus? And all I do is go back about forty years.

Woo! And get what we used to sing years ago. And we used to sing a little chorus that went like this. From the north to the south.

Now that is very good. Oh, you're clever. This time it's from the north to the south.

From the east to the west. The gospel story is the brightest and the best. That Jesus came at his Father's own request to save four sinners who were dying.

Dying. A means all have sinned without a doubt. B, right.

B means for sure your sin will find you out. C means come. All the invitations say to all four sinners who are dying.

You won't get up and go out with me because I can't sing it. But I'll try. I'll do the best I can.

And then you will help me. And if you big punk in a moment like to help as long as you don't spoil it, we'll let you help as well. Big ghost in a moment like this.

Here we are now. I've sung it four chorus. From the north to the south.

From the east to the west. The gospel story is the brightest and the best. That Jesus came at his Father's own request to save four sinners who were dying.

A means all have sinned without a doubt. B means for sure that your sin will find you out. C means come.

All the invitations shout to all four sinners who are dying. That'll stop you turning round. Leave the bus now.

Oh, I see. Are you ready now? One, two, three. From the north to the south, from the east and to the west, the gospel story is the brightest and the best, that Jesus came at his Father's own request to save poor sinners who were dying.

He means all happy things will end today. Building means for sure that your sin will find your help. Saving comes mostly in the same time to all poor sinners who are dying.

Excellent. Well, not bad. Now for the last time, just the boys and girls.

None of the big folk now. Just the boys and girls. Sit up.

Breathe in. That's ready. Are you ready now? Here we go.

From the north to the south, from the east and to the west, the gospel story is the brightest and the best, that Jesus came at his Father's own request to save poor sinners who were dying. He means all happy things without a doubt. They mean for sure that your sin will find you out.

Saving comes mostly in the same time to all poor sinners who are dying. You'll be surprised what talent we've got here. Are you? That was lovely.

But I say, keep singing it. Keep singing it. Let folk know when you go to school, put your hand up and say, let's open and sing my ABC.

A means all of good. You'll get top marks in the class. You might get something else marked there, but you shouldn't.

Right. Just a word of prayer. Oh God and Father, we thank thee for the family fellowship.

We thank thee that in the church of God There's room not only for those that in years have proved thy faithfulness, but for young folk who have just trusted thee, and those who have yet to trust thee. And we pray thy blessing upon everyone here tonight, as we think again of this story so well known to us all. Grant that we may know your presence with us, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Amen. I think you'll understand that over the course of years, I must have preached on the story of Naaman, a legion of talk.

I suppose I've used all sorts of outlines about the story of Naaman. I remember the last one that I used. I asked people to think with me as we thought of this tremendous man.

I asked them to think with me of his distinction, that he was captain of the host of the king of Syria. Oh, how distinguished was this man! I asked them to think with me of his disillusion, but he was a leper. Oh, it's so possible to be distinguished, but then have something mar that life.

I asked them to think with me of a man in his desperate disappointment, as he went to the person he thought could help him, and found no help at all. I asked them to think with me, indeed, of his disbelief, but he was told to go and wash in Jordan's water seven times, and he turned away in a rage. But then, of course, I asked them to think with me of his deliverance.

How many times have you boys and girls in Sunday school, how many times has your teacher said to you, I'm going to tell you the story of Naaman, and he, or she, has used three words. And they said that

Naaman went to the wrong person. He was told to go to the prophet, but he went to a who? He went to a king.

He went to the wrong person! He took with him the wrong! What's the second king? He took with him the wrong. Well, who aren't he? Christ! Right! He took with him the wrong Christ. He thought that gold and change of raiment, for all these things, would bring blessing to him.

But if he went to the wrong person, with the wrong Christ, he had the wrong, he said, I thought he had the wrong. Well, maybe your teacher hasn't told you. Let me ask the big problem.

I thought he said, I thought. Listen, you'll have to join my preacher's class. He had the wrong plan.

He said, I thought that the prophet would come out and place his hand upon me. None of it was of any avail. But tonight, I don't want to talk about those things.

Tonight, if I may, I want to draw your attention again to this tremendous story. And I want to remind you first of Naaman and his miserable condition. Is there anyone here today could think of a more miserable condition than to be a person of personal courage? To be a person of honor and popularity and wealth? To be a person esteemed? A man who had reached and had done great things, and yet to have this head of you.

But he was a leper. But he was a leper. Oh, please.

I have seen enough leprosy in my lifetime to feel that I never want to see it again. But there is one thing about leprosy that always stands out before me. Why, in Africa, one has seen men whose arms have been all twisted up, whose face, whose nose and ears and toes have been so crumpled that you'd hardly think they had any.

For, as you know, it mostly attacks the extremities of the body. Yet, sometimes, I have been in leper asylum and gazed at a person who looks just like these girls and boys in the front. You would see the lack of evidence that they were lepers.

But they're lepers. Mostly children or young folk of parents who have gone down with leprosy. And when the doctors have taken, indeed, their blood samples, they have found that although there has been no outward evidence of leprosy, it is there in the bloodstream.

Oh, I'm not going to suggest to you that leprosy is a type of sin. I don't think sin needs any types. It is so prevalent.

It's so well known to every one of us. There's no need for God ever to say something of a type of sin. We know what sin is.

But you and I know this, that it isn't just a man who murders who's a murderer. It isn't just a man who was arrested having stolen a defeat. Let me illustrate what I mean.

You know what I mean. But let me illustrate it. Here is a man who breaks into a house.

And breaking into that house, someone hears the noise comes into the room. And the man turns and fires his grenade. And the person falls to the ground.

And the man rushes from the home. But somehow the noise is heard. And the doctor comes quickly.

And because that doctor came and came quickly, that person won't be saved. Is the man who fired the gun any different than the man who fired a gun and the doctor didn't get there in time? You don't have to murder to be a murderer. You don't have to be caught stealing to be a thief.

As many a person has broken into a home, and just as they've got through the window they've been caught. The same person who would have taken everything from that home unless they'd been caught. Like them.

Listen you young people. We haven't got to sin to be a sinner. My Bible tells me that each one of us were born in sin and shaven in iniquity.

We're sinners. And because we're sinners we sin. And men and women so often are lepers.

There's no outward sign of it. But when the blood is tested they find that the leprosy is there. And Mr. Nerman was a leper.

I don't know how advanced his leprosy was. He was captain of the host of the king of Syria. So I presume it was not so advanced.

I presume my Bible doesn't tell me. But I presume that he knew he was a leper. His wife knew he was a leper.

Maybe while a servant knew. But a little girl came and said, Would that my servant was within the prophet, which is in Israel. I only know I look around this whole world of ours today.

And I find myself in the midst of what I called the other evening, A sin sick society. A sin sick society. Oh listen much fellow traveler to eternity.

It's no good you coming to me and saying oh we're not so bad. Because every one of us know the curse of sin. The curse of sin.

And he was a man. So many good things could be said about him. But he was a leper.

I have a favorite little lesson for the children. I've got a strong feeling when I was with you some years ago, I might have used the lesson then. I don't remember but I expect I did.

You see, I have a favorite lesson with my umbrella. I say, you all know what a gentleman's umbrella looks like don't you? Not a lady's umbrella. I couldn't say what I'm going to say about a lady's umbrella.

A gentleman's umbrella. I sometimes say something about a gentleman's umbrella when I hold it that way. I say something about a gentleman's umbrella when I hold it that way.

I say something about a gentleman's umbrella when I hold it that way. And everything I say about a gentleman's umbrella begins with the letter S. When I hold a gentleman's umbrella that way, it is a... Sit. Cool, that's a good answer.

It's not the right one, but it's a good one. I say. If you put another word in front of sit, you might have it right, but then it wouldn't begin with x. So I answer this way.

When I hold a gentleman's umbrella this way, it is a... Yes, but walking sit doesn't begin with x. You're not very good at spelling. When I hold a gentleman's umbrella this way, it is a... A gentleman's umbrella is 36 inches long. It's a standard.

It's a yard long. I can take my umbrella and measure the chapel. One, two.

I can stand you up and measure you. It's a standard. Do you know, boys and girls, the Lord Jesus came into the world, and Sir or Madam, the blessed Christ of God came into this scene to be our standard.

He came, the scripture says, to be an example. To show us how we ought to live. The tragedy is, we've come short of the standard.

We've come short of the glory of God. Like Mr. Nairman, there's something wrong with us. Listen, when I put my umbrella up, it's not a standard.

Now it's a... Oh no, it's a trait? No, it's not a standard. When I put it up, it's a... It's a shelter. It's a shelter.

You know, when I was a little boy, my mum would come to the door and she'd look out. And because we live in England, you know, we get a lot of rain. We get a lot of green grass.

But you know, the rain would come and my mum would look out and she'd say, Boys, put your mats on. You know, your raincoats. Put your mats on.

It's... What do you think she'd say? Yes. Rain? No, she didn't say it was raining. Yes.

Stormy? Speak up. Stormy? No, stormy. She never said that.

She'd say, put your mats on. It's... Stormy? Speak up. Stormy? Pouring.

Pouring, right. Put your mats on. It's pouring.

It's... I said, that's the word God uses. The word my mum used to use. God says because we come short of the standard one day, he's going to pour his wrath on us, see.

He's going to punish us. And I need a shelter. And if Jesus came and lived amongst us to be our standard, oh, praise God, he died on the cross to be our shelter.

I say, Mr. Nairman needed a shelter, didn't he? He was a leper. And there was no one, no one, no one that could help him. But I say, let me finish the umbrella.

Oh, it's nothing to do with Mr. Nairman. I hold it that way. It's a standard.

I hold it that way. It's a shelter. I hold it that way.

It's a... Yes. A star. What do they use a star for? Yes, but walking doesn't begin with S. It's a... It's a... It's a... It's a what, sir? A stroll.

A stroll? You're worse than the boys and girls. Oh, I say, it's... What do you use a stick for? Well, it's a support. It's a support.

And the Lord Jesus lived to be our standard. He died to be our shelter. He rose from the dead to be our support.

And do you know Mr. Nairman needed someone just like that? The tragedy was this. That when I look at the story of Mr. Nairman, it's the story of his miserable condition. But it's the story of his mistaken conceptions.

And maybe I ought to look away from the boys and girls and look at you. Big quote tonight. Say, madam, how many mistaken conceptions are there in the world today? When it comes to the matter of being cleansed, do you think of what Mr. Nairman did? Mr. Nairman, first of all, he thought that he could have this blessing if there was an important commission.

An important commission. The king of Syria said to him, Nairman, come here. I will go to Nether and send it to the king of Israel.

You take it, will you? Could you think of a more important commission than that? To take a letter from one king to another? Especially, please, especially when the king of Syria was the victor when it came to the battle. You can understand the king of Syria sending a command to the king of Israel, but it wasn't a command. Oh, what an important commission this man wanted to perform.

I believe there are men and women today who can have the salvation of God for it's without money and it's without works. And you can have it as a free gift tonight, but you don't have it because you're looking for some big thing to be done. You imagine that it's said there must be some important commission.

Not only was he here a person who thought that there had to be an important commission, but he thought that there had to be an imposing contribution. Oh, I'm going to pay something, he said. Ten pounds of silver.

Oh, six thousand pieces of gold. Ten changes of raiment. I think every one of us will agree that in the markets of Maine we're talking about money now.

Here was wealth, tremendous wealth. And he said, I will go to the king of Israel and I will take with me ten pounds of silver and six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment. Oh, I will go with this imposing contribution.

And I'm sorry to say that the sons and daughters of man are still alive. There are people who imagine that they can get salvation, that they can favor God, they can please God and will be pleasing to God, if only they'd give something. We must give this and we must give that and we must give the other.

Listen, my friend. If you can get salvation by giving something, then God is cruel. He's a wicked God.

Because if you can get salvation by giving something, then there was no need for Jesus Christ to go to hell. There was no need for him to shed his blood. There was no need for God to lay on him the iniquity of us all.

We sing sometimes in the morning meeting, that lovely hymn, Jehovah lifted up his rod. Oh Christ, it fell on me. And if you can be saved by making some imposing contribution, then God is cruel.

He did that to his son when it wasn't necessary. Ah, but there was something more. He thought, I'd like to be cleansed of my iniquity.

I will go with an important commission. I will take an imposing contribution. Why? I will expect an impressive ceremony.

An impressive ceremony. He went to the king. The difficulty was, he just put the king in a terrible, terrible predicament.

For the king knew he couldn't make this man to be cleansed. He knew there was nothing he could do. And the king said, what has this the king of Syria done, sent to his father and to me, that I may cure him of his leprosy when he knows I can't do it? Why, he's seeking a war with me.

If you and I come any other way but God's way, not only will we upset ourselves, but we'll upset anyone else as well. And then when eventually they sent him to the prophet, he said, oh, there'll be an impressive ceremony. I see men and women all over the world expecting God to answer and bring salvation and blessing to them through impressive ceremony.

Have you ever seen them away in Montreal as they climb the steps of the Catholic church on their knees? You go to Montreal as a visitor. When you're away to the great Catholic cathedral and you'll see hundreds of people climbing those 367 steps, some of them till the blood runs down their legs, thinking they're pleasing God. I remember standing away in the heart of Africa by the side of a river and seeing over 14,000 Muslims dipping in the dirty river.

And some of them dipped ten times in that dirty river. They told me they dipped in that river once a year for every time they dipped, they were removed the 33,000 sins. You've worked that one out how many times they went under.

Some of them had done a bit of sin. But I'll tell you something, they were so sincere and they were willing to do it, and yet sometimes I looked at you and pleaded with you to come to Christ. You won't.

Oh, there's no impressive ceremony if you want salvation. It'll come to you if you come to the Lord as a child comes. He put a child in their midst and said, unless you become as one of these little children, unless you'll trust the Lord Jesus, just as a child who trusts its father and mother, you'll never enter the kingdom.

Oh, the story of Naman is the story of a miserable condition. It is the story of a mistaken conception. But praise God, it is the story of a mighty conversion.

For Naman, again through a servant, isn't it remarkable, isn't it remarkable how this learned, knowable, tremendous soldier, the general of the army, how he owes almost everything that happened to him for good, to a serving person. I think that teaches me something, you know. I think that tells me that while education and position is a wonderful thing, it's not those things that bring salvation.

Here was a little serving girl who'd been made a slave when the Syrians had come in and fought against the people of Israel. He was a servant of the prophet, and here was a servant of Naman. And oh, when the servant of the prophet came and told him he had to dip into the water seven times, and he looked at the dirty muddy stream, and he thought of the clear rivers in his own land.

I'm not going to dip in that water. I thought the prophet would have come out and put his hand on the leprosy. But his servant said to him, Master, Master, servant, Master, why aren't you sensible? If the prophet had asked you to do some hard thing, wouldn't you have done it? If he had told you to pay great sums of money, if he had told you to walk on grass, if he had told you to burn it, why don't you do the same old thing? Oh, listen, my friend, may I say this to you this evening? That when I think of salvation, my need of salvation, I realize how costly was the price of my salvation.

But I never had to pay it. He paid the debt. He did not ask.

He paid the debt for you and for me. He died just for the unjust. He gave himself a ransom for Mary.

Oh, my fellow traveller to eternity, there is for you tonight salvation, but there's only one way you can get it. You've got to get it God's way. And God's way is without money and without price.

The gift of... Oh, can I say that again? The gift of God is eternal life. I'm not sure. I've had a look at your track frame.

But I'm not sure whether there is a reason why there. If there's not, may I just make mention to it? If there is, well, I'm sure it has been blessed of God. But the man who wrote that little gospel track, the reason why, maybe the track that has been used more than any other track, apart from safety, certainty, and enjoyment, was Robert Laszlo of New Zealand.

I have the honour, and I tend to agree on, at the beginning of my Christian ministry, I have the honour of working for a while with Robert Laszlo. And I heard him tell a story. Now, please, please, it was not my story, it's his story.

But he's gone on the glory, so he can't tell it now. Would you permit me to do that? He told the story of a person, a fellow businessman, as you know, Robert Laszlo owned stores like Sears and Roebuck's, or Penny's, that's their great store, the farmer's market in New Zealand. And he was the president, the founder of the company, the owner.

A man of tremendous wealth, but a man who loved Jesus with all his heart. You know, he said that occasionally when having a little vacation, he would go fishing with some friends. And the business acquaintance went fishing with him.

And while they were away from the shore, trying to catch the fish, he had the opportunity of witnessing to him about Jesus. His friends couldn't get away from him then, he'd been through a lot. And he sought to witness to him about the Lord Jesus.

But the man looked at him and said, I can't understand it. Do you mean to tell me that I could be saved and do nothing? This man had a very beautiful daughter. A very beautiful daughter.

And this daughter of his had trained as a nurse. There was no need for her to have trained as a nurse. She could have lived the life of a wealthy young woman that she wanted to be of some use.

And so she trained as a nurse. Robert Maygold looked at him and said, just a moment. If your front doorbell rang and you went to your door and stood, saw standing in the door a dirty old mooring maker, and he looked at you and said, your daughter's a nurse.

My wife is dying of smallpox in my old mud hut up on the hillside. If you allow your daughter to come and nurse my wife back to health, I'll give you twenty-five pounds. About twenty-five dollars.

What would you say? Said the man who looked at Robert Maygold. Maygold, I don't know what you're getting at. Are you asking me, would I allow my daughter, my beautiful daughter, to go to a dirty old mud hut to nurse a woman with smallpox for thirty-five pounds? Of course I wouldn't let her go.

She might catch smallpox. Ah, but just a moment. What did while you were saying that to that mooring native, your daughter came to the door and said, Daddy, I heard what you said.

If I don't go and nurse that woman, I'll never have a moment's peace. All that I've trained for has brought me to this point where I am to be useful to someone else. Daddy, I must go.

What would you say? I tried my best to persuade her not to go. But she's of age. What could I expect? What? You allow her to go and nurse a woman with smallpox for thirty-five pounds? What? Man, you know, you know that if she had just the right for nursing, it would be ten times as much as that.

The man looked at Rob Laidlaw as though he was going to fight him, and he said, Laidlaw, I don't know what you mean, but if my daughter went to nurse that woman with smallpox, she'd go for nothing, or she'd not go at all. Do you think I would sell the health of my daughter? There's no need for me to tell you what Bob Laidlaw did. He just looked at him and said, and sir, do you think God would sell to you the death of his own son? The blood of Christ for your miserable good works? If you want salvation, you'll have it for nothing, or you won't have it at all.

That's why the Bible says salvation is not of words. God does not sell the death of his son to anyone. Christ had to die before you and I could be forgiven.

And God offers that forgiveness without money and without price, the Bible says. And here's man. He goes down into the water and he does exactly what the prophet tells him to do.

Not once, not twice, not three, four, five, six, but seven times completely obeyed what the prophet said and he came up clean. And the Bible says his flesh was like the flesh of a bay. I don't know what those words mean in their fullness.

I only know this, that if he had the flesh of a bay, maybe they're telling us that's what's got to happen. We've got to be born again. We've got to have a new life, a completely new life.

And Naaman came out of the water rejoicing. But friend, I shudder, I shudder to say my last point. We have seen his miserable condition.

We have considered his mistaken conceptions. We've praised God for his mighty conversion. But there's something else in the story.

His marred confession. God delivered him. God delivered him from his raptures.

And now he's going back to Syria. Now he's going back to his home, back to the people that he loves. If ever there was a man who could go back to a land with abundant evidence that there's a God in Israel, a God who can do what no one else can do, that man is Naaman.

He can go back and say, you remember me, I was the leper. I was the general of Yohanan. Your king could do nothing for me.

The king of Israel could do nothing for me. The prophet could do nothing for me. He only sent a servant to tell me what to do.

But the God of the prophet could do something for me. If ever there was a man that had the opportunity of witnessing to others as to the only true God, that man was Naaman. But oh, how marred was his

confession.

Oh, I know he asked that he could take soil from the land. That he could take it back with him. But then he looks at the prophet and he says, oh, when I bow my knee in the house of Rehman, may the Lord pardon his servant in this thing.

But he was going to go back. And instead of standing and witnessing for God, instead of showing what they knew, please, he wasn't standing, if I may say it, in cold ice. Their hearts and minds had been warmed already because they'd seen what had happened to him.

He had the chance of witnessing for God. But he goes back and he goes into the house of a false god. And he bows before that false god by the side of him.

I asked two questions the other evening. I first came to Durham thirty-five years ago. And some of you have been kind enough to tell me that you remember the first time we came.

Some of you have told me what I dreamt of. I can't even remember that myself. But nevertheless, when I first came, I came with my dearest friend, dear Bill Patterson.

We labored together so much. The Lord has taken all the glory. Been in glory for a long while.

But then he used to have a habit of saying, every time you point your finger at anyone, you point three fingers at yourself. Three fingers at yourself. I want to point at you tonight if I may.

I trust I do it lovingly and graciously, but I want to point three fingers at myself. I asked two questions the other evening. May I ask myself and you those same questions again.

Are you a Christian? What sort of Christian are you? What sort of Christian are you? None of them was cleansed. To use our modern expression, he was saved. And he goes back to Syria.

And he enters the temple of a false god. And helps his master in as well. And bends his knee before a false god.

Simply with the words, when I do it, will you forgive me? I don't think there's anyone in this service tonight that will agree with me when I say, how marred was his confession. Brethren, sisters, we are living in a day when there is a need for the gospel to be told out. Not just from the pulpit, but from the pew.

We sang a little chorus just now, lead me to some soul today. O teach me, Lord, just what to say. The plans of mine are lost in sin and cannot find the way.

Few there are who seem to care and few there are who pray. O melt my heart. O fill my life.

Give me one soul today. Brethren, sisters, whatever else happens, if we have trusted Jesus Christ, if we've been cleansed, if we have found that salvation is not a work and it's not a money, it's a privilege from God, and we've bowed our knee and we've asked him to be our saviour, what else we do? Let's go out not to be ashamed of him. Let's go out to tell it for, that Jesus said, May I follow?

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