

Proverbs 11:2-3

February 23, 2015

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn to Proverbs chapter 11. Last week we finished our series on Proverbs chapter 11:1, where it says:

A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

I think personally it is probably one of the best studies that a Christian could ever undertake, simply because when you apply it, it basically will change your life. It puts everything into perspective for you, how important it is for us to have a balance in our Christian life. The ability to get the right balance, but like we talked about the last week or two, not just to get the balance, but then I showed you how to maintain the balance.

Last week I showed you the balance of finding a spouse. We kind of ended on that one. I saved that for last in our study on a balance of relationships. I took you through your own relationship with the Lord first and put that in proper balance for you, and then showed you how to do the other one. The whole study last week, really, if you were taking notes on it or paying attention to it, simply comes down to two incredible concepts in finding a husband or a wife or a spouse. That is simply condensing everything in your life down to the two times that you join yourself to somebody. When you get saved, you join yourself to Christ, the Bible says in Ephesians chapter 5, Ephesians chapter 4. When you get married, then you become one with the spouse and you join yourself to that person for the rest of your life. I might add that everything that you do or you do not do for God the rest of your life will depend on those two decisions. They are very crucial. Of course, getting saved is very important, but finding the right helpmeet is equally important.

Today we are going to move on into the next verse. As we have seen so far in the book of Proverbs, we know now that this book is an incredible book on dealing with the issues of life. It is life's incredible handbook. My hope is that as you grow in it, as you learn from it, you will learn to do the same thing: every situation in life, people, circumstances, problems that come up, then go find the proverb that tells you how to deal with it.

Let us read Proverbs chapter 11. We are going to read verses 2 and 3 today, and it simply says this:

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

Now, Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and today we ask You to meet with us. We thank You for those that have come out today. We thank You for the visitors we have today, and we pray, Father, for the ones that are sick or traveling today, that You will be with them and take care of them. Help us to glean from the Word of God today what You have for us, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. For His sake we ask it. Amen.

I. Understanding Shame and Pride

Now the verse says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." Now, getting started here, you know how I have taught you the Bible, that there are key words that are in the Bible. When you want to ever understand the Bible and you want to make it make sense to you, find these key words. I wrote a book back there a number of years ago on how to study the Bible. It sold well under a million copies, and it is a book that simply will give you the keys to look for to understand the Bible. It is just as important once you learn them that once you are reading the Bible, you learn to look for them because they will open up the Scriptures.

If I was just reading through that verse here today, the first key word that pops up that I would see is the word "shame." That is a definitive word in the Bible. It is a context word in the Bible. It refers back to the Judgment Seat of Christ almost without exception in the Bible. Almost without exception, wherever you find the word "shame," look at the context very carefully. It will either be the Judgment Seat of Christ or it will be the Great White Throne Judgment for an unsaved man.

When John wrote to the seven churches, he wrote to the church in Laodicea. We know that we are living in the Laodicean church period. We know that it is a worthless church that struggles with everything that God has given them. They rejected the Bible. They rejected everything that God had given to them. They are a church that is all about them. He wrote them in Revelation chapter 3, verses 17 and 18, and he gave them some good advice. He says:

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

This church is in real trouble. This church has got some issues that they have lost everything spiritually with God. The Bible says you better get some things because if you do not, the shame of your nakedness is going to appear. Put that with 1 Corinthians chapter 3, 2 Corinthians chapter 5, Romans chapter 14, and we have a context that is the Judgment Seat of Christ. 2 Timothy chapter 2:15, Paul talked to his young men about the Bible and he said:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Now those references, when you find them, as I said, you put them in a context with that key word, it is always going to come up either the Great White Throne Judgment for unsaved people or the Judgment Seat of Christ for saved people. The passage here is talking about pride bringing shame. The church here in Revelation chapter 3, where we like to sing "How Great Thou Art," the church today wants to sing "How Great We Are." They completely lost the concept of God and it is in serious trouble.

Proverbs chapter 11:2 says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame." The second key word that I would see there is the word "pride" in Proverbs 11:2. That word here is crucial in our passage of understanding what we want to look at today, for it shows that the baseline issue in all issues, whether you are a saved man or an unsaved man, if you are here this morning and you have never trusted Christ as your own personal Savior and you have heard the gospel several times and you are still resisting it, you have not come to the place yet where you say, "Hey, I want to trust Him." You have heard it maybe over and over again. The reason why you are not doing that is because of pride. Pride will keep you from doing that.

If you are a saved person today and you have issues in your life that you know are not right, either some thing between you and God that you know are not correct the way they should be, but yet you will not do what you need to do, the reason why that is is simply because of pride. Pride will be the baseline issue in all our issues and will keep us from getting right, whether we are saved or whether we are lost.

II. The Law of First Mention and Pride's Definition

Now you know, here we follow a number of rules in learning the Bible. I have told you before that the Bible contains seven fundamental rules by which all the earth works by. But in those seven rules is what we call the Law of First Mention. The Law of First Mention simply means that God put His Bible together in such a way that the first time you find something in the Bible, you want to look at it because it probably is going to define it for you throughout the rest of the book.

I do not know if you know this or not, but the first time the word "pride" shows up in the Bible is found in the Old Testament in the book of Leviticus. I want you to turn to Leviticus chapter 26 and look at verse 19. You probably never saw this. You probably do not have this one marked in your Bible. Maybe some of you do. But the first time the word "pride" shows up in the Bible, it is found right here:

And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:

Now you see that? That is God telling Israel that He will break the pride of their power. Right there in that verse you have got a definition of what pride is from the Bible. Pride is power. It is your power over God's power. It is you knowing what God wants you to do, but you exercise your own flesh. The principle is so simple, and it leads to shame. If you are an unsaved man, it is going to lead to the shame at the Great White Throne Judgment. If you are a saved man, it is going to lead to the shame at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It all becomes a prideful spirit. It boils down into a spirit of pride that keeps you from getting rid of it, getting rid of your sin, getting clean with God, whether you are saved or whether you are lost.

III. The Nature and Effects of Pride

Now when we think of prideful people, we all can put in our heads, "Well, I have got somebody that fits the poster shot of being a prideful person." We all have been around them and we have

all been proud in our own lives at times, so many times just put your own picture there, put my own picture there. But I want to show you something. I want to clarify something. When we think of prideful people, we normally think of somebody that is very self-righteous, somebody that is very proud, somebody that is very self-righteous, very pious, people with a "holier than thou" concept of life. But you know that is not always the case.

Over the years, some of the proudest, pride-ridden people that I have ever seen and met in my life are some of the nicest people that you ever want to talk to. Pride is not something that just relegates itself to someone who outwardly shows it. Pride can be in your life that you just will not forgive somebody for something that they did to you. You feel like you have been so hurt and such an injustice was done, and maybe it was, but there is no injustice ever done to you that can compare to the injustice that was done to Christ, and yet He died on the cross. Pride will keep us from getting to that point. Pride will be the baseline issue of all our issues, for it keeps us from getting honest with God, no matter what the problem is.

The reason is, pride was the number one problem in the Bible. Everybody wants to think that the first sin in the Bible was Adam and Eve. That was not true. Adam and Eve's sin in the Bible is the second sin in the Bible. The first sin in the Bible was Lucifer. Back there in Ezekiel chapter 28 and Isaiah chapter 14, the Bible says that Lucifer was lifted up with pride. Lucifer wanted to be like the Most High God. Way back before Adam and Eve ever got into the garden, there was a rebellion in heaven with a cherub by the name of Lucifer, who through his rebellion got transgressed into Satan or the devil. The number one reason why that happened in the first sin in the Bible was the sin of pride. He wanted to be like God. He was not satisfied with who he was.

I have taught it to you before in Proverbs chapter 6:16, where it talks about the seven things that God hates, or six things that God hates and the seventh an abomination. I have given you this before, how that when you read through these seven things, they are the character study of the devil. They are his personality, his persona, what makes him tick, what he really is. It says in Proverbs 6:16:

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

You know what number one is? A proud look. Pride was number one. Pride was the number one first sin in the Bible, and pride will always be the number one issue. Whatever we say our problem is, saved or lost, when a saved man will not do what is right and get clean with God, when an unsaved man will not cast down his self-righteousness and come to God, the reason is, is pride. Pride is power. It is your power over God's power. We do not want to let that power go sometimes.

Pride is two things in a person's life. For a saved man, pride is hanging on to our credibility when we really do not have any left. Throughout Leviticus 26:19, the power of pride, you know what He said? He said that heaven is iron and the earth is brass. You know what that means? It means that you do not get, once you get pride in your life, and you are going to be the nicest person on the planet, and the battle of pride may be on the inside of you. It may manifest itself in many people on the outside as a very prideful person. But you may be saved here this morning. You may be a great guy or a great gal. You may be fun to be with, but down inside, you have got a

battle going on, and you know there is something in your life you are not giving over to God, and the reason why you are hanging on to it, it is power. It is power. Pride is power. It is one of those things that you are just not willing to give it up. Until you do, heaven is iron. You cannot get anything from God. You cannot get nothing from God. There are no blessings coming from God, nothing coming your way. The heaven is iron, and it says the earth is brass. Brass in the Bible is a type of judgment. It always represents judgment, another one of those key words. It simply says that as long as pride is in your life as a saved man or an unsaved person, as long as pride is in your life, it is the power over you that you are going to have your power over God's, and as long as you take that position, you are getting nothing from God, and all you have on this earth is heartache. Brass is judgment. Problems. Problem after problem.

Now the second thing is pride for an unsaved man. Pride for an unsaved man is him substituting his self-righteousness in his life for God's righteousness. Him thinking, or her thinking, that they do not need to be saved, that they have everything, that their righteousness is good enough to get them to heaven. In both cases, the Bible says in Proverbs 16:18 that pride goeth before destruction. When pride cometh, then cometh shame. But with the lowly, the Bible says, is wisdom.

IV. Naaman: A Case Study in Pride and Humility

Now I want to show you one of the greatest stories in the Bible. This was my introduction. I want to show you one of the greatest stories in the Bible on pride. I have told you before that everything you go to in Proverbs or in the Bible, you can come back to Proverbs and you can find the principle. Many times there are stories in the Bible and those stories translate into great pictures of something for us. We all know that. One of the greatest studies in all the Bible on pride that shows all its effects is found in the book of 2 Kings chapter 5:1-11. You have heard me say this many times, how Proverbs is the fundamental book in the Bible that rocks solid on its principles for life. All the stories in the Bible, all of the principles in the Bible will find their way back to the book of Proverbs. This story is a great example.

So if you would turn over there with me, you may not want to read along, you may just want to sit back and listen to the story. This is one of these sermons that you can just sit back and you do not even have to, from this point on, you do not even have to turn your Bible anymore. You do not have to look at it. You can close it, put it on your chair, sit back and relax. This is like watching a YouTube or something. You do not have to do anything until at the end and then you will probably want to kill yourself, but that is okay. Let me tell you a story. My favorite story in the Bible, and it is a story about a man named Naaman.

It says in 2 Kings 5:1:

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 talents 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 doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

This is one of the greatest stories in all of the Bible that really illustrates Proverbs chapter 11:2-3. It sets the doctrinal statement and really the great illustration of that verse in pride. I have a message that I preach out of here. It is a different message. I go a different direction, but it is called, "How an Army Captain Got Saved." It is basically a salvation message. But this also in this chapter, the Bible that shows us how pride will affect us in getting what God has for us. I want to talk about that for just a few moments this morning.

People find in the story will fit either an unsaved man or a saved man. If you are here this morning and you never trusted Christ as your own personal Savior, you have heard the gospel at least several times. Unless you have come here to get saved this morning and you have already made up your mind, you want to get saved, I would say the problem holding you back is pride. If you are a saved person here this morning and you have got something going on down inside you that you are not right with God and you know you need to get right with God, I will tell you right now, the reason why you are not moving on that, it is your pride. It is pride. It is pride. Pride is our keeping our power over God's power. It is simply that. I am telling you, because of that, if

you are saved or lost, the heavens are iron and the earth is brass. You cannot get anything from God and it is just one problem after another.

The Bible says in 1 John chapter 2:15-16, for a saved man, it says:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

There it is. For a saved man, Job chapter 41:34, it says that the devil is the king over the children of pride. That is what he does. That is Naaman here. This message is about pride and the power of pride in our lives. The reason why, when we get there, saved or lost, we cannot get anything from God. Nothing works out in our life. It is one big problem after another.

I told you this before, and I keep illustrating this in everything that we say. We believe the Bible here, and we teach the Bible here. I know the majority of you, if not all of you, believe the Bible and hold to the Bible. But I want to say something to you, and I am going to keep on saying this until the Lord comes back. You have to take all of the Bible, not just what you want of it. You cannot just take what fits your agenda and throw the rest of it away. When you want to do your own thing and it does not line up with the Bible, you cannot cut that verse out so you can go do it. You either take it all or you take none of it. That is where Naaman is at.

Now look at verse 1. This is the first thing I want you to see here. It says:

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.

The first thing I want you to see is Naaman is a great man. He had a spectacular military career. He had won many battles, and he is the captain of the king of Syria's host. That is like a general of the whole army today. The Bible says he is an honorable man. Because of him, God gave deliverance unto Syria. The Bible says that he was a mighty man of valor. His resume is absolutely impressive. But the Bible says that he was a leper.

That is a great picture of something. You go back to Leviticus chapter 13 and 14, you will find that leprosy is a type of sin in the Bible. It is a spot, it eats you. It destroys your flesh till you are dead. That is what sin does. It marks your body and it eats away at you till there is nothing left. That is what sin does, and it is a great picture of leprosy, it is a great picture of sin. This illustration is exactly, shows you that no matter how great and how honorable you are, how religious you are, what a good man you are, what a moral man you are, what a great man you are, you are still a sinner. That is when he gets out of this thing.

In all of our greatness:

- Romans 3:23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.
- Romans 3:10: There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

- Isaiah 64:6: All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of God.

Now you want to see in this story is what this great honor stuff did for him. It filled him full of pride. That is what it did. I have seen Christians like that all my life. I have seen Christians do that all the time. That is why the Bible says when it comes to things like the ministry, the Bible says not a novice. Over there it says in 1 Timothy 3:6, "not a novice." Have some experience. You know why? Because a young man going into the ministry, he tells you right there, he will get lifted up with pride, destroyed. You better learn some things. You see, Naaman thinks he is something special. Naaman thinks he deserves something special when it comes from God. His pride has blinded him and his pride has become his power. Boy, here is where we see the proverb, or at least the second half of that proverb, "with the lowly is wisdom."

Look at verses 2 through 5 again:

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 talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

The first thing I want you to see is simply this: the big time guy, he cannot get to God. With all this spectacular achievement, with all of his honor, with all of his great military victories, he cannot get to God. He knows everything that is going on within the kingdom. He understands every how it works politically in the system of Syria. But he cannot get the truth of what he needs. He has absolutely no respect for the Jews in the nation of Israel. They have conquered them.

Now it took a little servant girl who waited on Naaman's wife. Her name is not even given to you in the Bible. A little Jewish captive, the lowly. She knows exactly how to get clean. Exactly what to do. Hey, I have come down through history. Let me tell you something. It is the little guy out there who always gets it done before the rich and famous do. I mean, a guy like Donald Trump and J.P. Morgan and Sam Walton and Rockefellers and all that, and the list could go on all day long. They could tell you everything about life, how to make a million dollars and get everything going for you in life. They could not give you two cents worth of information about eternal life. It is the little guys. It is the little people out there, the lowly, like this little maid. Naaman, with all that he had, with all that he was, with all of his stature, he could not find a simple truth how to get clean.

I have studied church history quite extensively. I have come to the conclusion that Martin Luther was a great man, and I would never take anything away from him that he did. George Whitfield

was a great preacher in the early colony states here. Jonathan Edwards, John Huss in Czechoslovakia did an amazing work. Billy Sunday. I mean, the list is endless. We could go down through it, and you read book after book after book, and people talk about them all the time. Sometimes we get the idea that, and I am not taking away anything that they did, but what I am saying is this: for every John Wesley you had, for every Martin Luther, for every Billy Sunday, there were ten hundred thousand people out there that nobody knew their name, that never got a book written about them that were doing the job. God always gets it done with the little guy.

This little girl is a slave. She is a bond slave. She is as lowly as you can get. She is a captive from Israel. But with her lies the truth of how to get clean. I do not know if you picked it up yet, but if you know anything about association in your Bible, this little Jewish maid who told this Gentile king how to get clean or where to get clean, that is a picture of John chapter 4:22. The Bible says, "Salvation is of the Jews." The Roman could not find it if his life depended on it, and it did. With all of the stature and all of his glory he could not get anything, but God took a little lowly maid.

The world looks grander out there with all of its spark and what everything has got out there. Tonight we are going to have the Academy Awards. Everything you see in the world, everything the world does for you, everything the world wants to tell you, you know what it does? It tries to get you to prepare you to live a better life on this earth. My job is never to get you to live a better life on this earth. My job is to get you prepared for the next one that is coming after you leave this one.

Just as great Naaman could not figure it out, they had to get the answer from a little Jewish girl. God chose the lowly nation of Israel. The scum of the earth today. Every nation on the planet is against her. She has been kicked and beat down through the centuries. She has been a scourge and a byword and a curse word and about a joke for 6,000 years. But it was Israel that God brought forth a man child that brought salvation to this earth. Always come from the lowly. Always come from the lowly.

Now this little girl here, it is a picture of me and you. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says:

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

You have been bought with a price. You are a bond slave. You are a servant. You and I as Christians, we do not have any rights. We live in a Laodicean church period. Laodicean means "rights to the people." We live in a time when Christianity demands its rights. Christians say, "I have got my rights." The only rights you have got is to die and burn in hell for all of eternity. You do not have any rights. You gave them up at Calvary. You are a bond slave. Why the first man in the Bible in Acts 8 gets saved just like you and I get saved, an Ethiopian eunuch. The TV camera pans down in there and the Holy Spirit shows you he got saved exactly like you and I got saved.

Servant of servants. Servant of servants. You know why? Because after you get saved, you are a servant of servants.

I am telling you, this country is in a mess. You know that. With all the big time politicians, with all the big time Democrats and Republicans, with all the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of this and the Secretary of War and the President and the Democrats and the Republicans, they could not find an answer to America's problems and the world's problems if their life depended on it. They just had a three day summit on terrorism. The President brought in all the people around the world and the great startling conclusion that they came up with is better jobs. "If you get these young folks better jobs, they will not join the jihad." They already got a job, 24/7. They want to wipe out every Christian on this planet. You say, "What do we do?" Get the biggest army you can and open up an unemployment department.

When I say that, I mean this what I am about to say. I could send half of you there, probably more of you, but I could send half of you there one at a time. You could take the main seat there in the Senate or the Congress or get on the State of the Union and you could tell the world and tell them in 30 minutes what they need to do. But you know why they will not listen? Pride. "Who are you? You have never been anywhere. You are just a lowly little person from Kansas City." "Well, I have been in the White House for two terms, two terms too many. I have been in the White House, I have been in the Senate, I have been a Congressman and a Senator for 25 years, 25 years too long." They are not going to listen to you, not going to listen to me. We are lowly. But you know what? You are the one that has got the answer. Why, you could go in there and hold a Bible study and put them on their face in 15 minutes. But they will not listen. They will not listen. They are just not going to. Pride.

V. Naaman's Prideful Reaction and God's Way

Now look at verses 8 through 12 here:

And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

This is pride in action here. When he does go to the man of God, the first thing I want you to know is that he comes to bring with all of his splendor and glory. He comes as Naaman, the great

mighty man of valor. He comes with all of his greatness and all of his glory, all of his horses and all of his servants instead of just coming as a sinner that he is.

Now I love verse 10. Elisha will not even go out to meet him. What a thing to do. He sends a messenger and simply says, "Oh, by the way, go wash in Jordan seven times." Now I have got to tell you, Jordan, he is right on one thing. Jordan is the dirtiest river in the Middle East. It is the filthiest, dirtiest river. It is mud. It always was. It always is. It always will be. "And all that dirty old river of Israel. That is what I have got to do?"

Verse 11 and 12 says, "But Naaman was wroth." That is his response. He is upset. He went away in a rage. He thinks he is better than these folks. He thought he should be treated on some high level because he is some big shot. He is a legend in his own mind. He thinks, "I am Naaman. Do not they know who I am?" He expected some great religious experience. He expected Elisha to come out and the heavens to open and he stood there for God Himself to come down. He thought that the sun would refuse to shine and the waters would just back up the rivers and everything would change. He would stand there and he would strike his hand and some great religious event would take place.

You do not come to God that way. You do not come to God that way. When it comes to getting clean with God, whether you are saved or you are lost, you just come as the leper you are. "Just as I am, without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me, O Lamb of God, I come." You just come. You just come.

Look at verse 11: "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." He has been watching Ben Hur too much. He has been watching Charlton Heston and The Ten Commandments way too much. He needs to balance it out and watch Planet of the Apes or something like that.

Now in verse 11, there are three things wrong with what he is saying. I want you to see these. This is important.

1. The first thing he says is, "I thought." He has got the wrong thought process starting out. When Naaman comes, it is not about getting clean. It is about him. He is so full of himself. He thinks that God is going to come down and show some great spectacular thing. He says, "Surely I thought, I thought, I thought." Well, let me tell you something. When you have the power of pride, you do not think like God thinks. You know why? Because heaven is iron and the earth is brass. You cannot get anything out of that book. You look at it and it is just blank pages to you. You know why? Because your thought process is not God's thought process. Isaiah 55:8-9, God says, "My ways are not your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts." You have got to get on the same page. That was the first thing he did wrong.
2. Second thing, he thought completely wrong because of his thought process. "Well, he will come out to me." Let me tell you something. If you are unsaved here this morning, or if you are saved this morning and you are out of fellowship with God, I am going to tell you something right now, my friend. God will never deal with you on your terms. It is your terms that got you in the mess you are in. People are so funny. "Well, you know, God, if I am ever

going to get saved, God is going to have to reveal Himself to me." Well, He just may do that by putting you in hell. That would wake you up, would not it? He said, "Well, God just has got to come down and do something." He did everything He needed to do on the cross of Calvary. There is nothing more He is going to do to prove anything. He wrote you a book. He gave you what He told you to do. Hey, you either have got to take it or you reject it. When you come, you come just as you are. You do not bring your pride. You do not bring who you are, your social status, all this or that. You do not drive in your Cadillac. You do not come up with your \$500 suits on and thinking, "Oh, I am going to get something really good from God." You fall on your face as a sinner as you are.

3. Now, let me show you the third thing that he got wrong. He said, "Surely I thought he would come out to me. He would do this great thing and then he says this, verse 11, 'to recover the leper.'" Now, you need to learn to catch words in the Bible. To me, that just jumped out, "to recover the leper." You are the leper. Where is this "recover me the leper?" His pride is so involved, he is in denial that he is even a leper. He said, "Yeah, I thought he would come out and recover the leper." You are the only leper here. You see, when you come to get clean, you do not come your way. You come God's way.

He wants to wash in the river of his own country. Verse 12 says, "Can I go down in my own country in Abana, the river there and Pharpar and that river of Damascus? They are much better than all the rivers in Israel." No, you need a dirty river for a dirty sinner. I love this. "Oh, I need to get clean. Oh, okay. Those two rivers? Well, why cannot I wash in my own country's rivers? I mean, my own country. Why do we have got to go into Israel's river?" Oh, now the leper is an expert on getting clean. Is it not amazing how some people with pride, they know they are a sinner and in the moment you start to deal with them, they know everything there is to know about going to heaven. What a fool he is. What a fool every unsaved person was. What a fool every person that is saved that thinks that they could just, it will take care of themselves. You idiot. You have been washing in those rivers all of your life and you are still a leper.

The rivers that in this world that I am part of will never get me clean. If you are an alcoholic, you can go to AA for the rest of your life. You know what they will tell you? "You are still an alcoholic." After 40 years, you will have to get up and say, "I am an alcoholic." I have got a better plan for you. I have got a God who died on the cross who will take away all your sins and you will never have to be an alcoholic again, unless you want to be. He will clean you out. You can go to Narcotics Anonymous. You can go at every drug rehab place you want to go. You spend the rest of your life in and out of them. Let me tell you something. You will never get cleaned by the things of this world. The psychiatry of this world cannot help you. Your therapist cannot help you. All of the things they give you that all the world cannot help you, you need to get clean with God. That is where it happens.

VI. The Transformation of Humility

Now look at verse 13:

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

Now here is what pride does for you. See, he wants to get clean. I do not doubt that. But he wants it on his terms. Pride will always blind you from the truth because power and pride is the power over your life. Again, we see the verse in Proverbs where it says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom."

Look at verse 13. Again, it is the servants, the lowly ones, who get him on track with what he really needs to do. They say, "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, now if the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then when he sayeth that he wash and be clean?" Now I am not much on the new Bibles. They say that the new Bibles put it where you can understand it. You do not need a new Bible. I will put it where you can understand it. Because this is what they are saying. This is the BIV version, Bob International Version. They are saying, "Hey my Lord, my father, what is the difference of how you do it? What is the difference of how you have got to do it? That is not the issue. You are making the issue of what you have got to do. You are missing the point, sir. The question is, do you want to get clean? If you do, do what he says the way he says to do it. And if you do not, then stay a leper." If you want to get saved this morning, you want to get clean this morning, just do what he says. There is no great formula to it. There is no great, if you are saved this morning and you are out of fellowship with God, you know what to do. Just do what he says.

As a pastor, this is why in 44 years of ministry, I have never fallen into the trap of thinking that people of great stature will build anything for God. Now I know there are a few exceptions to that, and I will give you that, but I have been in this business for a while. The rich and famous just do not have much time for the Lord. They are only around when the TV cameras are rolling, for a photo op. The real work will always get done or get done by the men and women who go through life every day, struggle in normal jobs, with normal relationship problems, and they struggle, yet they keep on serving God.

For probably the first 20 years of my life when I was in a church, I watched the pastor court the rich and famous. He had the mentality that all pastors have today for the most part. If you see guys with big churches and they have big budgets and they have grand colossal churches, you know, and they have all the things that they have got to pay for, they do not really need. They, in their mindset, they see somebody that is a judge or somebody that is a congressman, somebody that is a doctor, somebody that is this or somebody that is that, somebody that is a great lawyer, somebody that they know makes a lot of money. Boy, I will tell you what, they are like leeches on them. They are thinking to themselves, "Boy, I need to get them in my church. Boy, if we got that guy in our church, he ever start tithing, he start giving this church, we can do everything." Oh, if we get five or six of them in this church, you can get 20 of them in your church and they will not do anything. It all comes from the common folk. It all comes from the common folk. They are the most worthless people you ever saw. "Well, he is loaded, boy. We get him in church, we are set." You get him in church, he will cost you more problems than you ever had in your

life. Because when he has got money, he is not going to give you his money to serve the Lord. With his money, he thinks he can run things. Yeah, he will give you money for this. Yeah, he will give you money for this. You are so stupid, you will take it and think you are getting it because he has got a heart to give to God. Those guys always want something back with whatever they give you. I guarantee you.

I have seen these guys, boy, you talk about God having a sense of humor. I have seen these guys where they hold on to it, they hold on to it, they have got millions of dollars, millions of dollars, millions of dollars. They buy everything they want, get everything they want, and when they die, then they leave it all to God or leave it all to charity. They are thinking, "Wow, you know, they did a great thing." Let me tell you something, my friend. That Bible says in 1 Corinthians 5:10, it says that when God comes into the Judgment Seat of Christ, you only get rewards for the things you did in the body. You do not get to keep it all you want and do what you want to do with it, and then when you are dead, you cannot use it anymore. Give it to God. He is smarter than that. Too bad you are not. Listen, God's faithful few will always be the ones you want to invest your life in, because when push comes to shove, the rich and the famous are not going to be anywhere around. They are never going to lay their neck on the line because of their status or their credibility. You get some high-falutin' judge or some high-falutin' lawyer. He is not going to get involved in something in the Bible where he is going to get tainted with Bible truth. He is going to play right down the middle. I learned a long time ago, you go down the middle road, you just get hit from both sides.

Now look at verse 14:

Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Well, praise the Lord, he finally goes down to Jordan, and he does what the man of God told him to do. Now do not you know that was a humbling experience? The Bible says he was captain of the Lord's host. That is like being a five-star general today. I have read all the biographies of all the great generals. I read Patton. Patton was one of the most egotistical, proud men you ever met in your life. Great general. But he did not mind killing 50,000 guys just so he could make a headline. They called him "Old Blood and Guts." The soldier used to say, "Yeah, our blood, his guts." There is a lot of truth in that. He was the most proudest man I ever met in all my life, did not meet him, but ever read about in all my life.

You know what a humbling moment was for him? One time in France, about 1944, he goes into a field hospital, and he is looking at all the wounded people, and there was a young private there with shell shock. He could not take it. His nerves could not take it. Patton got so enraged, slapped him, right in front of everybody. That reverberated out through all the newspapers in the country. They had cartoons of Patton holding up a little GI and slapping him. You know, when Eisenhower got a hold of that, boy, I will tell you what, Patton had to go in front of the whole Army Corps that that guy was for, and into individual battalions and right down to individual companies and apologize. That was the hardest thing he ever had to do. That was the hardest thing he ever had to do.

His great counterpart in World War II was Montgomery, the British general. They never got along. They both had pride as their main goal. After the Normandy invasion in June of 1944, at which Montgomery was pretty much out of, he wanted this great glorified thing. So he concocted this great airborne adventure in September called Operation Market Garden. You probably know it as the movie **A Bridge Too Far**. He dropped in. It was the biggest airborne movement in all the history of the world. It dwarfed Normandy. He was looking for the glory. He said, "If we do this, we will shorten the war by six months." Well, it fell on its face and flopped. Half the units got taken prisoners. That was the hardest thing he ever had to own. MacArthur is another one. Commendable general. But his pride was so incredible that he had to be number one. When Truman let him go at the end of the Korean War and shocked him and took him out of the command, it was the hardest thing he ever had to do. Ever had to deal with.

I want to tell you something. Old Naaman. This was tough on him. Here is the captain of the host. Five-star general. All of his troops lined up on the shore. His chariots, his company, his servants. Boy, he walks out there. I can just see it. Battalions on both sides of the river. He walks off that chariot. You can hear down there, everybody snapped to attention. They think he is going to give some great address. He gets naked as a jaybird. He walks. He walks over that thing. Everybody is looking at each other. I know soldiers, man. I know. I can just hear them now. "Oh, that bottom is going to get rusted out today." "Oh, he is going to give a swimming lesson." "We have got an amphibious operation going on here, right?" "Shut up. Get in line." Boy, that old man walked down in there. Boy, those little white knobby knees going down in that water. Dipped them and said, "Hey," he did not just do it one time. I mean, if it was one time, you could do it quickly. You could run down and get back out. The road from pride to humbleness can be a bumpy road. Seven times. Seven times. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. One for every day of the week. Seven times. It was not just one down. "Okay, let us go." It was seven times. All the troops are standing there. The tenters are there. "Knock it off." "You know," and the old man down there, "Number two." "All right. Knock it off. I am just counting, sir." "Shut up. Number four. You are going to be on KP for another four years." Down he goes fifth time, sixth time, seventh time. You know what? Seventh time he came out, he was clean. You have got to do it God's way. I do not care how hard it is for you to do it. I do not care. Your pride may be so welled up inside of you that you have got to go down seven times. What he did, what the man of God said, the way the man of God said to do it, his flesh like a little child. See, pride will always keep you from getting clean.

VII. The Transformation of Humility

Now look at verse 15:

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

Now look at that. He lost his pride. He comes now to the man of God and everything in this story now, from this part on, shows you that he got rid of it. Early on in the story, I showed you the

three things he did that was wrong. Now that he lost his pride, I want to show you three things that he did that was right.

4. First of all, he comes to the man of God, humble and broken with a contrite heart. He did not now expect the man of God to do anything for him. He has been humbled. He went through the humbling experience of bringing him to the point where he, as great as he was, as magnificent as his career was, he now knows he could not do a thing about it to get clean.
5. Second thing, the Bible says he brings all his company with him. His confession now is going to be made public. He wants every soldier, every servant. He wants everybody to know that the reason why he is not a leper anymore is not because of anything he did, because there is no God in the earth like the God of Israel. Oh boy.
6. Now the third thing, he gives God the glory instead of taking it himself. Now he says, "Behold, I know." Last time when he was full of pride, he said, "I thought." See, that is what God does. God takes you from what you think is right and He shows you what you know is right. 1 John chapter 5:11-13:

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

You can know you are saved this morning. That does not matter if you are a leper. It does not matter if you are unclean and you are not saved. You can know for sure. You do not have to go around and think, "Well, I think this is the way it is," or "I think I have got to do this," or "This is what I think." Forget what you think has got you in the mess you are in. You have got to come to the place where the first time in your life you know something. You are a child of God this morning? First John, the little book, five chapters, 26 times in five chapters he tells you and me as a child of God what we can know. What a difference it makes. Doing it God's way instead of your way. The problem, pride. Pride will be the stronghold of your power, the flesh over the power of God in your life. It will keep you as an unsaved man from ever getting clean in your life from your sin, salvation, or as a Christian it will keep you from getting your daily cleansing and you will be blind to the truth of the Word of God and deceive yourself that you are okay when instead you are headed for a real mess. Your heavens will be iron and your earth will be brass.

VIII. Integrity, Circumstance, and Salvation

Now this story is a great commentary as you can obviously see now in Proverbs chapter 11:2-3: "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom. The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." You see, Naaman had pride. But Naaman had integrity. He was prideful but he had character. It was that integrity that God used to guide him to where God wanted him to get clean. But it was a bumpy road.

You know, we all have circumstances in life that we do not like. When we are Christians and we find ourselves in a bad circumstance, the first thing we all do is pray for God to take away the circumstance. That is our natural human nature to do that. We have never learned that God allowed the circumstance whatever it may be, no matter how bad it may be, no matter how terrible it may be. God never allowed the circumstance to come into your life so God could change the circumstance because you did not like it. God allowed the circumstance to come into your life so He could change you through the circumstance.

In dealing with people, I have seen God's people with pride who have no integrity. They will always come around when they have not. They will always stay in their pride and will be more perverse in their transgressions and in time it will get destroyed. When God's people have pride with integrity, they will always come around to see the truth and see their mistakes and God will get them clean. But it starts with giving up the power of your pride, my pride. Admitting our wrong when the Bible clearly shows you, you have done this wrong. I go back to what I say. We cannot as Christians faced with the Bible that God gave us pick and choose what we want to believe. We cannot want to do this so I, "Oh, I have got these verses," but when I want to do this, "Well, do not tell me what the Bible says, I want to do what I want to do." That is pride. That is pride. Giving up the power of pride in your life and admitting we are wrong when the Bible clearly shows us what we are doing is wrong.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Now, you are here this morning and you are one of two things, one of three things really. Let us get the first one out of the way. You are right with God. You are saved. You love the Lord and you are doing everything God wants you to do. All right, I put you over here.

Now maybe you are here this morning and you are a person and you have never been saved. You do not have any excuses. God is not going to come down and reveal Himself to you any more than He already has. You have got all you are going to get. There is not going to be no sky opening up. Elisha is not going to come out and strike his hand over the place. It is simple. You are a leper. You have got to get clean. Romans chapter 3, Romans chapter 6, Romans chapter 10 is how you get clean. You either get clean or you stay a leper, it is that simple. God is not coming to you on your terms. You are going to come to Him on His.

If you are saved here this morning and you are a child of God and you are out of fellowship with God, same thing. You have got to get clean. For you, it is not a matter of getting saved over again because we know that once you are saved, you are born into God's family forever. It is a matter of you getting your own personal life straightened out with God. You know how to do that. So I am not going to, you know what you need to do. You have been around here long enough. You know how to handle that.

So let me go back to the middle. If you are here today and you do not know for sure if you die right now, you do not know for sure if you die right now. You do not have the assurance in your heart, "Bob, if I would die right now, I am not sure that I would go to heaven. I do not have that assurance in my heart. I do not know. I thought this. I thought that. I thought this. But after hearing what you said today, I just do not know." Well, let me tell you something. You can know.

All it takes is a few minutes in the Word of God showing you where you are at as a leper, showing you what God told you to do to get clean and then just get clean. Inside, brother, you come as fresh and clean as a little child.

Now, every head is bowed and every eye closed. I am going to pray here in just a second. If you are here this morning and you find yourself in that condition and you say, "Bob, I am not sure if I died right now, I would go to heaven. I want to know more about being saved. Here is my hand. Pray for me." Anybody? Just put it up. God bless you, ma'am. Put it back down. Anybody else? God bless you, sweetheart. Anybody else? Anybody else? I am not sure. Just take a few moments. God bless you, son. Anybody else? Here is my hand. I am not sure I am saved this morning. Just take a minute. Take a minute. Anybody else? Three hands went up. Three brave hands went up.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You very much. We thank You for the message today. We thank You for the truth of Your Word and the ability to be able to lay it out. These are good people. They love You, Lord. But there are some people here this morning that obviously need to do work with God. I give them to You now, Lord. I ask You to do what needs to be done in their life. You are the only one that can take it from this point on. I will give You the honor and glory. In Jesus' name, I shake your hand, every head bowed, every eye closed.

We have been here before. If you want to know how to be saved this morning, our heads are bowed, our eyes are closed. I will have somebody come and get you, take you into one of the rooms back there. John will find your room and we will open up the Bible and show you how to be saved. While our heads are bowed, we are praying for you, "Just as I am, without one plea, but all Thy blood was shed for Thee, O Lamb of God. I come, I come." Just stand up wherever you are at. I will have somebody come and get you. Just stand up wherever you are at, wherever you are at. We will get it done this morning. Get clean. Nothing like it in all this world of getting clean. Anybody else? Not going to wait long. You have your shot, you have your chance. You heard the message this morning. You know what it is all about. You know what God did for you. It is either get clean or stay a leper. It is your choice. Anybody? Anybody else?

Father, we do thank You and pray for the Lord Jesus. Again, we love You. We thank You for the good time that You have given us today in Your Word and Your love and Your mercy to us. Pray Your blessings upon the rest of this day now and all that we do and the activity and, Lord, and all that we have to do today. Thank You for the visitors. May they get a blessing out of it. Lord, we thank You and love You in Jesus' name. For His sake we ask it. Amen.

All right. Let me have the ladies that are going to be part of the prayer groups. I need six ladies. Six ladies. Just line up here, starting right here and work your way back around. Now, I am going to give you a little instruction this morning. Let us try to keep the groups under around seven or eight people. We have got some large groups there last time. We would not want to do that. If we need to split them up, we will. I have got one. You are here. One, two, three, four, five. Where is number six? You are six? Okay. I am going to. As soon as you get up here and you get your team set up, leaders, go back and see Bob. He will be back at my table back there. Give him the prayer

groups and we will go from there. Next week we go to restart and the following week we will do the men. All right, ladies, line up with your groups. One, two, three, four, five, six. Over here. Okay. Go ahead. Everybody else is dismissed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.