

# The Terre Haute

# SPEAKER

*“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).*

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## THE SERVANTS OF NAAMAN

*Nicolas Edwards*

There are many lessons to be learned from Naaman in 2 Kings 5. Often, when reading this text, we overlook a valuable lesson to be learned from his servants!

**NAAMAN HEARD.** Naaman was a leper. In 2 Kings 5:10 Naaman was told, “...Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.” Naaman heard what he must do in order to be cleansed of his leprosy.

**NAAMAN’S RESPONSE.** 2 Kings 5:11-12 gives Naaman’s response to hearing these cleansing words: “*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.*” After hearing the word by which he would be cleansed of his leprosy, he was wroth. He thought he knew better. He turned and went away in a rage. So often, men today are like

Naaman. They hear the word of God. They are told what they must do in order to be cleansed of their sin. Yet, they are wroth. They think they know better. They turn and go away in a rage. The gospel “cuts” (Acts 7:54) and “pricks” (Acts 2:37) the heart. The word of God convicts men of their sin! In response, there are few who “...*in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience*” (Lk. 8:15). Many are like those in Acts 7 who heard the word, were cut to the heart, and in response stoned Steven, the messenger. Remember, so long as Naaman was disobedient, he was still in his leprosy!

**THE SERVANTS OF NAAMAN.** As Naaman was wroth at the hearing of the word, notice the response of his servants in 2 Kings 5:13: “*And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean?*” His servants did not: 1. Go to the messenger. Sometimes when one has a friend or an acquaintance of some kind, who gets upset after being convicted by the word of God, they want to go straight to the messenger and give him what for! 2. Pat Naaman on the

back and console him. Often times, when the truth is preached and an individual is convicted, upset and rebellious members are quick to pat him on the back and console him as if he had been wronged and the preacher is the bad guy! Brethren, the gospel is “*the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:16) and it does so by convicting men of sin! Conviction is a good thing! It is what motivates one to recognize their sin and do something about it before it is too late. People are fighting against the word of God when they try to remove conviction. If you aren’t talking to someone about the gospel, for fear of making them wroth, and you comfort them, tell them “it is okay”, and apologize for the truth, then they will never be convicted of their wrong, never obey the gospel, and remain separated from God! Even though Naaman was wroth, his servants went to him and talked some sense into him. If you know of one who is not faithful to the Lord, go to them! If one hears the word of God and is wroth, go to them! Stand upon the word of God and “*speak the truth in love*” (Eph. 4:15). The result: “*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*” (2 Ki. 5:14).

## THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN

John Edwards

A cause of much misunderstanding in the church today is the failure to make distinction between the actions of the church and the individual Christian. This writing emphasizes that there are many things the individual may do that the church cannot Scripturally engage in.

**WHAT SOME ARE TELLING US.** I've been told, "What the individual Christian can do, the church can do; and what an individual Christian does, that's the church doing it." This just cannot be! When I take a shower, is the church showering? When I go golfing, is the church playing golf? When I love my wife as Ephesians 5:25 tells me to, is the church loving her as I do? Surely, you can see that there are many things I may do as an individual that the church can't and doesn't do!

**MAKING A SCRIPTURAL DISTINCTION.** The Bible clearly separates between the action of

an individual Christian and church action. Paul penned, *"For the body is not one member, but many"* (1 Cor. 12:14). The individual Christian is not the church, and what the individual does is not the church doing it! There are some things the individual Christian may do that the church has no business doing. 1 Timothy 5:16 is a good example: *"If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."* If what I do as an individual is the church doing it, then the church has been charged every time I help a needy relative! If not, why not?

**WHEN TWO OR THREE GO TOGETHER.** I've also been told, "When two or three individuals go together this is the church working." This argument was based on Matthew 18:20, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* This passage has nothing at all to do with this issue! Suppose two or three individual Christians go together in the pizza-making

business, does this put the church in the pizza business? To understand that two or three individuals are not the church, just read Matthew 18:15-17: *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."* If two or three are the church, then there would be no need for the witnesses to tell it unto the church for the church would already know all about it! There is a real need for preachers to quit saying such ridiculous things and get back to preaching what the Bible really teaches on this subject.

**LET THE CHURCH BE THE CHURCH AND DO ITS WORK!  
AND  
LET THE INDIVIDUAL BE THE INDIVIDUAL AND DO HIS WORK!**

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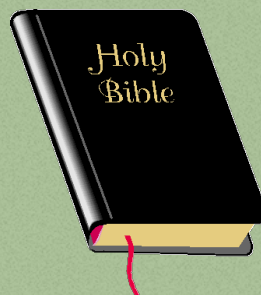
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***We Speak Where the Bible Speaks.***

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