

# 13.7.25 am

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Preacher: Reverend Kenny I Macleod

- [ 0 : 00 ] We're going to begin our service this morning singing to God's praise from Psalm 1a!  
Sing the whole psalm, blessed is the one who turns away. Blessed is the one who turns away from where the wicked war.  
Who does not stand in sinners' paths, or sit with those who mourn.  
Instead he cries not holy more, his joy and great delight.  
He makes the precepts of the Lord his study day and night.
- [ 1 : 29 ] He prospers ever like a tree that's planted by a stream.  
And in two seasons yields his fruit, his leaves are always green.  
Not so the wicked, they are like the chap that's blown away.  
They will not stand when judgment comes, or with the righteous day.  
It is the Lord who sees and knows the way the righteous go.
- [ 2 : 39 ] But those who live an evil life, the Lord will overflow.  
Let us bow in prayer. Lord, as we come before you this morning, we give thanks that we're able to sing praise to you.  
And we give thanks, O Lord, that you are the God who is worthy of all honour and praise and glory. We give thanks, O Lord, for the privilege of being able to draw near to you. And sometimes we just take it for granted.  
Sometimes we don't value or appreciate just what it is that we have, but we're able to worship the King of glory, our Creator. The God who has brought us into being.  
The God who maps out our life. The God who measures the length of days that we have. The God who sustains us every single day. And we give thanks, O Lord, that we're able to begin another week honouring and giving thanks to our great God.
- [ 3 : 48 ] How great you are. And we pray, Lord, that in the depth of our heart, that our worship will be meaningful. That it won't simply be lip service. Because it's all too easy to say the right things.  
But our heart can be estranged, can be far away. So we pray, O Lord, to give us a spiritual heart. So that our desire, our whole desire will be to you and for you.  
And that we will seek to honour you in our life. To seek to honour you in all that we do. We pray, O Lord, that you will indeed accept our worship.  
And that you will forgive us our sin. We come confessing our sin. And we acknowledge, Lord, that we are so far away from what we should be. There is a bias within us towards sin.  
But we give thanks for the great promises that your word gives. That Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. And help us then, Lord, to keep going to you.
- [ 4 : 49 ] And though there is for your people when we come to faith and come in repentance before you, there is a once and for all cleansing. Yet we need that daily cleansing.

And so we pray that as we come before you today, personally, individually, and collectively, that you will forgive us our sin. We pray that your spirit will minister to us.

We know that without your presence, without the aid of your spirit, then words can be just words. But we pray that the spirit will take the things of God and apply into our heart and into our lives.

Pray to bless this congregation. And we give thanks for its witness here, for its testimony. And we pray to encourage them day by day, week by week, and year by year.

Pray your blessing upon any today may be visiting here. And ask that you will bless them. Bless them in their time here. It's a holiday time. Families are away just now.

[ 5 : 50 ] Be with them. And be with all who are visiting the islands at this time. And we give thanks, O Lord, that we can bring everything to the Lord in prayer. We are indeed, it's not just something that we can do.

It's a command. We're told in Scripture, in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God. And so we pray that we might be in the habit of coming to you, seeking for your help, your strength, your guidance, your grace, for your peace, for the joy, for all that you have promised.

The resources are limitless. But we are often poor because we don't ask. And so we pray that you will bless us. Bless us all today. Bless those who can't come.

Bless them. We pray your blessing upon those who are aged, who are now too old to come to church, those who are ill, those who are going through difficult times, whatever they are.

We ask that you'll be with them, undertake for them, and bless them. Be with all the young people during holiday time. We pray that you will bless them, keep them safe, and ask, Lord, that they will have a time of refreshing.

[ 6 : 59 ] And be with teachers as well, that you will refresh them and prepare them for a new session when the time comes. We pray, Lord, to bless David at this time, his wife and family.

Lord, be with them as they're away, and keep them safe, and bring them back safe and sound. Pray your blessing then upon us all today. And we pray, what we pray for ourselves, we pray also for our nation and for all the nations of this world.

Because we know that throughout this world, many are gathering to sing praise to you, gathering to hear your word. And so we pray that wherever your people meet globally, that your power and spirit will be there.

Pray particularly for areas of this world that don't have the freedoms that we have. Places in this world where it is hard to be a Christian, where people are persecuted for their faith, where people have to virtually meet in secret and private.

Oh, Lord, be close to them. Keep the persecutors away. Grant them your grace and your protection, we pray today. Bless all the missionary endeavors throughout this world.

[ 8 : 11 ] And we give thanks, Lord, for all that is done in your name at a global level. And often it doesn't hit the main news, but we give thanks that throughout the nations of this world, many are receiving your word and hearing it gladly and turning to you.

And so encourage your people, encourage your workers throughout this world. Grant us your grace then, we pray, taking away from us our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it.

Amen. Amen. Amen. We black book here. And it used to be a red book. It's now a black book. And it's called, it's says here, British passport.

So if you're going on holiday, not the likes of you going to Glasgow or Edinburgh or even to London or somewhere, anywhere in the UK, you don't need a passport.

But if you go abroad, if you go to another place, then you have to have one of these. And it's an amazing wee book. It's got a crown on the front.

[ 9 : 16 ] It's got a lion and a unicorn, which I believe has come about because they represent the time when James VI became James I of England.

And when it's talking about kind of the union, whether it's the United Kingdom, the lion and the unicorn, it's all represented there. But the wonderful thing is that in this book, now I got this passport just two or three years, but the queen was still queen before King Charles came.

And you know what it tells us here? That this requires that this wee book is in the name of her majesty.

And today it will be the name of his majesty. And that whoever has this book is allowed to pass freely. And they're to give assistance, to give help and protection where it's necessary.

So on the authority of the king, if you have this book, this book, this little book will get you into different countries. I haven't been abroad much since I got it.

[ 10 : 26 ] I've only got two stamps on it. One last year when I was at Lauren and Pim's wedding, and that's in Amsterdam.

This year I was in Italy, so there's a stamp from Napoli. But you know, the thing about the passport is, if you had a friend who says, you know, I'm going abroad. I don't have a passport.

Can I borrow yours? And you'd say, oh well, no. And they say, but you're my friend. Surely I can borrow your passport. It won't work.

Because this passport is only for me. It's got my ugly mug in it. There's nobody quite with a face like mine, and just as well.

But it's also got my name. I've had to write my name. And it has a special number. Nobody else has exactly the same.

[ 11 : 21 ] And it's only me that can use this passport. Nobody else. So if you're going to a country, another country, or another kingdom, you need one of these. But there's another kingdom that I hope you all want to go to.

I hope everybody here wants to go to. And that's the kingdom of God. And to get to the kingdom of God, we don't need to fill out forms. We don't need to have pictures taken.

We don't need to have signatures. We have a king who has promised to take us there if we trust him, if we believe in him.

Now, it tells us here that I got this one, the queen, and it's the same. It'll follow on for the king. And King Charles is giving his promise in this to help me.

King Charles hasn't the first clue who I am. Never heard of me. But there it is. But King Jesus knows who you are.

[ 12 : 26 ] In fact, we're told in the Bible that the Lord has your name if you believe in him and trust him on the palms of his hand. Can't be closer than that. So King Jesus knows all about you.

Jesus is the way. That's what he said. Not a way. The way. The only way. So there's no other way into the kingdom of God but in and through Jesus.

So you make sure that you have a passport, Jesus. Because you need him. You need him in this life. And you need him at the end of your life.

Because if you have a passport, Jesus, then all is good. And he'll take you home to be with himself forever. Just a wee word of prayer.

Lord our God, we pray to bless us and particularly bless the young people. How wonderful to see them. And ask that you will be with them. Yes, give them health. Give them strength in their body and their mind.

[ 13 : 25 ] But particularly that they will know health in your soul. Watch over us, we pray, and take away our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing again from Psalm 63.

And this is in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 63. Lord, thee my God.

God, I'll receive my soul. God, I'll receive my soul.

For thee, my flesh long sin, the dry harsh land, where did no waters be?

That I, thy power, may behold, and brightness all thy grace.

[ 15 : 00 ] As I have seen thee here to walk within thy holy place.

Since better is thy love than mine, my lips thee great shall give.

I give thy name, will lift my heart, and bless thee while I live.

He does with my own hand, with my soul shall bear me.

Then shall my heart, with joyfulness, sing praises unto thee.

[ 16 : 35 ] And I, to thee, upon my head, remember with delight.

And when on me I meditate, it watches all the night.

In shadow all thy wings of joy, for thou my help hast me.

My soul thee follows heart and me.

Thy right hand does the same. We're going to read God's word now in 2 Kings.

[ 18 : 01 ] 2 Kings and chapter 5. 2 Kings chapter 5. 2 Kings chapter 5.

Naaman, Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.

Now the Syrians on one of the raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, Would that my Lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria.

He would cure him of his leprosy. So Naaman went in and told his Lord. Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel. And the king of Syria said, Go now and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, When the letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman, my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.

[ 19 : 27 ] And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, Am I God to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy?

Only consider and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me. But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, Why have you torn your clothes?

Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house.

And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.

But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, Behold, I thought that you would surely come out to me, and stand and call upon the name of the Lord as God, and wave his hand over the place, and cure the leper.

[ 20 : 30 ] Are not Abana and Farfel, though at rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

But the servants came near and said to him, My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you. Will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, Wash and be clean?

So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God. And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him and said, Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel.

So accept now a present from your servant. But he said, As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it, but he refused.

[ 21 : 38 ] Then Naaman said, If not, please let there be given to your servant two new loads of earth. For from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any God but the Lord.

In this matter, may the Lord pardon your servant when my master goes into the house of Roman to worship there, leaning on my arm. And I bow myself in the house of Roman.

When I bow myself in the house of Roman, the Lord pardon your servant in this matter. He said to him, Go in peace. But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said, See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian in not accepting from his hand what he brought.

As the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him. So Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, It's all well.

And he said, All is well. My master has sent me to say, There have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim, two young men of the sons of the prophets.

[ 22 : 55 ] Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing. And Naaman said, Be pleased to accept two talents. And he urged him and tied up two talents of silver and two bags with two changes of clothing and laid them on two of his servants.

And he carried them before Gehazi. And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house. And he sent the men away and departed.

And they departed. He went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, Where have you been, Gehazi? And he said, Your servant went nowhere.

But he said to him, Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants?

Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever. So he went out from his presence a leper like snow.

[ 24 : 03 ] Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. We're now going to sing in Gaelic from Psalm 103. And we're going to sing verses 3 and 4.

And we remain seated for this singing Psalm 103 from verse 3. And we're going to sing in Gaelic from the song.

And we're going to sing in Gaelic from the song.

And we're going to sing in Gaelic from the song.

And we're going to sing in Gaelic from the song. Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh

[ 26 : 55 ] Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Thank you.

Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read in 2 Kings chapter 5. I'll just read at the beginning.

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of all, but he was a lebor.

The Syrians on one of the raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, would that my Lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria.

He would cure him of his leprosy. The Bible has a way of introducing us to different people, different characters, just very suddenly.

[ 28 : 52 ] It's just all of a sudden there's an introduction. A classic example of that is in 1 Kings with regard to Elijah, the great prophet who was before Elisha. And it tells us very simply in 1 Kings 17, Elijah the Tishbite of the tribe in Gilead said to Ahab, As the Lord of God lives before whom I stand.

That's the introduction. We're told Elijah of the tribe, he's the Tishbite of the tribe of Gilead. But we find this declaration that it says, As the Lord of God Israel lives before whom I stand.

And that is very simply, it's telling us that Elijah was this servant of God who stayed and stood constantly in the presence of God, waiting for God's direction in what to do.

You couldn't get a briefer statement than that. And it's the very same when you come here about this man Naaman. Just all of a sudden we're introduced, This man Naaman, here he come.

And it tells us Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria.

[ 30 : 08 ] He was obviously a great military general. He was a fearless fighter. But he was also, we're told in the AV, it tells us he was an honorable man, which means that he would have been a loyal, trustworthy, good guy.

And I'm sure that throughout the whole of Syria, people would say, when they would see Naaman, they'd say, oh, look at Naaman. He would be the hero of the day. He would be the sort of, if he lived in today's world, he would be probably number one celebrity.

But the thing is, there's nobody would have changed places with Naaman. Not even the slave. Not even the prisoner. Because while Naaman had all the virtues, all the strength, all the power, all the fame, everything, it tells us very simply at the end of that verse, he was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.

Despite everything that he had, he was a leper. And there's nobody who would have changed places with Naaman to get that awful disease of leprosy, which was such a scourge at these times.

And you know, it's quite funny how so often we home in on the negative in a person's life. You have all these virtues, all these great characteristics spoken about the kind of person Naaman was, but he's a leper.

[ 31 : 38 ] And I think it says something about ourselves, the way we think. Maybe something to do with the sinfulness of our own heart. But aren't we good at homing in on the fault, our faults in people's lives?

David is a classic example. David was one of the greatest people of God ever. He was an extraordinary man of faith. Scripture tells us he was a man after God's own heart.

And yet so often when people think of David, they think of only two things. They think of him killing the giant, and they think of his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah.

The home in on the negative. It's like the same with Peter. The Apostle Peter was one of the greatest men ever. He was a man who made the greatest confessions in the time of Christ.

You are the Christ. You are the Son of the living God. To whom else can we go? For you are the words of eternal life. When Jesus talked about his death and betrayal and all that was going to happen, Peter was saying, Lord, I'm ready to go to prison.

[ 32 : 49 ] I'm ready to die for you. And of course, he meant it. But we all know what happened with Peter. He ended up denying Jesus.

Not just a wee sort of, I don't know, but he denied him in the most vicious way possible. And you know, so often when we think of Peter, he had great moments of faith, demonstrating walking to meet Jesus on the water.

And yet there's something in our thinking, isn't it? That we think, oh, Peter, oh, that's the one who denied Jesus. I think it says a lot about ourselves, the way that we home in. We home in it.

I don't know what it is. Does it make us feel better? Or what it is? But we see it in Scripture, and we see it in life itself. Well, here's this man, Naaman. And while he had everything, as far as his world was concerned, he was somebody who also was a leper.

And again, sometimes, just in passing, when we look at other people, you know, we're very prone to make judgments about people. And we look at people's lives. And sometimes we can look almost, as possible, people can look almost with a kind of a way of envy, or say, oh, I wish I had their way of life.

[ 34 : 07 ] I wish I had their life. I wish I was like them. I wish... You and I have no idea what people actually live with. We have no idea what it's actually like for people.

People that we see at a distance, and we say, oh, man, they've got a great life. We don't know. We don't know what personal traumas they might be carrying. We don't know what difficulties they might be facing.

We have no idea, sometimes, of the hardships at that part and parcel of their lives. That's why Scripture says to us, judge not, but you be not judged. So we ought never to be sort of measuring ourselves up and looking at other people's lives.

Oh, there's this. There's this. We don't know what's going on. Well, as I say there, many a person would have looked at Naaman outwardly as, I wish I was him. And then when they come to see what actually Naaman was nursing, this leprosy, nobody would have wanted that.

And so, we also find in the Bible that while leprosy was a real disease, a real scourge, it was also a picture that is given to us of sin. And, of course, that's the greatest disease of all.

[ 35 : 20 ] And sin affects and changes everything because we're all sinners and sin just, it saturates our lives. It's part of who we are.

And sin distorts our values and everything. And that's why, as we look in this world, this world promises us so much. And if we live only for the world and the worlds, and if our life is dictated by the world's values and the world's standards and the world's aims, we will end up disappointed.

Yes, the world can deliver for a while. But the world is nothing for the crisis in your life. The world is nothing for the hardships and the sorrows that sometimes come into our life.

And the world is absolutely nothing for death. death. Because whatever the world gives, it gives on the one hand, but when there comes a time when it takes everything back, every single thing, everything.

So the world will deceive us. And, again, we have this picture of what sin really is because sin is the ultimate deceiver. And until we come to making a sort of a spiritual discovery, until God touches our heart and our lives, we don't see this.

[ 36 : 47 ] We might be, we might come to church and might think a wee bit about God and about Jesus and think about these things and say, yeah, that's all very well, but I enjoy life.

I want to live life my way. I want to, there's so many things I want to do. I want to get world satisfaction. I want to get, I want to get on in life. If I become a Christian, what's going to happen?

And so there's this, this kind of battle goes on. But you know, when God touches our heart and he shows us what we're really like and shows us who we really need, it changes everything.

You come to this quick discovery that this world has got absolutely nothing for you. Absolutely nothing. And that when God's spirit touches your heart, you see that you're actually deserving of God's wrath.

And that's an awful discovery to make because, you know, somehow we delude ourselves in thinking, you know, I'm not too bad a person.

[ 37 : 50 ] God is for me. God will say at the end of the day, it's okay. You did your best. You weren't too bad. No, that's not how it happens. That's not, that's not how the verdict works.

Because God cannot look at sin. God cannot tolerate sin. And we are all by nature sinners and we need our sin dealt with. And if our sin is not dealt with, then we're under condemnation.

That's not something we like to hear, but it's what the word of God tells us. So Naaman is standing here as a picture of a sinner, but also somebody who is ill, needing both healing and cleansing.

But then all of a sudden, that's what the Bible is great at doing, is jumping from one character to another. Because verse two introduces us to this young girl, a little girl, who was taken captive in one of the raids when Syria would invade Israel.

They would take away captives and they took away this little girl. She was one of the captives that had been taken away. And in God's mysterious, and we have to say mysterious providence, because so often God's providence is a mystery to us.

[ 39 : 03 ] Anyway, she ends up working for Naaman's wife. We don't know her name, but God did. And God, I believe, was looking after this little girl.

Because I believe, although it doesn't tell us anything about that, I believe that this was a home where she was well cared for. Although she was a servant girl, I believe that she was treated well and looked after well in this home because of just the very way her attitude is.

But, you know, she's quite a remarkable little girl in many ways. Because, when you think about it, here's a little girl, and I believe that the grace of God has worked in her life.

That she is somebody who loves the Lord and trusts the Lord. And who do I say that? Well, we say that because when you see her attitude and when you see her spirit, you put yourself in the place of this little girl.

And if you were snatched from your home and you were taken away to another country all of a sudden, I don't know how old she might have been, 10, 11, 12, I don't know, taken away. Can you imagine the trauma, the distress, how he would feel?



[ 40 : 18 ] And here she is. And what we find quite remarkable about her is that she says to Naaman's wife, would that my Lord, that is Naaman, were with the prophet in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy.

You see, this is what I love about this little girl is, she is demonstrating God's love. What does God's love do or not do? Love keeps no record of wrongs.

Isn't that a beautiful thought? Love doesn't keep a record of wrongs. That's what we're told in 1 Corinthians. And when God pardons us in Jesus Christ, he doesn't keep a record of our wrongs.

This little girl had been wronged. She'd been snatched from her home. She was living in a foreign country. And you know, it would be very easy for this little girl to see, oh, look at Naaman.

Oh, she was seeing the personal heartache in the home that nobody else was seeing. She was seeing the distress that Naaman's illness was bringing to Naaman's wife.

[ 41 : 29 ] Now, if the Lord wasn't touching her heart, I think she'd be saying, ha, ha, he's got what he deserves. He was in charge of the crowd that came and snatched me and my people away.

I'm glad he's a leper. No, that's not her attitude. She wants that Naaman will be healed. And I think that speaks volumes, tells us so much about this little girl.

Because we see her loyalty to God. Her faith is obviously, it's still there. Her faith is there. And again, Scripture tells us the importance of bringing up children in the way of the Lord.

Train up a child in the way that he or she will go. And that way will not depart from them. And again, we see the evidence of faith because real faith keeps going even when things get tough.

You know, there's people who start out in the Christian faith and then hardships come, difficulties come, and they disappear. They go back.

[ 42 : 35 ] They just say, oh no, I'm going to give up. But real faith keeps going despite what happens, irrespective of anything. And I'm sure all of you who are following the Lord can look back on your own lives and you wouldn't change places for anything for where you are now.

But you know that as a Christian there are often difficulties and trials and temptations and things in your life. And you say to yourself, you know, at one level it was easier before I became a Christian than it is now.

But God uses all these things. Trials that afflicted just a number many be, but yet at length out of them all the Lord does set them free.

And one more thing about this little girl, she's a consistent follower of the Lord. She's the same in Syria as she was in Israel.

Because you know, sometimes it's very easy when there's no longer the restraints of other Christians and the other, the Christian culture that you might be around.

[ 43 : 42 ] To let the guard down and just to live another way. Well she didn't, she wasn't like that. She was consistent wherever she was. She was consistent in Israel, she was consistent in the city.

Anyway, just move on very quickly. We're not going to go through this chapter at all, but just to move very quickly to cut a long story short. Naaman goes and tells the king of Syria what the little girl had said.

The letter is sent with presents to the king of Israel. When the king of Israel gets this, he thinks, oh, me, I can't cure leprosy. And he thinks that the king of Israel is trying to start a fight.

Elisha hears about it and Elisha said, send Naaman to me. And so we find that Naaman comes to Elisha's house. What does Elisha do? Does Elisha come out and this is what Naaman expected.

He expected him to wave his hands around and to touch the spot and to call upon God and various things. No. Elisha doesn't come out at all.

[ 44 : 50 ] He simply sends a servant and he said to Naaman, my servant is saying, my Lord is saying, go and wash in the Jordan seven times and you'll be clean. What's Elisha doing here?

He's making sure that he doesn't get in the way of God's work. And that's a very important lesson for us because, you know, sometimes we do.

Why? Because sometimes we want a wee bit of the glory ourselves. We want, maybe make a wee bit of a name for ourselves to get a little bit of glory.

we ought not to. It's all for him. So we've always got to remember we're just servants, we're ambassadors, we're messengers. Every Christian is serving the Lord, working for the Lord.

It's neither about us, it's always about him. And that's the beauty of what Elisha is doing here. He doesn't want to get in the way and he doesn't want Naaman to think that he, Elisha, is the one who has healed.

[ 45 : 53 ] So he sends the message which is God's word. Well, Naaman was absolutely furious because he was expecting, because he was used to being made a lot of and he was expecting the VIP treatment and he's absolutely furious about it because he thought he was something special.

As we said earlier, so do we. We sometimes think before God that we're something special. And that's why so many people hate God's word.

Because God's word, there's people who will take sections of God's word and say, oh, that's good. I quite like that. But there are people that, there's people who say, if they come to church and hear them being told that they're sinners, before God.

They say, how dare you? How dare you tell me that I'm a sinner? Well, it's not me that's saying it. It's God's word. God's word says, all have sinned.

All have come short of the glory of God. Are there any righteous? None righteous. No, not one. That's what God's word tells us. God's word says, God's word says, And so, we have to grasp and lay hold upon that.

[ 47 : 14 ] That, that, and before God, we're not special in that sense. And that, unless Jesus takes our sin upon himself, then our sin is still on ourselves and in us, and we have to face God in that particular way like that.

So, as we see, Naaman was incensed by, by what had, what had happened. And he was saying, the rivers, rivers at home are far better. Thankfully, he had sensible servants who talked sense into him.

And he said, look, it's not a big deal that you were asked to do. You were just told, wash in the Jordan seven times. Try it. Go and do what it says. And that's exactly what happened.

And, you know, there are so many people who think the same with regard to salvation as is told in Jesus Christ. Because so many people think, don't tell me in this age that you believe that.

So many people will say that. People have said that to me often enough. Do you really believe that? That's old stuff. No. Yes, it's old, but it's ever new. It's the unchanging.

[ 48 : 32 ] There is no other. When Jesus said, I am, he didn't say, I am a way. He said, it's a definite article, I am the way.

I'm the way. There is no other way. I'm the way. And in this age of inclusiveness and diversity and all that, we have to be firm and stay to what Jesus says, not what we are saying.

Because people say, you can't say that today. We have to say that today. Because that's what the gospel is. And people will say, oh, you see, the problem is people want to have something to do with it themselves.

They want a part to play. If, for instance, we were told the way to get to heaven, you have to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, you have to cross the Atlantic, and if you can do so in a sailing boat or row it, you would hardly find a space with boats making their way out.

You've got to give a certain amount to the church. You've got to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation every single year if you do that. If you do, if you do, people will be doing it. But all it tells us is to believe.

[ 49 : 43 ] We have to believe and repent. That's where, that's how we come to salvation. That's how we come to faith in Jesus Christ. And people say, but what do I do?

No, you don't do anything. The doing has been done. And so, until if Naaman had said, I'm going to do it my way, I'm going back home, I'm going to these rivers at home, he would not have been cleansed.

He had to do exactly what God said. And it's the same for you and for me. There is no other way. And, I mean, there's so much more we could say just in passing.

I can't help but notice what Gehazi did. See how zealous Elisha was for the glory of God. He didn't want to get in the way in any shape or form. He wouldn't even take anything when Naaman came back.

Oh man, look, I'm cleansed. Brilliant. Here you are. Take some of this stuff. No, no. Elisha said no. Because he didn't want Naaman to think that it was anything to do with anything that he was or that there was any reward in it.

[ 50 : 54 ] There would be nothing wrong at one level of taking it. Don't get me wrong. Elisha's not saying it's not right to take a present. But Elisha is wanting to teach here that it's God alone.

It's got nothing to do with him, with Elisha. And that's where Gehazi sin is so wrong. Because Gehazi is seeing all this silver and gold and clothing and he says, I want some of that.

And that's why he ran after Naaman and made up this story that there were visitors that had come all of a sudden and could he get some clothes and some silver. And he got it and he hid it.

He thought he'd got away with it. He went back in to see Elisha. Elisha said, where were you, Gehazi? Oh, nowhere. Just out and about. No, Elisha said, my heart went with you.

My heart, I saw you go. You went after Naaman and you took from Naaman because you see he was getting in the way of God's work.

[ 51 : 56 ] He was taking from the glory of God by what he did. And Naaman and Elisha said to him, the leprosy that was on Naaman is coming on you and your descendants.

And he went out a leper. He said, it's a very solemn thing to try to take the glory that belongs to God to ourselves. But the great lesson here is hear what God's word says, which is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Jesus said on one occasion, you have heard so much but you still do not believe.

Is there anybody like that here today? You've heard so much but you still do not believe. But what were his following words? He then said, but he or she that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.

Let's pray. Lord our God we pray to bless us this day and we give thanks for your word and for what your word teaches us. We give thanks for these Old Testament incidents and experiences because they are there to teach us so much.

[ 53 : 11 ] Everything is relevant to where we are and we pray that we might heed and hear and lay hold upon your word. Bless us we pray. Bless us with the riches of your grace and bless the cup of tea coffee that follows on afterwards and be with us take us to our home safely for giving us our sin in Jesus name we ask it.

Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 126 from Sing Psalms Psalm number 126 When Zion's fortunes God restored it was a dream come through.

Our mouths were then with laughter filled, our tongues with songs anew. The nation said the Lord has done great things for Israel. The Lord did mighty things for us and joy our hearts knew well.

Psalm 126 The whole psalm when Zion's fortunes God restored. When Zion's forties restored it was a dream come true.

God's has done great things for Israel.

[ 54 : 48 ] The Lord did mighty things for us and joy our hearts new well.

Restore our fortunes, gracious Lord, like streams and deserts storm.

A joyful harvest will reward the weeping storm.

The high-fueling saints who sow those under tears of grief will come again with songs of joy bearing his harvest sheep.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.