



Pastor Kyle Mercer  
Healing & Obedience

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Series: Expectant  
2 Kings 5:1-19

**BIG IDEA - HEALING BEGINS WITH OBEDIENCE AND SURRENDER**

Good morning, Two Cities Church. Whether you're in here or you're down in Lexington, I want to take a moment and tell you about our Heights Conference. This is the second time we're doing it. We did it *last* year in September. We're doing it *this* year in September, which means this is now our annual Heights Conference. Amen? It's going to be awesome.

Now, why do we call it *The Heights*? It's because you need a mountaintop experience. I hate to break it to me, but most of our lives are lived in the mundane, and that's okay. But here's my conviction. I heard another person say this. The problem with adult American Christians, which is you, is that you stopped going to camp a long time ago. You have not had a bonfire camp experience in decades, and we're going to change that.

We can't bring you all to camp, so we're bringing camp to you. We can't put all of you in some big bus and take you to a retreat, so we're bringing a retreat to you. Now, here's what some of you will be really excited about. Some of you have been asking for this for years. At the Heights Conference for the first time...drum roll, please...we are going to have merch, as the young people call it. Oh, I've seen mock-ups. Get ready. It's going to sell out fast, so you'd better be here.

We're adding a night. Last year it was Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. This year it's Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Guys, we have some incredible speakers who are going to be at The Heights. I'll also be at The Heights. We have some incredible speakers there.

The first one is Jon Tyson. He has been doing ministry in New York City. He's a man of prayer, a man of revival, with a beautiful Australian accent. Get ready for it. That's

Thursday night. Some of the ladies were disappointed that when he came and spoke to the men they didn't get to hear, so he's coming back.

Dave Stone... I know most of you are like, "Who is that?" He was leading one of the largest churches in America before he passed it off to Kyle Idleman, who wrote the book *Not a Fan*. Anyway, Dave Stone was speaking at an event I was at in Colorado, and I'd never heard of him.

This happens to me every once in a while when I'm listening to somebody. About halfway through, I was like, "Who *is* this guy?" The stories he will tell, the experience he will bring... You do not want to miss it. That's going to be Friday night. Saturday night, we're bringing in Clayton King. He's an incredible evangelist whom God has used all over the nation, but particularly in North and South Carolina.

Oh, and if you're parents... I know you're worried about Timmy and Tommy and Sally and Junior and all that. We're going to have a full kids' ministry. What I mean by that is you're going to be able to bring your kids here, and we're going to have a movie night for them. That's going to be special every night as well. So, we hope you'll make it a priority.

Also, as of the 9:00 service, we had 140 people signing up for the Weekender. You guys treat the Weekender like *Hamilton* tickets, and I really appreciate that. I want you to sign up. Look, guys. If you're new, don't waste time. I've been doing this long enough. You're a medical student. You're a resident. You just moved to the area. Your kids are... I know the whole story. Get in.

There are not 2 ways or 10 ways to get connected here. And, guys, you know this. I'm just going to say it, though. It's hard, I'm going to say nearly impossible, to be a Christian without a church. Christianity is not a solo sport. It's not a spectator sport. You can't do it alone or on the sidelines. Get in. That's what I want to encourage you to do. You're going to love it.

This Friday and Saturday is our last Weekender of the summer before... There's so much happening this fall. I didn't even get into that. My session at The Heights is to tell you where we're headed, and I can't wait to do that. So, get in and get ready for The Heights.

Finally, tomorrow night we're having a prayer and worship night here. That's why we gave you this card. I want you to fill this card out. You can fill it out now, while I'm preaching, or while we're singing at the end. I want you to write down a bold prayer. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to drop them in the offering bucket. Spencer will tell you all about this. We want you to write down a bold prayer.

You just heard some bold prayers in those videos. I want you to write down a bold prayer. "God, you've got to come through for this to happen." Here's what's so powerful. You're going to drop that in the offering bucket. Keep it anonymous. Don't put your name on it. Drop it in there.

Tomorrow night, we're going to be grabbing some prayers. I'm praying for one of your bold prayers tomorrow, and we'll be praying for each other's bold prayers. It's going to be an incredible time together. With that said, let's pray. Get ready. Buckle up. We're going to have an incredible journey together as we talk about a topic that I've hardly ever talked about. We're going to talk about healing. Let's pray.

Lord, I want to prepare everybody here right now, at the very beginning, that we're going to call for a response at the end, and I want people to think the whole time, "Where do I need healing in my life?" Lord, there are people who carry so many wounds, and wounds need healed.

Lord, we thank you for one of the simplest and clearest stories of healing in the entire Bible, the story of Naaman. I pray you would use it to encourage, Lord. Who knows? People need to be forgiven. People need to be freed. People need to be healed. I pray you would do all that today. In Jesus' name, amen.

I think one of the worst feelings is feeling sick. And I'm not talking about the man cold that some of you ladies make fun of us for having. It's a real thing. Okay? I'm talking about when you are capital-*S sick*, like when you have a headache or a bad stomachache. I'll tell you a story.

Margy and I had our second kid, William. This was when we were living in Durham. We were part of a great church. So, these people came over to bring us meals. This couple didn't even realize they didn't cook their meal well, I guess, because Margy and I both got food poisoning. I mean, you're like, "Kill me."

Food poisoning! And we have a 2-year-old and a 0-year-old, basically. I can remember I could barely make the phone call. I needed someone to come and get Addy, who was 2, because we literally could not control ourselves. We were so sick and so weak. Somebody had to do it.

My kids are at camp this week, speaking about camp. So, we get there, and you know me. I'm meeting all of the counselors and all this kind of stuff. They're like, "Oh man. We had so much sickness last session." These are two-week sessions at camp. I said, "Really?" They said, "Yeah. Five hundred boys were here. We had to send 150 home."

Sickness will ruin your week. It can ruin your life. It has been said that you can have a thousand problems... Think about all of the problems in your life. Then you have a

health problem. Now you have one problem. You're like, "My marriage is okay. I don't love my job. My kids are kind of crazy. I'm really sick." That rises to the top. In fact, probably the most underrated feeling in the world is feeling normal.

As soon as you have a stomachache, a migraine, or your chest hurts, or whatever, you're like, "I just want to feel normal." Well, here's what we're going to look at. We're going to look at a successful guy who gets sick. That story happens all the time. Ask the doctors who work in the hospital. Everyone gets sick, but here we're told about a successful guy who gets sick. His name is Naaman.

**"Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria..."** He's secretary of defense, but he's really kind of like the VP. He's number two in all the land. So, he is successful in his industry. That's a great thing. He's the C-suite leader. He's the partner in a law firm. He's the highest attending doctor, however that stuff works. That's who he is.

Look at this. "[He] **was a great man...**" People like this guy. You know, sometimes if someone is successful, you're like, "Yeah, but he's a jerk." No, this guy is also a great guy. So, he's successful. He's a great guy. In fact, look at this. **"...a great man with his master and in high favor..."** People like him. **"...because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria."** So, he's not a believer, but God is still using him. God uses all types of people in places of power who aren't even believers.

**"He was a mighty man of valor..."** We don't know this for sure, but this isn't modern warfare. This isn't like shooting missiles from screens in places. This is wartime battle. Here's what I'm trying to say: He was most likely fit. He was strong. He was healthy. So, he was super successful, but... You're going to have a *but* in *your* life at one point. Look at the *but* here. **"...but he was a leper."**

He was successful but sick. He was a leader but a leper. You're going to be like, "Great marriage, but cancer." Great job, but she's leaving you. Great family, but a prodigal. This happens all the time. There's always a *but*. I want to talk about success, and then we'll talk about sickness.

Successful people are the hardest people to reach. Everybody is hard. I get it. I know the Bible. I know we're all hard-hearted sinners who are blind. I know all that, but I'm just telling you... The *gospel* literally means good news. So, why is it hardest to get the good news to successful people? Because they already have so much good news.

I remember I was at some Christian bookstore, and there was a book... And I appreciate it. I don't know who came up with this idea. I can't remember who wrote it. It was a book about praying for all of the celebrities in America, basically the cultural elites. Most of the cultural elites are very successful. They're not very open to Christianity.

I saw this when I was at Duke. Now, I didn't go to Duke. I'm not smart enough to get into Duke, but I did ministry at Duke for four years. I thought I met successful people when I was at Elon. It's a decent school. I thought I met successful people there. I'm just telling you, there ain't nothing like Duke.

So, I'm at Duke, and I remember I'm leading a Bible study, and the iPhone 5 comes out. I'll just give you one story. This kind of stuff happened all the time. The iPhone 5 comes out. I'm leading this Bible study. I don't know the fraternity guys really well. I'm like, "Oh, the new iPhone is so cool."

They're like, "You need to ask Adam. His dad works for Apple." I was like, "Not at the Apple Store in Greensboro. I mean, not *there*. Not at Southpoint mall in Durham." I said to him... I played the concentric circle question, asking him, "Do you live in Palo Alto?"

"Yes."

"Did your dad know Steve Jobs?"

"Yeah, they were good friends."

"Does your dad speak on stages at the Apple events?"

"Yes."

I end up finding out that this guy's dad created something like Apple Music or maybe Apple Maps. I can't even remember. This is normal. That kind of person is at Duke all the time. So there would be almost no interest. I'd get them in a little bit of a spiritual study, but it's like... And they were all young and super healthy. So, they're successful and super healthy, and they have access to all this stuff and sinful pleasures.

It's very hard to reach successful people until some type of suffering comes into their life. Now, I don't have time to get into stories. There were a couple people who I got to baptize and see come to Christ. Guess what they all had in common? Suffering happened in their life. So much of ministry is to build relationship, genuinely love people, and wait for the storm to come.

Okay. Let's talk about being a leper. Leprosy was a death sentence back then. It was like getting stage 4 cancer of the worst kind today or something like that. That's what it was like. They would say you would live 10 to 20 years. I don't know if you've ever been around somebody who... And you have your own professions. Some of you are doctors, and you see this all the time. When somebody gets a diagnosis that they have so little time left, it's almost overwhelming.

I remember there was a godly... This was not that long ago. There was a godly lady in our church. It was November. I'm telling you that for a reason. It was late November, and she got diagnosed. I think she might have gotten diagnosed in the early fall. We came to pray for her because she had stage 4 cancer, and it was not looking good at all. We had this time of prayer for her and everything.

I'll never forget what she said to me afterward. It was so simple. She said, "I was really looking forward to seeing Trump's presidency and the changes he was going to make, and I'm not going to see it." She died in January. This lady's time frame had gotten so shortened.

Now, the truth is we all have a terminal condition. Leprosy was a terminal condition for them. What happened is, believe it or not, the priest, of all people... Could you imagine me doing this? You'd go to the priest to show them your leprosy, and they would determine how bad it was and where you needed to go. But it was 10 to 20 years. It was a terminal condition.

I want to stop and talk to you for a second, because I want to talk about suffering, and I want to talk about the connection between leprosy and sin. Now, obviously, I don't know God's mind and heart, but God will often give us these horrible physical realities that speak to deeper spiritual realities that are horrible. For example, if I'm like, "Sin is terrible, and it'll kill you," everyone is like, "Yawn! I've heard that."

But if you're like, "Sin is like leprosy," if you've ever seen a leper, you're like, "So, your hands fall off, and it kills you." Let me draw the connection between sin and leprosy. Here's what they have in common: you see the symptoms on the outside, but the problem is on the inside. We'll get into this in a minute, but it always shows up, first, as a spot you have to deal with, because here's the other thing about leprosy: it spreads.

I was talking to a guy recently (not in our church). He had been an alcoholic for a long time and just gave it up. He's 35 or 40 days sober right now. I was asking him, "What has it been like?" He's really grateful. He's really joyful. He's all that. Do you know what he said to me, though? He said, "It has been like saying goodbye to a really good friend that betrayed me." I thought, "Yeah, that's right."

When people start drinking just a little bit too much, they don't see how things can spread. When people start looking at things on Instagram that they shouldn't be looking at... No one realizes that sin wants to have its way with you, as the Puritans used to say. Sin wants to have its full manifestation.

Then, sin isolates. That's another picture. You remember what it was like in COVID, where everyone was like, "Oh, it's contagious. Get in your house and wear your mask

and bleach your groceries," and all that. Some of you did that. It's okay. Basically, because of the contagious nature of it, people were isolated the rest of their life. So, it's a death sentence, but it's also a sentence of isolation.

It shows up first on people as a spot, though. Here's what I'm saying: Are there any spots in your life that you need to focus on so that they don't spread? I heard a guy on a podcast recently (I thought this was a great illustration) say if you want to diagnose your life for where there's an area you need to change, here's a great question to ask.

If your life was a movie... Or let's just think of it like a five-season show with multiple episodes. We're all sitting in here, and we can see your whole life. It goes up on the screens. We're eating popcorn, and we're watching it. We've been watching it for several weeks. We kind of know your life. Where would we be screaming at the screen, "Don't do that"?

It's like, "Stop talking to her! She's not your wife. What are you doing, doing that again?" We all have that moment in the movie where we're like, "No, no, don't do that!" We need to be able, in some ways, to step back from our life and go, "Where am I going...? If I'm not careful, this will spread."

Well, let me show you how God solves this problem. This guy (Naaman) gets to a place where there's a problem he can't solve, a battle he can't fight, a cure he can't buy. Look at what happens in verse 2. ***"Now the Syrians on one of their raids..."*** Those were when they went and pillaged places. ***"...had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife."***

Who is God going to use to reach Naaman? Not who we would think. It's like, "Surprise, surprise." I have to be honest. In my own mind, I'm very modern. I think, "If God is going to reach a successful person, he has to use a successful person." Sometimes I'm like, "Yeah, this guy is so full of himself. If the guy doesn't make more money than him and have a bigger title and live in a bigger house, he's not even going to listen to him."

But it's like, no, wait. God is going to reach an old rich man with a young slave girl. But there's more to it than just that. You'll see servants are a big theme in this story, but here's what's interesting. If you read verse 2... Sometimes we read things and skip over it. Here's what I want you to notice: this girl had been kidnapped.

What happened was Naaman, who we thought was a good guy, but maybe he's *not* really a good guy, because this is the kind of stuff he does... He goes in. I mean, they all did it, but he raided this village, most likely killed her parents, kidnapped her, and brought her home to be a slave in their household. In other words, so far, this lady has lived a sad life. Some people have sad lives.

I was with somebody recently, and I was talking to him. You know, he's older. He's in his 50s or 60s. He hadn't talked a lot about his family, so I asked him, "Do you have any siblings?" "Oh, yeah, I have a sister." I said, "What's her story?" I never met her. He said, "Oh, her husband left her for a gay guy, and she has a serious case of MS." Then he said, "She lives a very sad life." Yeah, there are people whose lives are sad. God's grace is there, but they have a sad...

Well, here's the thing. You're going to see this in a minute. I'm going to read it to you, then I'll tell you this. Look at verse 3. **"She said to her mistress, 'Would that my lord [the one who kidnapped me] were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.'"** We should be very surprised that she wants to help somebody who hurt her. She wants the best for someone who was the worst to her.

Can we be honest for one second? If I'm her (maybe I'm a bigger sinner than the rest of you), and I find out the guy who killed my parents and kidnapped me has leprosy, I am like, "Yes! I hope you live the rest of your life in isolation." Does anyone else like a good revenge movie? I'm like, "Oh, yeah. Get 'em!" It's like, "Die slowly. Die painfully. I want to be there when it happens." No, she's going to help.

Here's the thing. She has to do something that some of you need to do today, and I'm going to give you a chance to do it at the end. She needs to forgive somebody in her life so she can minister to that person. You can't minister to people you're mad at, and forgiven people forgive people. Do not tell me that you believe you are a big sinner and God has forgiven you of everything and you can't forgive somebody else. I'm not minimizing what they've done.

By the way, when you forgive, you don't say, "It's okay"; you say, "It *wasn't* okay. That's why I had to forgive." This whole story... She's going to end up forgiving him. He's going to end up being forgiven and set free. It's this beautiful thing. Some of you need to forgive your dad. I mean, there are people... I'm thinking of someone right now. He's still mad at his dad who has been dead for 20 years.

So, she's going to forgive, and then she's going to tell this man about the good news that he could be healed in Israel. Verse 4: **"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.'"** Here's what I love about Naaman, if I can speak to middle schoolers and high schoolers for just a moment: Naaman listens to the godly people in his life and does what they tell him.

I don't know if this is the beginning of belief. I don't know how much he believes for himself, but in some ways, this is what Christian community is. This is what discipleship is. It's one person going, "Hey, listen. I think I know, according to God's

Word, how to solve that problem, but tag, you're it. You have to decide to do something."

Now, he's obviously a desperate man, so he goes. He says, "All right. We need to write a letter." He gets the king of Syria involved. We'll move quickly through this part.

Verse 5: **"So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold..."** That's how we know he's rich. That's \$3 million in today's money.

Look here. He's Cam Newton. **"...and ten changes of clothing."** We don't know what's going on there. Strange, but here's the whole thing. If you've ever met people like this... He's willing to pay for his healing. That's what he's expecting. "I'll pay for this." I think any person feels like that. "I would give almost everything."

If Jeff Bezos got stage 4 pancreatic cancer, I bet he might give it all. "I'll give it all. That's how important my health is. What do you want?" Have you ever seen the movie *John Q.*? Raise your hand if you've seen *John Q.* I sweat during that movie. That's a movie about a guy who's... They won't give his son the treatment he needs, and he takes over the hospital. I was like, "I get it."

Someone you love... You're willing to do anything. You meet wealthy people who are like, "It's out of pocket, it's in Thailand, and it's experiential. We're going." If you get desperate enough, you'll do anything. Well, that's what he's doing. He's like, "All right. I'll bring a bunch of money. I don't know what this guy is going to cost."

Verse 6: **"And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, 'When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.'" He thinks the king might know the prophet who can do this. "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.'"**

In other words, the king goes, "I think this might be a plan." You know how governments are. It's like, "Well, yeah. We'll send somebody in and act like they have a need, but they're really there to spy." So he's like, "This is maybe a plan where the king of Syria is sending the number two guy, and he's going to spy on me. He's playing the victim card, but this is not going to work out well."

Well, Elisha hears of this. Verse 8: **"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.'" I love this. I want to be like this. I want to be the kind of guy who says, "Coach, put me in."**

It's messy. He's not from Israel. It's messy. He's sick. Leprosy is contagious. I love that Elisha can see "God is doing something, and I want to be a part of it." I want that posture for myself, for my family, and for you guys. It reminds me... Maybe this is a bad illustration, but when I was... I was never good. I played baseball until I was in sixth grade.

My dad was obsessed with baseball, 25-year season ticket holder for the Pirates. He just loved baseball. He used to always tell me, "When you're on the field, I want you thinking one thing: 'Hit the ball to me.' I don't ever want you up there going, 'It's two outs. It's bases loaded. I hope they hit it to somebody else.'" He said, "The posture on the baseball field is 'Hit it to me,' no matter what happens."

That's kind of what Elisha is saying. He's like, "All right. I want to be used. I think God is at work here. The king is all nervous. I'm in." Now look here. **"So Naaman came with his horses and chariots..."** You see the pomp and circumstance here. **"...and stood at the door of Elisha's house."** This is intimidating. He's impressive. He's the kind of person that you're like, "Wow!" All of the neighbors are like, "Who's that?"

Look at what happens. **"And Elisha sent a messenger to him..."** Elisha understands something that I want *us* to understand. Naaman needs to be humbled before he can be healed. Naaman is a desperate man, but Naaman is still a prideful man. I love this, because Elisha is not impressed with Naaman.

I have seen so many pastors... I don't even know what the word is. I wouldn't call it *fall*. Their ministry is so neutered, it's so weak, and it's usually because they got overly impressed by five or six people in their church who steer the ship now because they had money or influence or a boat or a second home. I mean, you'd be surprised what guys will do when they find out someone has a second home.

Here's the thing. You can't minister to somebody if you're mad at them. I told you that earlier. Here's another one: you can't minister to somebody if you're overly impressed by them. I had to psych myself up at Duke all the time. I'm like, "These guys are not better than you." They were wealthy. They were successful. They were having these incredible weekends.

Sometimes I'd have to think, "Do not be jealous of their lives, Kyle." I would have to have that conversation with myself on the way to campus. Like, "This is ridiculous. You're here trying to share the gospel, and you're jealous of these guys' lives? What's wrong with you?" You can't minister to people if you're obsessed with them, if you're jealous of them, if you need something from them that you're so afraid, "If I tell them about Jesus, they're going to take it away from me."

So, he's like, "I'm sending you my..." Here's another servant. I mean, how many servants are in this story? Verse 10: **"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.'"** He's humbling him with the messenger, his servant, and he's humbling him with the message.

In other words, this is a guy who has 10 pairs of clothes. Does the guy who packs 10 pairs of clothes want to get in dirty water? No. He's basically like, "You're going to have to..." Christianity and coming to Christ is not easy, but it's simple. He said, "You're going to have to do something that is going to look foolish to you." In fact, he doesn't want to do it. Look at what happens.

**"But Naaman was angry..."** This is the first time we're told he's angry. It's the first fully negative thing we're told about him. **"...and went away, saying..."** How many times have you said something like this to God? "Wait a second. I thought..." This is the language of expectation. The reason some of you are so angry... I had a lady come up to me after the first service. "My husband is so angry at God." I said, "For how long?" She said, "For 25 years." I'm thinking, "That's a long time."

Often, under our anger... I mean, consult your anger. Counsel it. Ask, "Why am I so angry?" Usually, it's unmet expectations. This is like marriage 101, right? It's like, "Oh, my goodness. Here's the problem with this marriage. They're both bringing everything they've ever experienced in their parents' marriages to the marriage, and then *he's* bringing the pornography he has seen, and *she's* bringing every romantic comedy that *she* has seen. This marriage is just a bunch of unbelievably unrealistic expectations."

He said, **"Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me..."** "I thought *he* would come out to me, like, Elisha, the main prophet." **"...and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God..."** "He'd do something really cool while I'm in one of my 10 outfits. And I wanted it to be easy." **"...and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper."**

How many times is God not working in your life the way you thought he was going to work in your life? We all do this. We all play the numbers game. I do this on every birthday. You guys are so sick of me talking about being 40. You know, it's mental for me. I just think about it. It's like, "Okay. Well, here I am."

I'm thinking of my dad. My dad is a successful business guy. I'm thinking about where he was when *he* was 40. You know, you play these games. "Okay. Where should my marriage be?" Where should you be financially? Some people, it's just like... Having just done this last service, you know, people are hurting.

A girl came up to me after last service and said, "I'm depressed." She said, "Also, I don't want to be single anymore." A young girl. I just prayed with her. People have these expectations. "By now, I was going to be married. By now, we were going to have kids. By now, my son would get married and give me some grandkids."

We have all of these expectations in our lives. Right? We know people get cancer, just not us. Then we want God to defend himself. "God, you need to defend yourself. You need to explain to me why you're not doing what I want you to do the way I want you to do it. God, you're not fitting into the box I made of you." That's what's happening here.

Verse 12: **"Are not Abana and Pharpar, the 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.**" In other words, he's like, "Guys..." And this is what we do. We get mad at God because he's not doing what we want. We don't want to obey what he says, so then we say, "Is there a way for me to halfway obey?"

That's a whole sermon. Halfway obey. "I'm not going to look at *this*, but I'm going to look at *this*. How close to sin can I get?" It's the kind of people who want to do the word study. "What does *drunkenness* really mean? Really? *Forgiveness*? What is it...? *Marriage*?" They're looking for a loophole instead of looking for grace.

Well, look. More servants show up. Verse 13: **"But his servants came near and said to him, 'My father...'"** That's a term of endearment. It's harder to see this in English, but I'll explain what they're saying in a second. **"...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'?"** What they're basically saying is, "If the prophet had told you to do something great to earn your healing, you would have done it."

If the prophet said, "All right. I will heal you, but first, climb Mount Everest and get back" or "Go to this valley, and in this valley there will be a tree, and on the tree there will be berries. Bring those berries back to me." We almost want to say, "I did something," but God is like, "You're not going to get to earn this at all."

They're like, "If it was something great, you would have done it, but because it's simple, you won't do it." See, coming to Christ is as simple as saying, "I can't save myself. I'm a sinner. I am so bad." Listen. You are so bad... So am I. You are so sinful that Jesus had to die for you. Becoming a Christian is admitting "Jesus is Lord, and I'm not. I need to repent and believe."

Well, finally, because of the encouragement of his friends... This is where we'll focus. Verse 14: **"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..."** That's the

language of healing. But then look. That would be normal. You would expect it to say the flesh was restored. This is what's interesting: **"...like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."**

So, he needed to be healed, and he needed to be cleansed. That makes sense. Why talk about the flesh of a little child? I've always told you I think a good Bible reader is a confused Bible reader. I'm like, "That's strange. That's not how people talk." That's not like an expression. "Oh, your skin is like a child's skin." That's not what they would say.

But if you know your Bible decently well, you might be like, "Wait a second. The idea of a child is something Jesus talked about a lot." He would say things like, "If you want to enter the kingdom of heaven, you must become like a child." It's a picture of both the humble trust Naaman had and the total transformation.

See, Christianity is a supernatural faith. You don't need to be made nice; you need to be made new. You don't need to turn over a new leaf; you need to be given an entirely new life. And we see this. It's external, but it's more internal. Externally he had changed, but also internally he changed. I'll show you this with the response. Verse 15: **"Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him."**

Now, I want you to notice he does some things right and some things wrong. Welcome to being a new believer. We have to have grace for new believers. The guy who led me to Christ, I'm pretty sure... I didn't call him to double check on this, but if my memory serves me correctly, he was still completely addicted to cigarettes while he was leading me to Christ. God later freed him from that.

This guy does some good things, and he does some bad things. He's trying to obey God. He doesn't know what he's doing. He needs someone to help him, but his life has been changed. With your kids, get used to imperfect obedience. I had a guy tell me recently... Really powerful. He said, "You know what my wife and I pray all the time? 'God, help me catch my kids doing something good, and help me catch my kids sinning so I can bring grace and encouragement to them.'"

Here's the good thing. **"And he said, 'Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel...'"** "I know Yahweh is God." That's like, "Great." That's what we'd call in the New Testament "Jesus is Lord," confession of faith. Great. **"...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."**

He still has... We all have this. He has a little bit of a religious spirit left in his heart. "I want to pay God back for what he did." What he's trying to say, basically, is "The

blessings of God can't be bought; they're freely given." Here's an interesting New Testament ethic: we are not in debt to God because we can never pay him back.

Go look at where Paul says he's a debtor. Here's what he says: "I'm a debtor to Greeks and to barbarians and to the Jews." What does he mean? "God doesn't need my good works; other people do." So, he says, "You don't need to pay God back, but you need to become a generous person in general."

Here's how it ends. Verse 17: ***"Then Naaman said, 'If not...'"*** He says, "Fine. Okay, I get that. I'm learning. Thank you for correcting me." ***"...please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD."***

He's like, "I'm fully committed. I need a soil sample, though." That's what he's basically saying. He's like, "Hey, it's massive. I need, like, two cartloads." I'm being a little silly here, but he's like, "I need something to remember what God did in my life here." It's interesting. This story of what God did in Naaman's life is so important for some reason...

Even though it's a short little story I just read to you in 2 Kings chapter 5, it's so important, it's one of the very few Old Testament narrative stories that Jesus talks about. He doesn't talk about that many. He talks about Adam and Eve. He talks about Jonah a little bit, but he goes back... Let me read you this.

Here's what Jesus says in Luke 4: ***"And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.' When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath."*** They're really mad. Why? Why are you mad about a guy getting healed?

***"And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff."*** Did you guys know that story is in the Bible? They want to throw Jesus off a cliff. ***"But passing through their midst, he went away."*** Why were they so mad? This is important.

What is Jesus teaching when he says, "No one was healed except Naaman, and Naaman was a Syrian"? He's basically saying God is completely free to save and to heal and to free whomever he wants. There's something that offends us about God's absolute freedom, which is a really interesting concept.

When God first reveals himself to Moses, do you know what he says? Moses asks, "What's your name?" and he goes, "I Am Who I Am." He's saying, "I define myself. I'm

the self-defining, self-existing God." About 30 chapters later, Moses is overwhelmed. He says, "God, show me your glory," which is like, "Show me how awesome you are."

Do you know what he says? He literally says this. Here is God's answer: "You want to know how awesome I am? I will be gracious to whomever I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whomever I want to have mercy." So, here's what we're going to ask. We're going to ask God at the end to be gracious to us today, because God is so free, but God calls us in his Word to respond.

Sometimes what people need, and some of you do... Some of you need to be forgiven. You need to repent. You need to give your lives to Jesus Christ today. You've never been forgiven. You need to be forgiven so you can be set free to forgive others. Some of you need to be set free today. There is some addiction in your life. There's something where... You've been freed from the penalty of sin, but you're dealing with something. You need to be freed from the power and presence of sin.

But what I want to talk about is I think some of you need healing in this room. As I was praying for you and thinking about you, I thought, "Man, there are so many different types of healing that need to happen." It's because there are a lot of different types of sickness. Right? It can be physical, it can be spiritual, or it can be emotional.

In a minute, what's going to happen... We've done this a couple of times, but if you're new, we're going to have the elders, which are the leaders of our church... They're going to come right up here. They uniquely love our church. They represent our church, and they want to pray with you. They want to hear what God is doing. They want to pray with you.

Some of you need healing today. I'm going to call you forward in just a minute. There are a couple of things I want to say to you. Some of you need healing, and you don't even know what's wrong with you. We'll figure it out. We're going to pray together. Even if we don't know, we're going to transfer the burden to the Lord.

Some of you might go, "I don't even know. I have some mental things going on, and I don't even know what's happening. I just need someone to put their hands on me and pray for me." Some of you are going to go, "You know what? I know we have all of these doctors in these big hospitals, and I did the X-ray, and here's the thing that they don't know. I can't... Is it thyroid? I can't figure it out." We're going to say, "Get down here. We're going to pray for you."

For some of you, it is relational things. We want to see marriages restored. Some of your marriages just need healed. A lady last service came down. "I've had a horrible marriage." I said, "For how long?" She said, "Ten years." A horrible marriage for 10

years. For some of you, your marriage has been a 3 out of 10. You read the book on communication, and it didn't work. You went to the counselor, and you gave up. Listen. We need God to intervene. Only God can heal. Only God can change.

Some of you have family of origin issues. Have you ever heard of father wounds? We call it a *father wound* for a reason. It needs healed. If you're dealing with something... Some of you feel it every Christmas. You feel it every Thanksgiving. I want to invite you. Some of you, genuinely, know what is wrong with you. You have something physical, and you need to come forward. We want to pray over you.

Some of you might want to come forward for somebody who's not here. There are a lot of different types of brokenness. The Bible says in Psalm 147 that God loves to heal the brokenhearted. So, we're going to stand, and in just a minute, I'm going to invite you to come forward as we sing "I Will Wait for You."

There will be elders up here. I'm going to pray in a minute. I just want to invite you, no matter where you are, to come forward for yourself or for someone else. If you're dealing with anything in your life and you'd say, "I need some prayer; I need healing" or "My son needs healing" or "My family needs healing," let's do it.

Lord Jesus, you are the God who heals. You came with a teaching/preaching/healing ministry. You care about our souls. You care about our bodies. You care about our community, Lord. You care. Lord, I pray for people in here who need to come forward because they need to be healed from some kind of trauma. There has been a death. There has been a divorce. There has been a betrayal. There has been a tragedy. They still cry every time they talk about it. They need to come down here.

There are some couples that need to grab their hands and say, "We're coming down. We're just going to pray for our marriage. We're going to ask God to heal it." There are some people who need to come down here because they need to realize they've been forgiven so they can be healed from their past.

There are people in here who need to forgive themselves. They need to come forward. They need to be healed from things they've done. There are other people who need to be healed from things done to them. Lord, would you create a culture right now where we simply take you at your word and we take our next step. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.