

The Abiding Word

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Preacher: Pastor David

[0 : 00] Good morning.

I'd like to share a little anxiety that I have this morning about speaking on Mother's Day. I feel like the pressure from the world is to get up here and go to get up here and go to and wish you a happy Mother's Day and preach a rousing message on the virtues and the honors of motherhood and for us to all leave smiling.

However, I'm intimately aware that Mother's Day, as is true with most holidays, is bittersweet.

In Romans 12, 15, we are called to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep. And so with that in mind, I just wanted to start this morning by expressing empathy and understanding that for some of you, Mother's Day is terribly hard as it is joyful for others.

And that for probably most of us, it's a strange mix of both. And so as we come together as the body of Christ, I just would encourage you to keep in mind the admonition from 1 Corinthians 12, 26.

[1 : 36] If one member suffers, all suffer together. And if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Father, we rejoice together and weep together.

And so would you join me in a prayer? Father, we rejoice over the gift of motherhood and the blessing of children.

And we weep with those longing for the gift of motherhood and those who have suffered the pain of losing children. We honor and rejoice over those mothers that have sacrificed and selflessly served us in the body of Christ for all his glory.

While we weep with those who continue to endure the pain of having lost mothers or experienced the hurtful relationships with their mothers.

We rejoice over those who you have used in our lives as spiritual mothers. Those that have labored and anguished in our lives in order to see Christ formed in us.

[2 : 48] And we ask that you would grant us the passion and the privilege and the ability, the commitment to be spiritual mothers for others. And to leave a godly legacy until Christ returns.

Father, we thank you that you open before us your throne of grace. That you invite us to come when we are struggling and when we are hurting. That we might find grace and mercy to help in our time of needs.

And so, Father, we come before you. And Father, I confess you. You already know my heart that. I'm not sure about even getting through the sermon this morning apart from your grace.

But as you see fit, then let it be. That Christ would be exalted in all things. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So, I don't know if any of you noticed.

Many people have commented on last Sunday's sermon. And everybody loves Sloty. We'll have t-shirts made at the end of the week. But there really was a big problem with last week's sermon.

[4 : 08] Now, no one's confronted me yet. But I figure let's just go ahead and get it out in the open. But I'd like to do that by kind of reviewing with you what we talked about last week.

So that hopefully it becomes more evident if you didn't notice yet. And so, if you remember, if you were with us. We talked about the fact that there are a lot of things in our lives.

Things that are not necessarily sinful. But that subtly, that easily can move in our lives to a place that they become idols.

And we become, almost without realizing it, at a place where we're loving the world. And that those idols are stealing away our love for the Father.

And we also talked about three truths that John gives us in 1 John 2, verses 12-14.

[5 : 13] That are truths that should enable us not only to love the brothers that we talked about. But also enable us to fight against these idols in our life. To turn away from them.

And turn away from loving the world. And enable us to love the Father as we're called to do. And if you remember, those three truths were summarized like this.

One, through Jesus, your sins have been forgiven. And you've been adopted into God's family. Number two, you are intimately aware of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

And number three, you've experienced the power of the abiding word giving you strength and victory over the evil one in your own life. Now really, if you stop to think through that a little bit, that really is a good summary of the gospel, isn't it?

That we see our sin and we come to understand how Jesus has saved us, forgiven us from those sins, and placed us into right relationship with God.

[6 : 17] And then through faith, we put our faith in all that Jesus has done on our behalf. His life, His death, His resurrection. And then we live each day under the lordship of Christ.

Right? Seeing Him continue to work out our salvation in our lives. So really, those three points are a very good summary of the gospel. But in light of that, we talked about how those truths are powerful, yet so often our emotional response to those things is sadly inadequate.

We fail to have an appropriate emotional response. Which, considering the strength of those truths, anything less than maybe ecstasy or something more is what would be appropriate.

But yet, we seldom see that in our lives. And I talked about three reasons why those truths may not be having its full effect, if you remember.

The first was, maybe we don't know Christ. And we talked about the fact that if we don't have a relationship with Jesus, then of course there's no emotional response to those truths.

[7 : 34] And just as I did last week, I'll just invite you, if any of you here are not sure that you have a relationship with Jesus, if you have never seen the depth of your sin, and found hope through what Christ has done, and have been reconciled to God through him, then don't leave today.

Today is the day of salvation. Don't leave. Talk to somebody, whether it's myself or Pastor Andrew, or any of the people around you, that we can make sure that you leave here in a relationship with Christ.

The second possibility is why these truths don't touch us as deeply as they should, was that we're not aware of our sinfulness.

That we are not conscious of how deep our sin problem is. And you remember I said sometimes we tend to think that we're sinners because we sin.

It's about certain behaviors. It's about being impatient when we're driving. Or it's about having that second look at an attractive woman. And that that's what makes us sinners, but that that's incorrect.

[8 : 39] That we sin because we're sinners. That from the time of conception, we come out as God-haters. But if we don't see that, if we don't see the depth of our sin, then maybe we won't respond to those truths.

And the third one was that our love for the world, or our love for our idols impacts us such that we're not responsive to the truth of the gospel.

Now, did you see it? Did you see the problem? You see, the problem is this. Okay? We have an idol problem.

The gospel is the cure. But loving idols keeps the gospel from having its full effect in our lives. So we have an idol problem.

We're kind of going in a circle, aren't we? If the gospel is supposed to be the cure, then how are we stuck in this idol cycle? That's what I termed it in my own mind.

[9 : 47] You know? Why are we stuck in this idol cycle? Idol problem. Gospel is a cure. Loving idols keeps us from having the full effect of the gospel, so we have an idol problem. So how do we break out of this?

If the gospel is supposed to be the cure, then what is it that we need to boost the effectiveness of the cure so that it's working in our lives?

Well, if you look at 1 John 2, verse 14, the end of that verse, I think we find the answer to that question.

1 John 2, verse 14. You can turn there if you want, but it's very quick. It goes like this. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

You see, we see an emphasis here. If you remember, John's repeating himself, and if you see that there's an emphasis here on the abiding word, that the abiding word brings about victory over the evil one.

[10 : 53] And now, if you would, turn to 2 Timothy. This will be a passage that you're very familiar with as well. 2 Timothy 3, verses 14, starting in verse 14 through 17.

2 Timothy 3, verses 14 and following says, But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.

And the part that is most familiar, all scriptures breathed out by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Now, what I'd point out to you is in verse 14, where Paul says to Timothy, to continue in what you've learned, that that's really the same Greek word that John has translated as abide.

Abide. And so, in John, we see that the word abides in us, and in Timothy here, we see Paul calling Timothy to abide in the truth.

[12 : 15] So, the word should abide in us, and we should abide in the word. And that is the way we break the idol cycle. Abiding in the word.

That's the answer you've been waiting for. Abide in the word. The abiding word boosts the effect of the gospel in our lives to empower us to turn away from loving our idols.

So, there's the problem. There's the answer. Abide in the word. Everybody say that with me. Abide in the word. That was really unimpressive. Let's say it like this. Abide in the word.

Abide in the word. It is better. Now, some of you may be thinking, look, bucko, I'm doing my devotions every morning.

At least most mornings. I'm at church every time the doors are open. And you know that if the doors are open at Maranatha, somebody's teaching the Bible. Right?

[13 : 16] I'm going to small group. We're studying the Bible. I'm even memorizing scripture. How much more abiding do you want me to do? And yet, I'm still struggling with loving the world and these idols in my life.

First, the encouraging word. I want to encourage you. Everything that you are doing to get God's word into your life is fruitful and not in vain.

Reading. However, I think we could all agree reading is not abiding.

Right? I mean, how often, I won't ask any students to show raising of hands, how often have you read a page in a book or maybe a chapter in a book and then you go, huh, what did I just read?

Okay. Reading is not abiding. I think we could also agree hearing is not abiding. Right? I mean, the reality is some of you have already forgotten how this sermon started.

[14 : 26] Okay? Hearing is not abiding. And I'm going to go so far as to say memorizing is not abiding.

Again, if we were to take a poll of some students, especially at this time of year, right? Exams. Some of you have finished exams. Some of you have exams yet to do. You know how it is.

You memorized all that stuff and you took that exam and Lord willing, you did well. But if we ask you a week later, a month later, how much of that material do you remember?

You see, memorizing is not abiding. So then the question is, how do we abide? What is abiding?

How do we let the word abide in us and us abide in the word? The Puritan, Richard Baxter, wrote this.

[15 : 23] Why so much preaching is lost among us and believers can run from sermon to sermon and are never weary of hearing or reading and yet have such languishing, starved souls.

I know no truer or greater cause than their ignorance and unconscionable neglect of meditation. You see, some hearers have anorexia for they have neither appetite nor digestion.

But others have bulimia. They have appetite but no digestion. So did you hear the answer for abiding? It's where he talks about our neglect of meditation.

Meditation. Practically speaking, the most effective way to abide in the word and to see your heart change toward your idols is through meditating on God's word. And yet, meditation is the most often overlooked tool for truly abiding in the word.

Now, I'm sure the majority of you know meditation is in the Bible but let's turn to Psalm 119. Psalm 119. This is a place we can see multiple verses quickly without having to flip all over.

[16 : 53] Psalm 119. We'll start with verse 15. Psalm 119 starting with verse 15. It reads, I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.

Look down to verse 27. Make me understand the way of your precepts and I will meditate on your wondrous works. Look down a little further.

verse 48. I will lift up my hands towards your commandments which I love and I will meditate on your statutes. A little bit further.

Verse 97. Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all the day. And finally, verse 148.

148. My eyes are awake before the watches of the night that I may meditate on your promise. You see, the Bible is full of passages on meditation.

[18 : 09] We see it given to us in examples from people like Melchizedek, Isaac, Moses, Joshua, David, Mary, Paul, Timothy. And so, throughout Scripture we can find the practice of meditation and yet so often it's still neglected.

Now, I guess I should be clear because of the nature of things at this time in history. When we talk about Christian meditation, we're not talking about Eastern meditation.

Okay? Eastern meditation, you know, more popular in my lifetime where you go and you empty your mind and, you know, llama, llama, llama, you know.

That's not what we're talking about in Christian meditation. As a matter of fact, Christian meditation is the exact opposite. It's not the emptying of your mind, but it's the filling of your mind with truth and with Scripture.

So when I talk about Christian meditation, here's the definition that I wrote down. The intentional focused thought on a specific truth of God's Word and its practical implications for your life.

[19 : 23] The intentional focused thought on a specific truth of God's Word and its practical implications for your life. Puritan Edmund Calammy said it this way, a true meditation is when a man does so meditate on Christ as to get his heart inflamed with the love of Christ.

He so meditates on the truths of God as to be transformed into them. And he so meditates on sin as to get his heart to hate sin.

Calammy went on to say that to do good meditation must enter three doors. Three doors. The door of understanding, the door of the heart or affections, and the door of practical living.

He said, you must so meditate on God as to walk as God walks, and so meditate on Christ as to prize him and to live in obedience to him.

So if you want to let loose the bazooka on the idols in your life, meditation is the answer. Meditation is the answer.

[20 : 39] And there are two types that I want us to look at. Two types of meditation. The first is occasional meditation.

Occasional meditation. The second is deliberate. So occasional and deliberate meditation. First, occasional meditation.

Occasional meditation takes what we encounter or observe through our senses and uses it to turn our hearts and minds to the things of God.

Now, we see that in Scripture. David does that with the moon and the stars in Psalm 8. We see Solomon do the same thing in Proverbs 6 with the ants.

We even see Christ doing that where he talks about well water in John chapter 4. It's this awareness of everything around us and all of these things, these gifts point in our heart towards the things of God.

[21 : 47] Now, the truth is, that's the design of every good and perfect gift that comes from above. Right? I mean, every meal should remind us of the banquet that lays for us in heaven and what Christ has done to give us access to that.

You know, every beggar that we see could remind us of our spiritual poverty, our need for grace and how God has met us there. Every kind act that happens in our life reminding us of the gracious kindness of God in Christ.

Whether it's the creation itself, whether it's sunrise, sunset, whether it's the mountains or butterflies or trees or grass, even the smallest thing, all of these things cause us to point our hearts and minds towards the glories and the truths of God.

The reality is, isn't that the goal of every stuffed animal ever given? Right?

You know, Brenda gave me slowly to remind me of her love and to in turn stir my heart towards love for her. And so the Puritans talked about occasional meditation as being the easiest form of meditation.

[23 : 18] It didn't happen any time, any place, with anybody. And they actually wrote books. I mean, there are books with hundreds of examples of occasional meditation that they wrote for their people because, as you can imagine, Puritans were busy.

They didn't have, you know, TV dinners and stuff. And so, you know, they were busy people and the pastors at that time would give them these examples so that even whether they were working in the fields, when they were walking from town to town, whatever the case may be, they were able to see the things around them.

And they were able to use those things to enter into meditation and worship of God. Now, I'm not implying because it's easier that it's easy.

I can honestly tell you that this week, having studied this some, I thought, okay, I'm going to give myself to more occasional meditation.

And so, even, we were driving, we went down to my daughter's graduation, driving there, driving back, and I was like, God, okay, you know, trees, trees are green, green's about growing, you know, we grow in Christ, and oh, look, a squirrel.

[24 : 41] You know, honestly, I really had a hard time, like, getting through a thought, I would just get to the point where I thought, okay, I'm getting to some deep spiritual truth, and then I'd be like, hey, don't pull in front of me, you know, and so, I'm not implying occasional meditation is easy, it's just easier, but it still takes intentional commitment, right, it takes an intentional commitment for us to be looking for the things around us that can stir our hearts and minds to worship.

not only that, but it also takes knowing God's word. You see, the more we know God's word, the more connections there are between us and what we experience, whether it's what we see or what we hear, whether it's interaction with people, whether it's interaction with nature, so it takes knowing God's word so that those connections can happen, and it also takes the discipline of pausing.

You know, we're so busy, right? We're so busy, that's later, we'll talk about that, but you know, it's so hectic, and we always have some place to be, and usually we're late, and we have more to do than we have time to do it, and even just the discipline of pausing our thoughts to think on the things of God takes intentional commitment and effort.

And so, occasional meditation, it's not easy, but it's easier. So, the second type of meditation, deliberate meditation. Now, the Puritans consider deliberate meditation the more important of the two, the more essential of the two.

Deliberate meditation is intentionally setting aside time and space in your life each day to focus and reflect on the things of God. Deliberate meditation is intentionally setting aside time and space in your life each day to focus and reflect on the things of God.

[26 : 46] Thomas White said, deliberate meditation draws from four sources, scripture, practical Christian truths, providential experiences, and sermons.

Sermons in particular are fertile fields for meditation. Moore wrote, James Usher, I like this one.

James Usher said it this way, one hour spent in meditation is worth more than a thousand sermons. And this is not debasing of the word, but an honor unto it.

You see, so often we are inclined for things to be so transitional even in our hearts and minds, right?

You know, so far I did get a lot of comments on last week's message. All of them centered around Sloty. Everybody loves Sloty, okay? But the truth is how often do the things that we read, the things that we hear, the things that we are engaged with even in God's word in Bible study.

[28 : 00] They pass through our hands, our minds, we're leaking pots. And so the discipline of deliberate meditation is catching a space to take those things and absorb them in.

Now I have ten tips for you on meditation. Ten tips. And all of these quotes on Puritans and meditation are primarily from two books.

Let me give credit where credit is due. One is Puritan theology, a doctrine of life by Dr. Joel Beeky. And the other is God's battle plan for the mind, the Puritan practice of biblical meditation by David Saxton.

So if you would like to know more, I would highly recommend both sources. So ten tips on deliberate meditation. Number one, meditation must be frequent and consistent.

frequent and consistent. You see, the Puritans said ideally twice a day. Meditation should happen at least twice a day.

[29 : 08] Okay. It can happen at least once a day, but ideally twice a day if time permits. Now, they also said though, that if you wait too long between meditations, times of meditation, meditating times, if you wait too long between your times of meditation, the effect of those times is greatly lessened.

Actually, compared it to a bird and her eggs. If the bird is too long apart from the nest, then the eggs eventually die. So not only does it need to be something that's frequent, but it's consistent.

Something that's happened regularly. And their recommendation is to pick a good time, preferably your best time, when you're at your peak mentally, and when there's the least amount of distraction.

Okay. Second, find a place that is quiet and free from interruption. Find a place for meditation that is quiet and free from interruption.

Now, I know some of you are probably at a point in life that I do remember where you're thinking, have you seen my family? There are no places of quiet that are free from interruption.

[30 : 27] And to that, I just want to give you an example that I'm sure you've probably heard before. But Susanna Wesley, you know Susanna Wesley, right? She was the mother of John and Charles Wesley.

They're more famous. They had 19 children. I don't think anybody here has 19 children. And Susanna Wesley was committed to her time with God, and so twice a day, she would put her apron over her head.

And her children were taught if her apron was over her head, it was not the time to interrupt mom. I'm sure there was a great deal of chastisement to make that happen.

But again, finding the place for quiet and uninterrupted meditation may take some creativity, but it's essential to have time to reflect.

reflect. Number three, begin by asking the Holy Spirit for strength and perseverance to focus your mind. Again, Edmund Calamey wrote, I would have you pray unto God to enlighten your understanding, to bring life to your devotion, to warm your affections, and so bless that hour that by meditation of holy things you would be made more holy, that you would have your lusts more crucified, and your graces more increased, that you may have more death to the world and the vanity of it, and more life to heaven and to things of heaven.

- [31 : 58] The reality is like all spiritual disciplines, you cannot be successful in meditation on your own. So start with the Holy Spirit, humbly seeking his strength.

Number four, read the scriptures. Read the scriptures. Again, the whole point of meditation is abiding in the word, so you need to get into the word, and let the word get into you.

Find a verse or a doctrine upon which to meditate. And the Puritans would recommend you start easy, maybe on an attribute of God, or on Christ's character.

Don't start with things like the Trinity that are a little more challenging. They say start easy and work up. Consider one subject at a time. Focus in on one truth.

Also, find truths that are applicable to your present situation. Here's some examples. If you feel separated from God by your sin, meditate on Christ's willingness to forgive sinners and receive everyone who would come to him.

- [33 : 05] Or if you're struggling financially, meditate on God's wonderful provision for those who are in need. If you're facing physical pain or struggles, meditate on God giving strength to the weak or healing to the sick.

You know, find areas that are applicable to where you are. You don't have to start with, you know, the eminence of God. Start with the things that are already on your mind and bring Scripture to bear on them.

And then work on choosing that verse or that topic and committing it to memory. So find it in Scripture and put it into your mind so that you can continue to chew on it.

Number five, use your memory to focus on all that Scripture has to say about your subject. Consider past sermons and other things you've heard or read.

Another example from Edmund Calamey. He said, If you would meditate on the subject of sin, begin with the description of sin. Proceed to the extent and the spread of sin.

- [34 : 09] Consider the original cause of sin and the effects of sin. Consider the property of sin in general and of your personal sin in particular. Consider the opposite of sin, grace.

Think about metaphors for sin or the titles given to sin and all that Scripture says concerning sin. So, after you've gotten into God's Word and gotten God's Word into you, the goal is to focus in and allow the Holy Spirit to bring to remembrance all that you may have heard, all that you have read, Christian books.

Now, as I was working on this, I'm going to give you just a little piece of information from personal experience. Okay? If you're like me, you probably have a computer.

Okay? And you may do your Bible study on computer or on the Internet. There's all kinds of stuff on the Internet. And when I got to this point, originally, I was there with all of my software to help me study something and meditate on it deeply.

And the time quickly went and technological issues. You know, trying to find this and then that and then, oh, look, I found this feature. And, you know, it was kind of like the squirrel of the occasional meditation.

- [35 : 27] And so, what I would say and what I would challenge you to is truly seek to use your memory and to allow the Holy Spirit to bring to remembrance the things on the topic you're meditating.

You know, if you want to study a topic, do that. But understand that studying is not meditating either. Okay? So, use your memory.

Focus in on it. Don't be distracted by other things. Number six. Stir up your affections. Stir up your affections. Such as love, desire, hope, courage, gratitude, zeal, and joy to glorify God.

Preach the truth to yourself. Preach the truth to yourself. That's something that we say often in our household. Preach the truth to yourself.

I actually got that from Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. And it's the point where not only are you taking these truths in, but the goal is for there to be an emotional response.

[36 : 31] You see, that's the breakdown that we talked about previously. How the truth can be there, but it becomes almost so common that we don't care anymore. And so, in your meditation, the goal is to get that truth to the point where you have an emotional response to it.

If you're thinking on the blood of Christ, you should respond to that emotionally. If you're thinking about God's almighty power in creation, that should move your heart.

Now, I accept that we run at different levels of emotional being-hood. Okay. I know that, you know, I tend to be on the emotional end of things, and I'm like, oh, a butterfly.

Oh, thank you, Jesus. That butterfly is great. And some people are not that way. Okay. So, I'm not giving you a range. You don't have to be moved to weeping every time.

But in meditating, the goal is for the truth to move your heart. Okay. So, stir up your affections. Number seven, consider how the things meditated upon should impact how you live.

[37 : 40] What are the practical applications of these truths? Again, follow Edmund Calamee's advice. He said, if you ever would get good by the practice of meditation, you must come down to particulars.

And you must so meditate of Christ as to apply Christ to your soul. And so meditate of heaven as to apply heaven to your soul. Live out your meditation.

He said meditation and practice should be like two sisters walking hand in hand. This isn't theoretical. You're not trying to decide how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

Okay. It's the truth of God's word moving your emotions but bringing you to a different way of living. How does this live itself out in your life? And number eight, take those applications and turn them into resolutions.

Turn them into resolutions. He said, let your resolution be firm and strong, not mere wishes, but resolved purposes and determinations.

[38 : 49] So after your time in meditation, when you've reached the point where God's word has saturated you, you've had an emotional response, you've seen a place where this should be lived out in your life, write it down.

Jonathan Edwards had a lot of resolutions. We can't talk about all those. But it's a great practice to write it down. Okay. Today I will do this because of your truth.

And not only write it down, but share that with people, the people who are in your life that can hold you accountable, that can be praying for you. Share your resolutions. Number nine, conclude with prayer, thanksgiving, and psalm singing.

Prayer, thanksgiving, and psalm singing. Watson, another Puritan, said, pray over your meditations. Prayer sanctifies everything.

Without prayer, they're but unhallowed meditations. Prayer fastens meditation upon the soul. Prayer is tying a knot at the end of meditation so it doesn't slip from you.

[39 : 53] Pray that God will keep those holy meditations in your mind forever, and that you will savor them, and that the savoring of them will abide upon your hearts. So as you come to an end, just as you started in prayer, end in prayer.

Asking God to keep those in your mind because you can't do it. We leak. Ask for help. Number ten, finally, don't shift too quickly from meditation to engagement with the things of this world.

Don't shift too quickly from meditation to engagement with things of this world. It's kind of like when you've had a great meal and you just want to keep that flavor in your mouth, you know, that you ended on, you're like, that was so good.

I never want to eat anything again. You know, and so in our time of meditation, you know, we can have these great experiences, and if you go from that into a meeting where you're going to be arguing with people, you know, it's like, oh, God, you're so great.

Oh, I want to kill these people. Okay? So, you know, don't be too quick to the things of the world. Savor the moments.

[41 : 08] Take a little time. Walk slowly out of the room from the time of meditation. Again, a quote for you.

It says, Meditating is like trying to build a fire from wet wood. Those who persevere will produce a flame.

When we begin to meditate, we may first garner only a bit of smoke, then perhaps a few sparks, but at last there is a flame of holy affection that goes up towards God.

And the Puritans would encourage you, don't give up until there's flame. But they would also acknowledge that sometimes there's just no flame. And there are days when you just have to go, God, you know, I'm sorry.

I know that I should be focused on your word, but today I just, it's just not happening. And you start again tomorrow. Okay?

[42 : 10] Now, I know you might be inclined to think this is too simple of an answer for the problem that you have.

Whatever problem it is, whatever idol it is, whatever struggle you're facing in your life, that sitting for some amount of time, twice a day, thinking about God's word is going to change your life. Okay? I could understand that you might be hesitant in that.

But by the hand of providence, actually, when I was meeting with Faith and Molly this week, we were talking about a passage of scripture that they didn't know at the time that God was saying, hey, this is really what you need for your sermon.

So, 2 Kings chapter 5. 2 Kings chapter 5. You can turn there. You don't have to. It might be familiar to you. It's a story about Naaman going up to see Elisha because he had leprosy.

And so he found out there's a prophet. He went to the prophet Elisha and wanted to be healed. Okay? 2 Kings chapter 5. We'll start in verse 9. It says, So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.

[43 : 25] Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you, and you will be clean. But Naaman was furious, and he 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 wave his hand over the place and cure the leprosy.

Are not Abana and Farah 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.

Verse 13. Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then when he says, You wash and be clean?

And 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. And so the point is this.

If you look at your life and the things that you're struggling with, the things you have struggled with, the things that you've been struggling with for some time, isn't it worth giving meditation on God's word a shot?

[44 : 42] If it was a bigger formula, if it was more impressive, maybe you'd be inclined to do it. But why not set aside time each day to focus and practice the discipline of meditation so that we can be faithful to 1 John 2.

Again, 15 through 17. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes and pride of life is not from the Father, but is from the world.

And the world is passing away along with its desires. But whoever does the will of God abides forever. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we come to you and we confess the sad way that we deal with your word so often.

Father, we are creatures of our culture and our time. The sinfulness of our heart inclines us to want quick moments with you just like fast food.

We want everything to be resolved with you in 20 minutes like a sitcom. And Father, we confess that in that, so often we neglect setting aside time to dwell in your presence, to abide in your word, and allow your word to abide in us.

[46 : 14] Lord, I pray that you would give us a willingness, a commitment, a desire to be with you, to be intimate with you, to know you, to know your heart, and to be like your son.

Father, let this be a tool that is used according to your word to make us like Christ, that we would be filled with love for the Father and not love for the world.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. This morning, if you would like to come forward for prayer or if you would like to come forward to join the church or if there's anything else you'd like to come forward to, please feel free to do that.