

Naaman

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[0 : 00] Psalm 96a.

O sing a new song to the Lord, sing praises to his name, and his salvation day by day let all the earth proclaim. His glory and his mighty deeds to every land declare.

How great and awesome is the Lord with him, no gods compare. For other gods are wood and stone, the Lord made heaven's height. All power and majesty are his, he dwells in glorious light. All nations to the Lord ascribe the glory that is due. Glory and strength ascribe to God and praise his name anew. We sing these verses, Psalm 96a, verses 1 to 8.

O sing a new song to the Lord. O sing a new song to the Lord.

[1 : 14] Sing praises to his name, and his salvation day by day.

Let all the earth proclaim. His glory and his mighty deeds to every land declare.

How great and awesome is the Lord.

With him no gods compare. For other gods are wood and stone, the Lord made heaven's height. All power and majesty are his, he dwells in glorious light.

[2 : 56] All nations to the Lord ascribe the glory that is due.

Glory and strength ascribe to God and praise his name anew.

Let's bow in prayer. Lord, our gracious God, as we bow before you this morning again, we give thanks that we're able to sing to you.

And we're able to sing a song that comes from our heart. We pray that it might not be just from our lips. It's easy enough for us to sing the song, but the song has to have meaning and it has to come with feeling and it has to come with emotion and understanding and to be part of ourselves as we engage with you.

And so we give thanks for your word. What a wonderful way that we have of engaging with you when we're able to bring the word which you have given to us, the word that you have revealed so much of yourself in, and that we're able to sing back to you and to praise you and to glorify your great and holy name.

[4 : 28] Lord, we give thanks that you are a majestic God. You are the God who counts the number of the stars and you name them one by one. And yet you're the same God who is in the passion of your Son as they're all near to us.

And you reach down to us in our weakness, in our pains, in our sorrows, in our difficulties. And you walk with us and you engage with us and you understand us in a way that nobody else understands.

And so we marvel at this amazing God who is the creator and the sustainer of this vast universe, but is also the one who upholds and sustains our lives.

And the God who has marked the number of days that we live. And there will come a time, an appointed time, when we will leave this world, just as there is an appointed time for judgment afterwards.

We pray then that you will bless us today and that we will hear your voice. It's the most wonderful thing where we can gather together and to hear what God the Lord will speak, knowing that to his folk he speaks peace.

[5 : 44] This is a world that craves peace. It's a great desire, the great longing in people's lives that they might have peace. There's so much anxiety, so much fear, so much uncertainty and trepidation.

So much depression. So many people are just not sure what's happening and what life really is all about. But we give thanks, Lord, that you have shown to us that you are the prince of peace and that you are the way, the truth and the life.

We pray then, Lord, that we may fix our eyes upon you. And like Peter on the waves that we might walk looking at you. Help us not to be like Peter who began to look at the waves and he hear the roar of the wind and the surge of the sea.

And when he did so, he began to sink. We will sink too when we take our eyes off you. So help us, Lord, to keep our eyes fixed upon you.

We pray, Lord, that you will help us as we journey through this week. Every day is uncertain. And we have our plans and we maybe have appointments in our diaries. And we think because of how last week went that this week will maybe follow a similar pattern.

[7 : 00] But we don't know. And there are always the unexpected. And so we ask, Lord, that you will prepare us for this week and for all that it brings, for all its opportunities, but also for its disappointments, for its joys, but also for its trials.

And we pray that we may discover the sufficiency of your grace in every situation, knowing that that grace is sufficient for us. Pray, Lord, for those who are ill at this time, those who are laid aside.

We pray for those who are experiencing great pain in body, those who are undergoing treatment or surgery. May be those, Lord, who have reached a stage where there's nothing more that can be done for them in life.

Lord, may you draw close to them and grant them your peace. We pray for any in that condition who still don't know you. We pray that you will reveal yourself to them as a great Savior.

Pray for those who are in darkness of mind, those who are struggling through the oppression, depressions that can be so much part and partial of our makeup and nature.

[8 : 15] We pray, Lord, that you will lift them up and that you'll be gracious to them. Lord, we pray for those who mourn, those whose hearts are broken through the loss of loved ones.

There's been so many deaths of late, so many who have broken hearts right now. Lord, those who miss the empty place and miss the voice and miss the presence of people who are so special to them.

We ask, Lord, that you will grant them your grace and upholding and keeping. Pray for our young people as they're back to Sunday school. We pray for our young. We pray for the creche, the tweenies.

We pray, Lord, for the Sunday school and the youth fellowship. We pray for all the work that goes on. We give thanks, Lord, for those who give so much of their time and energy and their commitment week in, week out.

We give thanks, O Lord, for all the people who work so selflessly behind the scenes and do so much. Lord, we pray for those who struggle with all the addictions in life.

[9 : 22] And we give thanks, Lord, for all the work that is done, often at a great personal cost. We remember David Chisholm and the work of Road to Recovery. And we realize that that is so often a hidden work and a painful work, very often a disappointing work.

And so we pray for encouragement. We pray, Lord, that some of those who are seriously struggling and genuinely want to get out of the dark place that they're in, that you will break the chains that hold them down and that they will discover a new liberty and freedom in yourself.

And that they'll be kept from going back. And they'll be kept looking forward, looking to you at every turn and every step. We pray to bless all our office bearers and all who have the authority and the rule within our congregation.

And ask, Lord, that you will bless them. We ask, Lord, that you will watch over each and every one of us. Bless us nationally and internationally. Lord, we need you at this time. So often as we look around, we see a world that seems to be folding up in many ways.

Every news bulletin every week seems to bring something maybe that's almost a little more depressing. And people often wonder what's going to happen.

[10 : 41] What does the future hold? Well, we don't know. But we know that you know. And so we commit ourselves to you and ask, Lord, that you'll grant us the grace to live with you and to live before you.

And we pray, Lord, that you'll grant grace to our leaders. Help them to look to you. Lord, as long as they look only to themselves, we will reel and stagger like those drunk. But we pray that our leaders will begin to look heavenward and look to the God of heaven and earth.

Bless us then, we pray, and do us good. And bless your word now to us, we pray. And take away from us our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen. Before we read, just a wee word to

the young folk.

One day, a while back, I was in the toy shop with Joshua. And I can't even remember what it was. It wasn't much I was getting. And of course, for every young child, a toy shop is just the greatest thing in the world.

But whatever it was I was getting, he came over to the counter with this massive lorry. It was almost like this.

[12:00] And he was trying to give it to me. And he says, I need this. It's not I would like it. But I need this. I said to him, no, you do not need this.

Oh, I do need it. So I took it. And I went back. And I put it where it was. And I knew that at that particular moment, he really thought he needed it.

But I knew that in a while, eventually, he would get fed up with it. And he would be playing with something else. At that moment, he really thought he needed that.

And you know, that's very much like ourselves. Because there's a great version of the Bible that tells us that the Lord will supply all our needs. And there's a huge difference between what we think we need and what the Lord knows we need.

Because many of the things that we really think we need, we don't really need them. But the things that we really need, the Lord has promised that he will provide for us.

[13:07] And it's important for us to ask the Lord, Lord, show me every day the things that I really need. Because this world holds out so many things that I think I need.

But there's lots of them actually I don't. Help me to see the real things. The things that I really need. And Lord, provide them. Give them as you have said that you will.

And you know, that's a great and wonderful thing. That Jesus has promised to provide for us. All the things that we need. Isn't that wonderful?

What a Savior we have. Let's say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[14:08] For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Let's read God's word now in 2 Kings. 2 Kings chapter 5.

2 Kings chapter 5.

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 their 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.

[15:21] 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. 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 clothes. 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.

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.

[16:42] And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored, and you shall be clean. But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.

Are not Albana and Farfur, 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.

But his servants came near and said to him, My father, there's 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 he said, Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. So accept now a present from your servant.

[18 : 01] 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. Then Naaman said, If not, 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. 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 that, Elisha said to him, Go in peace. Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. Let's go back to the beginning.

Verse 1. 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.

[19 : 16] He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. The Bible has a way of introducing people very suddenly to us with a minimum of fuss, with a minimum of description.

A classic example of it is Elijah. It tells us, for instance, about Elijah. Elijah, Elijah the Tishbite of the tribe of Gilead said to Ahab, As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives before whom I stand.

That's it. That's all we're told about Elijah. That he was a Tishbite of Gilead, and that he stood before the Lord.

In other words, he was a servant of the Lord. He stood in the presence of the Lord, and he was ready to do whatever God commanded him to do. That's what he was about. And the Bible is a way of just introducing us to people like that with just the bare minimum, but it gives us sufficient to know about the passion.

And here in this chapter, we have a kind of a similar thing where we have this man, Naaman. And in this one verse, an awful lot has told us about him.

[20 : 38] And from all accounts, he was quite a remarkable man. He was a national hero. He was a great favorite of the king. He was a great military general. He was somebody who was incredibly popular, no doubt about it, a great fighter.

And we're told, in fact, in the AV, he's described as an honorable man. So he was a very, along with all the other things, he was obviously a very decent human being.

And he was obviously the kind of person who was loyal and trustworthy and all these sort of things. But at another level, he was a tragic case because he was a leper.

And although many people, I'm sure, envied Naaman, they would have no doubt envied his lifestyle, envied his popularity, envied his fame, envied his wealth.

I don't think anybody actually would have changed places with him. Even the slave in full health, I don't think, would change places with somebody who was a serious leper.

[21 : 49] And it's one of the things, really, that we find that here, I suppose it says an awful lot about ourselves.

Because when you read this verse, it tells us all the great things about Naaman. Naaman. He was a commander, right, of the army. He was a great man with his master.

In other words, the king trusted him completely. He was so loyal. He was in high favor. He was a man of immense popularity and of great importance.

And God had actually used him in giving victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor. He was so courageous. He was filled with heroism.

But then it says, but he was a leper. And you know, I think it says an awful lot about ourselves as well. Because see that last little phrase there, but he was a leper.

[22 : 50] There's something about our sinful nature and makeup that hangs on to that. If you say to anybody, you ask somebody, right, tell me something about Naaman. Naaman, you probably wouldn't automatically begin to say, oh, he was a fantastic fighter.

He was somebody who was incredibly trustworthy and loyal. He was a great hero. No, automatically you would say, Naaman was a leper. See, that's kind of the negative thing about him.

And you know, unfortunately, that's kind of the way that we often think in life about people. You think of David. David was, as you know, who else has been termed a man after God's own heart? That's who God termed David. And when you think of all the wonderful psalms that we have given to sing, and when we study the incredible godly life of David, and yet you talk about David automatically, yes, you think of David killing Goliath, but there's the but.

He was an adulterer and a murderer. People's minds so often go to that. Talk of Simon Peter. And Peter did so many wonderful things.

[24 : 14] He made wonderful testimonies about Jesus Christ. You are the Christ. You are. Remember when Jesus was asking, who do people say that I am?

Peter gave the most amazing testimony as to who Jesus was. And yet often when we think of Peter, yes, we might think of him walking on the water, but very often our minds go to Peter denying Jesus.

So there's this about us that links in, know your name on the leper, David the adulterer, Peter the denier. See, this is so often the way that we think, and I believe that that's part of the legacy of sin. Because it really, when you think about it, it shouldn't be the way that we think. Because we ought to be thinking, when somebody has brought so much into life, we ought not to be thinking about maybe the one or two negatives in their life.

But that's what we tend to do. We major in on the sin in other people's lives. And another thing that we can often do is that we can look at people's lives from the outside.

[25 : 23] And we can often imagine and say to ourselves, you know this, they've got great life. We look at, from our, from the outside, as we look at them, their lives seem to be going really well.

They've got a nice house, they've got a nice car, they've got a nice family, they've got a nice job, they've got everything. And we say, well, you know, everything's going so well. We don't know. We have no idea what actually is going on in a person's life.

Because many people whose lives from the outside seem to be going very well. They have all kinds of issues and all kinds of problems and all kinds of difficulties.

And, you know, we just don't know. So it's one of the, one of the things that we should, we ought to be careful about. Because just what we're saying here is, from an outside perspective, taking away Naaman's leprosy, looking at his life, you would say, whoa, there's a man who's got it all.

And at the end of the day, he's a man who's got actually nothing. And there's, as I say, people might have envied his lifestyle, his fame, his popularity, his wealth, and all these things. But nobody at the end of the day, when push comes to shove, would have changed places with him.

[26 : 43] Because of his disease, his leprosy. And, you know, in a sense that the world is full of promises. The world holds out so many things to us.

To enrich our lives, to make life exciting and thrilling, and to bring and make life what it should be for us. But, you know, at the end of the day, the world doesn't hold out one thing for us.

When we face the crisis, when we face the bereavements, when we face the crosses and the losses, and when we come to face death itself, the world doesn't have anything.

Everything that the world ever gives it, it just takes back again. That's what the world does. It doesn't leave anything with us. And, you know, at the end of the day, the greatest discovery that we can possibly make is that the world has nothing for us, but that there is one who has, and that is the living and through God.

You know, when we make the spiritual discovery, and all of you in here today who are Christians, you came to that place where you made that spiritual discovery. And you came to realize that you were lost.

[28 : 04] And that if you died, that you were going to hell. And that discovery was one of the most frightening and painful discoveries you ever made. But side by side with that, you saw a place of help and hope and refuge, and that was in Jesus Christ.

And you went there. And it was life-changing. And, you know, it is the most awful thing for people not to know this, not to understand this.

But, you know, the thing is that leprosy, when we come back to this, leprosy, while it was a fearful scourge in biblical times, was also a picture of sin. And just as leprosy defiled it, it made the person ill, and it was an awful disease, but it also caused the person to be unclean.

And that's what sin does. Sin affects and stains our whole being, our affections, our will, our understanding, everything about us, everything that we do.

But, you know, at the end of the day, what we've got to realize is this, that there is only one who can condemn sin, and he does, that is God. But there is only one who can forgive sin and pardon sin, and that is God as well.

[29 : 26] And I would urge any of you here today who have never gone to the Lord, and maybe have never discovered just what your sin is. It's possible that you've sat under the gospel for years, and you've never really been touched in your heart or affected, or have any awareness or consciousness that as things are, you are not right with God, and you are under God's condemnation.

It might be hard to believe, because right now, maybe you're feeling quite good in yourself, and that's good. It's a good thing to feel good in yourself. But if you're not right with God at the end of the day, you're not in a good place.

So it's important that you will go to the Lord and say, Lord, show me. Please today show me how things really are. Show me the way of salvation.

Help me to see. And so we have here, when we come back to this picture here, we find that Naaman is this helpless leper, and he's also a helpless sinner in need of cleansing.

But all of a sudden, the picture changes and introduces us to this young little girl. girl. And Naaman, of course, and his wife had this servant girl helping in the house.

[30 : 43] And this girl, of course, was somebody who was a captive from the land of Israel, somebody who had been taken captive in a Syrian raid. And I can't begin to imagine how that little girl felt.

When you think, we have no idea what happened in that raid. Her parents may have been killed. Even if they weren't, she was torn away from them. And here she is in a foreign land with, as far as Israel were concerned, were the enemy.

And she's living in this house away from home, away from everything. And when you imagine, when you begin to imagine or try to imagine how it must have been like for her at the very beginning, the fear and the uncertainty, she'd be scared.

But she ended up, in God's providence, in this home, in Naaman's home. And I like to think, because of the way, the attitude of this little girl, away altogether from the fact that God obviously was in her heart, that I think it was a good home.

And I think that Naaman and Naaman's wife were good to her, because of just the way that she actually speaks to Naaman's wife. That I believe that even although she's a captive, that she landed, as it were, so to speak, even however difficult it was, she landed well in this home.

[32 : 09] But I believe that this little girl is showing that the grace of God, the God that she was taught in when she was a wee girl, that that faith, that belief has remained in her heart.

And you know, it is so important to teach your children when they're young. It's the best years of your life. It's the years when things go in. It's the easiest time to learn.

It's the easiest time to retain. See, when you get old, you can't retain. You can try and learn, but you can't retain it. When you're young, you do. It stays in.

And you remember things even now that you learned when you were wee. And this little girl, she had been taught in the ways of the Lord and she remembered. And she obviously, this is why I believe that the grace of God was so evident in this little girl's life because she says, she said, I wish she said, this is what she said to her mistress, I would that my Lord were with the prophet in Samaria and he would cure him.

Now, isn't that amazing? Here's this little girl who's been taken captive and is in a foreign land in service to a foreign power. And yet, she is telling how this man could be cured, how Naaman could be cured, that there was a prophet of God in Israel who could cure him.

[33 : 43] And that's why I say that God's grace is shining in this little girl's life because this is God's love. You see, what does love do? Love keeps no record of wrongs.

If she wasn't a believer, if she hadn't God's love in her heart, she wouldn't be talking like that. Do you know what she would be doing? If she wasn't a believer, she'd be rubbing her hands saying, oh, that's what they get.

She'd be gloating. She'd be happy. And as she would look at the sadness in the home, she would say, that's what they get for pinching me. But that's not the way she's thinking because love doesn't

keep a record of wrongs.

Love wants the best for everyone. And again, one of the beautiful things about this little girl is we see the loyalty of her faith. It's true faith.

You see, people can sometimes say, oh, I've got faith. But you know, we know that sometimes people start out, but then when things go wrong, when the testing time comes, what happens? [34 : 50] They go back. The truth or the reality of real faith is that it stands, it tests. And that was very true in this little girl's life because if her faith wasn't real, after all she has gone through, she would have said, what's the point in following God?

I was taught and brought up to believe in God and this is what I get. I get pinched from my home and thrown into another land, a foreign land, and here I am as a slave girl in a foreign land.

Is that what following God gets you? And she would turn back. But no, there's real grace.

It's like, remember, in the pilgrim's progress where the two were going in their way, obstinate and pliable, and they fall into the big bog, the big marsh. And obstinate, of course, well, obstinate didn't go with Christian, but pliable, when Christian began to talk to him about heaven and all the rest, pliable said, oh, I quite fancy signing up for this.

I'm with you, Christian. I'm joining with you on the way. And then they both fall into this great big marsh. And pliable pulls himself eventually out on the same side that he came in.

[36 : 12] Christian worked his way over to the other side and pliable went back to the city of destruction. That's what some people do. When the test and the trial comes, they can't take it and it proves that the reality of their faith isn't really real.

But let me tell you, my dear friends, and I know there's all of you in here, you've gone through testing times. There are times that your faith has been shattered and shaken and rocked and you've been tossed to and fro and the devil has whispered at you and he said, remember how it used to be before you became a Christian?

It's far easier, wasn't it? And he'll try and whisper to you. And his aim is to try and to get you to deny your faith and to go back. But true faith doesn't go back.

True faith keeps going despite all the trials and all the difficulties and all the setbacks. Well, again, one of the other things that we can see from this little girl is her consistency of being a Christian even when there's nobody about to see what she's like.

You know, it's all very well being a Christian on the Lord's Day when you're surrounded with other Christians. But when you're in a different place, when you're in another place, are you still acting like a Christian?

[37 : 33] It's a big test. Well, she comes through this with flying colors. Anyway, to cut a long story short, the king gives Naaman a letter. Naaman went to the king, told the king about what the little girl had said.

King writes a letter, sends Naaman with all his presence to the king of Israel. King of Israel gets a letter, reads it, and tears his clothes because he's thinking that he, the king, is expected to cure Naaman.

And he thinks, there's only one thing here, Syria wanting a fight. And of course, he's terrified because Syria had beaten Israel in the past. So, Elisha hears about this and Elisha sends for Naaman to come.

Now, the wonderful thing as we see as Naaman deals, as Elisha deals with Naaman, Elisha is determined to guard the glory of God. He doesn't want to get in the way.

And that's a great lesson for us. And that's why Elisha sent the servant out to tell Naaman what to do. Because, you know, sometimes when we do things for the Lord, we get in the way.

[38 : 48] Sometimes we want a wee bit of the glory ourselves. Sometimes we want that we, that we'll say, oh, I had a wee bit to play in that. I had a wee bit here and a wee bit there.

Elisha is so zealous for the glory of God that he's not even going to come out himself. He doesn't want that Naaman will go away thinking, oh, what a wonderful man Elisha is.

He wants that God will get all the glory and honor. What a lesson to us. Because sometimes we want just even a wee bit of the honor, a wee bit of the glory.

And God says, my glory I will give to none other. And that's where you see how Elisha, what a wonderful man of God he is. What a lesson, what a lesson to us all here.

Now, of course, Naaman, who is used to being a man of great honor and privilege, he was used to great fuss made about him. And he was expecting that Naaman would, that Elisha would come out

and he would perform all kinds of things and that he would give them utmost respect and I don't know what all he was expecting, but he was absolutely furious when he was told by the servant that all he had to do was to go and to wash in the Jordan seven times.

[40 : 08] And so he was furious. You see, Naaman thought he was something special. You know, part of the bottom line problem with this is that before God, we think sometimes we're something special as well.

We think God owes us. We think God will never put away the like of me. God won't banish me. It's me.

And we tend to, this is a self-righteousness within us that has to be broken. Well, Naaman was absolutely riddled with self-righteousness and he couldn't get over how he was treated here. And he was incensed. How dare that he do this? And you know, many people react the very same way under the gospel. There's a lot of people are incensed when they're told that they're sinners. Me? What do you mean I'm a sinner? How dare you tell me that I'm a sinner? Well, that's what the Bible says. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

[41 : 16] No exception to the rule. You've sinned and come short of the glory of God. So have I. That's how we are. And you know, that's one of the major reasons why people don't want Bibles and they don't want to know because it takes them right down off their self-righteous high horses and brings them right down to the dust before God.

And so Naaman, of course, as we say, he's saying, I'm not going to do what he says. The rivers, why go to the Jordan? The rivers at home are far better than the rivers of Jordan.

And you know, that's what so many people are like. With regard to the gospel, people say, well, I'll do it my way. I'm sure today in Stornoway or throughout Scotland or throughout Britain, there's lots of people, maybe they don't come to church, but they say, you know, it doesn't matter how, you come to God your own way.

I don't need to be told how to get right with God, no? Well, it's very interesting that Jesus tells us that there's only one way. I know we live in a day of diversity and a day of inclusiveness and all that kind of thing, but I'll tell you, that doesn't work in the gospel.

There is only one way. Jesus said, I am the way, and you'll remember that he uses a definite article. Jesus doesn't just say, I am a way.

[42 : 45] In other words, I am one of many ways. He says, I am the way, the only way. No one comes to the Father but through me. That's serious, that's solemn, and that's how it is.

So there is no other way to God, irrespective of what people might say and people may want to believe. God's way of salvation is a blow to human pride because we always want to take some credit.

We always want, imagine if we had a part to play in our salvation. Can you imagine the boasting? You'd be saying to you, do what I did. Can you imagine a testimony meeting? If it was down to us, one would be trying to outdo the other in what we did, but no, we've got nothing.

It's all of grace, it's all of God, that's the wonderful thing. And it's a blow to human wisdom as well because there are so many people today think that preaching is foolishness.

Many people will say to you, don't tell me you still believe the Bible? Oh, that's old, that's outdated. No, my friend, however the wise people may think about the foolishness of preaching, it is the God-appointed way of bringing us to himself.

[44 : 09] And anyway, just in conclusion, we see that Naaman was ready to go home in his anger, but the servant said to him, listen, come on, see reason, listen to a wee bit of logic.

Think of what the servant, Elisha's servant said. All he's asking you to do is to go and wash in the Jordan. And that's what eventually Naaman went and did.

And you know, at the end of the day, that's all God is asking you and me to do as well, is to believe. He's not asking us to do something amazing. He's not asking us to go on an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

He's not asking us to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. five times a year and then you become a Christian. He's not asking us to give a certain amount of money and put all these things together and you become a Christian.

Do you know the funny thing is, if God asked us to do that, there'd be loads of people doing it. Because it would mean that they were having a part to play. But it's of grace.

[45 : 11] And all we're required to do is to believe. And Naaman believed. he went into the Jordan a sinner. And he went into the Jordan a leper. And he came out of the Jordan not a leper.

And he came out of the Jordan believing. Completely believing in the Lord. Lord. What about you today? You've heard and you've seen of the Lord far more than Naaman ever did or ever saw.

And is it possible that you're still not believing? Well, it's time you did. It's the simplest thing in the world. I know you might be saying it's the hardest thing in the world.

But all you have to do is to believe. And you might say to yourself, but I can't. I want to. Well, there's only one who will help you to believe. And that's Jesus.

So you go to him today and say to him, Lord, please help me to believe in you. And if you really ask him to do that, he will do just that for you.

[46 : 22] And just like Naaman, you too will be cleansed. Let's pray. Lord, our God, we pray to bless us. We give thanks that you are the God who heals, the God who cleanses, the God who restores, the God who binds up.

We pray, Lord, that we might know your healing and cleansing in our own lives, that you'll be merciful to us and that you will guide us in the right way and take us in the way of righteousness. Lead us in the paths of righteousness, we pray, for thy name's sake. Take us to our home safely and take away from us our sin. In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen.

We're going to conclude our service singing to God's praise from Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter.

[47 : 27] Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is. Be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless. Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be.

of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee. All thine iniquities who doth most graciously forgive, who thy diseases all and pains doth heal and thee relieve, who doth redeem thy life that thou to death mayst not go down, who thee with loving kindness doth and tender mercy's crown. Psalm 103, wonderful, O thou my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is.

Be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless.

Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be.

[49 : 02] Of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee.

All thine iniquities who doth most graciously forgive, who thy diseases all and pains doth heal and be relieved.

Who doth redeem thy life that thou to death mayst not go down, who thee with loving kindness doth and tender mercies crown.

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. Amen.