

On Sunday we walked through 2 Kings 5 and watched the grace of God reach an unlikely man. Naaman was powerful, honored, wealthy, and successful, yet none of those things could cleanse him. When the Lord offered healing, Naaman nearly rejected it because God's appointed means seemed too ordinary and humbling. Only when he laid aside his pride and submitted to God's word was he made clean. His cleansing produced worship, while Gehazi's greed revealed the opposite kind of heart—a heart that tried to turn grace into an opportunity for gain. The chapter reminds us that grace cannot be earned, purchased, or exploited. It must be received with empty hands. And what was free to Naaman points us toward the greater cleansing freely offered to sinners because Christ himself has paid its immeasurable cost. This week we will return to that grace and ask what it means to receive it, live from it, and guard its honor.

Monday: But He Was a Leper

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:1–7

Naaman enters the chapter with an impressive résumé. He is commander of the Syrian army, a great man, highly favored by his king, and a mighty man of valor. Scripture even tells us that the Lord had used him to give victory to Syria. Then comes the sentence that changes everything: “but he was a leper” (2 Kings 5:1). Power, reputation, courage, and royal favor could not protect Naaman from the weakness of his own body. He could command armies, but he could not command his disease to leave.

There is mercy in moments that expose our limits. We naturally prefer to imagine ourselves competent and self-sufficient. Yet illness, grief, financial trouble, aging, broken relationships, and death remind us that human strength has firm boundaries. Naaman's condition did not mean that his accomplishments were unreal, but it revealed their limits. More importantly, the chapter shows that the

Lord had been governing Naaman's life before Naaman ever knew the Lord. The God of Israel was not merely a tribal deity confined to Israel's borders. He was already ruling Syria, armies, kings, victories, servants, and circumstances.

Our deepest helplessness is spiritual. Sin is not a difficulty we can solve by intelligence, discipline, money, reputation, or religious effort. This is why the gospel begins with grace rather than achievement. Christ came for those who cannot cleanse themselves. He did not come merely to improve respectable people but to save sinners. Just as Naaman needed a power beyond himself, we need the Savior who alone can forgive guilt, reconcile us to God, and make the unclean clean.

That truth changes how we view weakness. Some burdens may be removed in this life, and others may remain. God has not promised immediate deliverance from every sickness or hardship. But weakness can expose the false refuge of self-sufficiency and teach us where our true hope lies. The widow carrying grief, the caregiver watching a parent decline, the worker who cannot fix everything at home, and the believer fighting a stubborn temptation all stand in the same basic place: dependent creatures before the living God. Our limitations are real, but they are never outside his providence.

Reflection Questions

1. What limitation or burden in my life most clearly reminds me that I am not self-sufficient?
2. How does the gospel address a deeper need than anything my abilities, possessions, or reputation can repair?
3. Where do I need to stop pretending that I am in control and instead entrust myself faithfully to God's providence?

Prayer: Father, you are the Maker and King of all the earth. Nothing in my life lies outside your sight or your rule. Forgive me for trusting my strength, accomplishments, resources, or plans as though they could secure me. Teach me to receive my limitations humbly and to depend upon you without despair. Thank you that Christ came not for those who can save themselves, but for helpless sinners. Give strength to those who are sick, grieving, burdened, or afraid, and help your church bear one another's burdens with patience and compassion. Keep my confidence fixed upon your character and your promises. In Christ's name, Amen.

Tuesday: Wash and Be Clean

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:8–14

When Naaman finally arrived at Elisha's house, he came with horses, chariots, wealth, and expectations. He had already imagined how the healing ought to happen. Elisha would surely come outside, invoke the Lord dramatically, wave his hand over the diseased place, and cure him. Instead, Elisha sent a messenger with a simple command: wash seven times in the Jordan. Naaman was furious. He had come seeking cleansing, but he nearly rejected it because he disliked the way God chose to give it.

Naaman's words reveal the heart of his problem: “Behold, I thought” (2 Kings 5:11). He had constructed his own terms for grace. He wanted an impressive prophet, an impressive ceremony, and perhaps an impressive river. God's command seemed beneath him. Yet the power was never in Elisha's personal presence, the grandeur of the ritual, or some special quality in the Jordan. The power rested in God's promise. Faith does not make God's word effective; faith receives what God has promised.

The gospel confronts our pride in much the same way. We naturally want something to contribute. We would rather present God with a record of good behavior, religious activity, sincere intentions, charitable giving, or spiritual achievement. But Scripture declares that salvation is “by grace…through faith” and “not a result of works” (Ephesians 2:8–9). Christ does not negotiate with sinners over the terms of salvation. He calls us to repent and believe. Faith is not a great work by which we impress God. It is the empty hand that receives Christ.

This same pattern continues throughout the Christian life. We may prefer dramatic answers when God calls for ordinary obedience: pray, forgive, confess, worship, give, serve, read his Word, love our neighbor, remain faithful in the church. None of these actions purchase God's favor. They are the ordinary shape of life under his Word. Pride asks for something more impressive. Faith says, in effect, “If the Lord has spoken, his word is enough.”

Reflection Questions

1. Where am I most tempted to approach God on the basis of what I think ought to happen rather than what he has actually said?
2. How does salvation by grace through faith humble both my pride and my

fear?
3. What simple act of obedience has God's Word placed before me that I have been resisting because I wanted different terms?

Prayer: Lord, your wisdom is higher than mine, and your Word does not need my approval before it becomes worthy of obedience. Forgive me for the many ways I say, “Behold, I thought,” and then measure your commands against my preferences. Strip away the pride that wants to contribute something to my salvation or dictate how you should work in my life. Thank you that Christ has accomplished what I could never accomplish. Teach me to receive him with empty hands and to walk in the ordinary obedience of faith. Make me attentive to your Word, willing to repent, and ready to obey even when your way appears small or unimpressive. Amen.

Wednesday: Like the Flesh of a Little Child

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:13–15

Naaman's servants reasoned with him. If Elisha had commanded some great deed, Naaman would have attempted it. Why then refuse the simple word, “Wash, and be clean” (2 Kings 5:13)? So the mighty commander went down into the Jordan. After dipping himself seven times according to the word of God, “his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (2 Kings 5:14). The man who arrived surrounded by status and wealth emerged from the water with nothing to boast about but mercy.

That description—“like the flesh of a little child”—is striking. At the beginning of the story, an Israelite girl taken into servitude spoke the word that sent Naaman seeking help. Now the mighty Syrian commander becomes, in his restored flesh, like a child himself. The chapter has quietly overturned the normal human hierarchy. The powerful man needed the testimony of a servant girl, the counsel of his servants, the word of a prophet he did not know, and finally the mercy of a God he had not worshiped.

Scripture uses cleansing language to describe what God does for sinners. Our problem is not merely ignorance or weakness. Sin defiles, condemns, and separates us from the holy God. We cannot wash away our own guilt. But the blood of Jesus Christ “cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Christian forgiveness is not God pretending that sin does not matter. Christ bore our guilt and satisfied divine justice at the cross. Because he has acted for us, the sinner who trusts him

is truly forgiven, truly justified, and truly received.

Remembering that cleansing should shape the way we live with both humility and hope. A Christian may still struggle with shame over sins long forgiven, or discouragement over sins still being mortified. The answer is not to minimize sin. It is to take both sin and grace seriously. Confess what is sinful. Turn from it. Then believe what God says about those who are in Christ. The believer's identity is no longer determined by the stain Christ has washed away, but by the Savior to whom the believer now belongs.

Reflection Questions

1. What past sin, present weakness, or hidden shame most tempts me to believe that I am beyond cleansing?
2. How does Christ's finished work give a firmer foundation for forgiveness than my feelings about myself?
3. Is there a specific sin I need to confess and forsake while resting more fully in God's promise of cleansing?

Prayer: Holy God, I confess that my sin is deeper than I often admit and that I cannot cleanse myself. Thank you for the precious blood of Jesus Christ, shed for sinners and sufficient to remove real guilt. Keep me from treating sin lightly, but also keep me from clinging to shame after you have spoken forgiveness in Christ. Give me a tender conscience, quick repentance, and growing hatred for everything that dishonors you. By your Spirit, continue the work of sanctification in me. Help me to remember that every Christian stands before you by mercy alone, so that I may treat others with patience, humility, and grace. Amen.

Thursday: A Gift Too Costly to Buy

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:15–19; 1 Peter 1:18–19

Naaman returned to Elisha a different man. Before his cleansing, he had stood outside expecting the prophet to come to him. Afterward, he “came and stood before him” and confessed, “Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel” (2 Kings 5:15). Grace had done more than change Naaman's skin. It had begun to turn his heart from idols toward the living God.

Naaman wanted to give Elisha a gift, but Elisha refused. That refusal mattered. Naaman had originally arrived carrying vast wealth because he assumed

supernatural help would have a price. If Elisha now accepted payment, Naaman might leave thinking that the blessing had been purchased after all. So the prophet swore, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none” (2 Kings 5:16). Naaman needed to know that God's mercy was gift, not transaction.

Yet salvation is free to us only because it was costly to another. Peter reminds believers that we were ransomed “not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18–19). The gospel is not inexpensive grace. Our redemption required the incarnate Son of God to bear our sins in his body on the tree. We contribute nothing to the payment because Christ has paid the whole price. Nothing can be added to his finished work without dishonoring its sufficiency.

That produces worship rather than payment. Christians do give, serve, sacrifice, and obey, but never in order to purchase God's acceptance. We give because we have already received. We obey because we belong to Christ. We serve because grace has made us grateful. This distinction matters deeply, especially when weariness sets in. The church member quietly caring for others, serving in an unnoticed ministry, giving sacrificially, or persevering in ordinary duty does not need to earn God's notice. In Christ, God's favor is not a wage waiting to be earned. It is grace already bestowed.

Reflection Questions

1. Where am I tempted to think of my obedience, giving, or service as though God now owes me something?
2. How does the costliness of Christ's blood deepen my understanding of grace as a free gift?
3. What act of worship or service can I offer this week simply out of gratitude rather than a desire to earn recognition?

Prayer: Lord God, I praise you for grace that cannot be purchased. Silver and gold could never ransom a sinner, nor could all my good works erase my guilt. Thank you for giving your Son and for the precious blood by which your people have been redeemed. Forgive me when I quietly turn obedience into a transaction or imagine that my service places you in my debt. Give me the freedom of a grateful child who serves because I have already been loved and received in Christ. Let my giving, work, worship, and care for others rise from thanksgiving. May our church display the generosity of people who know that everything we have is grace. Amen.

Friday: Was It a Time to Accept Money?

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:20–27

The chapter could have ended beautifully with Naaman going home as a worshiper of the Lord. Instead, Scripture turns to Gehazi. He had witnessed remarkable works of God through Elisha's ministry: provision for the widow, the raising of the Shunammite's son, poisoned food made safe, hungry men fed, and now Naaman cleansed. Yet proximity to holy things had not made Gehazi's heart holy. When he saw Naaman's wealth leaving with him, greed began to speak.

One sin quickly produced another. Gehazi ran after Naaman, invented a false story, obtained silver and clothing, hid what he had taken, and then lied to Elisha. Sin rarely remains contained. What begins as a private desire demands protection. Covetousness calls for deception; deception requires further lies. This is one reason Scripture tells us to put sin to death rather than make peace with it. Sin is never a harmless guest. Left unopposed, it seeks the whole house.

Gehazi's sin was especially serious because he distorted the grace of God. Elisha had deliberately refused payment so that Naaman would understand that God's cleansing could not be bought. Gehazi turned around and made the gift look like a transaction. In this respect he anticipates the terrible danger of using holy things for selfish gain. Judas walked with Jesus and kept the moneybag, yet loved silver more than the Savior. Religious privilege cannot substitute for faith, and ministry cannot sanctify greed.

The warning reaches beyond pastors and church leaders, though it certainly includes them. Any Christian can begin using service, generosity, influence, knowledge, or spiritual language for vanity, control, praise, or advantage. We should therefore examine not only what we do but why. The remedy is not suspicion of money itself or contempt for proper compensation. It is a heart increasingly satisfied in Christ. Greed loosens its grip when we remember that our life does not consist in our possessions and that the greatest treasure has already been given to us in the Savior.

Reflection Questions

1. What desire for money, recognition, control, comfort, or approval am I most tempted to protect from honest examination?
2. How does Gehazi's example warn me about receiving religious privileges

without allowing grace to transform my heart?
3. What concrete act of repentance, generosity, honesty, or accountability would help me put this temptation to death?

Prayer: Search me, O God, and expose what I would rather hide. Guard me from greed, vanity, dishonesty, and the desire to use holy things for selfish purposes. Forgive me for the ways sin multiplies when I excuse what seems small. Give me courage to confess quickly and turn back before temptation hardens into habit. Make Christ more precious to me than money, praise, comfort, or influence. Protect those who lead and serve your church from shameful gain, and make all of us careful to guard the honor of the gospel. Teach us to handle earthly gifts faithfully while setting our hearts upon the treasure that cannot perish. Amen.

Saturday: Go in Peace

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:15–19

Naaman's story ends with questions still unresolved. His confession is genuine, but his understanding is incomplete. He asks for Israelite soil, apparently still thinking in ways shaped by the ancient belief that gods were associated with particular lands. He is also troubled about what will happen when his royal duties require him to accompany the Syrian king into the temple of Rimmon. Naaman is a new worshiper with much yet to learn.

Elisha does not answer every question in the scene. Neither does he crush Naaman's tender conscience. He simply tells him, “Go in peace” (2 Kings 5:19). The words should not be read as approval of idolatry. The chapter has made plain that the Lord alone is God. Rather, Naaman is being sent back into a complicated life as someone whose allegiance has begun to change. Grace does not ordinarily give us instant maturity. God receives sinners in Christ and then patiently forms them into faithful worshipers.

That patience is part of our own Christian life. Justification is complete the moment a sinner trusts Christ, but sanctification unfolds across a lifetime. We truly belong to Christ while still having much to learn, confess, and put right. The Spirit does not abandon us to immaturity. Through Scripture, prayer, the fellowship of the saints, the Lord's Supper, preaching, correction, and ordinary obedience, Christ conforms his people to himself. We are cleansed once for all in our standing before God and progressively renewed in the way we live.

Naaman also reminds us that those who receive grace become witnesses to grace. His story began because a nameless Israelite girl told him where help could be found. Now he returns to Syria confessing the Lord. Most Christian witness is similarly ordinary. You may never preach to thousands. You may speak to a family member, encourage a struggling believer, invite a neighbor to worship, care for someone who is suffering, or simply tell another sinner where cleansing may be found. We go in peace because Christ has made peace through his blood, and we return to the gathered church ready to worship the God who makes the unclean clean.

Reflection Questions

1. Where can I see evidence that God is patiently teaching and sanctifying me even though much growth remains?
2. How does knowing that my acceptance with God rests in Christ allow me to pursue holiness without despair or self-righteousness?
3. Who has God placed near me whom I can serve, encourage, invite, or point toward the grace found in Christ?

Prayer: Gracious Father, thank you that you do not merely forgive your people and leave us unchanged. You receive us in Christ and patiently conform us to the likeness of your Son. Give me humility about how much I still need to learn and confidence that your Spirit will complete the work you have begun. Help me walk faithfully in the responsibilities you have given me, bearing witness to Christ in ordinary words and deeds. Make our congregation a people who receive grace humbly, guard the gospel carefully, serve generously, and tell others where true cleansing may be found. Prepare my heart to gather again with your people in worship and thanksgiving. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.