

Elijah and Elisha 08 ~ Keswick Conference 1970

by Harold Wildish

The story of Naaman the Leper highlights the importance of faith, obedience, and the power of God's word in bringing about spiritual transformation and cleansing from sin.

Duration: 54:54

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:14, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, John 13:34-35, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:14-15

Topics: "Keswick"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing the story of Naaman the leper from 2 Kings Chapter 5. He emphasizes the importance of each step in Naaman's journey towards healing, highlighting the significance of every link in the chain. The preacher also acknowledges the presence of both human nature and a new nature in individuals, emphasizing the need for self-reflection and recognition of our sinful nature. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the need for humility and acknowledging our dependence on God's grace for salvation.

Transcript

I think most of you realize that we are moving very slowly through the second book of Kings. I had hoped that we might get through to chapter 13 by the end of the week, and here we are turning you tonight to chapter 5. For the sake of those who are joining us and you, we are studying the opening chapters of Kings, taking a panel story and using it as an illustration of truth. And each little panel has become a chapter, and I've given it a heading.

I'll just go over the headings up to date. Chapter 1, Man of God. Chapter 2, Take the Mantle.

Chapter 3, Dig the Ditches. Chapter 4, Pour the Oil. Chapter 4, continuing, Watch Your Days.

Chapter 4, continuing, Shut the Door. Chapter 4, ending this morning, Protect Your Food. Now we are starting chapter 5. Our reading is from verse 1 of 2 Kings chapter 5. Now, this is a well-known story.

You could almost repeat it, some of you, by heart. Now, Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria. He was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper.

Now, I'm going to pause here for a moment. I'm going to ask you to tell me, when I finish my reading, in a moment or two, how many links in the chain there are in this chapter that leads this Syrian general to Zalepa? The place where he stands, cleansed and rejoicing and thanking God that he's free from his leprosy. See if you can find out how many links there are in the chain as we read through the story from verse 2. See if you're right.

The Syrians had gone out by companies and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid, and she waited on Naaman's wife. She said unto her mistress, Would God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in and told his Lord, saying, Thus and thus saith the maid that is of the land of Israel.

The king of Syria said, Go to go, I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

And it came to pass when the king of Israel had read the letter that he wrenched his clothes, and said, Am I God to kill and to make alive that this man dost send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore, consider, I pray you, see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. And it was so when Elisha, the man of God, had heard that the king of Israel had wrenched his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou wrenched thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wrought, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Havana and far, far rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage.

His servants came near and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had asked thee to do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith unto thee, Wash, and be clean. Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God. And his flesh came again, like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

He returned to the man of God, he and his company, and came, and stood before him, and said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. Now, therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. But he said, As the Lord liveth before whom I stand, I will receive none.

And he urged him to take it, but he refused. Naman said, Shall there not, then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules, burden of earth? For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods but unto the Lord. In this thing, the Lord pardoned thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimen to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimen, when I bow down myself in the house of Rimen, the Lord pardoned my servant in this thing.

And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way. God will bless to our hearts the reading together of this scripture, for his name's sake.

And before I ask you the question, just let thou our heads for a moment. Now, Lord, we ask thee that thou wilt be amongst us in all thy risen power, revealing thyself to each one of us. May thy Spirit lead us into thy truth, and give us understanding.

And whatever our need is tonight, whether it's the need of cleansing and pardon, or whether it's the need of being links in the chain to lead such sinners to Christ, wilt thou lead each one of us to that place where we can be gloriously usable in thy hands. Do thy work for thy glory and for our good, for thy dear name's sake. Amen.

Now, I don't know how many of you, in the reading of that scripture, found out that there are seven distinct links in the chain from the moment that Nerman the Leper begins to move on his journey downward and downward, until at last he dips himself the last time in Jordan, and comes up and looks at the place where this leprosy was, and there bursts from his lips a great big hallelujah. Praise the Lord, because he knows that he knew he was cleansed. Seven links in the chain.

Now, may I say to you very earnestly that every link in the chain is of equal importance. Thank God for the gift to the church of the evangelist, and I could name many great God-used evangelists in your country who have the joy of forging the last link in the chain. Their voices, with all earnestness pleading for decision, bring people to that moment when they say, Yes, Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for me on the cross at Calvary.

I'm coming to thee, Lord, yielding myself to thee in all my sin and need, and I'll make my decision to receive thee into my life to be my Savior. And many look back to that happy day, that transaction day, when they could say it's done, the great transactions done. But, believe me, long before that decision was made, and some servant of God was used to forge the last link, there are links in the chain a way back.

It may be a godly pastor, it may be a good Christian business friend, it may be a mother's prayers, it may be, oh, it may be just anything, and each one of these links are equally important with the final link. And, when we meet the master in the morning, I think the well done will be just as much to those who forged the first and second and third and fourth and fifth and sixth link as, perhaps, the evangelist who was used of God to forge the last link. This is very important, because I know godly mothers who will never climb on a platform.

I know godly sisters who will never take the place of public work and speaking for the lost. And yet, in the nursery, in the kitchen, in the home, in the Bible class, in the neighborhood, they are forging links. Some of you just now are pretty busy forging links in the lives of your grandchildren.

Isn't that right? Your prayers, and your sending of a little book, or your reading to them Bible stories of the 101 ways that we grannies and grandpas can touch our little ones. And, of course, some of you have got us beat. It's your great-grandchildren.

Congratulations. Now, there were seven links in the chain, and I'll just run through them very quickly, because this isn't really our subject tonight. The first one is in verse 2, the little maid, this precious little Israelitish slave girl, in verse 2, who speaks up for her lord, and says, Oh, if my master would only go down to the prophet of God, I'm sure he could be cleansed.

The second one is in verse 4, and one went in and told Naaman what the little girl was saying in the kitchen. I'm sorry to have to say this, it looks as if Mrs. Naaman had lost her chance of being a link in the

chain. That Syrian lady nowhere comes into the picture as one of the links of the chain.

It could be that the one who went in and told Naaman was Mrs. Naaman, but I rather think the Spirit of God would have put that into the story if it had been true. Someone left the kitchen where the little girl was talking to our mistress bravely, and went in and told Naaman about it. The king got to hear of this, and in verse 5, the king of Syria said, Well, let him go down, and I'll send a letter with him, and he shall go and see this prophet of God.

And so the king who wrote a letter is the third link. Now, when Naaman arrives down in Elisha's country, in verse 8, it was so when Elisha, the man of God, heard. Who told him? Who told Elisha that a certain king was puzzled because Naaman had come down demanding cleansing, and the king of Israel couldn't do a thing about it? Someone must have gone to Elisha and told the story, and this is a link in the chain.

And then, in the next verse, we read of Elisha. So Naaman came with his horses and chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Elisha had sent a message, Send him down to me, and Elisha is now the fifth link in the chain.

Now, strangely enough, Elisha didn't go out to see him or talk to him. You say, Why? Well, simply because this man of God was dealing with Naaman as he is, a leper. Not a general, a leper.

Out there in that chariot is a leper with leprosy, and Elisha doesn't even get up. He sends a messenger out and tells him what to do, and this unknown messenger in verse 10 is the sixth link in the chain. And, when Naaman shivers, he says, I thought he would surely come out and put his hand over the place and do some miracle.

Are not those lovely snow waters up there that come from Lebanon better than this old, foul, muddy stream of Jordan? And he's angry, and after six links of the chain have been forged in his conversion, he's an angry man. Now, listen, Christians, I'm pausing here. Don't you be too worried, and don't you be too puzzled when you see a sinner getting angry about the gospel.

Perhaps they're nearer conversion than you dream of. At least there are stirrings within. There isn't that awful indifference, and an angry man is about to turn away and say, I'm not going into that muddy, muddy old stream.

And then there come on the scene some unknown servants in verse 13, and they hold a little after-meeting, and they say, if he had asked you to do some great thing, you would have done it. Why not try it? And we see this commander-in-chief of the forces of Syria going down to look at that river. Have you ever seen it? I never saw a muddier river in my life.

I stood on its banks and wondered at its dirtiness. You may have seen it when it was blue and fresh and clear, but it was just a mass of muddy, swirling waters when I saw it racing down to the Dead Sea as I stood by its side about three years ago. And I can just imagine Naaman looking at it, and putting his toes in it, and getting up to his knees in it, and up to his waist, saying, I wonder if it's worth it.

Well, let's try. And he comes up and looks at the place, and the old leprosy is still there. I'll try again.

And down he goes, and it's still there. Down he goes, and it's still there. Go and dip in Jordan seven times.

I think the sixth time he just about said, look, I'm fed up with this business. It isn't working with me. It may work with others, but this isn't the way it's going to cure me of leprosy.

And one of his servants shouted, one more, master, come along, one more, trust and obey, there's no other way. And down he goes, comes up, hallelujah, it works. And he goes back and wants to pay for it, bless his heart, as if you can buy God's cleansing and salvation with money.

Now, this is the story of Naaman the Syrian, who was a man who was converted in the New Testament language, cleansed from sin. Now, just a word about this man. Do you know who he was? We are told, if you will turn back, you might like to turn back a few pages in your Bible to the first book of Kings, and you might like to turn to that chapter 22, the last chapter of first Kings, and you read in verse 30, at the end of the verse, and the king of Israel, his name was Ahab, a wicked king, married to a wicked woman called Jezebel.

And the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle, and the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, fight neither against small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. It came to pass when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat that they said, surely it's the king of Israel, and they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out, I don't know what he cried, I should think he said, I'm not Ahab! I'm not Ahab! They saw that it wasn't their man. It came to pass that when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, Ahab, that they turned back from pursuing him, and a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness, wherefore he said unto the driver of the chariot, turn thy hand, carry me out of the host, I'm wounded.

He went out of the battle, and he died according to the prophecy of the old prophet, and the gods licked his blood out of his chariot, and a man took a bow, put it into his bowstring, and fired one of the captains, and it was a bow at a venture that hit him between the joints of the harness, pierced him. He died according to prophecy, and this captain was Naaman. You say, how do you know? Well, turn back to verse 1 of chapter 5, our chapter, now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria.

He was also a mighty man of valor, and Josephus, the great Jewish historian who gives us the details, many lovely details that are not found in the bible about names and places and history of the Jewish people, says it was a well-known fact that Naaman was the captain that took that bow and fired it, a bow at a venture that brought Ahab to his death and gave deliverance to Syria. And I can see the king of Syria saying, who fired that bow? Finally the man that fired that bow, and he brought him up in the army from a captain to be a chief commander in the army. A great man, you can see him on his horseback, you can see him with all his medals and his lovely uniform, but, but, a leper.

That nasty, in those days, completely incurable disease, that disease that separated a man or woman from their loved ones, that sent them out onto the streets to cry, unclean, unclean, and most of them who had no sustenance lived outside the city gates, begging, cast upon the mercy of the people. This general was a leper. Now, this leper was gloriously cleansed, and of course this is one of the gospel messages that you've taken from the old testament.

This is one of the messages that some of you preachers here have preached again and again, the cleansing of Naaman the leper. I've heard many talks from boyhood days on this chapter. I've heard preachers even go so far as to advertise their talk on Naaman the leper.

I think they advertised it, was it, seven ducks in a dirty pond, or something like that. Well, that's a picture of what happened when he went down into Jordan seven times, all dirty Jordan, to get the cleansing. But, let me tell you, that leper had to come down to the place where he dipped himself in Jordan, and Jordan always spoke of death.

You know that there's no cleansing to a sinner apart from the precious blood that flows, flows at Calvary when a substitute took your place and died for you. That you might taste that cleansing of precious blood. No other remedy, no other cleansing for sin, but the forgiveness and cleansing that springs from Calvary.

But, that's not our subject. Now, in this story, there's the most wonderful woman in the Bible. Did you know that? You know, my wife was giving a series of talks on the women in the Bible to a big group of women down in the West Indies, and I asked her how she was getting on, and I said, have you taken my favorite woman yet in the Bible? And she said, which one is that? And I said, you guessed.

And she said, Ruth. And I said, no. And she said, Mary.

I said, no. She guessed and guessed and couldn't guess. And when she demanded the name of this one, I couldn't tell her.

The little maid, the little Israelitish maid you read of here in verse 2. The Syrians had gone out by companies and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel, a little maid, and she waited on Naaman's wife. Do you know she's the most wonderful girl in the Bible? You can see I'm in love with her, can't you? There's all the makings in this little girl of a victorious, fine, beautiful, strong, spiritual woman of God. And that's what the Keswick message wants to produce for the Word of God.

This priest at Keswick alone can produce this in lives. You see, well, I never thought much of her. Well, let's have a look at her for a little while.

The Syrians had gone down on horseback, and they'd come ravaging over those hills and right down into the northern parts of Israel, and they'd come down possibly into the land where Elisha the prophet used to move right through the country to his little schools of the prophets teaching them. And they'd come down, and they had captured some prisoners, and they had set some farms on fire, and they had retreated. And a little girl, possibly, quite possibly, it's one of the things I'm going to ask her when I get to heaven.

She'll be there all right. I'm going to ask her how they got hold of her, and I'm sure they just picked her up. A horseman went down and got her the hair of her head and a little skirt.

I hope she didn't wear mini skirts in those days, and got her right the way up on the horseback trunk. And she's galloping off and leaving her farm burning, and dead, possibly dead, defending his home. And mother, who knows where darling mother is.

And these brutish enemies have captured her, and she's a little slave, and she's been put into a household to work in the kitchen with one of those hoity-toity Syrian mistresses. And they can be. And in the kitchen, she finds something out.

Of course, this is pure imagination, but I think it's right. She had to get up in the morning, and it was not just turning a little knob as you do in your lovely kitchens. She had to, you know, get the sticks, perhaps even chop them.

And she had to catch fire, and she had to get the water a-boiling, and when she got things all ready, she went with her cup of coffee for her master nearman. And she stood outside the door. She heard the military voice, Oh, come in! And she stepped inside, and she said, Good morning, sir.

She went and put his coffee down by the bedroom table, and she turned round and went out of the door. But listen, little girls have got sharp eyes. You know, he wasn't there in bed in his uniform with all his medals, and the great big general on his horse, he's in his... I don't think they had pajamas then.

I think he was in his nightshirt. And he was sitting out in bed to get his coffee, and she saw it! What? The plate! Yes, nearman had known it for some time. This dreadful blood disease is breaking out in some place, just where it was.

I don't know, but she saw it. And she knew what it was. There were many lepers in Israel, her land, in the days of Elisha the prophet.

Outside the gate of Samaria, they cried Unclean! Unclean! Pity! Pity! Pity! And people threw money to them, and food to them. And she knew what lepers were walking the streets of Israel in those days. And he's got it, that dreadful disease.

She's outside the door, and she's closed it. And do you know anything about human nature? Now come, precious American ladies and gentlemen, do you know anything about human nature or not? She's outside the door, and this is the first instinct of normal human nature. Have you ever seen kids flip their fingers? They're so excited.

Serve him jolly well, right! And yes, the hated Syrians killed my daddy, burnt my farm, took me captive, and fired from home. But no, no, no, there's not human nature being revealed here. There's a new nature being revealed here.

Inexplicable! I can't explain it to you. Will you face the fact that when raw Adam nature is revealed, and stripped with its from its Christian sort of veneer of, we are respectable ladies and gentlemen, Americans and Britishers can be as savage as any people in the world. And if not, we are just sinners.

The loathsome disease of sin is there. In the sight of God, woe is me, I'm a man undone. We dress ourselves up, and we move in society among seven sinners.

I'm a little bit better than he is. I wouldn't do what she does, but we are equally guilty with God. We've got this foul disease of leprosy, and we need cleansing.

And without cleansing, we can never stand before God. We need to be saved. And oh, how desperately this poor man Naaman, in spite of all his medals and positions, needed salvation from this loathsome disease.

And the little girl's got the secret. And instead of being glad, she's sorry. I can't understand this, and yet I can.

Do you know that this little girl was probably one of the Sunday school, I'm using New Testament language now, or modern language, one of the Sunday school children of the school of the prophets. She was one of the little people in these 7,000 who had never bowed the knee to Baal. That Elijah was told to spend his last 10 years teaching the things of God.

And as he came over the mountains in the farm kitchens, he would gather a group together and teach them of the living God. God is love, and God is light, and the character of God, and God's ability, and what God can do to us. And the little girl had sat there listening, and she had taken in the truth, and she is manifesting something in this story that only the Spirit of God can produce in human lives.

I challenge you, instead of serve you jolly well, right? There's a strange movement of compassion in her little girlish heart, and she says, oh, poor Master Naaman got leprosy, that dreadful disease. Oh, if only he was down with my prophet Elijah, if only he could hear the things I've heard in Sunday school, if only he could meet my God, he could be cleansed. Now, I'm going to ask you a question.

What do you know about compassion? Now, when you be brave, you may think I'm a dreadful critic. I'm sorry if you do, I don't mean you harm, because all the time the barbie is going right in here, you know. But where today, where today do you meet people with passion for souls born of a compassionate heart? I take my Bible and turn the pages, and Jesus moves around, and it says he saw the lepers, and he was moved with compassion toward them.

He saw the crowd of sheep having no shepherd, and he was moved with compassion toward them. He saw them at the end of the day, and they were hungry, and the disciples said, send them back to their homes, but he was moved with compassion, and said, we must feed them. You say, Mr. Wildish, I can't pump this up.

Of course you can't. You can shut yourself in the door for an hour, and try to pump up compassion, and you'll only get to as he drips with that. Compassion is born of an indwelling spirit.

It's Christ's compassion's moving your heart. It's Christ's love let loose, being shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. Compassions toward the perishing world around.

Not what I can get out of the world, but what I can give to the world. Compassions that will break every social barrier. Compassions that will break every racial barrier.

Compassions that will go and stoop to serve. I'm sorry, she cries, if only my poor master, who's got leprosy, could see my prophet, who knows God and knows the way of salvation, I'm sure he could be saved. And, let me tell you, this is perhaps the greatest need of the Church of Jesus Christ today.

Compassion. Compassion. I've watched on the mission fields, and I've seen the love representatives of the home churches.

I've seen them in the forefront trenches. I've seen them right away out facing the enemy in the jungle. I've watched them, and some have it, and some haven't got it.

In the mission field, that's true in the home churches. What do we know of compassion? The passion of Christ. The movements of his love in our heart toward a perishing world.

This little girl had it. It's an evidence that she had the movings of God's gracious spirit in her life. There was divine life there in those Old Testament days.

She showed it by her compassion. Now, look at verse three. And she said to her mistress, she said to Mrs. Nerman, would God... Now, I want you to stop.

Would God... Now, let's put a personal pronoun in. I would God. That's three now.

But, let's make it four words. I, the personal pronoun, would, would. God, I would to God.

This is the attitude of prayer. I would to God. It was a little heart in touch with the living God in prayer, and born of her deep compassion is prayer.

I would to God. Now, I pause to ask myself the question, what do we know today really about prayer? If I asked you if you pray, every one of you would put up your hands. If I asked you if you had a prayer list, some of you would put up your hands.

You're businesslike, and you've got a prayer list, and you put down the names of loved ones, and neighbors, and missionaries, and things that you feel you ought to pray for, and just as you have a shopping list, and you're businesslike in your shopping, so you're businesslike with God in your prayers. Others can't bother about that. They're so haphazard, and they often say, well, of course, the Spirit will lead me, and that's, of course, an excuse.

If you promise to pray for that missionary, why not put his name down on that prayer list, and why not businesslike once a week, or once a day, or as often as he comes round on your prayer list, really remember that servant of God out on the battlefield? Well, you say the Spirit of God will lead me. Well, sometimes six months pass, and is it the Spirit of God's fault, or your fault, that you don't remember that servant of God? You wave them away and say, I'll be praying for you as you go down to Haiti or Peru. Do you? I wonder if you're satisfied with your prayer life.

Let me tell you today, in Britain and in America, the thing that's at its lowest ebb is the prayer life of God's people. It's pathetic! You go to an assembly of Christians, and you'll find two hundred breaking bread on Sunday morning. Go to their prayer meeting, and you'll find thirty there.

Go to a great big church that talks to its seven hundred or thousand members, and say, where's your prayer meeting night? And they scratch their heads and say, prayer meeting night? Oh, we tie in our prayer meeting with something else and something else, and it's quite a small meeting, and we only have one or two prayers. Where is our prayer life today? Where is mine? Where is yours? Where is mine? Where is yours? I wrote to God. You know, Jude tells us that we are not to pray for the Holy Ghost.

Did you know that? He says, praying in the Holy Ghost. He says, you have dwelling within you the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit of God can produce within you prayer. The apostle Paul backs up James in Romans 8, and he says, yes, with groanings that cannot be uttered, the Spirit of God who knows the mind of God, and searches the deep things of God, and knows your deepest need, will produce a prayer life.

Are you satisfied with your prayers? Compassion produced prayer. Her deep compassion, born of the Spirit of God, produced, I would to God. Now, look at the next word.

I would to God. She says, verse 3, my Lord were with the prophet in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy. You know, little girl, I'd like to talk to you.

Why wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get that little maid up here on the platform and have a talk with her? Little Jewish maid, probably with dark hair parted down here, and those rather dark flashing eyes. You know just what shape her nose would be, but she would be a sweet little soul, I sort of feel, a farming little Jewish girl. And I say to her, now listen, we haven't even asked your name yet, I don't know your name, and so little we know about you, and yet you are my favorite, you know.

I don't know whether you ever got married, or whether you were ever a mother, and had children, and ran a farm yourself, but we just have fallen in love with you. Now, listen, what made you think that Naaman could be cured from his disease? Can you tell? Have you ever seen a leper cured? No, sir. What? You've never seen cured in your life, and there were plenty of them down there in that country door? Oh, I never saw one cured.

What, you never saw Elisha go stand on the place and cure a leper? No. And do you know what the Bible says, as you might like to jot this scripture down? It says in Luke chapter 4 and verse 27, and this is from the lips of the Lord Jesus, there were many lepers in Israel in the days of Naaman the Syrian, but to none of them, none of them came clean, except to that foreigner, that Syrian general. And why did he get it? Little lady, I think we know why he got it.

There was compassion in your heart, and there was prayer in your life, but there was more than that. What was it? Well, she said, I just believed that God could do it. And this is faith.

This is one of the greatest secrets of victorious Christian living faith. This is the victory that overcometh the world, faith, faith, faith that can step out on the seeming void and say, God will do it, find the rock beneath, faith. In living faith, this child said, I believe that the God of Elisha can cure this man.

She'd never seen it done in her life. Have we got that faith? Oh, I want to say to some of my Christian friends here, and to my own heart, let's examine ourselves, not to see whether we're in the faith doctrinally, but whether we've got the living faith, the faith that says God can save, save that loved one, save that neighbor, save that poor sinful man. God can save, God can do it.

But have you ever seen him do it? I couldn't say no, I'm not what I've seen, it's just I know he can. Little lady, could you help us? And I can see a child talking, and she says, you know, there lived next to us a farmer, and he had a little boy of his old age, and we used to go to school together, and we sat side by side in Elisha's Sunday school when he came through, and he taught us all about the things of God, and one day my little friend was out in the fields, and all of a sudden he got sunstroke, and he cried, my head, my head, and he died, and his mother put him on the bed, and she called for Elisha, and when Elisha came, he went into that room and alone with God, he stretched himself, he warmed the child, in dependence he cried to God, he went to the child again, and the child awaked, and the child was restored and came out. I've seen him, a living boy, and if Elisha could raise the dead, what's a little leprosy to the God of Elisha? Here's a girl who's got a living faith.

Have you? Have you got a living faith in the living God? Have you got a living faith in the living Christ? Have you got a living faith in the Holy Ghost? Have you got a living faith in the Word of God? Have you got a living faith in these things? This is victorious faith, and so her compassion has led to prayer, and her prayer reveals her faith, and there's one more thing that strikes me about this little girl that I've fallen in love with in the Bible, her courage. If I was talking in England, I would have to use another word, I would say her pluck. I don't know if you use that word very much here.

Anyhow, this was a plucky little girl who knew what it was to stick her chin out and square her little shoulders and saying, my faith is worth standing up for. I know it's difficult, and I know they'll misunderstand me, but I've got to, and she opened her mouth and spoke in the kitchen. I don't know what reaction she got.

I sort of feel that Mrs. Nairman was rather a character. I've got the sort of feeling, I don't know where it comes quite from, that when she heard the little girl talking about the master's leprosy, she said, you little spike hat, you keep your mouth closed, and she gave her a real hot time of it. That's how I feel about it.

I'm going to ask them all when I get up there if this is so or not, but there it is. I admire the little girl's pluck. You've got courage.

I say, around you in Florida, in the sunshine of Florida, where you've come to stay or to live, where you're having a holiday and looking for the sunshine, there's several million elderly dying people heading fast for eternity in the next months and years. Many of them are without Christ, without hope, without salvation. Do you ever speak to them? Why shouldn't you? You say to you, there's one thing I have to confess to my Lord at the end of the day when I seek to put everything right before I slip away to seek to sleep.

It's not so much sins committed, it's opportunities lost. As I look back over the day, I say, Lord, Lord, I tried to speak to that crowd in the morning, I spoke to that luncheon in the afternoon, and I spoke to them in the evening, but Lord, I didn't speak to that gas attendant who filled up the car. I didn't speak to that person who brought the mail in.

I didn't even have a real concern to try and speak to the boy who brought the bundle of newspapers. I didn't try to reach the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker. And do you know, dear Christ, we have something so valuable and so wonderful, and yet we are not passing it on.

And when it all boils down, it's lack of good, wholesome Christian courage. But we don't sell the message of the gospel to others far more freely. You say, they don't want it.

I don't know that you're right. They may appear not to want it, but do you know many of these people are conscious of the leprosy of sin in their lives? And they too are finding that they're living in a dying world, and death is beginning to pull them down to the dust. And there are wonderings, and doubtings, and strange stirrings.

And it isn't only occasionally a Christian gets cancer, they are getting cancer, and pains, and old age, and arthritis. You have a living Christ, and you have a way of pardon and cleansing, and a hope for eternity. Is it possible we keep our mouth? Little girl, I love you.

I'm looking forward to meet you in heaven, even though perhaps you are not in the bride's church. I don't know where your standing will be, but there were all the makings in this little girl to be. A mother in Israel, a woman of God, a soul in whose life the Spirit of God moved, as I see her compassion that led to her prayer life, and her prayer life that led to her living faith, and to her courageous witness.

And she was the first link in the chain, the first one that forged, and forged, and forged, and forged, and forged, and forged, till a dipping man came up and said, hallelujah, I'm saved, as he saw that God had dealt with his leprosy in his life. For there, messages over the time of God, he was found his presence in prayer. Just a moment of testing, quietly in prayer, there could be a soul here tonight that's just longing for pardon and cleansing from sins.

Spirit of God has been showing you your need of a savior, or wouldn't you like just when you sit to whisper to him, I am coming Lord, coming now to thee. Wash me, cleanse me in the blood that flowed at Calvary, wouldn't you like to do what millions have done? Not dip in an old muddy river called Jordan, but bow at the cross where Jesus died to redeem you to God. Look into his face and say thank you, I'm going to trust

you, and yield to you.

Look into the face of that living Savior who's able to save and receive him by faith into your heart. Just now, why not do it? Bowed in prayer, let your heart speak those words, and if at the close of the meeting you'd like to talk to me, I'm at your service. If there's one anxious soul, if there's one troubled heart wanting to seek the Lord, then Lord, for us who are Christians, we've known thee for long, long years, some of us.

We are living in desperate days when so easily, in the light of life, we can go slack. We would test our faith. Have we got the moving compassions of God's Spirit? Have we the prayer life? Have we that faith that rarely steps out on thee? And oh, we pray that thou would give us courage to seize the opportunities that come with everyday life.

Lord, teach us each one what to do, whether it's to use the avenue of literature to give to people, or to speak the spoken word, or by all means make thee known. And now, Lord, the time is gone. We have to dismiss our meeting and go out into the night as we go out into the wonderful moonlit night and look up at the stars.

Help us to think of the moment when soon thou art coming back, and we shall look into thy face and give an account to thee. We know that one well done from thy lips will make it all worthwhile. Thou didst long ago say a cold water cup given in my name will receive a reward.

We pray that we may be channels of blessing to those around us increasingly, seizing the opportunities that thou dost give to us, and making our Christian life an adventure which we shall live for thy glory. Dismiss us with thy divine blessing. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with us all.

Amen.

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