

Good morning. Good to see your faces this morning. Contrary to popular belief, I am not pastor Mike. He's still off on sabbatical. My name is Brock Ashley, and I'm the pastor of Woodlawn Chapel and Charleston, Illinois. We are. I forgot my clicker. Guys, you did a great job of getting me a clicker, and I left it, so sorry. There you go. That's behind the scenes stuff. So, needless to say, I'm the pastor of Woodlawn Chapel and Charleston, Illinois, and we are a church plant. We were sent out in September of 2020, was our first church service on the campus of Eastern Illinois University, on the south side of Charleston. And so this is actually a picture of our church building. The Lord gave us pillars and a steeple. And so we were praying for a shed or a pole barn. And the Lord gave us pillars and a steeple. So we're very thankful. But over the last five years, we've been able to see tremendous amount of growth in the church. And so, so much so that they're able to do church without me. And so they may find out they don't need me at all when I get back. But needless to say, just super blessed by what God is doing now through two services and and you know, just a lot of faithfulness as the Lord has blessed our congregation and our fellowship. But I was at one time the reason I'm here today. Your assistant pastor. Many of you didn't know that. In fact, I was thinking about this earlier this week that we're going to stop putting things chronologically here at Parkland Chapel in terms of years. We're going to start doing it in terms of sanctuaries. And so I was your pastor, two sanctuaries that wait, this sounds better in an English accent. Two sanctuaries in for parking lots ago. I was your pastor. So a two sanctuaries and four parking lots ago. This is the spot that we were all in together. So I'm thankful to have the opportunity to be here with you all today. And what we're going to do is we're going to actually turn in our Bibles to Second Kings Chapter five, because as I was thinking about, you know, the faithfulness that God has had on us as a new church plant, what we have done is to simply teach the Bible simply over 20 years. Here at Parkland Chapel. The thing that has made the difference, that has changed people from the inside out, is simply being taught the Bible simply. And I don't know why. That's a hard thing for people to figure out. And yet, what I do know is that God is faithful. And so when we open His word, what Isaiah says is that His word will go forth and it will not return void, and it will accomplish the purposes that he sets for it. And so I want to encourage you to turn with me to Second Kings chapter 5. We're going to work our way through this chapter. But as a as a little bit of background in this chapter, this is a story really of two different situations, two different people, a new believer and a backsliding believer. And so we see these different contrasting positions that are going to take place here in second Kings five. But the main characters are, first of all, a guy named Elisha. Elisha was the protege to Elijah. He was a great prophet. A double portion of the Spirit of Elijah there, and he ministered to those northern ten tribes of Israel that had split apart. When the

kingdom split up after Rehoboam. And so Elisha was this amazing prophet, a fantastic man of God. But he is presented with this problem of a guy named Naaman, who is a Syrian commander. Now, as we read about Naaman and we start this story, it's important to note these two were not friends. Assyria and Israel did not like each other. They were sworn enemies of one another. And so we'll begin here in chapter 5, verse one. I'll pray over the text before we start. Father, we thank you for your word. Thank you for the opportunity. We have to study it here. Thank you for the foundations that have been laid, a verse by verse Bible study that go back years, even decades now. And father, we call on you now. Holy spirit, please come down, rest mightily upon us. Because without you these are just words on a piece of paper. But by you, these are powerful words that speak to our hearts, that change us from the inside out. And so, Holy Spirit, please come down and minister to us individually and corporately alike. In Jesus name, Amen Second Kings, chapter five, verse 1 begins like this. Now Naaman, commander of the army of the King of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria, and he was also a mighty man of valor. But a leper. And so we're introduced to our first character, a man named Naaman. And what we're told here is that he was used by God. And that's fascinating, because what I just shared with you is his country was an enemy of God, and yet he was used by God. For what purpose? For the purpose of actually disciplining the children of God. Do you realize that God can do that? That he can take ungodly situations, ungodly people, even ungodly intentions, and he can use them for his purposes? And so this is what the Lord has done through Naaman the Syrian. He's using him as a disciplinary measure for the Israelites, for the children of God. What also we notice here from the text is he was called a mighty man of valor. Now, that's a fascinating title for you Old Testament fans. You might remember that title from a guy named Gideon in Judges chapter six. This would be an Israelite judge was called a mighty man of valor. And yet the Lord speaks this about Naaman the Syrian, a pagan who did not seemingly know the Lord. But God is using him as a vessel. Now, as we see Naaman the Syrian. Well, we also note is that he was a successful man. He was honorable in the eyes of his master. He had all kinds of worldly success in terms of a businessman. He was a successful as anyone you knew. But he had a problem. His problem was he was a leper. The part that comes after the comma. He was a leper. Now, leprosy in the Bible is always a picture of sin. Sin destroying us from the inside out. So as successful as he was, as powerful as he was, he was a leper. He had a sin issue. It was destroying him from the inside out. He wanted desperately to correct it. And so in verse 2, the plot thickens. And the Syrians had gone out on raids and had brought back a captive, a young girl from the land of Israel. And she waited on Naaman's wife. And then she said to her mistress, if only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria, for

he would heal him of his leprosy. And so here we have the next character in the story, a Hebrew slave girl. Now, what's fascinating about this is this girl had become a slave to Naaman in his house through a raid on her nation. She was taken away from everything she knew, everything she loved her own people, and she was plopped into the house of Naaman against her will. And yet, as she gets word that her master has come down with leprosy, she didn't say what would rise up in my heart. Serves him right. Stinking sinner took me away from my family. How dare he do that to me? I hope he rots. Know this young girl in a situation that she didn't ask in this spot? Instead of being bitter, she decides to be a blessing. And by the way, this is a spot that I'm guessing there are a few people in this room. Find yourselves in. In a situation you didn't ask for and a spot you didn't think you'd be in at this point in your life. And yet you've got a decision to make. Do I want to be bitter with the spot that God has allowed me to be in? Or do I want to be a blessing? This young lady has made the decision to be a blessing, to speak words of kindness, good things into this situation, and she takes the curse. What seems like a curse and the shackles fall off. I want to encourage you that if you're in that spot where bitterness is risen up because of the situation you find yourself in, when you decide to see God's hand in everything and his hand is in everything, you will go from you being feeling like you're cursed to you being blessed. In thinking about that this week I was thinking about my own story and coming here to the parkland. The truth is, I shouldn't be here right now. I came with not great intentions, not great motives to be rich and famous and successful and check all the boxes made my way from Illinois across the Jordan River or Mississippi. Same thing. Made my way here. And yet what God did through ungodly situations and ungodly circumstances is he dropped us in a little green pole barn right off of Double-o and through the Word of God changed not only my life, but also the lives of my entire family. And so the Lord can do amazing things even through ungodly situations. But what was even more amazing about this is when the bitterness started to go away. About our situation, about our plight. What a blessing it then was. And so this young lady is a testament to what a blessing we can actually be when we don't let bitterness overtake us. Now verse four, And in Naaman went in and told his master, that is the king of Syria, saying thus and thus said the girl who is from the land of Israel. And then the king of Syria said, well, go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. And so he departed and took him, took with him ten talents of silver, 6000 shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. And then verse 6, he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said, now be advised, when this letter comes to you that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy. Verse seven. And it happened when the king of Israel read the letter that he tore his clothes and said, am I God to kill and make alive that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore, please consider

and see how he seeks to quarrel with me. And so Naaman, and what we see here is the desperation that he had for his situation. And this guy is the commander of the Syrian army, enemies with Israel. But he is so desperate to be healed of the issue that plagues him from the inside out. He's willing to go to his enemy, to seek help, to take loads of money and changes of clothes. And we see what a value he was to the king of Syria. I mean, this guy must have been worth an awful lot to the king of Syria. As his commander, he writes a letter to the King of Israel. But when he arrives at Joram, Joram is or Jehoram is the king of Israel at the time when he arrives at his house, he thinks this has got to be some kind of joke he's got. He's thinking about this as a *Braveheart* kind of a moment, like he's trying to pick a fight, like he's looking to pick a fight with me. And his reasoning for this is, do you know how many cases of leprosy have ever been cured in the history of Israel? Don't read the slide and cheat zero zero cured cases of leprosy to this point in the nation of Israel had never happened. And so as this man comes, desiring to be healed of this disease, the King of Israel said, there's no way. And yet for you fans of Leviticus and I know there's some of you in here that love to read you some Leviticus did you know there's an entire chapter? Chapter 14, dedicated to the healing of leprosy? I'm suggesting to you that God is not into waste. He did not waste all that real estate. One whole chapter in the law in the Pentateuch. If it was not possible for someone to be healed with leprosy, I'm speaking truth into that because there is spiritual leprosy happening and there are promises all over in this book. And yet, do we have enough faith to take God at His Word in this story? Quite amazingly, what we see is a situation that happens often in our life. Yeah, but they're too far gone. They're too far gone. That thing, that situation, that person. It's impossible. We all have people in our lives that when we look at that situation, we go, yeah, God can do a lot. But who don't know about that and oftentimes we love them. And oftentimes they even sleep next to us. And we think there's no way, there's no way. I've prayed too long, too many times. I can't see it happening. And yet God's Word says it's possible. He is the God of impossible. He's not into wasting words and real estate within his Word. If it were not so, he would have said so. And so the Lord said, it's possible. In this spot. The issue here for Jehoram is he lacks faith in the one who can save. And what I find amazing about this story is here's the king of Syria, this pagan king, and he has more faith than the King of Israel, the King of Syria sends his top man back to be healed because he believes in the God of the Hebrews. I bring that up because I wonder how many times someone who does not truly know the Lord our God and they ask for prayer, and in our heart we go. I don't think so. That thing.

Is too much.

And yet oftentimes the world can have more faith than the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can forget how big our God is that we serve. Oh yes, he can do that. It is possible. We continue in verse 8. And so it was when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. And then verse 9, Naaman went with his horse, his horses and chariot, and stood at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean. But verse 11, Naaman became furious, and went away, and said, indeed, I said to myself, he will come. He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand all over the place, and heal the leprosy. Verse 12 are not the abna and the pharpar the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? And so he turned away in a rage And so we see now in the story, Elisha catches word that King Jehoram has torn his clothes, a sign of mourning, and Elisha sends word, Send Naaman on over to me. And so there he is. He's awaiting for Naaman to come. Naaman arrives with his entourage. And what Elisha does is not even go to the door. Naaman knocks on the door. Elisha doesn't even go down to answer. Instead, he sends a servant to go down there and to answer. And when the servant arrives, he shares with him a word from God. He says, all you've not got to do is go down to the Jordan River, dip seven times and you'll be cleansed. Now remember, Naaman went seeking an answer from God. He's received an answer from God. The issue is he doesn't like the answer that he received. Now, in looking at this, we have to give Naaman a little bit of grace here, because it's important to note that Jordan River, not beautiful. When you think of all the beautiful things that you can see in the Holy Land, the Jordan River, is not it? I hope you take the opportunity, despite everything you hear, to go with us in 2026 to Israel. But when we get there, one of the most beautiful sights to behold is not the Jordan River. It is a ugly, muddy mess. It looks like it reminds me of the crick behind my grandparents house. Now around here you might call them creeks. Where I'm from, we call them creeks. And so back behind their house they had a crick that my brother and I used to play in. You know, it was the same crick where the septic tanks all drain down in. That's where most of the water. No wonder we never got sick. Right? But that's the spot that I think of when I think of the Jordan River. And so as as Naaman hears this, he's thinking, I don't want to go into that muddy, nasty crick. And as a result, he's mad. In fact, for you old King James fans, the word for rage is actually the word wrath. He was wroth with anger, and in thinking about the word wrath, you know, we got some sayings where I'm from like this. He was madder than an old wet hen. He was madder than a boiled owl. I don't even know what that means, but that

sounds pretty mad. He was maybe like this one better. He was madder than a mule chewing on a mouthful of bumblebees. Okay, not for you. This next one will get you. He was madder than a three legged dog trying to cover up a **** on an icy pond. Let let that soak in a little bit. I am never getting invited back. That's what you know for sure. But I'm going down in a blaze of glory. And so the bottom line is Naaman was mad. He was. Really angry. But think about what he was really mad about. He had an expectation on how something was going to go and his interaction, even though his prayer was answered, his request was answered. It didn't meet his expectation. One of the biggest stealers of our joy in this life is unmet expectations. I think this is going to go this way. I think this is going to happen that way. And so I've got it all laid out there for God. All he's got to do is put his stamp of approval on it. Yet how often does it actually go the way you and I think? Never. At least not for me. Almost never. Does it go the way that we think it's going to go. And yet the Lord provided a way for him to be healed. The struggle for Naaman is the same struggle for us. He's used to being in control. He's used to pulling the levers. This is how this thing is going to go. He's a man in charge, and now he's in a situation that's out of control. He's not in charge of this thing. He is dying from the inside out. He's desperate for help. And it reminded me of a man from the New Testament that we know as the Messiah who came to a world that was dying. And you know why they rejected him more than anything else? Unmet expectation. He did not come in a package that they thought he was going to come in. And the way that they thought he was going to come, and therefore they rejected him. John chapter one, verse 11 says that he came to his own, and his own did not receive him. They rejected Jesus because they had ideas and thoughts of who the Messiah would be to come in and drive Rome out. And yet what did he come to do as a homeless, itinerant carpenter? Riding in on a donkey? Lowly? He came to drive away the leprosy that kills us from the inside out. And yet he didn't meet their expectations. And so this is the problem Naaman has with this whole situation. Now we continue in verse 13, and his servants came near and spoke to him and said, My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more? Then when he says to you, wash and be clean? And so he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean, a story of salvation. The salvation began with simple, basic obedience. He knew he was dying. He knew he needed an answer. And by simply being obedient to the Word of God, he now receives salvation. It started with someone sharing with him the good news, the little Hebrew girl there in his own house. She shares with him the gospel, the good news, the hope you can have in God. Now for this little girl. She was an unlikely character in and of herself, and reminds me how often we look at our lives and go,

who am I to share? I don't know enough Bible. I'm not polished enough. I don't have it all together like I'm supposed to have. The Lord uses unexpected people and unexpected situations to change the course of history. First Corinthians chapter 1, verse 27. This is what Paul says, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. If you're foolish, if you feel weak, guess what? Batter up. You're who God is looking for. He doesn't have to worry about sharing glory with people like me, because I'm foolish and I'm weak. And his good news goes forth. And so we see this happen with the Hebrew girl. The message was more important than the messenger. The message is too important for us to keep to ourselves. It's more important than my foolish pride. And so we're called to share the message. For Naaman, the struggle was one of legalism, something that plagues us so often. He said, if I could have done something mighty, surely Elijah should have waved his hand all around and done this or done that. And his friends came along and said, if he would have asked you to do something hard, you would have done it. And how often our flesh wants to take part in our salvation, doesn't it? We want boxes to check. We want to have something to do with us being in right relationship with God. But that's not grace, grace says. I don't think so. It's all Jesus, all the time. And so legalism wants to take part. What God asks for us is simple, basic obedience. Just like Naaman the Syrian here, who had the obedience and the faith of a little child, he comes out of the water with the skin of a little child. Mark chapter 10, verse 15, Jesus speaking says, assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it. Oh, how often we overthink it. He's just looking for basic obedience to believe that Jesus is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. That's it. That's all the harder this thing needs to be. Naaman arises from the water. A new man, a saved man, and he, verse 15, returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him. And he said, indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. Now therefore, please take a gift from your servant. And he said, That is Elijah. Elisha speaking says, as the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing. And he urged him to take it. But he refused. And so Naaman says, verse 17, then if not, please let your servant be given two mule loads of earth, for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offerings or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord. Verse 18. And yet in this thing may the Lord pardon your servant. When my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord please pardon your servant in this thing, and so Naaman comes back, a changed man, a new life, old life put away, and he desires desperately to worship, so much so that he's willing to take back two mule loads of dirt. I want to worship

on this ground. I want to worship the Lord my God. Now, on this spot. And the dirt becomes a touchpoint for him to worship. But his heart is good. His heart is to worship. His concern here at the end is, what about my job? What about my boss? I'm working in an ungodly place with this pagan man as my boss. What am I going to do? Is the Lord going to look past this thing when I'm standing in this temple of a false God that I don't even believe in? Check out the answer from Elisha here in verse 19. And then he said to him, go in peace. And so he departed from him a short distance He comes with this problem. How can I go back to this place? How can I worship in this spot? And Elisha gives him an unlikely response. He says, go in peace. Wait a minute. This is bad theology. He's taking truckloads of dirt. He's in the temple of Rimmon. Why doesn't he put a stop to this thing? This new believer needs to know all the regulations of believing in Yahweh, trusting in Jesus. And so what we see is what so often happens is we forget about the most important thing. And that is grace. Some of you have heard this phrase before. Grace is the main thing. If you've heard that phrase, I want to encourage you, wipe it out of your mind. Grace is not the main thing. Grace is the only thing. The only thing that sets us apart. The only thing that differentiates us from all these other religions. It is grace. It is God's riches at Christ's expense. It's nothing you and I have done nor earned. It is the grace of God to call us his children. It's what separates us from all the rest. It reminded me of the story in Matthew chapter 9. In Matthew nine, there's a woman there that had been bleeding for 12 years, and she was she'd spent all her money. She'd tried all the doctors, all the remedies. And finally she gets it in her head. If I can just get to Jesus, if I can just touch the hem of his garment, then I can be healed. I know that I can, and she arrives there. She touches the hem of his garment. Most of you know this story, and what happens is she's healed. Jesus then turns to her and corrects all of her bad theology. That's not how the story goes at all. Here's what Jesus says in verse 22. He says, be of good cheer, daughter. Your faith has made you well. Jesus was simply looking for a glimmer, a mustard seed sized portion of faith, and with that he can change the course of someone's eternity. He didn't need to correct all of her theology. She would work that out with the Holy Spirit in the time to come. And this is a struggle for you and I, especially as we believed in God, and we see new believers coming in. And by golly, you've got a lot of new believers in here. It's it's easy for us to want to correct everything. But here's the thing. This may have been somebody, but Mike will be back next week, so it'll be okay. You're not the Holy Spirit. I'm not the Holy Spirit. He is the corrector. He is the convictor. And he is so very gentle. As things fall off along the way, you know the role you and I are called to play, to share the gospel of grace. And this is fantastic news. This is news, grace, grace. God's grace, grace that is greater than all my sins. This is a story worth sharing with people. And so we're called to share, to communicate the gospel of

grace This past, it was like six weeks ago now I got the opportunity to go and share with a class there at Eastern Illinois University, class of master's students was a psychology class, and I was there on a panel with all these people from different religions. And so they had a Hindu guy down here, and they had for some reason, the Muslims got two people. They had me 2 to 1. They had a mormon, and then they had a Buddhist all on this panel. And I'm nervous about this thing. I don't get nervous to speak in front of you all, but I didn't know what to say. How this thing is going to go down. And so I'm praying through it. And finally, finally, as I'm in the parking lot, getting ready to walk in, here's what the Lord told me to share with them. He said, tell them about my grace. They can't hold a candle to my grace. And you know what? I wish the Lord would have gave me that a few hours before, but he gave it to me at least before I got in there. That's one, two. He was spot on. All their beliefs, and my heart was broken for them because all this idea of karma and works and they were working so doggone hard, they wanted so bad to be in right relationship with God. And yet they missed it because here he is in Jesus and his grace and his blood that's poured out for you and I. And so what the world needs is grace. The message is one of grace. Now, his question Naaman's was was, what about what about this false God that I'm going to have to go stand in the stinking temple with my boss? What am I supposed to do about this? Well, here's what Exodus chapter 20, verse 3 says, and at Woodlawn Chapel we're going through, we started in Genesis last year. We're now in Exodus 20. So last week we started the Ten Commandments. I got two commandments in I promise I'm going to finish today, just not on time, but here's commandment number one. You shall have no other gods before me. The first commandment God lays out there contained both the premise and a promise. The premise is this there are other gods that might sound offensive to some of you, but here's the thing. Look around. There are other gods, little g gods. But anything we put above the true and living God. It is a God, but his promise is this they will not stand. It doesn't matter how many we want to prop up or put before him, they are going to fall short compared to the true and living God. And so as we think about naming there before, Rehman, Rehman is not going to stand. This dude doesn't stand a chance before the true and living God. And Elisha knows it. And so when he sends Naaman in there, he's able to have a smile on his face and say, go in peace, brother. That God, that false little g got a room and he don't stand a chance with this guy. He's able to have grace upon him. We continue in verse 20 and here the story takes a shift. Now we're going from a new believer who's excited, who's on fire now to one who has walked with the Lord, who has seen the Lord but is now backslidden. But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said, look, my master has spared Naaman the Syrian, while not receiving from his hands that what he brought. But as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him. So Gehazi purchased a pursued Naaman.

When Naaman saw him running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, is all well? In verse 22? And he said, all is well. My master has sent me, saying, indeed! Just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments. And so Naaman said, please take two talents. And so we urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothes, and handed them to two of his servants. And they carried them on ahead. Verse 24. And when they came to the citadel, he that is Gehazi took them from their hand and stored them away in the house. And then he let them go, and they departed. And now, verse 25, he went in and stood before his master Elisha, and said to him, and Elisha said to him, where did you go? Gehazi and he said, your servant did not go anywhere. What we see here in these verses with Gehazi is a man who is now despising the provision of God. He's experienced all that God has provided, and he didn't like it. So he hatched himself a plan. He comes up with a plan to make a way for himself through lies, manipulation, and worst of all, misrepresenting the God of the universe. Thankfully, I didn't put a picture of any TV televangelist up there. You're welcome. But here's the thing is upset is that makes us to think about the blame isn't going to fall on Naaman, the one who is deceived. The blame will fall on the deceiver. The deceiver is the one that has to live for all of eternity with the decisions that he's made now for Gehazi, he Acts to Elisha, like you and I experience with our kids, oftentimes when we catch them, catch them red handed, doesn't he? Hey, where have you been? I've been Nowhere, man.

I ain't done nothing. I've been here the whole time.

So he's got this.

What? Who, me?

Why not.

Me?

Response. We go on in verse 26. And then he said to him, did not my heart go with you? When the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen, male and female servants? Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever. And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow, and so we see the backsliding. And now the fall for this man who had seen

so many amazing things that God had done in his life. But as we look at the backsliding of Gehazi, what I want to share with you is it didn't start in this chapter. This wasn't the beginning of backsliding. And this is what happens so often with us is is the backsliding, the falling away from God? It doesn't happen all in an instant. It's over the course of time and we can see this happen in Gehazi. Going back to chapter 4, because it's important to note that he was, first of all, he lacked compassion. In chapter 4, a woman comes to Elisha, whose son has just died, and she comes to Elisha, the man of God, who she knows can help in this situation. She falls down at his feet and in verse 27, but Gehazi came near to push her away Gehazi looking at this woman who's crying out that her child has just died, he decides to push Gehazi away. He lacks compassion for those who are struggling. This is one of the first signs of backsliding that we lack compassion for the world around us. Going out into the public just for me, just Walmart. I mean, it's hard to go into Walmart and not be moved. In fact, I leave sometimes and I just sit and cry in a parking lot. And I know I'm super manly and that's hard to believe, but but that's the reality. This world is lost. People all around so desperate with no hope. We have apartment buildings all around our church and I pray because there is there is no hope in those places. Lord, help them to be able to come to the knowledge of you where there is hope in this place. But for Gehazi, he's compassionless now his master Elisha. He says, let her alone, for her soul is in deep distress. He has compassion on this woman. He then sends Gehazi ahead to take his staff and to lay it on the face of the child. And what we see is the next thing that happens in life is not only is he compassionless, he's powerless. In verse 31, Gehazi went ahead of them, laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was neither voice nor hearing. And so Jesus's response is to do what he was asked. But his life had no power because he lacked compassion. He had no power in his life. Now Elisha is going to show up in this scene, and what he does is he he goes to work, he gets life on life with this boy, stretches out his hands hand to hand, gets up in his face, breathes upon him, eyes set upon the child. He gets involved. And when we get involved in people's lives, for one, it's messy. Ever been involved in helping somebody out? You know this to be true. It is a hot mess. What? Proverbs chapter 14, verse 4 says, is this where no oxen are? The trough is clean. That is true. If you're mucking stalls and there's no oxen, guess what? You're not getting any poo on yourselves. But here's the other part of verse 14. But much increase comes by the strength of an ox. We need oxen. We need people in our community surrounding us. If we expect things to get done for the kingdom. But let me tell you folks, it is a mess. You're going to get some on your shoes. Great news we got muck boots on sale at Rural King because you're going to get some poo on your shoes when you go to get involved in people's lives. But if you want to see the power of God, it comes through getting involved. Life on life, hand on hand, eye to

eye contact with other people. And so for Gehazi, he had no compassion. Therefore he saw no power. The third thing to point out is that he struggled in the faith compartment. He was faithless. Later on in chapter 4, a man shows up with the first fruits of his harvest, and as he shows up with the first fruits, he hands him over to Elisha, who at this point in time has got a whole school of ministry going. He's got like 100, you know, junior prophets that are all listening to Elisha do teaching. And this man comes with his first fruits, a small amount. And Elisha says this to Gehazi in chapter 4. There it is. Chapter four. He says, give it to the people. Verse 42, that they may eat, but Jesus's response is, what shall I set this before? A hundred men? This is a little bit of food for so many of these grown men. But notice the response, and this is going to sound familiar when you get to the New Testament. Elisha says, give it to the people that they may eat. For thus says the Lord, they shall eat and have some left over. They're going to have seconds, because God is so good. Now this is Gehazi, though lacking faith, this same man who just saw a child raised from the dead. That's kind of a big deal, is now lacking that God can provide food for the school of ministry, but it makes me wonder how many times I lack faith when I have seen resurrection story after resurrection story after resurrection story. You are here in a place where you see dozens of baptisms a year. You are witnessing a miracle. Please know that there is no greater miracle than a resurrected life. So why then, do we think that God cannot provide in our situation? Why do we think that God's arm is too short, that somehow he can't do this thing in my life, we see the miracles take place. He's the same God. Hebrews 13 says, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He's the same. It's our faith that struggles. And so to know that he has done it before and he will do it again. That's the lesson here to learn. And he doesn't need much faith from you. And I. One of one of my favorite people, she's gone home to be with Jesus here at Parkland Chapel. Many of you know her. A lady named Sandy Gallagher. Sandy would listen to your story. She was a great listener. She was also a great prayer warrior and a woman of God. But but I remember her sharing a story about an impossible situation, and she got to the end of the story, but with tears in her eyes and a big smile on her face, she got her finger up and she said, oh, but God But God, what was she making reference to? But God statements that exist throughout scripture. Statements just like this. Psalm 73, verse 26, my flesh and my heart fail. Anybody been there? No raise of hands needed. My flesh and my heart fail. But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Throughout Scripture there are these but God moments. And if we but grab a hold of the but God moment, we can see those things happen in our life right here today. Gehazi was faithless in the spot that he was in, which led him to chapter 5, where we're at, where lastly, finally, he was covetous. He looked at the provision of God, and he not only he not only denied it, he flat out despised it. He looked at what God had given him in his

life, and he said, not for me anymore. No thank you. A life of ministry. The spot I'm in. I'm tired of living with a lack. This is why Elisha chastised him, saying, is it time now for groves and gardens and all the things we're living with? The provision of God that he's given to you and I and so much of the time we can have covetousness rise in our hearts as we see these things start to take place, and so if you're in here this morning and you're in this spot, maybe you've been a believer for a long time. But things, things aren't like what they used to be. Compassion is started to fail. Faith has dwindled. I'm not seeing the powerful moves of God in my life. Maybe. Maybe you feel like the Righteous Brothers where you know you know it. You lost that love and feel. Whoa.

That love.

And. Feeling you lost that loving feeling. Cause it's. Whoa, whoa. First service did better than you all. Take that man. Where are you at? Goose? You lost that loving feeling. Here's the suggestion. If you're in that spot. Revelation chapter two. Verse five, where Jesus here is writing a letter to the church at Ephesus, where that love and feeling was gone, gone, gone. Whoa whoa whoa. He says, remember therefore, from where you have fallen, repent and do the first works Go back to those things that were early on in your walk. Maybe it was a devotional, a Bible reading. I'll share what it is for me when I get in this spot, and I realize I'm getting hard hearted and things are getting tough, and I'm not seeing the moves of God that I was, I go back and I listen to the old recordings. I'm so thankful to Parkland Chapel and the technology team for saving all those archives, because I go back and I, I click on the the study through Matthew from 11 years, 12 years, 13 years ago, and I let the Lord move on my heart again, the way he did way back a decade ago, where the move was so powerful. I have to pull over my truck and just sob like a baby. It's hard to show up at a construction site when you've been sobbing like a baby but the Word of God moving so powerfully through those first things, I don't know if that's your jam or not, but if it is, go back to those first things, those initial things, and see what God might do, how the compassion is restored, the power is renewed. The faith begins to be rejuvenated. And then all of a sudden you can look at what God's done in your life and go, thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jehovah Jireh. God, my provider. And so, Lord, thank you. Thank you for your word. Thank you for this gracious group that let me go into overtime. Lord, that I don't know how many people that was for today, but I know for sure that was for me. So I thank you that your word is real, and it is living. It is sharper than any two edged sword, and it cuts between the soul and the spirit. Lord, help us to get back to that spot. Thank you for the new believers you surround us with. Thank you for the works that you're doing in this place where we can be excited about new belief and new faith

in you. Help that to be a rejuvenation and a recharge. For those of us that have been walking with you for a while, Lord and man, we want some of that again. We want to be restored like that again. Lord, we believe that you can do that in our lives. Father, I want to thank you for this place. I want to thank you for what you've done through Mike and Lucinda I thank you for the work you started 20 years ago. That changed my life and my family's life for all of eternity. Thank you for this place. Thank you that you keep making it new and afresh. But there's roots of the old that go down deep, built upon the Word of God. Continue to bless this place and pour out your spirit upon it, that there could be many more salvations, many more baptisms, many more church plants We pray all this in Jesus name, Amen. Let's stand.