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Alright. Well, it's good to see everybody here today. How are you doing? You doing good? Good.

We are one church gathering right now in multiple locations around our city. So I want to say hello to each and every one of our campuses, regardless of wherever you are joining us from. I know that we have a number of people hosting watch parties around the country, so if you're watching online so good to have you.

We're in week number three of this series of messages that we've called *Rumble Strip*. We've all probably had that experience before where maybe we're on a long road trip, maybe we're pulling an all-nighter trying to get to Florida on spring break, maybe we take our eyes off of the road for just a moment on our daily commute and that's when we hear the sound and feel the vibration of a rumble strip.

And basically, if you've missed the first two weeks of this series, the big idea is that there are these rumble strips along the side of the road. They are grooves in the road that are actually are designed to keep us on the road. We've said that rumble strips do three big things:

They wake you up, alerting you to danger

They are still well inside the safety zone

That's important to remember. If they were all the way to the edge of the pavement then they wouldn't give you a whole lot of time to make a course correction. And number three:

They assist you and me in arriving safely to our destination

So what we've been saying each week is that just as we need rumble strips along the side of the road, we need a few in life as well. And God has given us some of these rumble strips. They are found in the principles of his word as well as in the promptings of the Spirit—the principles and the promptings. And they assist you and me in helping us get from where we are to where we want to be.

Now, here on week number three I want to give us another definition so we can see another angle of this. I might say it this way:

"Rumble strips" are a standard of behavior that become a matter of conscience.

So, what that means is that when we hit the rumble strip it lights up our conscience making us aware of something.

I've heard from a number of you since we've started this series: direct messages, emails, conversations in the hallway just recognizing that there were a few rumble strips in your life that you ignored, maybe that you wish that you would have paid attention to.

Some of you have come up to me in tears and said, "I didn't really fully know how to say it but as I am going through this series, I'm recognizing that there are some rumble strips going off in my life right now." And they are there for our own good. They keep us from swerving off of the road, over the embankment, hurting ourselves and the people we love.

Now, with that said, I want us to be really careful that we don't confuse the rumble strips for just another set of religious rules. I think that so easily we can do that. I think that when it comes to what we would call matters or issues of conscience that sometimes this can turn into a really destructive thing when we sort of impose our matters of conscience upon other people.

Paul actually goes into great length discussing that in his letter to the Corinthians. And when that happens, it can distract us as well as other people who need to experience the power and the grace of God from really experiencing it.

It kind of reminds me of the words of that great theologian, Homer Simpson, who one time when he was asked, "What religion are you?" said, "You know, the one with all the well-meaning rules that don't work in real life. Uh...Christianity."

Some nervous laughter in the room. Some of you are like, "Can we laugh at that? Is this a set up?"

I don't know, man. Some of you may agree with that statement. Maybe this is kind of articulating what you feel. You're sort of like, "What I kind of thought this was was a bunch of religious rules or moral standards."

Maybe you've sort of like... I don't know maybe you've kind of felt like this is God's plan—a giant game of Simon says with us. Remember that game from grade school? It's as if God is saying: Simon says believe in me. Simon says go to church. Simon says you'd better read your Bible. Go ahead and get that tattoo. Oops, Simon didn't say—alright?

We feel like maybe we're being set up or that God is trying to catch us doing something, or maybe you have had someone who called themselves a Christian and he sort of used the religious rules against you, kind of made you feel inferior or inadequate or less than and he sort of gave you that condescending look, you know the one. It just sort of made you feel as if you're being held to a standard, which by the way you never really remember agreeing to.

So for many of you, maybe if that was your experience with religion—it explains why you walked away. And you said, “I’m not religious.” Maybe you walked away from the church. Maybe you don’t talk to God much anymore. If that explains you in any way, shape or form—for starters, I’m really glad that you’re here or listening to this message. And I actually don’t blame you.

If that’s what I thought that God was offering, then I would walk away too. And what might surprise you even more than me saying that is that I think that Jesus would agree with you as well, because Jesus was fed up with religion and man-made rules that put distance between people and God.

In fact, one time in Matthew, chapter 5 Jesus said these words. He said: Hey, listen, “I’ve not come to do away with the Law,” so don’t misunderstand. We talked about this on week one. The Law—the 613 laws that are found in the Old Testament he goes: Hey, I’ve not come to do away with them.

Actually the Law is not a bad thing. The Law is actually a really, really good thing. The two big problems with the Law, there isn’t anybody who can live up to all 613 of them. And then, number two, when you try to use the Law to make yourself look better than you really are you make other people feel bad about themselves.

Jesus is like: Man, I’m so out on that. And so he says, “I’ve come not to do away with the Law,” but here’s the word he uses, he said, “I’ve come to fulfill it.” And that’s a really good thing. In other words Jesus says: Hey, you don’t have to be distracted trying to follow every nuance of the Law, what I want you to do is look at me. What I want you to do is invite me into your life.

Here’s another way of saying it. Jesus is like: Here’s the ball, I’ll block for you and let me run right through that defensive line. And last week I said in John, chapter 10, verse 10 Jesus said, “I have come to give you life, and life to the fullest,” which means that he is for you, which means that he wants you to experience joy—come on, if you’re going to clap, commit. No PGA golf claps in here.

Here’s another way of saying it:

The rumble strips are there, not to limit our lives, but to maximize the lives that we’ve been given.

So much of the time we don’t see it because there are so many things distracting us away from it—even those of us within the church, sometimes especially those with in the church. Oftentimes, I know this has been true for me—I came to Jesus, got saved by grace through faith, and then I started going back trying to follow the rules. And it distracts me away from the power and the healing that God wants to bring into my life.

Now listen. Following Jesus isn't always easy, but it should never be complicated. And sometimes we make it more complicated than it needs to be.

I don't think that I need to convince you that driving behind the wheel of a car is really dangerous when you are distracted. I think we would all agree with that. The National Safety Council actually provided a list of the top things that are distracting us as we drive. Most of these are not going to be surprising to you.

One of the ones they list is just eating and driving, alright? So no more Taco Bell kids.

Another one that they mention is music. We crank up the play list and we sort of get lost in the song and we stop paying attention to what we are doing.

Another is cell phones, texting and driving.

Another is other passengers in the car talking to us, distracting us.

I don't know if any of you have ever done this—slow down to look at an accident and then maybe you get into one.

Dozing off behind the wheel is another one.

And then one of the last ones that they list is putting on makeup, alright? So ladies—you look good. You look good but you're risking our lives, okay?

They go on to say that there are 1.6 million accidents each year. There are 390,000 injuries that occur each year from texting and driving. I don't think that that is a surprise to any of us.

But oftentimes, what we know to be true behind the wheel of a car, we often fail to see in our spiritual lives. What is at stake is much higher. And many of us are distracted away from what Jesus has truly called us to.

I want us to look at a little-known story tucked away in our Old Testament out of 2 Kings, chapter 5. So if you have a Bible or a Bible app would you go ahead and turn there. If you don't the verses that we'll walk through, I'll put up on the monitor beside me.

I want to look at this story of an individual in particular who really needed to experience the power and the healing that only God could provide, but he was distracted away from it.

Now, there are two primary characters in the story who I want you to be familiar with before we look at the passage. The first is a guy by the name of Elisha. Elisha was a prophet in the nation of Israel. Now a prophet was just simply a person who spoke to people on behalf of God.

The second character in the story you need to be familiar with is a guy by the name of Naaman. And Naaman was a general in an enemy army, the nation of Aram. And Naaman was this guy's kind of a guy. He was described as a might warrior. Ladies wanted to be with him. Guys wanted to be him, alright? He's just a stud.

It's amazing how much in common I have with Naaman. I mean, he's just my doppelganger, I feel like I'm looking in the mirror. I'm such a big dork. My wife is somewhere rolling her eyes. I can feel it.

So here you've got these two guys. Naaman is this intimidating figure and one day he gets diagnosed with a terminal disease. He gets diagnosed with leprosy. Now leprosy was a disease that started in your skin and it worked its way into your body attacking your vital organs. And there was no know cure.

Leprosy was not only a physical scare but it was social and relational death sentence—meaning when you got it you didn't want to tell anybody that you had it because as soon as they found out that you had it they would isolate themselves from you. And it was terrifying.

So, I want to pick this up in verse 2. It says, *"At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel,"* that's where Elisha is, *"and among their captives was a young girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. One day the girl said to her mistress, 'I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria,'"* that would be Elisha. *"He would heal him of his leprosy."*

Now the first thing that I want you to see here is that you've got this young girl from Israel who has been kidnapped. She has been taken captive by Naaman's army and she gets placed in Naaman's house as a captive, as a slave.

And here she is, being held against her will, she hears the dinner conversation, she knows that he has leprosy and she speaks up and she says: I know where he can get some help and some hope. It's pretty amazing. We don't know anything about this girl. We don't even know her name.

Now, if I'm in her situation, and I'm being held captive against my will, and the people who are holding me captive—if I found out one of them had a terminal disease, maybe this is just me, I'm not saying a word.

Maybe this is reflective of my heart, but I'm just guessing that some of you would feel the same way I would. I would just say, "Oh, you have leprosy, too bad. I hope you die a slow and painful and miserable death." But she doesn't. She speaks up and she says: I know where you can get some help. I know where you can get some hope.

So in verse 4, Naaman goes to his boss, the king of Aram and he explains the situation. He says: I don't want to alarm you. I've got leprosy. I haven't told anybody yet. And I've heard that there is somebody in Israel who can actually heal me of this. And the king of Aram says: Man, not only will I give you time off work, but I will send a text message to the king of Israel. We met each other one time at the last king's convention in Vegas. I know who he is, and I want you to get right over and get the help that you need.

Verse 5, *"So Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing."* He knows that this is going to be very expensive because this is out of network, alright? Don't tell me the Bible is boring.

Verse 6, *"The letter to the king of Israel said: 'With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy.'"*

Now, the king of Israel at this time was a guy by the name of Joram. And Joram, like most of the kings in Israel's history was paranoid and self-absorbed, which is a bad combination for any leader to have.

So when he received this letter, he thinks that this is a set up. He thinks that this is a political ambush that they are actually trying to use this to pick a fight with him because what will happen if Naaman comes and doesn't get what he wants, then they will say that this is a reason for them to invade.

Verse 7, *"When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, 'Am I God, that I can give life and take it away? Why is this man asking me to heal someone with leprosy? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me.'"*

*But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: 'Why are you so upset?'"* In other words, stop reading fake news. Get off of Facebook. He says, *"Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet here in Israel."*

Now, if you don't know anything at all about Elisha, here's all you really need to know. The whole purpose of Elisha's life was to shine a big, giant spot light on God. The whole purpose of his life was to say: Let me remove the distractions, let me eliminate the barriers, I don't care if you're an insider or an outsider, I don't care if you're from the nation of Israel or if you're a general in the enemy army of Aram—let me just shine a big spotlight on God.

Can I just say that that is the heartbeat of our church as well? When you come to serve and when you come to worship that should be the focus of all of our efforts. It's to just shine a big spotlight on God. I thought we would get some more clap behind that. That's good, alright? Hey, so far, I don't know about the other campuses, so far 9:30 is putting you all to shame—just saying. But it's not a competition.

*“So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha’s house. But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: ‘Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy.’”*

Now you’ve got to understand. Naaman is a big deal. Naaman is used to people making a big deal out of him when he shows up: like autographs, selfies all of those things. And he shows up to Elisha’s pad—I don’t know just with a whole bunch of Range Rovers. They’ve got the whole crew and they pull up and Elisha’s assistant runs in and says: Hey, Naaman’s here. And I love this, Elisha goes: Oh, yeah, yeah. I forgot about that. Go out and tell him to take a swim in the Jordan River.

I just love the fact that Elisha doesn’t go out to meet him. I don’t know what he was doing. I envision that he was shaving. I just envision that he was standing there in his towel shaving casually, drinking his coffee, and he says: Yeah, I don’t have time to go out and meet this guy who is a big deal.

And as you might imagine, Naaman gets ticked off. Look at verse 11: *“But Naaman became angry and stalked away. ‘I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!’ he said. ‘I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy’”* I don’t know all hocus pocus stuff, *“and call on the name of the LORD his God and heal me! Aren’t the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel?”*

In other words, he’s talking about the rivers that he has back home. He’s like: They are far superior than what we have here. *“Why shouldn’t I wash in them and be healed?’ So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.”*

In other words he’s going: I’ve come all of this way and you didn’t even come out to say hello to me and now you’re telling me to go down to an inferior river and go swimming. This is ridiculous. It’s a joke.

Now here’s the thing that Naaman couldn’t have possibly seen or understood at the moment. In Israel the Jordan River had a really special place in their history. Maybe some of you might remember this from your Old Testament history. When the Israelites escaped captivity in Egypt it was the Jordan River that they crossed to go into the Promised Land. And it was this symbol that recognized God had delivered them, he had given them some freedom, and now it was a new beginning.

The Jordan River would be the place where many, many years later John the Baptist would baptize thousands of people. Jesus, himself, would be baptized in this river. But Naaman couldn’t have possibly seen this, he couldn’t have possibly understood it.

Naaman did have one thing right. It was just a river. There was nothing especially significant or special about this river. There were no magical qualities in this river that would have healed him of his leprosy—just a normal river.

It's kind of like baptism. One of the things that God asks us to do after we trust him with our lives is to be baptized. I know for many of you that's maybe kind of a confusing thing or it's a frustrating thing or a discouraging thing—something that you don't necessarily want to do. And you're like, "Well, what's the big deal about it?"

I want you to know that there is nothing in the waters of the baptistry that save you. I know that's a big disappointment for some of you. Some of you are like, "I thought you piped that in directly from the Holy Land. Some of you are like, "I thought there were like some Holy Spirit Epson salts in the baptistry, but there's nothing special in that water.

In fact, it's just the opposite. It's actually pretty gross. Like if you only knew. If you only knew. Especially when we do spontaneous baptisms. I've been in there. I feel like after 30 people or so it starts to feel kind of funky, alright?

I'll hold my hands up and I've got hair intertwined through my fingers. There's like a nice, little layer of some kind of scum on the top. It's just like body oil and make up—I don't know. And now you're like, "I am definitely not being baptized now. It's not happening. There's nothing special in the water. So what's the big deal?"

Here's what the big deal is. In baptism, your humility and obedience meet Jesus there. And something powerful happens. And the same thing is going to happen to Naaman. It's just a river. And Elisha is really sort of like wondering: Will you have the humility and the obedience to do something that you don't understand, to do something that's maybe confusing to you.

Naaman is upset. He's pacing around, mumbling under his breath. That's when his men speak into his life. Look at verse 13, *"But his officers tried to reason with him and said, 'Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'"*

There's a lot of wisdom in that. Bro, can you dial it down just a bit. This isn't that big of a deal. Why are you so angry? They're saying: Hey, listen. Didn't you expect him to tell you to do something difficult, invasive, or painful? Didn't you expect him to say: Hey, we need to put under and we'll cut you open? You probably would have done it. If he would have said: Here, drink this green stuff. You probably would have done it.

All he's telling you to do, man, is go for a swim. What's the harm in that? Let's go down. Let's have a swim. Let's see what happens and then we'll go home.

Aren't you grateful for people like that in your life? I hope you've got some people like that in your life. People who will talk you down off the ledge. People who will speak into your life when your emotions get the best of you and their words clear your head and reset your heart.



And by the way, could I just say that last week we set a record, I believe, in the history of our church. We had over 200 of you go to Growth Track and say that you wanted to be in a group. And I just want to say, man, way to go. That's incredible. Over 200 of you said you don't want to do this alone. You need people speaking into your life. And I just say way to go and I hope that you follow through. I know that maybe you've slept since then, maybe something has happened this last week. Follow through on it. Continue to do what you said you were going to do.

Well, Naaman, to his credit, he calms down and he listens, and he goes down to the Jordan River. He doesn't understand at all what he's doing. Verse 14, *"So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed!"*

Now some of you might be wondering like what's the big deal with seven times. That seems like a little bit of overkill. Why seven times. Was it like he dips six times and he still had leprosy and then he goes down the seventh time and he's healed? How does that all work? Did it just fade a little bit over time?

I don't know. But the number in the Bible that represents completion or perfection—many of you know this—is seven. But I think there's even another principle that we could sort of bag up and take home with us today and apply it to our lives—it's just simply this... It's a principle that many of us are learning: Repetition is what healing requires.

What I mean by that is that for many of us we're looking for quick fixes, easy solutions, one and done. And God isn't trying to bail you out of a scenario, God wants to change your heart. God wants to heal you.

There have been so many times when I really don't want like Heavenly Father transformational God to kind of do heart surgery—what I really want is vending machine God, "I've told you what I want. Just give it to me, alright?"

And then when God doesn't give you what you asked for, that he said he would never give you, then you say, "Well, I don't have any use for you."

See, what seven represents here is man, don't give up. Like for many of you, you need to continue to show up. You need to continue to go to your group. You need to continue to have that conversation. You need to continue to be forgiving. You need to continue to humble yourself and surrender yourself and just lean in over and over and over again and see what God would do.

Look at what it says in verse 17, *"Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find" Elisha, "the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant.' But*

*Elisha replied, 'As surely as the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts.' And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused."*

I love this. Elisha is saying: Hey, listen. I don't want any compensation. I don't want any money for what I did. I can't take any credit for what happened to you because I didn't do anything. Do I need to remind you that I didn't even come out and say hi?

And actually, there is a reason why I didn't. It's because I didn't want you to be confused or distracted as to where the power came from. The power didn't come from me. The power came from God and I wanted you to see that. I wanted you to know that it was the power of the living God that met you in your obedience, Naaman.

I wanted you to know that when you didn't understand it, when you were confused by it, when you were frustrated with it, when you almost talked yourself out of it, God showed up. Even though you went reluctantly down to the river.

And, Naaman, to your credit you did it. I know it sounds crazy—Jordan river, seven times. Like I was half joking—you actually did it. You humbled yourself. You went down there and, in your humility, and obedience, that's when you met God there. There is a word for it. It's called faith. And God showed up in the midst of your surrender, in the midst of your need, and he healed you. God's grace is free. He just loves you man. He wants you to be healed.

It's an incredible story and it doesn't get a lot of air play. In fact, for many of you maybe it's the first time you've ever heard it. I know for me; it had been years since I reviewed it. I had to walk my way back through it.

Did you know that Jesus actually references this story in his teaching in Luke, chapter 4? The setting is that Jesus is teaching in the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. And he references this story and it just about got him killed. The people wanted to throw him off of the side of a cliff.

Now, as someone who communicates for a living, can I just tell you that if your response after I get done is, "Let's kill him," I don't know. Maybe I should rethink this whole career path, alright? That's what I need to do.

But that's what happened to Jesus and all he did was reference this story we just walked through. Here's what he said in Luke, chapter 4. Jesus says this to the people in the synagogue, *"...many in Israel had leprosy in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one,"* the only one, *"healed was Naaman, a Syrian."*

And that's actually what triggered the people's anger and they wanted to throw him off of the side of the cliff. Now, what's the big deal with what Jesus just said here? Here's the big deal. Here's what Jesus was saying. Jesus was saying: Hey, listen. Naaman wasn't the only one who had leprosy back then.

A whole bunch of people had leprosy—people who had home field advantage. People who didn't need to get time off work and a letter from their king, because they had direct access to Elisha right there in their back yard. People who were considered the people of God. They had leprosy and they could have experienced the power and healing of God but for whatever reason they didn't experience it. They didn't humble themselves. They didn't obey. But an outsider did. A Syrian by the name of Naaman.

Jesus was issuing a warning and they picked up on it. Jesus was saying: Hey, there's no room for entitlement in the kingdom of God. Just because you think that you've got direct access to God because of—and you fill in the blank: because of the denomination you grew up in, because of your theology, because of your moral choices, because of your matters of conscience that you abide by but others don't seem to, because of the way that you vote... On and on it could go. Jesus says: Hey, hey. Be careful that after you come to God that you actually don't get distracted from the power of the gospel.

Jesus just might show up and save the person you might least expect.

That's what he is saying. And as a church may we never forget that because the minute that we forget it is the minute that we begin to become just another religious institution that slowly dies a long, painful death.

Several weeks ago I got a letter in the mail. It was just this summer. I got in my office. I'm kind of working through... I'd been travelling and so I was opening up some mail and some things that I received. And I had this hand written letter from someone who had visited our church. So I began to read the letter and it started this way:

I visited your church this Sunday past.

And I thought, "Did you just crawl out of a time machine? Are you from a different era?" That whole letter was kind of written in that style. It was unusual. And very clearly, he wanted me to know that he was a Christian. He'd been a believer for a long time. He visited our church one Sunday over the summer and he was unhappy about something. It was on a Sunday that I wasn't here. I was actually traveling.

Ryan Bramlett, our Downtown campus pastor, was preaching that weekend. He'd done an incredible job. But he [the writer of the letter] was upset, how should I say this? With Ryan's stylistic choices, in particular he had some rips in his jeans that morning. Apparently, he fell on the way in. I don't know. I don't know.

So he was upset about that. The whole letter was talking about the rips in his jeans, how it was an affront to the holiness of God and how dare we? And, "I hold you accountable because you're the lead pastor," and on and on he went.

Now listen. I don't want you to misunderstand me. This individual had every right to express his opinion about not liking Ryan's jeans. You have every right to express your opinion about the shirt that I'm wearing. You may not like it. You may not like my face and you can tell me that. You have the freedom to do that. I'm not telling you that you don't have the freedom to say something.

What disappointed me about the letter, especially from somebody who made it very, very clear that he was a Christian, was that it was harsh, and it was mean spirited, and he didn't say one thing about Ryan's message. So, I actually went back and listened to it.

That particular morning Ryan did an incredible job pointing people to the hope that can be found in Jesus. The gospel was crystal clear in his teaching.

And what discouraged me is that he didn't reference that one time, especially in the fact that Scripture makes it very clear; Man looks at the outer appearance. God looks at the heart. So what we need to understand here is just simply this. Jesus is on a search and rescue mission for people who are really, really far from God.

There is a passage in Jude that says to snatch others from the fire, meaning that I want to be close enough to the flames to smell like smoke. I don't want to retreat into my holy bubble and begin to just kind of cast religious rule bombs into people's lives. I want to get up close and be compassionate with people because Jesus is on a search and rescue mission. May we never get distracted away from that.

So, one time in the gospel of John, Jesus walks up to a 38-year-old man who is a paralytic. He had been paralyzed his whole life. He's laying beside this pool in Jerusalem that was known to have some medicinal qualities. He thought that maybe they could heal him. And Jesus asks him this penetrating question.

He says, *"Would you like to get well?"*

Can I just turn that question toward you today, whoever you are? Maybe it's somebody here trying to recover from the religious rules game. Maybe it's somebody here who just realized that they've actually become quite callous toward people in this world who are far from God. Maybe you're here today and you're saying, "Man, I am far from God and I'm really wrestling with some stuff." Can I just very compassionately say, "Man, do you want to get well?"

What is it that you need healing from? Chances are it's not leprosy. Maybe it's something physical, maybe it's something emotional, maybe it's fear, maybe it's anxiety, maybe it's depression, maybe it's loneliness, maybe you feel stuck right now in your life. Maybe you're overwhelmed. Maybe right now you're just tired of being a cynic.

Do you want to get well?

If so, the first place to begin—just like Naaman—is recognizing that you need to get well. There's something that's holding you back and you've got to surrender if you want to get well.

Several years ago I had this cough that wouldn't go away. I didn't feel bad other than the cough. The cough was more annoying than anything. And I kept saying to myself, "Not a big deal. I'll get over it. Just a few more days. I'll keep popping these cough drops and it will be fine." But it wasn't fine.

And people would come in and I'd be hacking up a lung as we were talking. It was like, "Hey, bro. Have you gone to the doctor?" I'm just like, "I'm busy and they'll want money. It will be fine." This went on for a week, two weeks, three weeks.

Finally one day, I won't forget it, some of the ladies in the office had an intervention. And they walked into my office, it was very solemn. They huddled up around me. They said, "Aaron, we love you. You're going to the doctor. There is a van outside that will take you, alright? On the way back we'll go through Wendy's get you a frosty, okay?"

And I went to the doctor and guess what? I had bronchitis. Ain't coming back from that one with Halls, right? The first step to recognize that I needed to be healed from something was to be honest about what I needed to be healed from.

And Naaman wasn't going to heal himself. And you aren't either.

See, when you can surrender and when your humility and obedience meet Jesus, man, there's incredible freedom and the power of God will surge into and through your life.

So, can I just leave you with this encouragement today? For those of you who need some healing, man:

Don't give up.

Don't give up. Some of you walked in here today hanging on by a thread. Some of you walked in here today not quite sure if you were going to follow through. Can I just say, man: Don't give up? You might be reluctant, you might be confused, you might be frustrated—I get it. Man, I understand. Please don't give up.

Here's the next thing:

Just show up.

Just show up. That's all God is asking you to do. Just show up. Now, how does that fit into the context of your life? Maybe for some of you, you need to start showing up in your marriage because you're not. Some of you need to start showing up in a

relationship. Some of you need to start showing up in your spiritual life. You just need to show up.

Maybe the only thing you can do is... “I don’t want to come to church today but I’m just going to come. I’m just going to show up. I’m going to sit there in the seat and just take a deep breath and surrender.” And I bet you in your humility and obedience, God will meet you right where you are at.

So, let me encourage you with words that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. He’s talking about some of the things that his team went through in the province of Asia. I just want to leave you with this passage right here.

He says, *“We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead.”*

They had all of these problems, all these issues, all these hardships and what it taught them was to stop relying upon themselves and start relying upon God.

There is power that is there to bring healing into your life—whatever that looks like. So, let’s just take a moment and ask Him to do that.

Father, we come to you right now and I pray that regardless of who we are, regardless of where we’ve been, regardless of what we’re struggling with that right now, today, that we would just simply surrender.

Maybe what we need to do as we are sitting here is we just need to hold up our hands, not high, just hold up our hands right in front of us—open handed—just as a sign to say, “God, I surrender. I’m coming empty handed to you. I’ve been relying upon myself too much. I’ve been holding onto the ledge, thinking I’m walking by faith, but really I’m holding on to the ledge until the footing seems to be there and then I’ll let go.” But what you really are saying to us is just let go.

Some here today need healing physically. I pray that you would give it to them. Some here today needs healing emotionally or spiritually. God, I pray that you would bring the healing that only you can.

So, help us to not give up, to just show up and allow you to do what only you can. And we ask this in Jesus’ name. And everybody says: Amen.