

# Bro. Mark Bryant

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning.

I love to hear the chatter of fellowship in the sanctuary. Ain't nothing like it. Loving one another, expressing kindness to one another, acceptance to one another. That's what it's all about. Amen. Amen. As Brother Ronnie said earlier, Pastor and his wife are in Alabama.

Ms. Carrie's aunt or aunt, depending on where you're from, passed away. And they're there to celebrate her life. And so we just pray that they get home safely and that we just pray for their families and pray for them.

And then I really appreciate Brother Jeff, him sharing his talent with us this morning. That was a beautiful song. And I tell you, he's right on point that if it was every time the world needed Jesus, it was today.

Amen. Kind of goes hand in hand in the message. And that's all ordained by God. And I'm just thankful to be a part of it. Amen. I want to talk to you about this week that we've had.

[ 1 : 09 ] We've had a bad week. El Paso, Texas. Dayton, Ohio. Our prayers go out to them. Our heart goes out to them. Could you imagine walking into Walmart to get a few items before you head home after work?

And to be murdered, innocently murdered, because someone's angry. And the world, the media, the press, they want to say that it's because of this or it's because of that.

Or they want to ask why. And I just want to scream at the television saying you're asking all the wrong questions. You should be saying what. And it is nothing but sin. That's all it is. Evil and wickedness and sin.

And unfortunately, that's the world that we live in today. And that's the importance of the word of God being spread throughout our communities. Some people will even complain about me bringing it up in here, saying, oh, you shouldn't be talking about it.

But I'm going to tell you, I believe it all in my heart. The church has been silent for too long. And it's time that the people of this community and of this world hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 07 ] And I'm going to try my best to share it with you today. And I know I'm nervous, but I can tell you there's one here more nervous than I am. And that's my beautiful wife, Gloria. So, well, we're going to go ahead and get started.

And I want to talk to you about today's message. And I find myself asking, does society really believe we can heal this land with our own resources? Some people think we can.

But I'm going to tell you, we can't heal it without the word of Jesus Christ. And the Bible warns us of times like this. You know, like Brother Gray said earlier a couple weeks back that God's right on time.

This world's right on time. He doesn't get surprised. And he told us ahead of time that things were going to get bad. But there's hope for those that believe in Jesus Christ. And it's going to get better for us. We just got to weigh the storm, right?

So, I have met, in saying that, I've met several people throughout my life. And I've talked to several people throughout my life. And I've realized that nobody wants to go to hell.

[ 3 : 07 ] I have not found one person to tell me, yes, I'm ready to go to hell. I want to go to hell. I don't know about you, but I've never found that person. Everyone wants to go to heaven.

And some tell me, I'll be saved, but I don't want to do it right now. Society thinks that they can be saved on their terms. And that's the problem that we're facing today.

And that's the results that we see today. People thinking they can be saved on their terms. No one wants to be lost. And many people will even get angry with you if you suggest that they are lost.

They call you a hate monger. Or they don't want to hear it. Or they walk away from you. Never to have a conversation with you again. And so we see here that today's world and in society, everyone thinks that they can be saved on their own terms.

People today want to go to heaven. They want to be saved according to what they think. Well, I think that if I do this or if I do that, I'll be saved. Well, I'm better than that guy. And I'm not as bad as that guy.

[ 4 : 07 ] So I think I'll get in. I really think I'll get in because I'm just in the middle of the road without even reading the Word of God. Society wants to have their own way.

They want to change the rules because the current rules don't fit their lifestyle. They say, well, it's inconvenient. So I'm going to say we can do this. Or I can say we're going to do that. You might get away with that down here.

But when it comes to the Word of God, changing the rules is not an option. And we're going to see that here in a minute. We've got churches today that call themselves the Bride of Christ. And they facilitate things that are completely contradictory to the Word of God.

That's a scary place to be, brothers and sisters. And I pray and I'm thankful that we're in a church that is biblically sound and preaches the Word of God.

And even though it might tan your hide, at the same time it gives you hope. And that's the church I want to be associated with.

[ 5 : 08 ] Society today has a problem of following the rules. People today try to change the rules. Now when a man purchases a suit, the first thing he does is he gets it altered before he even puts it on.

He gets it sized up, takes it to the hymnist. He says, let me know when it's ready. He goes back, it's all tailored, just perfect for him. Then that's the first time he wears it. But I want to tell you right now, brothers and sisters, the robe of righteousness cannot be altered.

Man has to be altered to the robe of righteousness. We've got it backwards in today's society.

According to God's Word, salvation would be first base for all y'all that play softball and baseball and know the game of baseball.

Baptism and church membership would be second base. Third base would be Christian service. And waiting to go home. But not in today's world.

Today's world, we got people that think they can hit the ball and go straight to second base. Now if we did that on a baseball field, fans, coaches, parents, especially parents, would be screaming, that person's out.

[ 6 : 17 ] They can't do that. He's out. But yet, we try to do that in our churches today. Brothers and sisters, we have to hit first base first. If you don't receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, everything else is for nothing.

We got people that join the church without ever being saved. We got people being baptized without even being saved. Brothers and sisters, I'm not up here to be saved.

I'm up here because I am saved. The Lord Jesus Christ changed my life and I pray that he changes yours today. The Bible says, whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.

But whoever does not believe is condemned already. Mark 16, 16. Brothers and sisters, the foundations of everything that we do is to repent and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Turn with me to 2 Kings chapter 5. 2 Kings chapter 5 in the Old Testament. We're going to read verses 1 through 14. 2 Kings. I'll give you time to get there.

[ 7 : 23 ] 2 Kings. And we're going to talk about how people think on their own how you can get to heaven. And then we're going to see how God says you must get to heaven.

You must do certain things to be cleansed. 2 Kings chapter 5. 2 Kings chapter 5 verse 1 through 14. 2 Kings chapter 5 verse 1 through 14.

I'm going to read this for you. Don't laugh. If you're not here yet where you've got to have reading glasses, you're going to get there. So don't laugh at me. It says, chapter 5 verse 1.

Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Abram, was a great man with his master and highly respected. Because of him, the Lord had given victory to Abram. The man was also a valiant warrior, but he was a leper.

Brothers and sisters, if you don't have Jesus Christ today, you are a leper. Now the Aramans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel.

[ 8 : 28 ] And she waited on Naaman's wife. Verse 3. She said to her mistress, I wish my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria.

Then he would cure him of his leprosy. Naaman went and told his master, the king, saying, thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel.

Then the king of Abram said, go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothes. In verse 6, he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, And now, as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of leprosy.

When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, Am I God to kill and to make alive that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy?

[ 9 : 27 ] But consider now and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me. Verse 8, it happened when Elijah, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, Why have you torn your clothes?

Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. Verse 9, Naham came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elijah.

Elijah sent a message to him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you, and you will be clean. But Naaman was furious, and he went away and said, Behold, I thought he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.

Are not Abana and Farah far, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in rage.

Then his servant came near and spoke to him and said, My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, Wash and be clean?

[ 10 : 40 ] So he, being Naaman, went down and dipped himself seven times into Jordan, according to the word of the man of God. And his flesh was restored, like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Let us pray. Father, dear Heavenly Father, we're just so grateful to open up your word, Father. And at this time, we ask that you open up our hearts, Father. Lord, that you speak to us through your holy word, Father, in such a way that it causes us to respond.

That it causes us to respond, to be a witness for you, to glorify your kingdom, and to bring others to you. And Father, I pray, if anyone doesn't know your Son and Savior on a personal basis, Lord, I pray that today be the day that they receive Jesus Christ.

And in his name we pray. Amen. So as we see, Naaman, he's a soldier. I kind of like soldiers. I'm partial to soldiers. He's a soldier, and he's not only a soldier, but he's a fearless soldier.

He's a great warrior. He only answers to the king of Syria. He was a man that was considered full of valor in battle.

[ 11 : 49 ] He's been a conqueror of many things. He's got accolades on his walls. He's got medals. He's got citations. He's got everything that says that he is a man's man. He's a soldier.

He's faithful and loyal to his king and his country. But he still has leprosy. He's well-respected in the environment. He's well-respected in the community.

There's little boys, I'm sure, young soldiers. They want to be just like him when they mature and they get big. But he still has leprosy. He's done all the right things according to his country.

Served it well. Served it with pride. But he still has leprosy. In verse 2, we saw that a young girl, an Israelite, was held captive by Haman's army.

And she was brought into Naaman's house. And she was the maidservant for Naaman's wife. She could have been angry. She could have been bitter.

[ 12 : 52 ] She could have laughed when she found out her king had leprosy. She could have sat in a corner and remained silent and said, I hope he dies. He took me from my family. I'm a victim.

But that ain't what she did. She shared a way for him to be healed. She started the process in motion. A small, young, silent voice said, I know a man.

I know a prophet that can heal your king. Think about that, brothers and sisters. Think about that. A young woman that was captive from a hostile army witnesses to the very people that have her in bonds and in chains saying, I know a prophet that can heal you of your disease.

That's a great example for all of us. As we go out in the community, as we go out into the workplace, as we go out into the schools, as we go out to the ball games to tell someone, I know a prophet that can heal you.

In society's eyes, he was the man. In society's eyes, everybody wanted to be him. But in God's eyes, he had leprosy. So in saying that, the young girl told Naaman's wife.

[ 14 : 14 ] Naaman, of course, told her husband. Naaman runs to his king and tells him, hey, this little girl said this and this little girl said that. The king, who loves his captain, who's been a great warrior for him, said, go.

Go to Israel. I'll write a letter to the king of Israel and I'll let him know to heal you. So he grabs all the money that he has. He grabs all the silver and all the gold.

Takes ten changes of clothes. The silver and the gold that he took back then, they say today, would equal up to close to a million dollars. He automatically thought it was going to be expensive.

I'm here to tell you today, brothers and sisters, that salvation is free. It costs, but it's free for you and I. It costs God Almighty, his only begotten son, but it's free to you.

And all you have to do is receive it through the grace of God. Through faith, you shall be healed.

Through his grace, through his mercy, his son gave up his life so that you may be saved and you may be healed.

[ 15 : 23 ] Because by faith, without faith, no one can please God. But through faith today, you can receive the ever powerful, ever healing of Jesus Christ.

So he goes down there. He sends the letter to the king of Israel. And the first thing the king of Israel says is, Am I God to kill and to make alive? This man is sending word to me to cure a man of leprosy.

This king is trying to start a fight with me. He thought the king of Syria was trying to start a fight with the king of Israel because he said, Hey, I'm sending my captain, my main warrior down there to be healed by one of your prophets.

The king of Israel said, He's trying to start a war. There's no way I can heal somebody. Elijah, the prophet, heard of his king, the king of Israel, being in great despair.

He tore his clothes and was in mourning because he thought he was fixing to go to battle. He knew there was no way that he could heal Naaman. So Elijah comes to him.

[ 16 : 25 ] He says, Hey, boss, king, send him to me. Brothers and sisters, I have to ask you and I've asked myself this same thing. When someone's in trouble, when someone is mourning, when someone needs to be consoled, when someone needs to be loved on, do people say, Hey, send them to Mark.

Send them to so-and-so. Send them to so-and-so. Do they say send them to you? Is that the type of reputation you have in the community, in the workplace? If someone's hurting, I can go to him or I can go to her.

That's the message we should be sending our communities, in our workplace, in our society. You can come to me. So Elijah tells the king of Israel, Send Naaman to me.

He says, Send him to me. Send the leopard to me and he will know there is a prophet in Israel. He says, Send him to me. And he'll know there's a prophet in Israel.

Elijah knew that he couldn't heal him, but he was the prophet of the God that could heal him. So he said, Send him to me. So when Naaman heard that, he shows up on Elijah's front doorstep with all his chariots and all his gold and all his silver.

[ 17 : 43 ] And he's standing out in front of the front door saying, Hey, here I am. Come take care of this. I see that today in today's churches. People coming in saying, All right, preacher, serve me.

We got it backwards. We should be serving the church. We should be serving the society. Naaman pulls up with all his wealth and riches and all his entourage and says, I'm here on the front door.

Come make me whole. Naaman automatically thought he had to make a good impression. He tried so hard to show that he was worthy to be healed. He brought all the bells and whistles to say, Hey, this is the kind of guy that's asking for healing.

This is one of your top 10% guys here. I'm a good guy. Come heal me. I didn't impress Elijah. Elijah didn't even come outside. Elijah the prophet didn't even go to the front door.

Didn't even meet Naaman. Didn't even see him face to face. He sent a messenger. He said, Go wash in Jordan seven times and you'll be clean. Verse 11.

[ 18 : 52 ] It shows that Naaman was furious. Salvation, cleansing didn't work out the way he thought it would work out. So many times we got people to say, I'm going to get saved and it's going to be like this.

And it's going to be like this. And it's going to be like that. And I'll do this and I'll do that. It don't work like that. The Holy Spirit draws you to the Lord Jesus Christ.



He humbled himself seven times. And on the seventh time, he came up and he was cleansed. His skin was cleansed, the Bible says, as a little child.

In verse 14. So he went down and dipped himself seven times into Jordan, according to the word of the man of God. And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child.

And he was clean. Brothers and sisters, we too have the prophets. We too have Moses.

We too have all things that Naaman was given. And it's called the word of God. But so many times we want to alter the word of God to where it fits our lifestyle.

[ 24 : 53 ] We want to make salvation a servant instead of us being the servant. We don't want to humble ourselves before Jesus Christ, before the altar.

We don't want to dip at the altar. Because someone might see us. Someone might judge us. Someone might talk about us. But like Naaman.

Was told. That's the only way to salvation. Anyone that thinks they can have their own way. Is nothing but a leopard like Naaman.

You might think your condition is beyond repair. You might say, oh, but Mark, you don't know what I've done. I don't know what you've done. And to be honest, I don't care to know what you've done. But I know what Jesus Christ has done. Jesus Christ has climbed on that cross for you and I. And the Bible says while we were still sinners, he got on that cross.

[ 25 : 52 ] He didn't wait for us to be cleaned up. He got on the cross while we were still sinners. You come to Jesus Christ just as you are.

It's an individual salvation. It's not a group thing. You're called as an individual and you're saved as an individual. And you might think yours is beyond repair.

But I'm here to tell you, brother, it's not. I'm here to tell you, sister, it's not. And as we all know, there's many diseases in this world right now that are not curable. We have people sitting in this sanctuary today that have been told by doctors, I can treat your symptom, but I can't fix your problem.

I can't fix your disease. It's non-reversible. But I'm here to tell you, brothers and sisters, I got good news. The Word of God says sin is not one of them.

Sin can be cured. Sin can be removed. But only through the blood of Jesus Christ. If you're a sinner today, you can leave here as a saint.

[ 27 : 04 ] If you're broken, confused, hurting, you can leave here made whole. If you're full of sorrow and hard times and you're distraught and don't know what to do, you can leave here today rejoicing in the Son of God.

But like Naaman, you got to leave the pride at the altar. You got to leave the accomplishments at the altar. You got to leave the arrogance at the altar.

You got to leave the popularity at the altar. It's between just you and Christ. And I say, brothers and sisters, those that are like Naaman, that on the outside you look like you have it all together, but inside you're miserable, inside you're hurting, inside you're crumbling.

Brothers and sisters, I pray that you don't leave here today without being restored from the inside out instead of being accomplished from the outside in. Take that weariness, take that tiredness, take that weakness, take that vulnerability, and lay it at the altar.

The Bible says that your name will be written in the Lamb's book of life. It also says that angels in heaven rejoice when a sinner comes to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

[ 28 : 32 ] Think about that. You, as an individual, will cause angels in heaven to rejoice when you come to Jesus Christ. Don't tell me that ain't powerful.

That right there says it all. My next question is to the saints. In this set of scriptures, there are many examples of people of faith in this set of scriptures.

I ask that you ask yourself a personal question. Which one can you find yourself doing Monday through Saturday? Are you the captive maidservant who, like I said earlier, could have been angry, could have been resentful, could have said, ah, life's not fair.

I was treated unfairly and watched her master die with leprosy? Or would you be the one that no matter how life has treated you, would you be the one that shows love and mercy and direction for others?

Are you the, do you resemble the prophet? Do you take yourself out of it? Don't want anybody to remember you? The prophet didn't even meet Naaman face to face.

[ 29 : 59 ] He never left his house. He said, it ain't about me. It's about what God said and God said, in order for you to be healed, go to the Jordan and dip seven times. Are you like that prophet?

You don't care who gets the credit as long as people get saved. prophet says, send him down to Jordan.

Are you telling people send him down to the altar? Are you like Naaman with all his accolades, all his trophies and medals and pats on the back?

Thought he could earn his way to be cleansed. Thought he could earn his way to salvation. Thought he has proven himself and he was worthy of salvation on his own merits.

Is that you today? If it is, that's a dangerous place to be in, brothers and sisters. Because we can't do anything without the grace of God.

[ 31 : 02 ] I can tell you my personal experience before I was saved, I was full of malice. I was angry. I was self-serving. It was all about me. And all I cared about was me.

But I'm here to tell you in Easter of 1992, when I dipped down at the altar, I came up a saved man. My leprosy was white clean.

It was nothing I did. It was what all Jesus did for me. I went down broken, crying, shaking, but I came up whole. I hope each and every one of you here today can say that.

I went down with sorrow in my heart, but I came up rejoicing and excited about the love of God. I had people telling me to be quiet. Don't be so excited. I'm like, man, I'm saved.

I even had people tell me, oh, that'll wear off. I went down filthy and sin and came up clean, white as snow, the Bible says.

[ 32 : 06 ] I went down lonely and came up a part of God's family. I ask you today, are you a part of God's family? You've been invited to be a part of God's family.

God wants you to be a part of His family. Jesus Christ told the Father, I'll pay the price for them to be in my family. Will you accept that gift today through faith, through repentance?

Or will you be like the world and say, I'm going to do it, but I'm going to do it on my way. I'm going to change this and I'm going to change that and I think I'll be okay. Brothers and sisters, there's nothing but a lie straight from the gates of hell.

The only way you and I can ever be saved is through the atonement and the blood of Christ. Like I said, it's free for us, but it costs the Father, His only begotten Son.

So we're going to close now and I ask, do you know Him? I ask, does He know you? I ask it and I pray this never happens ever again, but if you go to the store sometime this week and you don't make it out of there, are you going home to Jesus Christ?

[ 33 : 34 ] Or are you like so many in society that think they can go straight to second base and they'll be okay? Now's the time.

If there's ever anyone that needs to pray, needs to know Christ as their Lord and Savior, needs to grow stronger with the Lord, or just wants to come down here and speak with the Lord, now's the time.

And I ask that we pray. I ask that Trish to lead us in music and I pray that if anyone has any unfinished business, that today be the day that they introduce themselves to Jesus Christ.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, I just thank You, Lord, so much for this hour. I thank You so much for Your Word. I thank You so much for Your encouragement.

I thank You so much for Your honesty and Your truth, Lord. Father, I just pray, Lord, that if there's someone here today that just has an inkling of doubt, Father, that they come forward and they erase that doubt, Lord.

[ 34 : 47 ] Father, I pray that if someone has been struggling to come to You, I pray that they have the confidence today, Lord, to take that first step.

I pray that they realize that once they take that first step, they'll never walk alone. again. And it's Your name, I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.