

“Never give up!”

We are offering a series of reflections for individuals and churches who may be finding it difficult to provide midweek prayer and shared learning from Scripture. You can use these by watching the YouTube video, reading the relevant Bible passage and then reflecting on the questions below. To help make this a shared activity, you are encouraged to reflect on this together with friends using an online conference package, or simply arrange with a friend for them to watch it too. Then ring each other up, share what your thoughts and responses and then pray for one another, and pray together for our world.

Read 2 Kings 5:1-6

Watch the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/BOI61YAwGzk>

This is the first of three reflections when you are invited to engage with the story of Naaman by standing in the shoes of three different characters. In this reflection, try to look at things particularly from the perspective of the young, unnamed slave girl. Three things to consider:

She didn't give up on herself. Circumstances may well be tough for you at the moment, but you don't have to be defined or consumed by them. What have you forgotten about yourself that you need to reclaim? What does God's word tell you about yourself that you perhaps need to re-discover? What might God be saying to you at the moment that you need to allow yourself to hear? What do you need to re-receive of that endless love that God has for you?

She didn't give up on others: There will be those who have disappointed and hurt you. Perhaps having the space to think and reflect has caused you to re-visit those hurts, and perhaps they have even become amplified as they've been turned over again and again in your mind? Perhaps it's been their response to recent events that has generated your reactions? Don't become shackled by your disappointments – God's love is outrageously generous, - let yourself believe that God's love really can extend to everyone.

She didn't give up on God: God is God, the same yesterday today and forever. God is not defined by circumstances and God's love and power is not defined by what we might be experiencing at the moment. Where you see signs of God's grace? – pay attention to them and make them your focus. Let them define your understanding of everything else that's going on around you. And if you can't see those signs of God's goodness right now – accept that they are simply obscured - not absent. Seek the faith to believe that God has not changed.

PRAYER

God of Justice, God of hope – in every circumstance that confronts me, help me to see the opportunities to do good, and to speak and act for what is right. Whatever earthly circumstances might prevail, help me to remember that my hope and my being is founded in you. Where others let me down or their actions are wrong, grant me the courage to speak for what is right, and the grace to forgive what I recognise as wrong. And so in all things, help me to place my trust in the God who holds me fast. O God, who never gives up on me, may I never give up on you. AMEN