

Ben Johnson Send Off

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Well, you know, real quickly, tonight is a night for us to have what we call a blessing service, and the idea is, in the Old Testament, they would bless somebody.

When somebody was going to die, he would bless his children. Or when somebody was going into ministry, and so Ben has already been ordained. He's headed out for the ministry. But tonight's a night just to say to him, we love you.

We believe in you. Our church loves you. Our church believes in you, and we're behind you. And so if you're visiting, this may be a very unusual service for you. It's about Jesus, number one, but it's about his servants.

And Ben and Crystal are on their way to China, and they are a blessing to us. Their parents are members of our church. And Brett is one of our deacons. Brett and Yvonne, why don't you all stand up right quick?

[1 : 05] These are the parents. How about a round of applause for godly parents? They have two children, and both of them are missionaries.

That is an unusual thing, and I am blessed that he serves in our church as one of our deacons. Well, Ben, you come up, and I don't know if Crystal, she's always been shy.

Is she going to say anything, or is she going to sit in her seat? Well, if you would come up, I don't know. You probably obey other pastors better than you do than me, so I'm supposed to not do anything. But anyway, a word of testimony from you each.

Ben, kind of bring everybody up to date on what God's doing, and just anything you want to say. It can be real brief. I figured you would. Okay, I'm fine with that. I just want to thank you guys for loving us.

I came to the church about nine years ago. The church is about a year and a half old, and you guys welcomed me with open arms and love and smiles and friendliness. And back up a little bit, a couple years before that, in 2005, I went on my first missions trip to the Dominican Republic.

[2 : 16] And I told God my last day there, I told him if he would let me be involved in missions, I would love it. And he was so gracious a few years later to allow me to come here and meet this awesome guy right here and to get married to him.

And I can't tell you how just overwhelmed by his grace that I get to go to China and tell them about Jesus.

And I'm just so overwhelmed by his grace. That's all I can say. Is that brief enough? All right.

Well, I would first of all just like to thank my legs for always supporting me. My arms for being by my side. And my fingers, because I can always count on those.

But I'm glad to be going to China. Three weeks ago, January the 2nd, was the first part of the year. And honestly, at that point, we had just gotten out of the hospital with Evie.

[3 : 25] We just had a December where we find out Maddox had reactive airways. Evie was in the hospital because of an asthma reaction. So getting a little bit discouraged. We got our support statement.

We said, OK, support's OK. It's not where we wanted to be. But our setup fund wasn't there. And that was the honest truth. We didn't have enough. At least we thought we didn't have enough. So I began to email.

January the 2nd, I emailed Pastor Gardner. I emailed Brother Jeff at the same time. I began to talk. I said, this is the numbers. This is what it looks like. What do I do? I thought we were at least \$15,000 short.

And we began to ask. We began to think. And they said, pray. See what God wants you to do. But not just that. I thought, well, maybe with the health issues, maybe with everything's going on, maybe we should push back six months, move to a new city, see what that might happen.

Well, I talked to Mark Tolson. Mark said, well, let's talk this over. We can work some things out. We can adjust some things. You might not get everything when you first get there. But we can work on that.

[4 : 26] You got enough support. You can save up for some things as time goes on. Get what you need. I said, OK. He said, but it would really help if you could ask for at least \$10,000 more.

I said, that'll help you set up. That'll really get you where you need to be. I said, OK. We'll commit to that. We'll say, let's go. We're going. Sink or swim. We'll ask for \$10,000. Before that, of course, before we talked to them, I'll just be honest.

We were discouraged. We were pretty angry, too. We thought God wasn't providing. We thought God wasn't big enough. What was this? We're at the end of this. We have our plane tickets. How on earth can we go to China?

We don't have enough money. Well, from the time we first asked God for that \$10,000 January 6th, well, it kind of trickled in. January the 8th, we got \$1,600.

January the 10th, the church we were in gave us another \$1,000. By the end of January 11th, five days, all of that need and more was met. And so we learned a tremendous amount about who God was.

[5 : 26] That in those moments that we see that, first of all, God was with us. That it wasn't just about the provision. That it was the fact that God is with us. That we're going to China. It doesn't matter what happens.

God is with us and that God is big. Bigger than our needs. Bigger than our health issues. Bigger than everything. That we can go with confidence. We know God is on our side. That God can take care of us because it's not the provision.

It's the provider. And we honestly needed that lesson at the end of it as we go into this. We are going. We're not unrealistic. This is the hardest language in the world to learn from English. We know it's going to be difficult.

We know there's going to be hard times. But you know, God's with us. And we have had a clear stamp. We see that now. We're so thankful for a church behind us. But as much as we can be thankful for you guys and legs and arms, we can be thankful that we have a God that is faithful and is bigger than anything we can imagine that can give us more than we ever ask or think.

So we're excited about leaving for China because we know we have God with us. Okay, I've got to introduce people. All right. So I won't have you guys stand. But I'll start over here.

[6 : 33] This is my Uncle David, my Aunt Barbara, my Granny, my Paw Paw, my Uncle Larry, my Aunt Jody. There will be a test at the end. This is Evie right there. And then my mom and my dad.

Behind them, my wife, Crystal, and then her cousin, Jessica. This is Joe, Jessica's fiance. And this is Sharon Renato. We stayed in their house down in Orlando when we were at a missions conference.

They didn't drive. She didn't drive all the way up here for this. She actually lives not too far from here. But we're thankful that they are all here tonight. And I guess that guy. All right.

Well, we are very excited, Ben, for this moment. And I hope all of us as a church family will be praying for him. If I had just a minute just to say some encouraging words to Ben.

Ben, I would say just remember, of course, you have the language. You got the move. You got all these details. But amongst everything, do not forget the most important thing that you have and that you need is God.

[7 : 31] And although that sounds very general, it sounds very easy. It almost sounds like a cop-out when you tell somebody, hey, just keep God first and love God. Almost like it's some mythical thing. Just throw out there and then you feel better as a Christian.

But just realize it's God who's going to give you the language. It's God who's going to give you the strength. It's God who's going to give you the discretion. God can make you a good husband. He can make you a good dad. He can give you everything that you need and even more than that.

Stay close to God. And that means staying close to God is reading in his word. And that means praying. That means talking to God and living a life that truly honors God. Staying and walking with him.

A verse that means a lot to me is 1 Corinthians 2.9. The Bible says, things that I have not seen, nor ear heard, neither entered into the heart of man. Those are things that God has prepared for them that love him.

You know what? God has prepared great things for you. The devil's going to go and he's going to try to attack you. In all different fronts, the devil's going to try to hit you. But just remember, with God on your side, you are the majority. And great things can happen in China.

[8 : 36] Ben, I was thinking some things to write down. I wrote down this. I'm incredibly excited for you and your family right now. In a way, I'm kind of envious of what is about to happen.

I know God's going to use you and your family in a great way. In ways that only Christians get to read about in a book. You're going to go to a field with 1.3 billion people.

And the majority of them don't know the gospel. And so you have an incredible harvest before you. You will have a great opportunity, a great chance to see God move in people's lives.

Like most of us here will never get to see. You will have an opportunity where you can see people who have never even heard about a God. Hear about this God and hear his word.

And then you get to see a radical transformation. You will get opportunities to see young men who were called into God's ministry. At one time, those same guys probably have never even heard of God.

[9 : 41] And I don't know what Christian here wouldn't want to be in your shoes. You get to go and see God do something great and use you. I've been blessed to know you for the last nine years.

Not the way Crystal knows you, but I got to know you and see you from afar in the last nine years. I've seen you preach here at Vision. You've taught several times in the training center.

And I know you have a desire to preach and teach and live by God's word. And if I could just read a portion of scripture, just one verse. It's found in 2 Timothy or as some people like to call it, 2 Timothy.

In chapter 1, verse 13, the Bible says this. It says, hold fast the form of sound words. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.

Ben, cling to this word. As much as I want to say, I was thinking like, what do I need to tell him? I was like, well, I'm going to tell him, I love you, Ben. We're always going to be there for you. I don't know if that's always going to be true because I don't know if I'm always going to be around.

[10:52] I don't know if we can always say we'll always be there. We'll try to be always there for you. But the one thing that you need to cling to, the one thing that we all have here, all have accessible, the one thing that will never leave us, the one thing that makes us know this God is his word, this sound word, this sound doctrine, his Bible.

And Ben, cling to that. Cling to that. And he says, cling to that in faith. Believe it. Love it.

Teach it with love. Let your words be seasons with grace whenever you get to preach it. Believe in this word. Realize that it will work. Hold fast to these sound words.

That's what Paul is telling Timothy. Ben, if I could just tell you one thing. Would you just hold fast to this word? Because at the end of the day, his word is all we have. I would love to say that we're always going to be here for you, which I know from the bottom of our heart, we're always going to strive to be here for you.

But there's something that could happen that would be, God forbid, anything bad happens. Let's say, I don't know. I don't even want to think about that stuff. But let's just say that vision is no longer. You have one thing that's going to last for eternity, and that's his word.

[12:04] So hold fast to that. Ben, it's an honor to get to speak to you for a moment. Thank you, Pastor and Church. Let me be part of this special night. We should send you off more often. It's good for attendance.

And you know that you are loved greatly here by all of us. If you look at 2 Corinthians 8, verse 1 and 2, I'd like to underline a couple things. I've got a couple pictures of us here.

I would speak to you from Galatians, but what can you speak to Ben Johnson about Galatians from? He taught it for a couple years in our couples class over there. And we've served in ministry together and really enjoyed it.

But look at these pictures here, Ben. This is from the first time you went to China there. We were soldiers back then together. And we're the ones. And here's the group there.

And in that group, you were 18, correct? 19? Around that. It was 10 years ago. And this summer, Paul Tauby, which is the teenager there, maybe 16, Kelly Perkins, before she met Robert, was in the picture where she had moved to the church here.

[13:06] But back then, you had something God was working in your heart. And you wanted to give yourself and your life to missions. And then it became more clear to you about China.

And I want to encourage you out of this passage here how you're going to be able to pour your life out for the people of China like you so much desire to do so. So if you'd underline four phrases here.

2 Corinthians 8, verse number 1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God. If you'd underline grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. How that at a great trial of affliction.

If you wouldn't mind underlying great trial of affliction. The abundance of their joy. And underline that term, abundance of their joy. And deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

And underlining riches of their liberality there. Four different things going on here. The grace of God. Great trials and afflictions. Abundance of joy. And then riches of liberality.

[14 : 04] Being a generous person. Ben and Crystal, we know your heart. You have as big a heart as anybody I've ever known. You're just fun to be around. And we know that you're going there to make a difference. You want to see lives change.

Crystal has the ability to see a story different than other people. Because of the story in her life. She knows how the gospel changes things. Ben's grown up in a wonderful family.

And he knows the difference that the gospel makes. He knows the difference of good churches will make their lives. And so they really want to make a difference. And it was so clear there from both of them. Especially there in Crystal.

Explaining how it's just a joy. And isn't it great to hear people that just say. It is such a pleasure to serve Jesus. It ought to provoke all of us to good works. They recognize the honor that it is to serve God.

And we all want to do that. But Ben, when we went to China 10 years ago. I imagine you packed a few Batman t-shirts. And you had a little bit of some money in your wallet. And it was probably a little easier than what you're doing right now.

[15 : 02] He had a to-do list of like 25 things on it the other day. And when I saw him next time, it was like 28. I was like, you're going the wrong way, Ben. And you've got to stop talking to Crystal. You're never going to get to that.

So now you're probably going to take 20 bags and two wonderful kids and a wife with you there. And life's a little more complicated there than it was when we were getting lost in the Great Wall of China a decade ago.

But if you want to be a generous person, which is what both of you have said. Generous to the greatest measure. They want to give their lives for the people of China. They just want to give all that they have for them. There's no measure that we can see that outside of Jesus Christ's death on the cross in a missionary life.

We see ultimate generosity. They want to do that. And you're going to be able to do that. And in doing that, you're going to do it even though there's great trial and affliction. No matter what comes your way, that doesn't keep you from being generous.

A lack of earthly resources doesn't keep you from being generous. No matter what comes your way here. It's hard to look at the grace of God in verse number one.

[16 : 04] It says they went of the grace of God. They witnessed. They looked at it. It's hard for us to think about how great God is in the midst of trial and afflictions. It's what we want to focus on. But Ben, if you'll keep doing what you just showed us in your testimony here.

That in the midst of trial and afflictions, you'll take your eyes off of that. And you'll look at a great God through his word that Brother Robert and Brother Jeff talked about. It's going to produce in your life an abundance of joy.

And that abundance of joy is going to let you be generous. So as long as you can see God from wherever you're at in this world, you can be a generous person. And you can live a life that's really going to make a difference.

And so look at it often, that grace of God, and let it come out in your life. Which we have there. We have an indicator. We know that we're not going to be. You want to be generous. You want to be in China so you can be generous.

So you want to give your life. But the Bible teaches us here that if there isn't an abundance of joy in our lives, then apparently we're not witnessing of the grace of God. And then our ministry stops. No matter how well we know the language.

[17:07] No matter where we're at. No matter how many churches there are. If the joy of the Lord is not coming from knowing him, then we have no ministry. But then it also says the opposite. Though no matter what comes your way, trials of afflictions.

If that joy that we see in your life continues and remains, you're going to be able to make a difference. And I'm so proud to be part of a church that sends you out. It is a great honor that we get to send people that understand and love the gospel like you to people that need it so much.

Well, I'm sure you know a little bit about what's going on. If you're from vision, you definitely do. But right now we're going to have some testimonies and some kind words, some blessing words. So if you're one of the men or women that's going to do that, if you'd make your way to the front and get ready to do that, these are words just to say we love you.

It's a chance to say we love you and we believe in you. If you'd have known just a few days ago, just a very few days ago, they were in a panic. They were scared to death.

They didn't know if God was going to come through. And they learned something. He's a big, big God. And he answers prayer. And you can know that and you can believe that.

[18:15] So I hope that you will, I hope you'll pray for Ben and Crystal. I hope you'll listen to each of the testimonies. My wife can't be here because she's sick. She sent a letter, but she couldn't because my daughter didn't go home.

And so you'll get your letter somehow because they go to the airport tomorrow. And then I got a text from Kyle Shreve. And he said, make the service go long so we can get there.

So anyway, I'm going to drag it out. Not really. I just want to say how proud I am of Crystal. This really never gets much easier.

But it really is amazing to see the story of Grace in their life. You know, they came here as kids from different states, totally different backgrounds. And it's just amazing how God has used them both.

And what a friend Crystal has been to us. I know anybody who knows her knows, you know, she's just a positive person to be around. Somebody who asks you about your day and just cares. And as sad as I am to see her leave, I'm just so happy for the people that she gets to reach and see there.

[19:18] We love you so much. And we're just so thankful for your friendship. Crystal, I love you. I'm so proud to call you my friend. And I'm so excited to see what the Lord is going to do with you in China.

I know that these are uncertain times for you and you're so excited. But then there's also the fear. And so something that I've learned, something that the Lord has taught me is to hold on to his promise in Hebrews 13, 5 and 6, that he'll never leave you or forsake you and that you'll be able to boldly say that he is your helper.

I love you and I'm so proud of you and so excited for you. This is a weird one for me because Ben and I actually grew up together.

And so before I say something to you, Crystal, I wanted to say thanks to Ben also. We literally grew up together. And Ben went to the first BCWE camp and came back.

And, you know, a counselor or, you know, you probably think, if I can just get that kid to go home and do what he said he was going to do, that'd be awesome. But Ben actually took it a step further and he came back and he really challenged our youth group at the time to serve the Lord.

[20 : 33] And I really believe that there was a time in a parking lot that we just had a conversation about what God wanted and missions. And I really opened my eyes and changed a lot of the things that I was doing in my life.

So I'm thankful for you, but I'm also thankful for your beautiful wife and for what a friend you've been to me. And I feel like I could just go on and on about all the things that you've done for me and how thankful I am for your friendship.

Like Stephanie said, somebody who really cares about you as a person. And I'm thankful for you and I'm praying for you. And I can't wait to keep in touch with you and see all that God does through you in China.

Crystal, I'm so blessed to have gotten to know you over the past seven so years. And the love of Jesus just flows out of you. I love your bubbly personality and just your excitement for serving him.

And I'm so excited to see the woman that you're going to befriend over in China. And I just will be praying for you that God will give you courage and that you would just trust him day by day to get through all the struggles that you're going to face.

[21 : 42] But he is so good and there are going to be so many rewards for what you're about to do. I'm so proud of you. My first time coming to vision was a blessing service.

I didn't really care about what was going on. But these have gotten progressively harder for me because I've grown close to the women who have been leaving. And I'm not going to lie. This one is probably one of the hardest ones.

It's just because, like, when I met Crystal, they were at the beginning of their deputation. You never think these are going to come. But they always do come and they always hit home to all of your friends.

So, Crystal, I love you. And I'm already jealous of the women. They're going to just enjoy your friendship and stuff. So, I love you guys. Hey, Ben.

It's great getting to know you and I believe in you. I know that you're going to go to China and really work in the lives there. You're going to train men. And I know that your sense of humor is a blessing and encouragement.

[22 : 41] I know they'll appreciate that. And I'm just grateful that you're, you know, I'm excited about Project China. So, we'll be praying for you all. And we're excited for you. Well, Ben and Crystal, it's a real honor to get to send you guys off this way.

But, Ben, your promise to me was that you'd finish the book of Galatians teaching us before you left. But I see your plan and everything. You got Brother Gardner to do the book of Galatians for you so that you could go ahead and leave.

One of the greatest things you did for our church was bring your parents down here. And Brett and Yvonne have been an unbelievable blessing. And though you're leaving, you're leaving behind something extremely valuable and beneficial for our church.

A set of parents and grandparents who are watching their kids and grandkids go to the field. And I know Chuck and Lisa and me and Sandy appreciate that. I told Brett tonight we'll be watching you, Brett, because our turn's coming.

But I think that turn's coming for a lot of people at Vision. And so we're really blessed by that. 1 Samuel chapter 22, verse 2 says, And everyone that was distressed and everyone that was in debt and everyone that was discontented gathered themselves unto him.

[23 : 51] And he became a captain over them. And there were with him about 400 men. If you can overlook the contextual problems here. You're not a king and you're not on the run to a cave.

But my prayer is that God gathers a group of men around you and Crystal, ladies, that you can train and bring to the knowledge of the gospel. Ben and Crystal, I know, Ben, when me and your dad were going through foundations together, we were talking about you one time.

And he said, you know, I said, well, what about Ben? How did you know he was called and all this stuff? And he said, you know, Ben was so shy as a child. He would never, you know, speak or get up in front of anybody and talk.

He said, well, I said, that's amazing because he seems so outgoing now. That's just a God thing and how he's worked in your life. And then you spoke just a few minutes ago about his provision there at the end.

And it's not the provision, but the provider, like you said, focusing on God. You serve an awesome God. I'm excited for you guys. And we're excited to know that God's going to do awesome things through you and use you.

[24 : 55] And you're willing to be used. And we're just so excited to be praying for you, brother. I really hate these because I'm going to miss you guys so much.

Thinking about what to say for you. Seeing such great friends go. I can count on, you know, one hand how many times that a person impacted my life to the point of completely changing its course.

And I'm jealous for China because I know that they're going to get a great family. And people are going to have their lives changed. Not necessarily because they get to see Jesus.

Not necessarily because somebody's telling them something that they may have never heard. But because they're going to get a great family. They're going to be great friends to them. Thank you guys so much.

Thank you. You ever think about, you ever think something in your mind about somebody but you don't say it? I told Ben this about a week ago. Me and him was talking when he started on deputation.

[26 : 07] I said, man, you were, I was worried about you. I probably told Lisa. I said, man, he's really kind of timid. And I think you told me, Crystal told you the same thing. But I look at how the Lord transformed you while you were here.

And he can do a work. It goes to show if our heart's in the right place, God will work out the details. Whether it's in our person. But if we love him and want to serve him. And I know you guys are going to run into some times in China that's going to be tough.

But I hope you'll remember that, hey, he'll work out the details. And I want to follow up to what Robert said. As long as we're not dead and gone, the man that's here. And we're going to be here for you. And I know what he's saying.

We can't always do everything for you. And stuff's going to happen over there. You're going to have to work out. But we love you. And we're praying for you. And we are here for you. I didn't ever really know Ben that well before coming here.

But ever since I had, I guess the first thing that stuck out to me about Ben was when I first started deputation, I started single and I just started going out.

[27 : 13] And I didn't really know how everything worked, how money really came in even. But I started getting these emails saying that I had some money in an account. And consistently there was money from the Johnsons in there.

And I thought, what? You know, I know that they didn't hardly know me at all. And for a straight year, they supported me as I was getting my feet on the ground and starting out deputation.

And that act alone was just so, it just struck me. So more than you probably know, I thank you all so much for that. Because, I mean, it's not like we had some wonderful, strong bond at the time.

But that's just the people that they are. They're just selfless and giving. And ever since then, I have seen that played out in their lives.

Whether it's just by an encouraging word or some advice through a pregnancy or actual things that have been given. And the Johnsons have been impressively humble and Christ-like.

[28 : 26] Especially Ben, it's very encouraging to see you at this point in your life. Because I hope to be where you are right now. I hope to be there in a year or so.

I don't know when. But I hope to be you pretty soon. And to see that you've gotten here to this point and how, again, I already said it, but just how humble that you are.

Even though you've done something incredible that a lot of people can't and won't do. But you all have done it. And I have never thought to myself, Ben is kind of a prideful, full of himself person.

I've not seen anything that would lead me to believe that. And I thank you for that because I want to be that way when I'm where you are. And Crystal, my wife's not standing up here, but I would just randomly hear from her, Oh my goodness, Crystal just texted me.

She's praying for us. And we just stop and we think, What in the world? How wonderful are the Johnsons? And how wonderful is Crystal? And the fact that you're transparent with your life has been an encouragement to us.

[29 : 33] And the fact that you are so dedicated in praying for others and that you've reached out to us and helped us. I'm excited that China's going to get that and that girls in China are going to come to the Lord because of the type of people that you are.

And again, we hope to be very much the same way. So thank you for your example. Well, Ben and Crystal, we're excited for you guys.

I guess I've known Ben since he was about a junior in high school and spent a lot of time in the class together. There are three things I've always really thought about whenever I think about you.

First is your ability to say the corniest jokes with a straight face. It's an impressive thing, man. It really is. Secondly is his consistency and his persistency.

You know, ever since I've known you, you've been, you're going to be a missionary, you know. I mean, there are a lot of 16, 17-year-old kids that are going to be a missionary. And you're like, okay, all right, good for you. Let's see how it is in a few years.

[30 : 36] Ben is that guy. I mean, we were going through stuff the other day and we found the pledge that you signed in 2004 with everybody else. You know, there's a lot of names. I probably shouldn't bring this up, but there's a lot of names in there that aren't around here anymore.

But your name is there and you guys are there. And you have been extremely persistent. And I just believe that God is going to use you. I mean, I know you guys are looking at the end of deputation.

A lot of times it looks like a finish line, but it's the biggest start line for like a quadruple ultra marathon in your life. You know? I mean, but the one thing that I never have doubted is the fact that God is going to use you and you're the most consistent person, one of the most consistent people that I know.

And I appreciate you guys. I probably met Ben about 10, 11 years ago. And he was just out of high school. And I remember him carrying around a flag of China all the time.

And I remember at a camp dumping out a bag of rice into a tub and illustrating how many people there were in China. And he tried to say how many times he would have to do that to show the number of people in China.

[31 : 46] I thought it was a pretty bad stereotype to use rice to represent Chinese people. But he has been passionate.

From the day I met him, he's been passionate about going to China and reaching Chinese people. And, you know, it's been a long journey, but you've kept that passion. And, you know, you've seen God do a lot of things.

At this point, Ben, you're going to be going into, you know, probably a tougher time than you've ever known. You know, let the things that you've seen in the past be that lion and that bear and know that God's going to slay giants.

And I know God's going to do something big in your life. And we believe in you. We love you. And we're praying for you. If you'll take your Bibles and turn with me to Luke chapter 12 and verse 29.

Luke chapter 12 and verse 29. Ben, I want to talk to you and Crystal more than anybody else in the room tonight. But you know I love you and I'm very proud of you.

[32 : 44] I believe in you. I have tried to express that to you on numerous occasions. And I hope that you believe that. And I think about you going to the mission field.

I think about you living in China. And I am going to talk to you about trusting God or living in fear. Trusting God or living in fear.

That's the choices you have. I am so excited that God did what he did in your life. As he answered your prayer.

More than answered your prayer. Two and a half times answered your prayer. What a great God. And how he met your need. Because I want you to know how big he is.

And I want to remind you that he'll take care of you. And he'll take care of your children. And he'll take care of everything going on around you. The Bible says in Luke 12, 29.

[33 : 41] Seek not ye what you shall eat or what you shall drink. Neither be ye of a doubtful mind. Neither be ye of a doubtful mind. I just like to ask you to underline that.

I think by nature all of us are doubters. We're all scared. We're all afraid. We're all worried. Anything that's new. Anything that's different.

The young man in my first ministry used to say to me. We'd get ready to go somewhere. And I mean I was a real old youth director. I was 19. And he was probably 15 or 16.

And he would say. How are we going to act? Because he wanted to know wherever I was taking him. How we were supposed to act. And I would be like. Let me figure it out myself. I don't know either. But a doubtful mind.

So let me just carry you through some scriptures. And I'm going to take longer than I usually do. Because you're going to China. And that's the place where everybody's afraid. And so we're going to just talk through some scripture.

[34 : 41] Look at 1 John 4, 18 with me. 1 John chapter 4 verse 18. Doubt will make us miserable. Worried. Living in suspense.

Anxious. Stress. It will make it very hard. It produces fear. The Bible says in 1 John 4, 18. There is no fear in love.

But perfect love casteth out fear. Because fear has torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. So if you look at that verse with me just a second.

When Evie. Evie. I never can say that right. Evlencito. All you got to do is put an O on the end of it.

If it's a Spanish word. When she's with you. She's not afraid. She knows. Her daddy's going to take care of her. She can be afraid.

[35 : 38] And she can be concerned. She can be worried. Stuff can be happening. She can run to you. And you put your big old arms around her. And hug her close. And she's like. I'm okay. Daddy's going to take care of me.

That's what the verse says. The verse says. There's no fear in love. When you know that the one that loves you is holding you. And you know that the one that loves you is taking care of you.

Then it casts out fear. And so I want to get you. To take your eyes off of the language. Don't believe that Chinese is so hard.

It doesn't matter what they tell you. Little kids learn it. Amen. Three-year-olds learn Chinese. And so it can't be that hard.

And it kind of reminds me of the way they used to talk in Peru. Some of the Peruvians said to me. They said, you know, English is so hard. And our kids can't learn that. They said, you think if they were to live in America as little children, they could learn it?

[36 : 37] And I was like, I really think any kid could learn any language. I just want you to know that fear is the opposite of love. And it has torment.

And so you're going to have to focus on who loves you. You're going to have to focus on who loves you. You're going to have to realize that if you look at him and trust him, if you have perfect or mature love, you'll be able to say, I can trust my father.

I can trust him. I'd like to remind you that if you doubt, it's going to make you unstable. And I can tell you from personal experience that James chapter 1 and verse 5 talks about doubting.

I can tell you that you're probably going to doubt every day of your life. When they're laughing at you because of the language. When nobody will accept Christ when you talk to them.

When you're not sure if your visa is going to get approved. When your child is sick. And ever since my kidney problem.

[37 : 39] You know, every time I have something, I'm like, okay, is that it? Is that what's going on? And, you know, I go to the doctor and I'm like, is it something in my kidney? They say, it ain't got to do with your kidney. But I want to think it's my kidney.

Because that's what we do. That's where we're wrong. And it says, and that causes you, by the way, to make different decisions. It causes you to do stuff you would not ever do.

It causes you to react in a way you'd be very embarrassed to admit you reacted. James 1, 5 says, if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not.

And it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith. Nothing wavering. I believe you, God, and I won't quit believing you. Verse 7 says, if you don't believe, you're unstable in all your ways, you're not going to get anything from God.

So I just want to remind you that this doubt that will eat at you and plague you, are the police going to come? Is somebody going to do something to me?

[38 : 40] It took a long time for Betty and I to get used to living in South America. Like, we'd never been anywhere, and a dog barked, a train went by, a truck went by, somebody, some drunk walking down through the neighborhood, clanging on all the iron, all the split rail fences, whatever they're called.

And we'd hear that, and I'd be like, what in the world? Is they coming to get us? What's going on? And so you've got to make up your mind that you won't doubt God. He called you to go to China.

You've gone around the country saying that for months. God called me. Trent proved that for 10 years you've believed that. He brought out a picture of it.

So I'm telling you, be really careful because this doubtful mind will cause you to do things, and later on you'll be like, I never wanted to do that. It also hinders God's work.

God wants to do stuff, but he only does stuff through people that believe him. That's amazing. I forget who sent it to me or where I read it, but this guy said, when I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't pray, no coincidences happen.

[39 : 57] And so, you know, if you pray, it's amazing how God's going to work, and if you believe. In Matthew 13, 58, he said, I'm not going to do anything because they don't believe me. They don't believe me.

And I can just tell you that if you'll just step out there, preachers in the past that were worried about the language have begged God, and they've said God showed them, and he helped them with the language, and they were able to learn the language.

You can ask believing. You can trust that God's going to do something big. It's really not about you. The devil's going to say, well, God would, but it's you. But it's never about us.

It's about him. And you know everything I know about this. But you're fixing to walk into the place the devil owns, and he doesn't want you there. And he's going to do everything he can to get your mind into a state of fear, to get your mind into a state of doubt, to get your mind into a state of questioning, to get your mind into second-guessing yourself.

And you have got to be very careful when you do that. When you stand up and preach over there, you've just got to expect, God's going to let me see people get saved. You've just got to believe it.

[41 : 07] It's amazing. And I've more than one time with young men that are on the team that I've worked with, they've said to me, it doesn't look like anything that's going to happen. And I've said, just hang on. Let's see what he's going to do.

I'm pretty sure I can pull an email that I wrote you that said that. When you first wrote me and said, I don't know what's happening. And I wrote back, I said, well, let's just see what he's going to do. That's the God you serve.

Let's just see what he's going to do. Quit yourselves like men. And let's just go see what God's going to do. When you believe God instead of doubting him, you're going to do it like Romans 4.

And I'll leave that with you. In Romans 4, when God describes Abraham's faith, he said he hoped. He believed in hope against hope.

There was no reason to hope, but he believed anyway. So how's this going to affect my children's health? Well, we're going to believe God. Everybody can give you 50 reasons why something won't work, but we aren't following them.

[42 : 07] We're following God. We're trusting him. The children of Israel that didn't want to cross into the promised land and wandered for 40 years, told God the reason they didn't want to go in there was their children.

And they missed the blessing. You don't want that to happen to you. It says in Romans 4.19 that he didn't consider his own body. There was every reason for Abraham and Sarah to know they couldn't have children.

But they said, we don't look at scientific fact. We don't look at medical evidence. We look at God. We hope against hope, and we don't consider the circumstances.

In Romans 4.20, they didn't stagger at the promise of God through unbelief. And if best I know, you've been living with this belief that God wants to use you for a long time.

I believe that if we could be just real honest and tell the truth, that you would say, yeah, I think God's promised me stuff. He did give you your support.

[43 : 13] He did prove in five or six days that he could give you more money than you believed that you could get. He's proven himself. Don't stagger at his promise.

Step into China knowing this. You're God's man. He opened the door. He's proven himself. And you're in the place. Now don't stagger. In Romans 4.21, it says that he was fully persuaded.

Fully persuaded that God was able to do it. Fully persuaded. You don't get out of a boat and walk on the water like Peter did unless you're fully persuaded.

You don't start giving out the meal when Jesus says, fix to feed these 5,000 people unless you really believe he's going to do it. You don't roll back the rock when Jesus calls out Lazarus unless you really believe he's going to do it.

And you don't get on an airplane and fly to China unless you really believe Jesus is going to do it. So let me just say this. Your mind goes to him.

[44 : 15] If you think about all the other junk, you'll get scared. If you line up all the things that could go wrong, if you line up all the bad stuff that could happen, I'll just tell you it's all going to be horrible.

But in Isaiah 26.3, it says, Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.

So who does he keep in perfect peace? The one who says, I just believe God. So you can think about all the junk that's going to go on in China.

You can think about all that that's going to happen. Or you can think this. I love him. And he's been good to me. Ben, you got married.

That's a pretty big miracle. You got beautiful kids. That's pretty big miracles. You got your support. That's pretty big miracles.

[45 : 19] When you got saved, that's the biggest miracle. You've traveled all over the place preaching. And people have loved you and believed in you and supported you. He loves you.

You're his man. You're as much as man as Jonathan Goforth. You're as much as man as Hudson Taylor. You don't take a back seat to anybody because you're as in line and hooked up to the Father as any of them ever were.

Trust him. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks.