Brown's to Turkey Send Off Service

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[0:00] Would you open your Bibles to the book of 2 Kings in chapter number 5. 2 Kings chapter number 5. It's an exciting evening. The send-off service, a blessing service for Dustin and Ashley Brown.

Very excited. The Lord has brought this. It seems like in one way it came through very quickly. Times went by quickly. There were moments that it seemed like it was going to drag on, right? But the Lord was good.

We're in 2 Kings chapter number 5. And throughout the Kings, there was... We see a lot of different kings. We see a lot of different things that are happening there. There were two men that really stood out, especially in this time.

That were the men that God used, the prophets that God used. One named Elijah. Elijah did many miracles of God. He saw God work in a wonderful way. And his servant was named Elisha, the man who washed his hands.

After Elijah's death, now Elisha comes on the scene. And he's used of God. And God begins to work in his life. And now Elisha, now he has somebody who helps him, who washes his hands.

[0:56] Well, the story goes on that in 2 Kings chapter number 5, that there's great problems in the Syrian camp, the enemies of Israel. And because of the problems, there's a captain of the guard in Syria.

He has leprosy. And so the king sends his man over to Israel. And he said, I want you to heal him. Well, the king of Israel looks and he says, who am I, God? I can't heal the man. I mean, this is crazy.

How would he even think that this is absurd? He begins to go crazy. Well, it comes to the ears of Elisha, the man of God, the prophet. And he says, come on, king. I mean, you know I can handle this.

I mean, God's big enough. And so just bring him over my way. Well, story shortened. The name and comes over. And Elisha says, go on over there. The Jordan River dipped seven times and you'll be healed.

And certainly enough, he does. He goes and dips and he comes back up and he's healed. And he just in amazement, this man, Naaman, he said, this is just great. Thank you so much. And I mean, I owe you everything.

[1:52] Here's a bunch of money. And Elisha said, keep your money. I don't need your money. Well, take the clothes. He said, keep your clothes. I don't need the clothes. And we'll take all that you have. Well, he sends them away. Well, the sermon of Elisha hears this.

And I mean, he's just furious. How in the world? I mean, this was the time we can get money. How was my master, Elisha? He just, you know, lets the opportunity go by. We could have been rich.

We could have had better donkeys, you know. And we could have drank sweet tea instead of the silly water that we're drinking. You know, we could have really had it good. Why did he let him go? And so Naaman, he's on his way.

And the servant Gehazi, I don't know how you say it. Maybe another preacher might say a different way. And sadly, you get to hear me tonight. So it's Gehazi. And so Gehazi, he says, well, I'm going to run after him.

So he takes off running after Naaman. Naaman said, what's up? And he said, well, we had a couple people come to town. So my master, Elisha, sent me to him. And he would like some money, that money you promised.

[2:46] He said, well, certainly. I mean, you healed me. And here's the money. And here's some clothes. And here's some other goods. And he takes off. And he goes back to the camp. Well, as he goes back to camp, Gehazi gets that stuff. And he hides it right there in his tent.

And he said, man, I just made a load of money and all kinds of good stuff. And my master will never know. About that time, Elisha said, hey, Gehazi, come on over. He said, yes, sir. He said, where'd you go?

He said, well, nowhere. I was just outside. And he said, no, my heart went with you. You went out there to find money, didn't you? You went out there to seek the good things, didn't you? He said, well, I don't know.

And so many him hauls around and finally it comes. And so certainly enough, he confesses. And Elisha says, you know that leprosy that Naaman had? That's on you now. And so he ends his life.

Now, think about this. Gehazi, he had the great opportunity. He was serving the great prophet, the man who was the Charles Spurgeon of his time. It was the Billy Graham of his time. I mean, this man, anything that happened, Elisha had a part of it.

[3:42] And here's the servant. But, you know, when I assume when he started out, buddy, I mean, he was excited. God chose me and Elisha's letting me serve. And man, this is just great. And he saw the great miracles, the raising of the dead and the providing from heaven and wonderful things.

But all of a sudden now, years have went by and he totally forgot about it. And he's running after things that do not fulfill. He lost the wonder of it all. It's just like he was excited about ministry.

He was excited about life. He was excited about knowing Jesus. And now he's running after money. Well, Dustin and Ashley, throughout these years, you've seen God provide. You've seen God protect your family on the road.

And you've seen God pile blessings from heaven upon your life. But if you're not careful, you're going to arrive to Turkey. And all of a sudden, you're going to just get in the norm of things and you're going to forget the wonder of it all.

You're going to forget all the things that God has done and you're going to lose sight of it and really lose the joy of Jesus, of serving Jesus. And that's easy for all of us. But how can we not lose this?

[4:44] In 2 Kings 5 and verse number 20, we see that the Bible says, But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, he said, Behold, my master's spare name in the Syrian. He's not receiving the hands that which he brought.

As the Lord lived, I'm going to go after him. So he says, You know what? Forget this. I'm out of here. We jump on down and for time, just jump all the way down to the end of chapter, verse number 27. The leprosy, therefore, of Naaman, it shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever.

And he went out from his presence, a leper as white as snow. Just because he really forgot his whole focus, just because he forgot the wonder of what God was doing in his life, now he's suffering.

So how can you and I never lose the wonder of it all? Let me give you a couple ideas very quickly. First of all, don't forget what God has given you. You know, it's awful easy for you and I, for all of us, to focus on what we don't have and forget what we do have.

Never forget where God has brought you from and what God has done up till now. You remember when the Israelites, they crossed the Jordan River, and as they crossed the Jordan River, they went inside and God said, I want you guys to, and used Joshua and said, I want you guys to go in the middle of the river.

[5:48] I want you to grab these stones, and I want you to bring them over, set them up. And why did they do that? They made this big old monument. Why? So that they could remember and never forget what God had done in their lives. And some way in your lives, Dustin and Ashley, write down what God has done for you.

Thank God in prayer and rehearse it to your children, but never forget what God has done for you, or you will lose the wonder of it all. Secondly, let God be your satisfaction. You know, you need to work hard at learning the language and adapting the culture and doing ministry and seeing people saved.

I mean, those are wonderful things, but listen, let God be your ultimate satisfaction. If the accomplishments of your life are your satisfaction, then you're going to run through life planting flags and knocking people over to get to the next level.

You must let Jesus be your ultimate satisfaction. You must let Him satisfy you. You know, D.L. Moody and Ira Sankey, they were a team of American evangelists that went over and they would go all over in Europe and in the United States.

They would travel everywhere, and as they would travel, D.L. would preach. Dwight L. Moody would preach and Ira Sankey would lead the music. And I mean, God was using wonderful ways. They went over to Europe and I mean, thousands, literally thousands of people were being saved because of the big crowds that would come in.

[6:58] There were a lot of people who came in taking advantage and they were pickpocketers. Well, before too long, they realized that many of the people that were coming into the meetings that were taking advantage and stealing, they were gypsies.

And so the London police made a law. They said, no gypsies can come to the meetings of D.L. Moody and Ira Sankey. Well, everything kept continuing going well and all of a sudden, it really became a burden on their heart.

And so Dwight said, if they can't come to us, we're going to them. And so he went straight to the gypsies. Boy, they began to preach and God began to bless. He would preach and Ira Sankey would lead the music and then he'd preach some more.

He'd lead, he'd sing some more. And I mean, God just began to do something. Well, they were finishing up their time and they were leaving. And as they were leaving, a little bitty boy, I'm just a young old lad, he'd come running up to the cart and he said, I just want to say goodbye.

He was a little redheaded boy. Well, Ira Sankey, one of the evangelists, he put his hand on him and he said, well, why don't we pray right now? And he said, God, would you use this boy? Let him grow up to be a powerful preacher of you, Lord.

[7:52] Let him see thousands of people saved. God, do a wonderful work in his life. Well, years went by and now D.L. Moody are older and Ira Sankey are older and now he's sitting in his house and one day he gets a call, he gets a message and they said, hey, this man wants to come over and talk to you.

His name is Gypsy Smith. And he said, yeah, I know who he is. He's an evangelist that travels all over like I did. Well, certainly enough, Gypsy Smith came over and he said, you know what? God's been good. Yeah, I've heard of you.

I know what's going on. He said, well, let me tell you where it started in my life. He said, you remember when you went to the Gypsies because they wouldn't let the Gypsies go to London to hear you preach? He said, yeah, I remember that. He said, you remember a little redheaded boy that you put your hand on and you said, you prayed for him?

He said, yeah, I remember that. He said, I'm that redheaded boy and God is using me to see thousands of people saved. Well, Gypsy Smith went all over and he also saw people saved and God was doing a wonderful work and a man came to his meeting and he was listening to him and near the end of his meeting, he said, Gypsy, let me ask you a question.

I heard you when you first started preaching and I've heard you now. Years and years have gone by and you have the same zeal and the same passion that you had when you very first started. Can I ask you, what in the world is your secret?

[9:00] Gypsy Smith looked at him. He said, you know what? I've never lost the wonder of it all. And you know what? The storms of life are going to come at you, Dustin and Ashley, and you're going to think as it rains down upon this hard culture or on a language or living in a foreign land or my kids are missing out, as the storms of life rain upon it, never lose the wonder of it all.

Serving Jesus is the best thing you could ever do. As the songwriter says, I have never lost the wonder of it all. I've never lost the wonder of it all since the day that Jesus saved me and a whole new life he gave me.

I have never lost the wonder of it all. How many times as Christians, we go through and the storms of life just rain upon us and we lose the joy of our salvation.

We lose our focus off of Jesus. We start running after the things of God, of the world. Dear friend, never lose the wonder of it all. And Dustin, I'd actually like to share with you a portion from Psalm 119.

I was hoping Brother Jeff would end with singing that song. That really didn't disappoint at all. I also love the story about that gypsies and it makes me think, Dustin, about some stories we have shared together.

[10:15] If you don't know it in the church, Dustin has some of the best stories about ministry that you'll ever find because he would be the guy that says, tell me where the gypsies are. I'm going to go reach them.

And I love talking to you about ministry. By no means a novice. God's allowed you to see a lot. And I think the reason that I appreciate it so much is as Stephanie likes to put it, we ought to be people that run towards the mess, that you find people where they're at and you put yourselves in their lives.

I don't know where in Turkey this picture is from. I know it's from Google. That's where I found it. But I don't know exactly where in Turkey. But somewhere in that picture, there's probably a family that's living in some kind of mess.

And even when you do find them and you knock on the door, you're going to realize it's going to take a whole lot of commitment to do ministry to them. And a lot of people would walk away. But you're not the kind of people that walk away.

And I appreciate that so very much. Psalm 119 and 105. You probably know this, 22 different portions. Psalm 119 divided in eight verses. This one, it's all about the Word of God.

[11:15] But this portion is about the never-ending confidence in God's Word. And so I just want to read each one of these verses to you and give one thought about how it should change the way we look at God's Word.

105, that Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I don't know if I told you, but the one time I went to Turkey, I got to spend the day with these ladies in their mid-70s that I met on an airplane.

And I took a picture and I sent it to Stephanie. And I said, is it okay if I hang out with these gals all day? And she was okay with it. And so they fed me and I carry their bags. We have a great friendship to this day. And when we got outside the airport, there was a person we asked for directions of how to go somewhere.

And the traffic was just horrible. Just as bad as I'd ever seen. And the funny thing is, I never told this story, never needed it before. But when we were driving down the road, this lady who gave us directions, she ended up walking beside us for miles.

And so she first told us what to do. But by the time we got to the intersection, she said, now go right here. And she went with us. And so about 25 minutes in the car, she's walking the whole time.

[12:21] All right. And she's carrying her bags and sweating. And I'm just riding in this car, watching her as she walks. And she's just telling us where to go, move by move. And so today is a big day and a big step.

But I want to remind you, God's word is faithful and good on every day and in small steps. We often spiritualize things. And we say, thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

And we only put that into a spiritual portion of our lives. But he is a light unto our path in every day and everything we do and the decisions we make. The word of God has something to say to us.

The Bible calls us to walk in a way that's worthy in Ephesians or upright in Isaiah or in light, first John, or humbly. The Bible has a great calling upon us on the way we walk.

But the Bible will give us all that we need. And this is what we should do concerning the word of God. 106. I have sworn and I will perform it that I will keep thy righteous judgment. Like what Charles Spurgeon said, one of the most practical benefits of Holy Scripture is guidance in the acts of daily life.

And so the Bible is there for big decisions like going to Turkey, big decisions in our lives. But it's also there for every day when you're trying to make decisions, how to invest your time, how to learn the language, all the things that you're going through.

The Bible is going to be your greatest resource. During times of trials, I'm afflicted very much. Quicken me, O Lord, according unto my word. Quicken or reviving of the heart is most certainly something that you're going to need going on the enemy territory.

As you feel the oppression and you need it, and you're not going to be able to find it through anything else other than God's word, but it's sufficient. The word of God is sufficient to quicken your soul when you need it, when you can go to him.

Even during times of affliction, we shall also live in total obedience to the word, and it's an acceptable offering to the Lord. Living a simple life, daily obeying him, is an acceptable offering to the Lord.

Accept thy besitzi, the free will offering in my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments. There's going to be a lot of big days ahead, I have no doubt. Starting churches, training men, but just the everyday life where you're living out the scriptures, that's an offering unto God.

[14:25] To say, God, I'm just going to give you these simple days. I'm just going to give you the days where I'm just plowing ahead. No matter how long I need to do this, every day, he's pleased with it. And that's a wonderful thing. When it comes to times of fear, we should cling to the word.

My soul is continually in my hand, yet do I not forget thy law. My soul is constantly in danger, turmoil, not just from outward, but just inside, spiritual warfare that goes on.

And in those times when I'm fearful, I'm not going to forget the law. I'm not going to forget the word. I'm not going to go away from it. Also, the void and falling into the trap of temptation, we follow the word. Verse 110, the wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I err not from the precepts.

As we walk daily in the word, it's going to tell us where to avoid, where to go. Not just an area of sinful temptation, but an area of ministry philosophy, an area of discouragement. How do we get ourselves around those temptations and to be ready for those snares is that we don't forget these precepts.

And when you're down and you need a reason to rejoice, verse 111, not testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. That you can go to a place when you can't teleport and you can't get on an airplane, there's a place that you can go inside of God's word that is free of everything else and there you can just rejoice.

[15:43] It's a place where you know there's great victory. There's a place where it's consistent. It's always the same and you can meet with the Lord. And then I pray this for you as I pray as the men will take the offering. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always even unto the end.

May we always be faithful unto the end by following his word daily. It says I inclined my heart. I didn't set my eyes. I didn't speak about it. But it's a decision of the heart that I'm going to incline myself.

I'm going to give myself to this book and it's going to be there until the very end. And I pray that your first days in Turkey will be like your last days of Turkey where it's a simple daily obedience to the word of God and you'll have a never-ending confidence in God's word.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for Dustin and Ashley and being the kind of people that know that your word makes a difference. Knowing that just simply living out your word can take us from the messiest of situations into something that a life that is beautiful.

I pray that you put them in contact with many people who have yet to know the power of this word that you have given us. Lord, I pray for both of them to have a confidence upon your word. Lord, not just in big decisions and not just on big days but on days where there's affliction and on small days that they will know that you are glorified from their living out of their faith according to your word.

[16:59] Lord, I thank you as a church that we would be allowed this honor to be a part of sending out such a couple to send out light into the darkness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Well, I'm sure you know that we always have words of testimony and we say a word of blessing to the person that we're sending off and so we're going to start that. I want to ask you, Dustin, to come up here and introduce your pastor and we'll let him go first and take all the time he wants and the more dirt the more we'll be excited about hearing it and then after that as soon as the pastor is finished all the rest of you men and women come up and say a word.

You want to introduce him right quick? Yes, this is our pastor growing up. We started going to his church when I was in high school I guess. I guess I was a sophomore in high school. My wife started going to church there soon after she got saved and my parents and my sister are still members there and I'm so glad that he was able to be here tonight.

I learned so much from him and really learned how to love people from him so thanks. So my wife when I pass I'm going to they're going to cream at me and just breaking my ashes on Bojangles parking lot.

The reason I'm telling you that really is because we had Dustin and I spent a lot of time talking and it might have been over could have been over a meal somewhere I'm sure it wasn't but always a meal but we spent a lot of time together and so let me say two things first of all when I was a young man I was 10 years old in a lock up June I lock up in St. Pete Florida my mom and dad had divorced or was in the process of trying to stay together back and forth and at 10 years old I hung up with the wrong crowd got in a lot of trouble but the first week I was at that lock up on that Thursday night I got out and on Saturday two guys from Metropolitan Baptist Church knocked on my door on a Saturday morning they said well you ride our bus to church I said man I don't think you really want me to I'm like I mean I need to tell you where I've been the last few weeks and the guy started just weeping at the door and he said he said young man he said you have no idea what God can do for you brother Gardner is what he said and I had no idea you know all I knew was I was in a whole mess you know a big mess and so I didn't get saved then but I started riding the bus to church in St. Pete and moved back to North Carolina where I was from originally and sometime

I was 15 so five years later my mom and dad divorced and I remember sitting in the [19:20] courtroom when they were divorced and I remember thinking you know what can God do for me what can God do for me and so fast forward all that and years ago we came after I had a pretty big heart attack I was 29 and a church that I had started I had to turn it over to someone younger I was working full time I was working about 120 hours a week literally and I was going well but I just couldn't sustain and so I quit breathing they brought me back to life and then I had to make some decisions well that decision when I fasted and prayed to go to Cornerstone Baptist Church in Greensboro I had no idea I'd meet Dustin Brown had no idea but I fasted and prayed brother Gardner because I knew that's what I was supposed to do I want to my daughter calls this soup it up version I'm going to soup this thing up Campbell's Soup version but I right away fell in love with Dustin he was always he always wanted to be with me and for that I'm very very grateful he was always a big sponge and he was always trying to get all that he could and I was so grateful for that and I remember thinking to myself on the ride home after I took him back from soul winning or an activity or whatever it was

> I always thought in a few minutes he's going to get out of the car and I'm going to miss him because he loves me and he wants to do something for God I got saved I was 18 and I asked God a friend of mine died in a car wreck and I got saved I said I'm giving it all up I'm not going to do this anymore I'm going to give my life to God as an 18 year old boy I said God will you let me make a difference in somebody's life didn't know I was going to meet Dustin Brown over in Matthew when I sign a Bible for years now when I sign a Bible it's Luke 10 too but also the correlation that same verse is in Matthew and the Bible says in Matthew chapter number 9 verse 35 and Jesus went about the cities and villages teaching in the synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people but when he saw the multitude he was moved with compassion on them because they fainted and they were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd then saith he and his disciples the harvest truly is plenteous very is plenteous it's absolutely true but the laborers are few pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest he would send forth laborers into his harvest the soup it up version is this for all the time that's with Dustin Brown it's maybe a better pastor he's not a perfect young man don't say amen

I did say in the office a little bit ago everything I tell you is five dollars per so if you want to know something you can see me and we'll work it out I'm really proud of his wife I'm really proud of Dustin and I love their family Miss Daniels been teaching in school at our church for a long time I love his mom and dad and I'm so grateful for this old country family who somebody knocked on their door one day and said well you're out of Sunday school bust the church that's it I want to make a difference in someone's life he says they're moved that word moved there when he says but when he saw the multitudes you know he was moved with compassion and so here he is he's preaching and healing in Galilee he's doing what he's going to do that word move there means you're affected very deep within way down deep somewhere you're affected to the core that you do what it takes to reach one just reach somebody he passed her in Arkansas and I said Dustin you could have gone somewhere cooler and I was kidding

I told him I said Dustin I said what you need we'll help you whatever you need to do just we'll support you whatever and I told him I said I'm so happy for you here he is in storefront like we did we started in a storefront building and we knocked on doors every night for years and started building the church and we even rented a school one time and they kicked us out of the school and I told Dustin that's going to happen you're going to be excited somebody's going to give you something it's going to cost you twice as much as what they gave you because like you said last night at church the power bill triples because you know now you're building heating and cooling everything but that move there affected deep within let me say this to you I realize full well that if you just go reach one each one reach one my prayer is you'll go to Turkey and turn it upside down we love Brady and Sarah and we're excited about the whole plant want everybody to do well want to see people saved I led some Muslim young men to Christ in our town and they begged not to tell their parents because they said mom and dad will kill us 14 and 15 years old begged us to not tell nobody and I so we sneaking around giving them gospel and all kinds of stuff and they're getting saved and what are you going to do you're going to keep trying to do the best to give the gospel when I signed that bible and I said the harvest truly is plentious but labors are a few that is true pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest he would send forth laborers you know what I was praying for

I didn't even know his name it's Dustin Brown I love him I'm appreciative for him there's no way to explain to you I got hundreds of stories and hundreds of times and things that mean so much to me I'm going to soup it up just because I got more people coming let me say this to you Dustin you're going to have to learn to encourage yourself son I know you know that this is not something you already know that you're going to have to encourage your wife you're going to a place there's nothing like Greensboro North Carolina it ain't like it ain't like Witsit it ain't like Greensboro it ain't like McLeansville it is so different but the truth is the problem is the same the problem is identical it's just different people that's all that it is it's exactly the same problem as someone who looked at me as a 10 year old boy who looked at me at a door and said that boy right there needs the gospel that's what I needed I'm ashamed of what I did when I was 10 I broke my mama's heart my daddy's heart I made my family they were done with me tonight I'll say this to you that you learn to encourage yourself when I say that remember that that you know no matter what you just you just stay focused and have your face like a flint make sure you understand that along that path that it's the same scenario just different people just like you have wept over and pleaded for folks in Arkansas and everywhere else you've been all the things you've done it's just different people different location let me give you a thought

I was in Nicaragua and I've been on a few missions trips and I was one of the Philippines as a missionary I thought when I went to Bible college and I didn't you know God made that clear that I need to be what I'm doing what I'm doing and I was sitting there and I was on my bunk one night and I had my youth pastors with me and we basically wept ourselves to sleep that night let me tell you why we did that because we were seeing live in action we led 100 folks to Christ in two days we preached in seven or eight schools it was wide open it was unbelievable and I told them I said they were so they didn't want us to leave they were begging us to stay I was preaching I've been preaching for an hour brother Gardner for one hour the lady's crying like a baby with 50 people in this garage house and she said please please don't leave I preached 40 more minutes she said sir will you keep on preaching I preached for two and a half hours I changed my name to T.D. Jakes by the way let me tell you this

I wasn't disappointed sometimes I think why don't we all have it like that you can watch a ball game for three hours amen whoever said come on you're right amen hear me hear me well they're moved listen he said he was moved with compassion understandably knowing that those folks there that being moved means affected deep within way down deep broken hearted because of the situation that they're in knowing full well that they need they need the gospel look I'm gonna close I've been preaching a long time I've been I've been pastoring for I don't know 25 years ministry 30 the one thing that I realized was this every day somebody gets up needs the gospel I'll give you a thought in this crowd tonight somebody here you might be close to leaving on walking out on God there's a lot of folks here I never take that for granted either you ought to re-up you ought to re-fire you ought to retool you ought to stay motivated somebody needs you you can't afford to quit you cannot afford to quit somebody needs you somebody on your job your neighbor somewhere somebody needs you and if you quit they're gonna die and go to hell

Dustin I'm proud of you son I love you Miss Ashley I love you Miss Daniel you know I love you love the kids we've had a good time I'm looking forward to what they're gonna do I love you I'm so thankful let me let me say a prayer okay father I do appreciate the time and I'm grateful for what I have been able to do as far as the time together with Dustin and Ashley full well knowing that we invest Lord that we know full well they will do the same wherever they land it's gonna be turkey and Lord I pray you give them a young man somewhere some folks in there that need to be discipled and loved and they'll get saved and they'll do their best to have fruit that remains turn turkey upside down until you come and I believe it'll be soon until you come I pray you give us an open door and soft hearts Lord touch them help them encourage them give them strength give them discernment give them that great wisdom help them be moved with compassion way down deep and make a difference in someone's life help them to stay the course stay focused and bless and provide for them in Jesus name

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen