



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Kings 2: 7-25

Spring 2024

"Passing the Baton"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are beginning a brief series in the life of the prophet Elisha. It will be, I think, five lessons in all, and we're going to begin with 2 Kings chapter 2: I've listed verses 7-25, but I'm actually going to cover the entire chapter—and I'm only going to read part of the chapter, verses 7 through verse 15.

So let me give you some context. This is the passage in which the prophet Elijah is taken up into heaven. And so, in verse 1 through verse 7, he goes on a tour of some of the towns. He goes up to Bethel, he goes to Jericho, and then he crosses the Jordan. And he's visiting these towns where there are prophets, probably the school of prophets in various locations.

And then he and Elisha, (I'm going to have a hard time keeping those two separate as I speak), but they cross the Jordan. And that's where we begin. They have made this tour of these cities, and then we come to verse seven;

⁷ Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. ⁸ Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. (*Now if that sounds familiar, like the crossing of the Red Sea, and the crossing of the Jordan earlier in Israel's history, it's intended to call that to mind. Verse nine;*) ⁹ When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for

you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." (*Now I take that "spirit" as not his personality, (or whatever), but as the Holy Spirit. It's not capitalized in the New American Standard Bible, but that's my interpretation. I'll elaborate.*) ¹⁰ He said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless*, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." ¹¹ As they were going along and talking, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. ¹² Elisha saw *it* and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. ¹³ He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over.

¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho opposite *him* saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

2 Kings 2:7-25

May the LORD bless this reading of His word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we do thank You for this time, for it's always good to be with Your people. This is what we're told to do, 'To not forsake the gathering together of the saints, as is the practice of some.' It's so easy to let other things get in the way, but this is where we're to be on the first day of the week, on the LORD's day, and doing what we're doing. And in doing this: In reading Scripture, considering the meaning of the texts, how it applies to us, what it says about You, and singing hymns of worship—that's real fellowship, and we thank You that we're here and that that we enjoy that and want to do that.

We thank You for the rain and we thank You for a break in the weather, and pray that there'll be safety going and coming to this service. Bless us in that way, but bless us in the service that we have a appreciation for what took place so long ago, and how it applies to us in this day. Bless us as we study together, build us up in the faith; may Your Word be used of You to sanctify us, as it is always used. So we thank You for this time together. Bless us.

And LORD, we think of those who have material needs. That includes all of us; we live and move and exist in You, as Daniel told that wicked king, Belshazzar, (Dan 5:23), You give us every breath of life that we take.

Bless us now, LORD, as we continue in worship, and bless us as we continue in study and worship. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) If you've watched the Olympics, you've watched a relay race in which four athletes on a team sprint a set distance, each runner handing off a baton to the next runner, until the fourth carries the baton across the finish line. It's really a race within a race, each athlete running his part in the same race. It requires speed and agility. Relay races have been lost because of a failure to pass the baton smoothly from one runner to the next; it requires flawless coordination. And that happens in life—in business, in politics, in church, as well as in sports as the younger generation replaces the older generation.

We see that in 2 Kings chapter 2, when the prophetic mantle passed from Elijah to Elisha. It was the new generation but the same race, the same mission—proclaiming truth, and opposing error. It happened in the most spectacular way, as Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan River into the region from which Elijah came, to be taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire.

But before that, Elijah went on what I imagine was a kind of 'Farewell tour'. He went from Gilgal, which is near Jericho in the south, up to Bethel, and then down to Jericho. Now these locations were communities of prophets—and not just prophets, but

they were, (what I mentioned, I think, in the reading of the Word), 'schools of the prophets.' What happened in each place isn't recorded but everyone knew, as you read through it, that Elijah was leaving, so it's likely that he was giving these prophets some final farewell advice.

Elisha accompanied him; he was his close disciple. In 2 Kings chapter 3, verse 11, he is identified as the one who would, "pour water on the hands of Elijah", so he was a constant attendant of the prophet.

What is surprising is at each stage of this journey, Elijah tries to dissuade Elisha from accompanying him, (even though on Mount Horeb the LORD had told Elijah that Elisha would succeed him). (1Ki 19:16). As they left Gilgal we read in verse 2, "Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel." Again, in verse 4, "Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho."

Now since Elijah knew God had chosen Elisha to replace him, he can't be contradicting the LORD's will, so what he was doing was testing Elisha's resolve and commitment to the mission. It was a hard mission. Elijah had ended up on Mount Horeb in Sinai, (which is actually Mount Sinai), because he fled there from Queen Jezebel when she threatened his life. A prophet's life was challenging. A prophet's life could be deadly. She killed some of the prophets.

So Elijah was challenging him much like the Lord challenged those who would follow Him. We see it early in His ministry. In Matthew chapter 8, verse 22, He told a scribe who wanted to follow Him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Another said, " 'Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.' Jesus said, 'Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead.' " (ibid. vs 21&22). That's hard. It's demanding. It was a test of their resolve, a test of their commitment. Did they follow Christ? We don't know. But it's a

way of saying to them, 'Count the cost.' Elisha had done that—and each time he declared, "I will not leave you."

I think it's similar to Ruth's response to Naomi in the land of Moab. Naomi's husband and sons were all dead. She was returning to her home in Judah, and told her daughters-in-law to return to their homes in Moab. Orpah did, "...but Ruth clung to her", the text says. She said, "Your people *shall* be my people, and your God my God....so they both went until they came to Bethlehem." (Rth 1:14,16,19).

Elisha was absolutely committed to Elijah, to the ministry of the prophet, and absolutely committed, (and chiefly), to the LORD. And everything in his ministry would bear that out. And everything in his mind and heart bears that out here—Elisha was an unyielding, uncompromising, courageous servant of the LORD. So the text states, "The two of them went on." (2Ki 1:6c).

They walked east until they came to the Jordan River. 'Fifty prophets from Jericho followed and watched as Elijah took his mantle, folded it, and then struck the waters of the Jordan River. They divided, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground', (vs7&8), just as Moses had divided the Red Sea to leave Egypt, and Joshua had divided the Jordan ,when it was at flood stage, to enter Canaan—and on both occasions they crossed on dry ground. Well that was the power of a prophet—it's the power of God.

On the other side, and knowing the end was very near, Elijah asked Elisha what he would like from him; " 'Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.' And Elisha said, 'Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.' " (vs9).

Now on the face of it, it may seem that Elisha was seeking twice as much of the Spirit so that he could accomplish twice as much as the prophet—and be twice as great. That would seem quite inappropriate. Actually, it's the opposite; it shows Elisha's sense of inadequacy. He recognized that he was so ill equipped to be Elijah's successor, that he needed twice the Spirit.

Elisha knew he was entering into the LORD's work, a work only God can do. He needed the Holy Spirit to have courage, to have the resolve, to have the power to do God's will, and shine in the darkness. David recognized that in Psalm 18, verse 29, "By You", he said, "I can run through a troop...and I can leap over a wall." And he did; he goes on to say of the enemies he faced, "I beat them fine as dust." (vs42a).

A great example of that is his victory over Goliath, the powerful giant who was experienced in the art of war. He had been a warrior from his youth; he was a killing machine—the champion of the Philistines. But David, a young man, a teenager, a shepherd—not a warrior, had something more than the giant had. It was more than a slingshot...he had the Holy Spirit. In a previous chapter, in 1 Samuel 16, Samuel anointed David king; and verse 13 says, "...the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward..."

As a result, David the shepherd boy, killed both a lion and a bear to rescue a sheep. Then he brought down the Philistine with a single stone. —That was God the Holy Spirit, not David. And that was Elijah, that's what Elijah had, and what explains his greatness. It's not himself; it's not his own spirit, his personality, his '*gravitas*'...whatever, that Elisha wanted, but the Spirit of God that Elijah possessed.

We see Elijah's own spirit, his own strength when he is running from Jezebel, all the way down to Mount Horeb, all the way down to the Sinai peninsula...and with us, too. It's not just resolve; it's not just personal commitment that we might try to call up. That's nowhere adequate for a Christian, (in his life, her life), and our service. What we need is supernatural—what we need is the power of the Holy Spirit.

And Elijah understood that. He called the request, "a hard thing", (vs10), because he knew that only God can make a gift of the Holy Spirit. But he said, "...if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." (vs10b). In other words, he left the matter where it needed to be left, where it had to be left—and that was with the LORD.

So in effect, this request was a prayer by Elisha. It was a big prayer; it was a bold prayer. He wanted a double portion of the Spirit that Elijah had—a double portion of the Holy Spirit so that he could do God's work.

Now we don't pray for that; we don't pray for the Holy Spirit. Every believer in Christ has the Spirit of God at the moment of faith. Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 13, (you may remember from some weeks back), "...having believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit...." Saints, Christians, are privileged people; we have the Holy Spirit within us. We have the third Person of the Trinity dwelling within us, the seal on our soul to guide us and protect us and instruct us—provide us with Christ's life constantly, and power at every moment.

So, we are to be praying boldly like Elisha did, not for the gift of the Spirit, but for the guidance of the Spirit, the wisdom and power of the Spirit—that the Spirit in us would fill us, and control us, so that we can serve the LORD well and faithfully. And the LORD gives us every indication that if we pray according to His will, we will receive the things that we pray for.

Do you believe what Jesus said at the beginning of His ministry in Matthew, chapter 5, verse 14, when He goes up on the mountain and sits down and His disciples come—and He says to them, "You are the light of the world."? And do you want to do what He said that they and we are to do, "Let your light shine..."? (vs16).

Well, then we should pray for that. We should pray for purity—moral, spiritual purity. We should pray for power. We should pray for wisdom and courage; it comes from the Spirit.

Elijah was a man who shined and gave light to the end—to the very end of his ministry. We see that here in verse 11: While the two were in conversation, while Elijah was still teaching Elisha, the chariot appeared. It was, "a chariot of fire and horses of

fire” that suddenly came between the two in the middle of their conversation, in the middle of Elijah's ministry, and it took him up in “a whirlwind to heaven.” It was a departure as spectacular as his life was, and appropriately accompanied by fire, which had a big place in his ministry.

You'll remember, he's on Mount Carmel when he calls down fire from heaven. He's sometimes called ‘the prophet of fire’. And as Elisha watched Elijah go up in glory, he gave a eulogy with what I think is both sorrow and wonder: "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" (vs12).

Those words state the greatness of Elijah. He was Elisha's spiritual father, his spiritual leader, counselor, and friend; and as a show of mourning at his disappearance, ‘Elisha tore his clothes in two.’ But it was not only the loss of a father, it's the loss of Israel's leader, Israel's champion. He was Israel's true army; Israel's chariots and Israel's horsemen. He was the defender of the faith.

So what that really was, was praise of the power of God in a faithful man. Zechariah writes of that, of how it is we accomplish the work of the LORD. In Zechariah chapter 4, verses 6 and 7, we read, " ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit’, says the LORD..." By the Spirit, He goes on to say, ‘We move mountains.’

Elijah had been a great warrior in his fight against Baal, and the false gods, and the evil monarchs. He'd had a very difficult ministry, a challenging ministry, and he had done amazing wonders. He'd been a stalwart in faith, a man of courage, a great leader. Now he's gone.

Now what? I'm sure those fifty prophets, young and old, and who were some distance away but who witnessed all of this, wondered that: ‘What now? Our master, our mentor is gone!’

How often has that been repeated? ...Well, in every generation. Ultimately it's not the man but the LORD. Still, He uses people and His people need to be praying earnestly, continually, that He will raise up leaders and teachers for His church. We can become accustomed to what we have, and then neglect that. We always need to be

asking the LORD to supply us, through those teachers that He's given us, and through those who are to come, and be praying for that. And so these men no doubt, were in that state of wondering, 'What now? What will happen?'

So if the prophets and the faithful of Israel had wondered, 'What now?', the answer occurred before their eyes, recorded in verse 13 and 14. While Elisha was praising and mourning the prophet's departure, he saw something falling from the sky. It was Elijah's mantle, the garment that he wore over his clothes—an emblem of prophetic authority; and it was God's gift to this young prophet.

Picking it up, he struck the Jordan and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?", (vs14). The river divided, Elisha walked over as Elijah had done, walked over on dry ground proving that Elisha was the prophet's successor. He took up where the teacher, his teacher, had left off. Elijah was gone to heaven—but the God of Elijah, Israel's God, was still present on earth and working as before.

Elisha knew that, and knew that 'sorrow is right, that's proper'; but sorrow must end and the LORD's work must continue. And that in fact is a great solace to sorrow, a comfort and a relief for grief, by working for the LORD and carrying on the ministry. And like his teacher, he would do that to the very end, and he too would shine for the LORD.

That is one of the lessons of this chapter: That we, 'let our light shine' —that we carry the message of hope, of forgiveness, and life wherever we go. That takes commitment; that takes understanding what is at stake. It means picking up our cross, and following the Lord. All of that, from Elisha's standpoint, is future instruction, but Elisha had done that. He had demonstrated that when he tore his own clothes: It was not only a show of sorrow, but it demonstrated that he was leaving the old life behind to begin this new mission.

So, he crossed over the Jordan with resolve. The 50 prophets witnessed all of this. They saw him walking in the mantle of the prophet, with the power and the

authority of the prophet. He did the miracle that Elijah had done, the miracle that occurred when Joshua led the nation into Canaan, when the Jordan at flood stage was divided. So they had every reason to be confident in his leadership.

And they were. They were in Jericho, or nearby, in between the river and the town when he approached them; and "... they said, 'The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.' " And they came to meet him and, 'they bowed down before him. ' (vs15b)

Yet they made an unusual request. They asked if they could send out a search party to find Elijah, thinking, "perhaps the Spirit of the LORD" had cast him on some mountain or valley. (vs16). It was a foolish request. Elisha refused it. "You shall not send.", (vs16b), he said. But they persisted.

Different reasons have been given for this insistence on going and searching for him. Maybe it was because they didn't know what the reader of the text knows, and thought that, 'being taken away', only meant being transported to another location. That's perhaps what they were thinking.

Or maybe they had a hard time letting go of Elijah. He was their father, too—their spiritual father and they may have hoped against hope that he was still with them somewhere. People speak of closure, of coming to terms with death, or the departure of someone, and perhaps they didn't have that yet. The search would give them that.

Still, sometimes it's hard for people, for 'the old guard', to make the transition from the old to the new, from Elijah to Elisha, from the old preacher to the new one. In 1 Timothy chapter 4, verse 12, Paul told Timothy, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness..." People do that, and find all kinds of reasons to attack the new man proclaiming the truth.

Charles Spurgeon had some of that, when he first came to London to begin his great ministry there. He was young; he was 19 years old, but an immediate sensation. While Park Street Chapel was being repaired, he preached in Exeter Hall. Services there were described as 'crammed to suffocation'; and the establishment was not happy. The press attacked his youth and attacked his style. He was called, 'the Exeter Hall stripling',

(‘This young guy.’) They wrote, "His style is that of the vulgar colloquial, varied by rant. All the solemn mysteries of our holy religion are, by him, rudely, roughly, and impiously handled."

What they really hated was his theology, and the depth and conviction with which he preached. He was young and bright, and he shook up London—and they didn't like it. But God's hand was on Charles Spurgeon, and he became known as ‘The Prince of Preachers’ —and we still read his sermons today.

Well maybe there was some of that with a young Elisha. The hand of God was on him, but some were missing the old prophet and having some problems adjusting to his replacement. If so, Elisha was unaffected by it, (just as Charles Spurgeon was unaffected ages later). So he let them go on their search, and when they returned empty handed, said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go’?” (vs18).

But I think Elisha showed great wisdom in allowing them to form a search party and go out and look—and not be something of an autocrat by resisting that, excluding that, but rather letting them learn the new reality for themselves from their own experience. They searched everywhere; and they learned to their satisfaction that Elijah was really gone—gone to his great reward; and they were left to continue the fight, and continue the fight with Elisha.

They were in Jericho and thought that was a good place from which to continue their mission as prophets. But there was a problem; the water was bad and the land unfruitful. Jericho's not very far from the northern rim of the Dead Sea, which is a salt sea. So Elisha did a second miracle when he healed the waters, and again showed that ‘the spirit of Elijah’ was on him.

He told the prophets to bring him salt in a new jar. Then he threw the salt into the spring, and the water was made clean—not because of the salt, which was only a symbol, but because of the LORD. Elisha said, "Thus says the LORD, I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer." (vs21).

Jericho became an oasis in that dry, Jordan valley. So in this act, the LORD showed mercy to this community of prophets by the hand of Elisha, as further proof that he was God's man—that God's hand was upon him.

Then a third event occurred at the end of the chapter that again revealed Elisha's prophetic authority—and also revealed how he differed from Elijah. Elijah was a hairy man. Elisha, we learn, was bald. And when he paid a visit again to the town of Bethel, some children, (really, it's probably more like teen aged boys), greeted him with a reminder of that difference. "...as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, 'Go up, you baldhead; go up you baldhead!' " (vs23).

That was a mistake; verse 24, "When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number." (Now, I know somebody out there is thinking, 'Wow! Talk about an overreaction. What is this all about?' And a lot of people have thought that very thing. In fact, a lot of people have thought much worse.

One of the commentators, Donald Wiseman, wrote, "This passage is often cited as a major moral problem in the Old Testament." Robert Alter is one of those many critics. He was professor of Hebrew and comparative literature at the University of California, Berkeley who translated the Old Testament into modern English. It's a three volume work titled, *The Hebrew Bible*. It came out, I think the copyright is 2019, so it's been out for about four years.

And at the bottom of each page he makes comments, much like in your reference Bible. You'll have all these notes at the bottom, and he has comments that he makes at the bottom of each page. And he had some comments on this passage. He wrote, "This murderous response to the boys' mockery is morally scandalous. Is it meant to suggest that Elisha does not make responsible use of his prophetic powers, that after turning death to life at the spring, he now spreads death? The early rabbis were so outraged by this story that they felt constrained to assert that it never really happened."

Well all of that, at least to my mind, suggests that a man may be smart and know Hebrew without knowing the meaning of the words that he translated—(likely because he doesn't believe this is the Word of God anyway).

Nevertheless, how do we explain what is admittedly an unusual event? Well not by denying that it happened, but by seeing it in its historical setting, and according to the prophet's authority.

Bethel was the place where Jacob had the dream of a ladder reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending, and where the LORD's promise to Jacob was given that He would protect him, and bring him back to the land. The name of Bethel is really two words: bet el ; 'House of God.' That's where this took place.

But by the time that Elisha goes there, it's the time of the divided kingdom. This town, this holy site, was now the center of Jeroboam's cult, where he had placed one of the two golden calves—one up in the far north in Dan and then this one at Bethel, (which is on the border of the northern and the southern kingdom). He put those there to keep the people from going back to Jerusalem and worshiping in the Temple, (fearing that if they did that he'd lose his kingdom). And so he, (Jeroboam), started this cult, this false religion.

So, Bethel was a center of paganism at this time. It was a hotbed of opposition to orthodoxy, the worship of the LORD, and mocking the prophet who was God's spokesmen was mocking God Himself. —It was blaspheming Him. It was an attack typical of the whole northern nation, which worshiped Baal. Elijah had not eliminated that. Elisha, here showed that he was committed to carrying out this fight against Baalism, false worship and blasphemy.

But two things. *First*, these were not children. These were “young lads”, as it's translated here. This word, “lad”, is used of servants; it's also used of, ‘youths of marriageable age’. In fact, when David calls back Absalom from exile and sends Joab to get him, he says, ‘Bring the lad back.’ So ‘a lad’ could be old enough to lead a rebellion against the king.

Secondly, there are no deaths recorded here. But what it shows is the seriousness of sin, the danger of blasphemy, that even young people, even children, are subject to sin's penalty.

We live in a different age from the age of the prophets. In Luke chapter 9, (verse 56), when James and John wanted to call down fire on Samaritans, Jesus rebuked them; "The Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them," He said.

This day that we live in is the age of grace and the age of God's patience, (but in fact, God's patience has been seen throughout all of the history of the world). But we are now living in that—we're living in the day of salvation. 'The age of the prophets' is for our instruction—with its hard events that show the seriousness of sin, the deadly consequences of it, and the need that we have, (and mankind has always had), of a Savior.

But even here, in our text, we see God's mercy. Consider it: Why only two bears and not ten? Why only 'forty-two lads' and not all of them? And why were they 'torn up' and not eaten up?

Well, they had blasphemed the *Lord God*! The fact that we are shocked at the incident, or embarrassed by the prophet's action only shows how *little* we understand the great weight of sin, and how small our view of God really is.

He is infinite. He is Holy. He is the Almighty, who gives us every breath of life that we take. We owe Him every moment of our existence. He gave those young men, those boys, the breath that they used to blaspheme Him. The marvel is that He didn't destroy all of them in a moment.

And the marvel is that He continues to tolerate this world, and to tolerate us, His people, because we sin every day, every moment. But He endures us; in fact, more than that, He loves us infinitely, and blesses us from His grace.

Now, that's the way I look at this incident. And I think that's the right way to look at this incident. The fact that a man would call it 'murderous' shows how highly he values himself, and how lowly he esteems and knows the Triune God.

Now, 'from there Elisha went up to Mount Carmel, and from there to Samaria', (vs25), —the capital; all places that Elijah had been when he opposed the prophets of Baal and Israel's evil king and queen. Elisha was demonstrating his commitment to carry on the prophet's ministry—and these three events demonstrated that he would do that in the power of the LORD. Three miracles have occurred that demonstrated, 'the baton had been passed.'

Every Christian is running the race of faith. It's an old race, an ancient race, a race within a race in which each of us has space and time given to us—limited time to run well and prepare the next generation. So how are you running? Time is a blessing. Time is a gift. It is precious. God has given each of us just so much of it to use for His service.

And maybe you'll be caught up to meet Christ in the air, as Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, verses 16 and 17. So how will you be found? As Elijah was when he was ministering, and the LORD came and took him up?

We're to be committed to His service. We are all to be committed to the life that Christ has given to us—and we're to be thinking about Him and seeking to live like Him in a way that's pleasing to Him at every moment. May we have that commitment. May we be devoted to Him and His service. That's what we need to seek; that's what we need to pray for ourself.

But to some of you I ask, 'Are you even in the race? Are you even a believer in Jesus Christ?' If not, you face something far worse than a couple of female bears. It's eternal judgment that is coming for you—and that is eternal fire and eternal night.

I say that with solemnity; and so I say, in light of that, 'Flee the wrath to come.' Recognize your sin; turn to Christ; believe in Him as God and Savior. He will forgive you; He will receive you at that moment. He will make you a child of God with a glorious, eternal future, and a glorious and meaningful life in the present. So look to Him. May God help you to do that.

(Closing prayer) Father, we do praise You. We praise our Triune God, praise You Father, for choosing from the foundation of the world, a people for Yourself, a vast number of people throughout the ages; and sending Your Son to redeem them, ransom them by laying down His life as payment for their sins. And then the Spirit of God who draws us, who quickens us, who gives us the faith to receive the glorious gift of salvation that can never be taken from us—we thank You for that LORD; we praise You for that.

And now, the LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. In Christ's name, Amen.

(End of Audio)