

Dr. David Cooper
Shake the Dust
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It is nice to be back here in Winston Salem. It is just as hot here as it is in Atlanta.

What a great time of worship this morning. I really was blessed by the new song we sang about the Holy Spirit Fall on Me. Rob has just written that song. I think it is very inspired. It is kind of the way I feel this morning here in worship for the Lord to fall on me anew and afresh.

Today I want to turn your attention to a statement of our Lord's in the gospel of Matthew if you have your bibles and want to open with me today. In Matthew the 10th chapter the 14th verse I want to talk to you about shaking off the dust. Now I know it probably irritates you when preachers always tell you to speak to somebody next to you in a worship service but if it doesn't irritate you too much say to one person shake off the dust. Go ahead and tell them SHAKE OFF THE DUST. Let's see if we get this statement of Jesus to find a permanent place in our hearts. He made this statement when he had commissioned the disciples to go out into towns and villages to preach. He had given them power and authority to heal and he knew that in all those situations things were not going to go well not everybody would listen to them, not everybody would receive them. There would be disappointments and difficulties and so he said when you go to a town or village if they don't accept you shake the dust off your feet when you leave that town or village. Shake off the dust and yet I find this statement of Jesus to us has so much impact to where we live our lives everyday.

Irenaeus the early church leader said the glory of God is a human being who is fully alive. Jesus said that I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly. That means life to its overflowing measure. One of the things that keeps us from living fully in the present is the unfinished business from the past. We want to move forward. We want to enjoy the moment. We want to live a full life but we find ourselves defeated and distracted by the past. This is what Jesus meant when he said you better learn to shake off the dust. When you begin to move on in your life you need to shake off the dust of the past.

Many people today are talking about moving on. Many people of today are talking about a new vision, a new dream for your lives, a new word from God but the fact of the matter is that you and I are never ready for anything new God has for us if we are still carrying the dust of the past. You are not ready for the new blessing, the new opportunity if you haven't shaken off the dust from the old. If we don't shake the dust off we are going to take the dust into the new experience, into the new opportunity and into the new relationship and that was Jesus was telling them. When you go and you preach and minister and people reject you they don't listen to you, you are disappointed, don't take the anger and frustration from that experience and carry it to the next. You have to leave that anger and that frustration and that disappointment in that town so that when you arrive in the new town, the new place, the new opportunity, your heart is full of joy, your heart is full of faith and your heart is full of love for these people. You and I are never ready for the new until we shake the dust from the old.

We spoil the new. We spoil that new job because we are still mad about the old one and how we were fired. We spoil the new relationship because we are still mad about what happened to us in the previous relationship. We spoil the new ministry because we are still upset about what happened in the old. If you don't shake off the dust off you find that you will bring all of that baggage into the new and then we ruin the new experience God has for us. So we are not ready for the new we don't need to be talking about the new and we don't need to be praying about the new as long as we still have the old and we need to shake off the dust first, leave it there and then we are ready to move on to the new.

Now this is not unusual that Jesus would use the analogy of dust to talk about our relationships because if you think about it the very first mention of humanity is associated with dust. The bible tells us in Genesis 2:7 that God formed man from the dust of the ground and he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. The Bible tells us that when we die we return to the dust. The physical body we all have is made up the same properties of the very earth upon which he live. In Ecclesiastics 12:7 the scripture says that when we die the spirit returns to the God who gave it and the body returns to the dust from which it came. God always remembers that we are but dust. He always knows our frame and always understands everything about us. This is one of the reasons that God does not put more demands on us than he does because he knows what we are made of.

The Bible tells us that he has mercy on us as a father has mercy on his children. In Psalm 103 verse 13 and 14 because he remembers that we are but dust. How much can you expect from a handful of dirt? We need to remember that with each when we get so impatient, so frustrated. We get so disappointed in each other because we have all of these high expectations we need to remember what we are made of. It might help you lower your expectations a little bit. How much can you expect from people? How much can you expect from a handful of dirt? God remembers it that we are but dust so pities us. He has mercy on us. He is compassionate toward us.

We use this term even in our own language. We talk about biting the dust. We say he bit the dust or our team bit the dust when we go through an experience of failure. We talk about waiting until the dust settles. Wait until everything is clear. We even use this kind of language ourselves when we are not that far into Jesus saying when you are going through a hurtful experience, a disappointment experience, a painful experience, shake the dust off your feet before you move on to the new place a new season God has for you.

To illustrate the fact that we are made of dust, I don't know if you are familiar with the very properties of the human body or not but if you today for example were to take one square inch of human skin let me tell you what it is really made of Now I want you to look down at your finger tip look at one square inch of human skin. You can do the math what I am about to tell you and you can multiply this for your entire body. But on that one square inch of human skin there are 19 million cells, there are 625 sweat glands, there are 65 hairs, and there are 19 feet of blood vessels. There are 19000 sensory cells and there are 20 microscopic animals on that one square inch of human skin. In fact the entire human body is infested and covered with mites. So much so that the body is constantly shedding dead skin cells and growing new ones. It does this 24 hours a day to free the body from all of those microscopic organisms living on it.

You are constantly shedding and growing new skin cells and this may surprise you to know that 75% of the dust in your house is made up of human skin. Now that is gross. It also brings a whole new meaning to spring cleaning like we are sweeping ourselves out the door, vacuuming ourselves up. So the connection between dust and people in relationships is very solid here. He is talking about the dust in your relationships, the dust and experience of life you are not ready for the new until you are able to shake off the dust.

There was a little boy sat in children's church one morning the teacher was teaching on the creation story. He got so fascinated with this story about how God made Adam from the dust of the ground and then later God told Adam that from dust he came and until dust he would return. This little boy was just fascinated with this story about dust. After lunch his mother lost track of him and found him in the family room and he was kind of down on his knees looking under a piece of furniture. They had hardwood floors. She said "Son what are you looking at?" He said you got to see this. She got down on her knees and looked under the furniture and there was big pile of dust gathered under the furniture. She said "son why are you looking at that?" He said "I don't know what it is but it is somebody that is either coming or going."

Now this raises the question what kind of dust do we need to shake off? Now I want to talk to you about three very common forms that we all seem to experience.

The first is the dust of regret and remorse. We look back over our lives. We look back over a situation. We say I wish I would have done that different. I wish I could change that. I wish I could fix that. We regret some decision we made. We regret mistakes. We regret sins. We regret failures. We look right now at the economy and we say I regret ever having investing my money. I regret having bought that big house. There are so many regrets going on right now in our nation because things have changed so dramatically for people.

Sometimes when marriages are struggling people tend to look back and they start regretting some decision they made. But the fact of the matter is that sometimes the decision you made in the past were good decisions. Just because life is not working out now it doesn't mean you have to second guess everything in your life. Things do change. Circumstances change. People make new choices.

You are never going to move forward and neither am I if I am going sit and regret everything that happened in the past wishing I could change it because I can't. We fall into remorse. We fall into a sense of sadness, a sense of depression about we lost this and we missed that opportunity. I wish I had done this. I wish I had taken that position. I wish I had started that ministry. I wish I had made that investment. We start regretting things that we did not do.

We find ourselves living in this whole place of sadness looking back at the past. We are not living in the moment and we are certainly not looking at what it is ahead. We are just looking back at the past talking about it, thinking about it and rehearsing it I wish I had done this differently and I wish I had done that differently and we find ourselves with a dust of regret.

There is a story of a man in the Old Testament named Samuel. He was a prophet and he was also the last judge of Israel. He was a man that found himself in that place of regret. He was the one who anointed the first king of Israel by the name of Saul. It was an amazing story about Saul who came out of obscurity. A man who was head and shoulders of all men, a very large man physically but the Bible says in 1 Samuel that he was small in his own eyes. He was a man who was very humble in heart and had a very small view of himself even though he was very large physically. Samuel anointed him to be the first king of Israel.

Everything started well. But then Saul grew arrogant and power got to him. Power ruined him as it does many. He began to rebel against God. He began to disobey God openly into the point that he completely rejected the Lord and the Lord rejected him as king and his story ends instead of triumphs. He ends being killed on the battlefield along with his son Jonathan who was heir of the throne at the hands of the Philistines. And when Saul was killed on the battlefield Samuel went into depression. He went into hiding. He stopped his ministry. Why? Because I think Samuel blamed himself. He was the one who selected him. He was the one who anointed him. He was the one who led the worship service. Samuel was the one who mentored Saul spiritually and Saul ended a colossal failure and Samuel blamed himself because of the demise of Saul.

It is very easy to do that with people that you have tried to help. It might even happen with your children. You teach them a certain way. You raise them a certain way and then they begin to go against everything you taught them. It is very easy to start blaming yourself for the decisions of others. But I want to tell you something you and I are not responsible for the decisions other people make in our lives. Everybody at the end of the day is responsible for their own choices. We can't live anybody else's life. We can teach. We can pray. We can encourage but we can't do it for anyone.

Samuel blamed himself over the rebellion of Saul and he went into such a deep place of depression he regretted the whole thing. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to Samuel in 1 Samuel 16 verse 1 with a message I think many of us need to hear. God said to Samuel "How long will you mourn for Saul?" There is a time to mourn. There is a time to regret what happens but God said "how long do you plan to stay in this season of mourning?" How long Samuel do you plan to regret. Exactly how much of your life do you want to waste regretting what has happened to you?

Then the Lord said fill your horn with oil. You say what is that? Well he had a horn that he put oil in it and it was symbolic of the Holy Spirit. When he anointed Saul he poured that oil over his head and a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It was connected with his ministry but now the horn was empty. He didn't have a ministry. He was completely given out of any joy or any vision for his life. God said you need to fill your horn with oil again and he said third of all he said "Be on your way." That is God's word to us when we find ourselves regret and remorse and all we can think about is I wish this had not happened. I wish I had done this different. I wish I had made these decisions.

God says how long will you mourn? Exactly how much of your life do you want to spend regretting the past? It is time this morning to fill your life with oil but not physical oil but the spiritual oil of the Holy Spirit to receive fresh and filling of the Holy Spirit with the joy of the Lord today so that you can be on your way to the new blessing, the new season and the new opportunity God has for you. Hallelujah.

The Bible says in Psalm 30 verse 5 weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning. There is a time to weep. There is a season for sadness but it comes a time that you need to end that nighttime of weeping and regretting and living in depression and wake up and say but the morning brings new joy I am going forth in the joy of the Lord.

You have got to shake off the dust of regret. You have got to get your mind out of the pit regretting what you did or what you failed to do and remember that life is here and now. Life is today. Fill your life with oil this morning and be on your way.

The second type of dust is very common for us it is the dust of ruined experiences. Have you ever felt like you said to yourself that I made a mess of everything? Anybody here? You ever used that. I have made a mess of everything or you said it to someone you love you made a mess of everything. Things were going well. Things were great. We have ruined it. It happens in relationships. It happens financially. It happens in ministry. It happens in every aspect of life. We build something. We accomplish something. We dream something and the next thing you know it is completely destroyed. It is completely gone. It is ruined. Then we start feeling like that is the last chapter. We are never going to be able to build back again. Maybe tell ourselves God has given up on us. God has lifted his hand off of us. Everything is ruined around us. We lose hope. We cannot dream of anything in the future. All we can see is everything that is lost and everything is ruined.

In the Old Testament Jeremiah was a man he went through the type of depression over what was lost. He lived in the days of the war of Babylon against Israel and in the midst of the lost that he felt that sense that everything in life is ruined he wrote the book in the Old Testament called Lamentations. Now if you have read Lamentations but I can tell you without a doubt it is the most depressing book in the bible. If you ever do one of those read the bible through in a year you will struggle when you get to Leviticus you will think you will never get out of Leviticus. But if you can make it out you are going smooth sail for a while until you hit Lamentations and you are going to fall back in the most difficult reading of your life. It reads like an R rated war movie. He has graphic horrible description of war when the city of Jerusalem was attacked by the Babylonian army. That is modern day Iraq. It was a two year war. They starved the people out. The people ran out of everything until finally the king surrendered. They carried the people off to captivity to serve in Babylon.

Jeremiah sat on the hillside and looked at the desolation of Jerusalem. The Babylonians tore down the wall of the city. All ancient cities had these large walls that protected them. The Babylonians completely leveled it to the ground. If you take a trip to the Holy Land today God will show you stones from this era when they tore down the wall of Jerusalem. You can see historically the different areas of time when they rebuilt the wall. Not only did they tear the wall down they did something that historically I still have never understood there was something you may know of not just from the bible but from your study of world history.

One of the Wonder's of the ancient world was in that city. That was the magnificent temple of Solomon. The entire Holy of Holy in temple of Solomon the walls and the ceilings were overlaid with pure gold. The marble of that temple would just glisten when the sun would strike it and for some reason the Babylonians tore the temple of Solomon down to the ground. They did not leave anything left of it. The temple represented God in their midst. It was the place for the Day of Atonement took place. It was the place where they understood that God met with them that God atoned for their sins. It was the center point of their worship. It was the one building that reminded them that God was with them.

If you got up this morning and every church in your city was gone the absence of the architecture would have a profound effect upon you. This was the center point that reminded them we are God's people and that God is with us and now it is destroyed. They were taken off to serve in Babylon. This was the second exile like they were slaves in Egypt. They find themselves in captivity again and it was looking after all Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations. It is the most depressing book in the Bible - lament. If we named it today we would call it the blues. He just lamented their sin, the war, the death, the loss and you have to got to read a long time before you find anything good in Lamentations.

But if you will hang in there and keep reading when you get almost to the end of the 3rd chapter you are going to stumble upon a great truth. In verse 21 he says "yet this I call to mind therefore I have hope." For the first time he stopped thinking about the war. He stopped thinking about their captivity and he started thinking about the faithfulness of God and when he changed what he thought about watch his emotions immediately change. He goes from despair to hope the moment he got a grip on his mind. I can tell you the first way out of your sadness and depression is not change the world around you it is changing the world within you.

If you find yourself in a place of depression today I can tell you as a license counselor that antidepressants will help you. They will stabilize you. What antidepressants will do will keep you from you falling further into depression but there are no medications that will give you hope. There are no medications that will give you joy. Medication will not lift you up. It will stabilize you and keep you from falling down but it will not lift you up. You have to take charge of your thoughts and begin to focus on the faithfulness of God.

When I called this to mind he said "therefore I have hope." What did he call to mind? Keep reading because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed his compassions never fail. They are new every morning. GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS. Say it with me GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS. That is an amazing statement because of the Lord's great love. We are not consumed. We may have been defeated. We may have gone away from him. We may have suffered war in this world in which we are living right now. You may be living through the difficult season of your life but I am going tell you something you are still standing. You are still here right here. We are still here. His mercies never fail. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness.

Great is your faithfulness. What does that mean? God was still faithful as the covenant God even though they were going through the most difficult time in their history. And when he began to feel that hope for the first time the Holy Spirit moved upon him and said Jeremiah "I want you to write a letter", if it was happening today he would say send an email. I want you to write a letter Jeremiah and I want you to send it across the desert sands of Arabia and have all of the Rabbi's read it to the people who are in captivity. You will find that letter in Jeremiah chapter 29. They copied that letter and every minister and every rabbi got all those Jews in captivity and said let us read you this letter. Here is God's word to us. We are in captivity. You fell like everything is gone. You feel like God has abandoned us. You fell like that God has left us.

But listen and it is in that letter that a statement that I would imagine most of you know. Some of you have it displayed on art work but you probably don't where it came from or where it was written. It was written to the Jews who felt that God had left them, God had abandoned them and

God sent them this word in captivity in Babylon in Jeremiah 29 verse 11 "I know the plans I have for you declare the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." I am going to tell you something that doesn't mean a whole lot when your life is great. It doesn't mean a whole lot when everything is going well but when you have lost everything you feel like God has abandoned you and God has given up on you. And you hear the Holy Spirit say I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper says the Lord and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. God is faithful to his people Hallelujah.

Let us give the Lord praise this morning. That is God's word to us. You have to shake off the dust of the ruined experiences and stop telling yourself that it is the last chapter things can never be better. They can never rebuild. They can. God has a plan for your life.

The third kind of dust and maybe the most common is the dust of resentment. That is what those disciples are going to feel. They preach some places and they are trying to help people. They are going to be persecuted. They would be criticized. They would be called names. They would be told to leave their town. It would be very easy for them to get so angry about the way they were treated. We all get hurt. We all get disappointed. We all get angry.

I have come to the conclusion that I think anger is a useless emotion. Now I know occasionally it might motivate us but for the most part anger is a useless emotion. It is not a sin to get angry. Everybody gets angry. But if we don't learn to shake that anger off and if that anger sets up a permanent place in our lives it will do us in.

The Bible says in James 1:19 "man's anger does not produce the righteous life God desires." I don't think anger ever produces anything good. We want to move on to this new experience. We want to move on to this new relationship and sometimes we spoil it because we are so angry about what happened to us, how people treated us and how people neglected us. Some people stay angry for months, years and some people stay angry for their lifetime. My father was not there for me. My mother was negligible. It is very easy to be hurt by our childhood. We are not even aware of it. It puts a chip on our shoulder. We are just mad all of our lives. Sometimes we lash out at people not because we are mad at that person but because we have so much pinned-up anger toward other people it just seems to come out toward everybody.

The Bible says in Hebrews 12:15 see to it that no one misses the grace of God and no bitter root grows up to cause trouble in the family. Listen carefully if anger is not resolved it starts to grow. It turns into bitterness. It troubles us. It doesn't trouble other people. It troubles us. If you are angry today and you are still mad about it you are the one that is going to get the ulcers. You are the one that is going to get the migraines. You are the one that is going to have the sleep disorder. Bitterness grows up to cause and it troubles your spirit.

Now it is okay to be angry. Everybody gets angry but the bible says don't stay angry long. It says in Ephesians 4:26 "do not let the sun go down on your anger." So I can conclude from that if I am angry today about what happened yesterday anger is now working against me. You are going to get angry. You are going get hurt but the Bible says by the time the sun goes down in the evening you need to get it out of your heart so that when you wake up the next day you can move on to the new blessing God has for you.

If you are angry today about something that happened yesterday and if you are mad about how they treated you at Starbucks this morning you can enjoy today. Go ahead and be angry. But if you are angry about what happened yesterday you have been angry one day too long. It is time to shake off the dust. The Bible says that not only that bitterness grows up to cause trouble. It will defy many. It will spill over from your life and into mine and into other relationships. It will affect all of our relationships.

The scripture tells us in Ephesians 4: verse 30-32 "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God with whom you are sealed for the day of redemption." Get rid of all anger. Now when people talk about

grieving the Holy Spirit they usually use that phrase to talk about a worship service but when he talks about grieving the Holy Spirit he is not talking about what happens when we gather together for worship. He is talking about the anger in our hearts. It is the anger that quenches the Holy Spirit's fire, it is the anger that robs us of the joy of Holy Spirit it is the anger that keeps us from the power of the Holy Spirit. He says if you don't want to quench or limit the spirit in your life get rid of all anger not some of it, not most of it but get rid of all anger.

Rage and slander, slander is speaking badly about people. Brawling, that means fighting along with every form of malice. What is malice? Malice means we are sitting around thinking to ourselves I hope they get what's coming to them. Malice is a feeling of ill will toward another human being. It is that thought. What happened to all those Amen's I was getting a moment ago? It is amazing to me how quiet everything gets when you talk about relationships. Yet Jesus reduced all of religion down to relationships. Love the Lord as your God with all of your heart and love your neighbor's as yourself. Real spirituality is about relationships. The anger is what ruins the relationships. The anger is what alienates us. The malice - I know they are going to get what is coming to them, they are going to reap what they sow. The Bible says get rid of all anger. Then it says be kind in compassion to one another forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you.

I was counseling with a woman the other day in our church. She and her husband are up in senior years. At one time they had a lot of money. They did well but then the fall of the economy and through some bad investments of her husband they have lost everything. When I talked to her she had \$2 in a checking account and our church helped them. They are living in an apartment they could barely get. Her husband has found a job and is trying to build back and she is angry and the anger is normal. She began to talk about her anger. She had been talking to her husband about it. Everything in her life has been taken away from her. And during the conversation I said, well have you told him you forgive him and she said "No because I haven't." (laughing) I did what you did I started laughing and I said at least you are honest about it. That may be something you may want to think about.

It is easy for that anger to set up in our hearts and never let it go. We then carry it everywhere where we go. We will carry that mood of anger and irritation. I will tell you today it is time to shake off the dust no matter who hurt us, who neglected us, or who treated us unfairly. Jesus says when you leave that town, leave you that relationship, and you leave that experience shake off the dust and go on to the new place God has for you. Hallelujah.

No the question comes how do we shake off the dust? Let me give you three simple steps. The first thing we have to do is recognize the dust we are carrying. It is hard to see it sometimes. We are oblivious to the issues we have about the past. Other people sometimes can see it in us but we can't see it ourselves. You can't shake it off if you don't know you have it Right? You got look down at your feet and go oh I am dusty. I am carrying this resentment. I am carrying that feeling of hopelessness. I did not realize it. You have to recognize the dust you are carrying before you can shake it off.

Plato said the unexamined life is not worth living. One of my favorite prayers in the Bible is in Psalm 139 verse 23 "Search me O God and know my heart." It is so much easier to say Lord search my husband, search my wife, search their hearts but we begin to grow and develop when we can say Lord search me and know my heart. Why would he pray that? Because we do not know our heart, we don't know the issues sometimes and he says see if there is any offensive way in me. Lord, see in me if there is any dust in my life so I can shake it off.

The Bible says II Corinthians 13:5 test yourselves and examine yourselves. It is called to take a good look Lord let me see if I am carrying dust from the past that seems to be ruining everything in my life today.

Have you ever been in a restaurant with your family or friends and you are telling a story, I mean a story you are really excited about and you are just into that story and during the middle of you just going on and on somebody looks at you and gets your attention and they take their finger and they point at their cheek. What does that mean? That means you got mustard on your chin and you look like an idiot talking.

Now when they point at your chin do you keep talking? No, you immediately stop ASAP. You look for the closest napkin. You don't wipe your chin you wipe your whole face. You say did I get it? Did I get it? Did I get it? You are thankful, right? Aren't you glad somebody showed you that there was mustard on your chin? How would you feel if you got in the car and looked in the mirror there was mustard in the chin. How in the world did nobody tell me? How long did I have that there? Right?

It is amazing to me that somebody can point out mustard on your chin at a restaurant and we love them for it. We don't say no no there is not mustard on my chin you need to listen to me. We don't do that. We are so open and so receptive because they showed us something about ourselves that we did not see. But yet the same people in our lives try to help us see the dust we are carrying and we get defensive we say no no I don't have that issue going on in my life. (Hallelujah in background) That is what I have been waiting on. Now I am connecting.

The people that love us say look you are just angry all the time and you say no not me I am not angry. Let me tell you something if you were not angry the people would not keep telling you, you are angry. Hey there is mustard on your chin. Somebody tries to tell you hey you are control freak. You are driving us nuts. You are micromania. No, no not me, I want everybody to be free. I am not trying to run everybody's life. Let me tell you something the people closest to you would not keep telling you were controlling if you weren't controlling. Hey man there is mustard on your chin.

People in your family wouldn't tell you that you are bad with money. No, no I know how to manage money. They would not keep telling you to leave the money alone if you were good with money. Hey there is mustard on your chin.

We can accept it in a restaurant but we can't hear it about the things that matter the most. So today if you look at yourself or the Holy Spirit speaks to you, and those of you who don't have a broken rib right now from your wife hitting you, recognize the dust you are carrying because you can't shake it off if you don't know you have it.

The second step to take is to decide it is not worth carrying. This has helped me personally. I have just decided there are some things not worth carrying. It is not worth it to me to ruin this beautiful day with the dust of the past. This is a great day. It is the only day we have. I have come to the place I would like to enjoy it and I do not want to ruin it carrying the dust of the past.

When you hear the word stewardship what comes to your mind? What comes to your mind? Money probably but stewardship has nothing to do with money. That is not what stewardship means. Stewardship that is an old English word that means manager. Some of you are a manager. A steward is a manager. Stewardship means the management of life. When you give your tithes and offerings that is not stewardship that is giving. Stewardship is the management of life. Now a part of that would be managing your money so it would be connected in that sense. But the management of life is a lot bigger than money right? The most valuable gifts you have is your time. Every person here would give up every dollar they have if they could have good health, if they could live and life is time. Stewardship is the management of life. It is the management of your time. It is management of every day that God blesses us with.

When you begin to look at it that way and the scripture says in 1 Corinthians 4:2 that it is required of a steward of a manager that a man be found faithful. You just say to yourself I am not being a good steward of my life, I am not being a good steward of my time I am wasting my mental

energy, my emotional energy on all of this baggage. It is not worth it to me. I want to enjoy today. I want to enjoy the blessings of God. I am shaking off the dust. I am done with that. Then some people call you and email you and text you and Facebook you and try to get you all stirred up again then you need to send them all this one message "SHAKE off the dust."

The third thing is move on to the new opportunity. Move on. That is what Jesus said when you go to a town or village and it doesn't work out for you shake the dust off your feet and move on. There is a new town. There is a new opportunity. There is a new blessing. There is a new job. There is a new career. There is a new ministry. There is a new calling. Once you shake off the dust then get your life moving again. Get back in the moving mode instead of the waiting mode.

I think one of the most misunderstood phrases in the Bible is waiting on God. People think that means passivity. The Hebrew word wait only means to trust God it does not mean to stop moving. You need to move on with your life. You need to think in ways that are going to move you forward. Act in ways that are going to move you forward. Jesus says leave that town and go to the next one. Go to the new relationship. Go to the new career. Go to the new ministry. Go to the new opportunity. Shake off the dust and move on to the new assignment God has for you.

It says it this way in Isaiah 43 verse 18 and 19 this is God speaking and the Lord says "forget the former things do not dwell on the past." Don't you like the way God repeats himself. Why does God do that in the Bible? Because he knows we don't listen. My mother was just like God. So he says the same thing forget the former things, you have to forget it, and then he repeats it, do not dwell on the past because he knows we have the tendency just hashing it over right? Stop dwelling on it. Stop obsessing about it. Stop sending e-mails about it. IT'S OVER.

So God says stop obsessing and stop rehearsing it. Then he says see, that means open your eyes and look because if you don't look for it you are going to miss it. See I am doing a new thing. It is not that God is doing a new thing. The problem is that we are not seeing it? Why are we not seeing it? Because our vision is on what happened to us? God is at work. God is blessing. God has opened the way. We do not see it because we are still obsessing about the past. He says forget the past get your mind off the past. Now open your vision and SEE I am doing a new thing.

It is springing up then he asks do you not perceive it? I am working in your life? Do you not see it? I am making a way through the desert and streams through the wasteland. I am making a way through a desert. You thought there was no way back that is what he means that desert of Arabia I am going to bring you right back across the desert and put you right back in your homeland. You did not think there was anyway through this. God says I am making a way. (Praise God) Quit telling yourself there is no way through it. Quit measuring the future because what happened yesterday. God says I am making a way. I am providing streams in the wasteland. What in the world does that mean? What does water do to a desert? It turns it into a garden. . Things that have been dead, things that I have been lifeless I am going to bring new water and that water is cause everything in your life to begin to blossom and grow again. SHAKE OFF the DUST.

I am going to tell you a story as I close that really brings this statement of Jesus home to me. Last summer a young woman an early 30's came to see me for counseling. She is in our church. She came in depressed. I knew she was depressed looking at her. I am telling you she looked like she went to her closet what is the most depressing outfit I have and that is what I am going to wear. Now I am going to tell you something about women they are calculated at what they wear. She had her hair up in a pin and I know they don't usually don't go out in public like that. So I figured that was a statement. She had no make-up on so she physically was wearing her depression. She was upset, she was angry, and she was depressed. She could not eat. She was losing weight.

She pours out this story. She is a schoolteacher. She has her Master's. She has gone for a six year certificate. She has seniority in the school teaching elementary children. And they just told her they want her this next year to go back and teach children that have behavior disorders. She

said every teacher has to do that. It is like boot camp and everyone has to serve their term but then you move on. She says they have looked at these younger people and they have looked over them. They are telling me to go back. They are telling me the reason they want me to go back is because they think I am gifted I have an ability. They need some help there. She says I know they are patronizing me. She was furious.

She has already gone to every supervisor. She has made complaints to the board. This is unfair. She has gone the HR route. You know when you are in a job you feel like they are treating you unfair she was doing everything she could go. She was at the end of herself. She told me I think I am going to just quit teaching. She was ready to end her career the thing she dreamed about it, the thing she trained for and the thing she spent thousands of dollars to get educated in. She is now thinking I am just going to stop teaching altogether. Thank the Lord the economy was so bad she could not find another job. I said have you looked at some other schools. She said yes everybody has already done their hiring. I am trapped. I don't know what I am going to do. I can't afford to quit. I would quit right now if I could. She felt she was trapped in a prison. Toward the end of that conversation all of this anger she was so upset why could God let this happen?

At the very end I said do you think it is possible that maybe the Lord is opening the door that you, I am telling you she attacked me I took that off the table quick. I said forget about it. She left the same way she came in. Maybe it helped her to just tell the story.

So she came back two weeks later. She looked the same. We went over the same story. I have been treated unfairly. I cannot get anyone to listen to me. They are patronizing me. I don't know what I am going to do. I feel trapped. I have no options. At the end I again just suggested "do you think maybe there is an open door here for you that maybe you do have gifts. Maybe there are some children that you are going to help this year that you don't even know." She says it's so chaotic in those rooms. The children have so many problems. She says I have done that before. She says I don't want to ever do that again. I can't handle that. But she did not get angry when I said suggested to her. So she left thinking about it.

I did not see her for a month. She came back to see me. And this day she looked totally different. Now women have the ability to change their appearance. They can just trick you. And I say is that you? Men we have like black and brown and blue and gray. Men are drab all the time but women, women have so many colors. Women make up colors. There is one color they call fuschia. There is no such color as that it is pink. Not to them, no. Women make up names for colors they have so many colors. They have a hundred pocketbooks and shoes to match. A guy has one wallet and it is either black or brown.

I am telling you her whole appearance was different. She really dressed up with bright colors on. She said her hair, beautiful long hair, I did not even realize she even had hair up there. Her hair was fixed. All that make up on she looked like a model. She is sitting upright. She is happy. She has a big smile on her face. I said what happened to you? She said I got to thinking about what you said and I thought maybe, maybe since I can't get out of it maybe there is an opportunity. She said I got out of my condominium, I got out of my depression and I went over to the school. She said I have gone into the room and taken everything off the wall. I have rearranged every desk the way I want. I have put up all new artwork. I stood there in the room. She said I have been over there every day fixing everything up the way wanted it. I am already envisioning the children and I am already praying for them now. She said I have created a whole environment. She said instead of thinking it is a chaotic environment. She said I have taken control of my environment and feel that I this is the calling of God on my life.

Now she did that and at Christmas time, that is the break you know where she can now make a change for the next half of the year and I saw her after service. I said how are thing going? She said it is going to great. I have signed up to teach them again.

Now we are in another year. We are in the summer so I am figuring this summer she is done with this. I saw her last Sunday morning after our services. She came down and spoke to me. I said how are things going? She said things are going great. She said I am going to teach those children again this year. That woman shook off the dust of anger toward the people over her she shook off the dust of depression. She stopped telling herself she is a victim. She stopped telling herself I am trapped. She stopped telling herself that everybody is against me and she embraced life.

Let me tell me something about her that we all need to pay attention to. That woman did not change anything in the world around her she changed the world around within her and when you change within you the world around you will fall into place. So today let's shake off the dust and go on to the new place God has for us.

Let us stand together for prayer today. Would you pray with me out loud? Heavenly father I praise you that your mercies are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. Give me the power today to shake off the dust so that I can move on to the new place you have for me, In Jesus name.

In the closing moments of our time as you are praying and reflecting on God's word today I want to speak to any person here who has never accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior. The Bible says we must be born again. We need a spiritual change. We need our sins forgiven. The bible says in the book of Roman's that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your hear that God raised him from the dead you will be saved.

I want to lead you in a prayer this morning and pray it in faith the Holy Spirit will touch your heart. You will receive the greatest miracle of being born again. You will walk out of here in a moment understanding what the scripture say that all things pass away and everything becomes new. Will you pray this prayer for me today if that is your need today? Lord Jesus Christ I believe and confess that you are Lord of all, the son of the living God, I ask you to forgive me of my sins. Cleanse me of all unrighteousness. I receive you this day as my eternal Savior. I surrender my life to you as Lord of all. I praise you for the miracle of salvation and the miracle of a new beginning. Lord Jesus I am yours and you are mine. Hallelujah.