

A WORD WITH YOU – By Ron Hutchcraft
10383 – “Saving Lives With What You Have”
Exodus 4:2

October 28, 2026

It started out like just another day driving a school bus for Ponderosa Elementary. But that night, Kevin McKay would be hailed as "the bus driver from heaven." In between, came the most deadly wildfire in California's history.

On the morning of November 8, McKay had just dropped off his students when he saw the smoke. Ten minutes later, the evacuation order. Ultimately - and quickly - you know, the entire community would be consumed by flames. Most parents made it to the school to quickly pick up their child. But as the fire was, in McKay's words, "coming down in a thousand places," there were 22 children still left at the school.

Since he had just unloaded, he had an empty bus. Within minutes, he had them aboard that bus with the help of two teachers, Abbie Davis and Mary Ludwig. That's when they began what became their five-hour journey through what Ludwig said "felt like Armageddon." The smoke and gridlock was so heavy they only traveled an eighth of a mile in the first hour.

They continued to navigate the wall of cars ahead, and McKay could see the fire was creeping ever closer to the road. One fourth-grader said, "There were fires left and right, everywhere you looked." Abbie Davis confessed that she thought they were going to die at several points along the journey. But they didn't, because of one man's courage and determination to save lives from those relentless flames.

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **“Saving Lives With What You Have.”**

I was really moved as I read his story. Yes, because of Kevin McKay's selfless heroism. But also because of that Scripture that kept playing back in my heart in the midst of that conflagration. "Save others by snatching them from the fire." That's in Jude 23. Jesus left heaven on that rescue mission - to save us "from the fire." The fire of God's judgment for defying our Creator to, in essence, be our own "God." Running our own life. The "fire" I deserve that fell on Jesus on the cross as He (in the words of the Bible) "gave Himself for our sins to rescue us" (Galatians 1:4).

But I know people who don't even know the fire is coming. Let alone, that Jesus loved them enough to take the fire for them. Most of us know folks like that. Someone needs to "snatch them from the fire." Someone needs to do what a courageous bus driver did as Paradise went up in flames. Use whatever vehicle we have to save lives!

Like our influence, for example. In someone's life. Our connection, our relationship with someone who, each day, is one day closer to a judgment Jesus died to save them from. We know them, and we know Jesus. They don't know Jesus. Could our responsibility be any clearer? Is it any wonder God says in Ezekiel 3:18, "if you do not...speak out...I will hold you accountable for their blood"?

When God called Moses to join Him in rescuing his people, He asked Moses a probing question, and it's our word for today from the Word of God in Exodus 4:2, "What is that in your hand?" It was only a shepherd's rod, but God told him to "throw it down" so He could transform it into something that would set people free. And that piece of wood, super-naturalized by God, helped liberate a nation.

When God asks me and each of His people, "What is that in your hand?" You got a home? A job? A computer? A Facebook page? A Bible study? Do you have a membership at the gym? A school or service club you're in? You have money in the bank? You have some respect at work or in the community? You have musical ability? A gift for writing or art? Do you have a relationship with a coworker, a neighbor, someone with a common interest?

God has heard the cries of the lost hearts around you and me and He's coming to rescue them. But He's asking you to use whatever has been trusted to you to save the ones you know; whatever's in your hand. There's one vehicle we all have. Our most powerful vehicle - our story. Your life, your background, your battles, your pain, your failures, and how Jesus has changed your life. Your story, interwoven with His Story, could change their story forever!

The heroism of a man who saved lives with the vehicle he had makes me do some soul-searching. What do I have that God wants me to surrender so He can use it to change someone's eternity?

I can't imagine that bus driver simply driving off in that bus to save only himself. Not when there were people he could save from an unthinkable fate. I don't want to arrive in heaven with an "empty bus."

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