

Hour of Power vom 21.07.2017

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GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – BS/HS

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

HS: And we are so honored to have you as part of our church community. It is not an accident that you are here this morning. It is not an accident that you are tuned in with us this morning. The Lord has a plan for your life and his plans are good, and his plans are life giving. Would you turn around and shake the hands of the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

BS: Let's pray: Father, we thank you so much for calling us here this morning. We believe, God, that everyone here in this church, and everyone around the world that's joining us, Father, Lord, we just believe that no matter who is watching, or who is here worshipping, that you can touch their heart, that you can turn around any circumstance. That hope is available, that hope is a reasonable and good thing to have. That we can trust in your love and your power, Father. There is no one who is truly at the end of their rope if you are there with them. And so Father, I pray in Jesus name that every chain would be broken, that people would leave here encouraged, inspired, renewed, fulfilled. You can do it, Lord. We trust you and we believe in you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURE – Philippians 3:4b-9 – CHAD BLAKE

In preparation for Bobby's message this morning, hear these words from Philippians chapter three.

If others think they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider lost for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - - the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

This is the word of the Lord.

INTERVIEW – ALAN PLATT

BS: My guest today is Alan Platt. Alan is an agent of transformation in the lives of individuals and local churches, in corporate structures of societies, and he's been in full time ministry since 1983. Serving the church on various levels, today he is the visionary leader of Doxa Deo which is based in South Africa but is truly a worldwide movement. It's an awesome movement. So would you please welcome with me today, Alan Platt. I really want to get to the heart of your message, which is the finished work of Christ. But before we get there tell everybody a little about what you're doing in the world. I mean you're having a big impact in your ministry Doxa Deo. What is that?

AP: We are truly at the receiving end of grace. It's one of the most marvelous things for any human being to discover that God could actually use you. And that was our discovery. It was my discovery as an individual where I had the privilege of taking over a church that had gone through challenges. And as we started navigating the way forward, we discovered grace: grace to be, grace to do, grace to go through. And right now, we're seeing that God has given us the ability to position people, followers of Christ all over the globe with this understanding that they are called by God to make a difference in their world.

BS: And that's really what you're doing. You're empowering people. I mean what is it like thirty thousand people or so are involved at Doxa Deo. I mean just an incredible movement that you're a part of. It's something really to be paying attention to in the world and the heart of it is grace, isn't it? I mean that's the heartbeat behind what you do.

AP: Well I often say to people if God could use me, he's definitely interested in using you. We had the privilege of leading this charge, but really in the understanding of two of the original focuses of the church, which was defined as the Imago Dei and the Missio Dei; the image of God and the mission of God. And those two discoveries have led us on this journey. If people can understand who they are in Christ, their new identity in Christ, it repositions them to be part of the mission of Christ.

BS: I feel like so many Christians want to engage in the mission of Christ. They want to do good things for God, they want to help the homeless or volunteer, or whatever, but oftentimes they haven't been rooted in that really first part, that identity piece.

AP: The challenge for us is to understand that it's good to do good for humanity. But there's something that changes that equation when you discover this mystery that has been in the heart of God through all the ages now revealed in Christ Jesus. And that every human being can discover that they are included in that reference, revealed in Christ. It changes the way we do compassion, and benevolence, and engagement with our world. It really brings a greater sustainability because we're not just doing it in our own strength and willpower, it's being motivated by the very essence of the knowledge that God loves this world deeply.

BS: Amen. It does seem like though, aren't there many churches that people would say 'this grace is for everyone.' That it's a transformative power of God to touch every heart. But many churches sometimes, and I don't think this is one of them, but sometimes it feels like maybe people watching on television would say 'Alan, I went to this church and they definitely did not make it feel like I was welcomed there, or that God loved me, or I came dressed a certain way, or acting a certain way, or from certain subculture.' What do you say to that, to people like that?

AP: Well we have to understand the good news is only good news if it's good news.

BS: That's good.

AP: And good news is, in essence, only good news if I know that I'm included.

BS: Yes.

AP: I have a friend that recently in South Africa phoned me and said, 'Alan, I have good news. They found platinum on my farm.' I thought well that's good news for you but it doesn't mean much for me. You see I'm not included in that reference.

Bobby, here's the key: the moment you discover that you are included in this incredible reference that God has established in Christ. God took the initiative. We don't have to try and convince God to include us. He has reached out to the world. He loved the world. And you know in this season, I'm very aware of being here in the U.S. about it being football season. And I see how people respond as fans when their team wins. Something happens to them. That recorded victory suddenly has a deep bearing on how they think, feel, talk, and even engage their friends. That's what happens to us when we discover that there has been a victory that has been recorded, never to be challenged again, and we are included in that reference. His victory is my victory. His triumph is my triumph.

BS: Yes, that is good news. Today we're talking about this prayer that we say every week. And we're beginning a series called Life of the Beloved. And the first line is really a line that a lot of Christians have trouble with. And the line is "I'm not what I do." And it's: "I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I'm the beloved of God." And the irony is that until you learn that your actions don't change the way God feels or thinks about you as far as his love and affection towards you, until you can change your attitude, and your mindset, and your heart about that, you actually lack the power to truly be like Christ.

And one of the big questions I get often, and I know you believe that, right? I mean we talked about this earlier that that is really the heart of the gospel. That sanctification does not come by trying harder, it comes by being saturated in God's grace and love.

So here's the question: all of these things that we're saying, how do believers live every day in that knowledge? Like how do you really live in that space?

AP: We are so conditioned to have to achieve to get acceptance and acknowledgement, but in essence, we must discover we are human beings not human doings. We find who we are in our identity and our true identity is revealed in Christ. Christ came, not to show us just a way to live; he came to introduce us to our true design. He's the blue print of who we are. And so I often like to say Jesus did not just come to introduce us to a new way of living, he came to introduce us to a new way of understanding who we are. You see identity precedes activity. The way you perceive yourself determines how you live. The way you think about yourself, the way you think of who you are determines how you engage with people, circumstance, your reality. It all stems from who I think I am. And if I can discover who I truly am. Listen: if I am says I am, then I am.

BS: That's good. It's like if the good news is...yes that's good. His name is Alan Platt and he has an amazing book. If this topic touches your heart and it's something that you want to read more about how to live in the goodness of God's grace, His book is called *We Start at Finish: Living from the completed work of Christ*. And it's a tremendous work, an amazing book. I want to encourage everybody to get it on our website and Alan's website.

Alan, thank you so much for being with us this morning. It's such a privilege to have you here. We're going to be praying for you and watching as God continues to move through your ministry Doxa Deo. It's a tremendous, great thing that the Holy Spirit is doing and we're so honored to have you.

AP: Thank you, my honor being here today.

BS: Thank you, brother. Appreciate it. _____

DECLARATION – BS

Would you please stand with me and we're going to say this creed together. Would you hold your hands out like this as a sign of receiving? And this is particularly important today that we listen to these words because we're beginning a series today about this prayer. It will go the next five weeks. Say this with all your heart. "I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share his love with the world. Thanks, you can be seated.

MESSAGE – BOBBY SCHULLER "You are Not What You Do, But You'll Do Great Things"

So today we're beginning this series, we're calling it "Life of the Beloved." Yes, I got that right. What it means to live in the knowledge that I am God's, that he is mine, and that although behavior is so important, and how we live our lives is so important that in the messiness of living life, there is one thing that cannot be taken from you and that is your identity as the beloved sons and daughters of God. That there is nothing we can do, nothing that can be done to us, nothing that can be taken from us, nothing that can change in our circumstance that can change one simple thing: that you and I are God's beloved children, and that's very good news. And if we forget that one, very simple but easily lost principle, we can actually lose everything else that matters in this world.

And so I want to take the next five weeks to navigate through the theology and the practice of what it means to live out of this kind of life. To live as the kind of person that says the most core part of my being in the weirdness and hardness of life, that I have this one thing that will never change: the fact that there is literally nothing I can do that can change the fact that God has and always will love me. And we're going to dive into that, are you ready? And it's going to be a happy series and it's going to be fun.

Today's sermon is really about finding a spiritual home. Finding a place where your heart can come to after it's been beaten and battered by the world in general. There are three types of people that may be listening today and I have been all three types. The first is the rat-racer. Do you ever find yourself going, going, doing, doing, hoping that someday you'll be happy or fulfilled, or you'll retire, or something will happen in some distant date that you're hopeful for but right now you feel unfulfilled, you feel empty, you feel like what Thoreau said, "Our society is filled with men who live constantly in quiet desperation and they go to a grave with a song still in their hearts." Maybe you feel that way. If that's you, this message is for you.

If you're the second person: the hedonist. A person who has just come to a place where simply in life I need to recognize that in the abyss of life I need to simply minimize harm and maximize pleasure. I need to find ways that I can have fun and saturate my life in entertainment because that becomes the substitute for true Christian joy. If that's you, this message is for you, too. And the third person: the nihilist. The person who has just given up all together; that believes that all of life is a cruel joke; that someday all we do will evaporate into nothingness, and that my life doesn't matter, and your life doesn't matter. If that's you, especially if you're watching on television, maybe you're sitting in bed and you're watching this today, this message is for you.

Today we're going to talk about the gospel. The gospel is simply this: no matter what I've done, the work of Christ is sufficient to save me. To save me from my rat race. To save me from my business. To save me from my worry. To save me from my lack of meaning. To save me from death. To save me from the harm of life. That the work of Christ is sufficient to save me from these things. That I can be baptized in the power, spirit and the love of God which never, ever fails. Today we're going to talk about that.

Now this prayer, we're actually going to go line by line, and today we're going to talk about that first line. And the prayer that we say, I've called it often the Creed of the Beloved. It seemed catchy, you know? This is a prayer that actually changed my life. It evolved from reading my two favorite authors Henri Nouwen and Dallas Willard. And I took these two ideas, the idea of hurry and worry, and the idea of living in the belovedness of God, just prayed through them every day and I watched that as I prayed an earlier version of this prayer, this creed that we say every week, and my life changed. I found that every day, as I centered myself on this prayer, I found out my life changed. How many of you have found yourself during the week actually saying this creed? I don't have worry, I don't have to hurry, anybody? Raise your hand, I want to see it. Awesome! There is something sustaining, stabilizing in the craziness and pain of this world that by just pausing for a moment and saying I'm not what I do, I'm not what I have, I'm not what people say about me. I'm loved. I don't have to worry. I don't have to hurry. I can relax. I can trust Jesus. By repeating these things in our life, there's something that happens in the heart where all of a sudden life starts to get flavor again. That the numbness of my soul begins to tingle and come to life. The blood begins to flow again. I stop worrying so much about what other people think, and worrying about doing everything right, and worrying about having all my ducks in a row, and I can finally just enjoy life, live, and finally get to a place where I love people and do what's right because I want to. Imagine that. That I live so rooted in God's love that no one has to tell me to do good, I want to do good because that's who I am. I've been changed by God's love. That it's no longer willpower, it's no longer trying harder, it's what I want. I want to help people. I want to serve my neighbor. I want to care for people that are hurting. I don't care if they don't give anything back and I don't care if hurts because I live from a place of God's love. I now have the strength, and the power, and the desire to do what is right and good. That's the power of living in God's love.

This first line in the prayer is the one that, oh my goodness, I probably hear it once a week and I love it, actually, and if it's you, I want to talk to you about this. This first line "I'm not what do," all of us have a challenge. We live in a morally relativistic world, don't we? And that's a problem, isn't it. It is. It's a problem that people have decided that whatever I feel like is right is actually what's right. The problem with that is that doing what is right oftentimes hurts, and isn't fun, and doesn't feel good. And so there is this thing in many of us, especially as Christians, where we're like no, right is right, wrong is wrong, and what you do matters. And to that I say, amen, one hundred percent. But until we figure out that our identity is not rooted in what we do, we lack the power to truly be good.

So this first line "I'm not what I do" is the gospel. And I'm going to help every Christian here solve this problem. Juan Carlos helped me sort this out, okay? Thank you, Juan Carlos Ortiz. Hi, my friend. He helped me sort this out. He just said 'just say this and you'll convince everybody,' all right? Here is the slide. This is the theological language. "I am not what I do" is "not by works." Do you feel better now? Somehow if you frame it in theological language, not by works, the gospel, then somehow people go oh yes, that's true. The reason I say I am not what I do is because it's new language. It's saying the same thing but it touches people's hearts. You are not what you do. Regardless of what you do in life, regardless of all your acclaim, all your trophies, all the amazing things you have done, it is not your identity. And regardless of your sin, and your mistakes, and your regret, and the ways that you've hurt people, and the ways that you've not finished things, your unfinished symphonies, those are not your identity, either. There will come a day when those things will be a distant memory. You are God's beloved. What you do matters, what you do is important, what you do has historic value, what you do can grieve or please the Lord, but in the end it is not your identity. We can only do good truly like Christ our whole lives when we're rooted in God's love and we want to do what is good. That can happen. Look life and love is hard. Love is hard. All the love except from God that we experience in this world has a brokenness about it. There will always be a time when the people that love you and the people you love most will disappoint you. They'll break your heart. There will be things like death, and break ups, and divorce, and unfaithfulness. These things will often betray and disappoint us in love, and when that happens, we need to know that we have a spiritual home that we can go to, a place that's deeper than all other loves; a place that is God's love. We need to return to that place. Amen?

So the passage that was read today was from Philippians. Now Philippians is referred to as the book of joy, and in this book, Paul is talking to the church about what it means to be completely alive and joy filled in the grace of God. And Paul's story as a missionary has these guys that are sort of chasing him around, and they're going around basically saying 'I know Paul said that you're saved by grace through faith, but we say that you need to get circumcised. And oh yeah, you can't eat pork, and by the way you need to make sure that on the Sabbath you don't work.'

And so everywhere Paul went, it was like good cop bad cop. Like here's Paul and we know he says that God loves you and God cares about you, but we say no you need to do all of these religious things. They were legalists. For these people it was important to know who was in and who was out based on behavior. This is human nature, isn't it? I think these were John Ortberg's words, right? John Ortberg said picture someone in your mind. Picture someone in your mind. Picture someone who is wearing black leather, leather pants and riding a motorcycle. Who am I talking about? It's a biker, right? So bikers all look the same and if you want to be in a circle of bikers, you need to look, and act and talk like a biker. If I paint a picture for you of someone who has pompoms, and like a tank top, and like a dress, and they're rooting for a sports team, who am I talking about? It's a cheerleader, right? There are ways in which we dress, and we act, and we look that cause us to recognize when people are in and when people are out. And the church does this stuff doesn't it? And Christianity was doing this.

And so Paul was being followed by people that didn't want to lose the precious commodity of knowing who was in and who was out. How do we know you are truly in? Well if you're circumcised, if you honor the Sabbath, if you follow the dietary laws, well then we know you're committed. And Paul says no. No! And then he begins to brag and he says I was circumcised on the eighth day. In other words, I didn't convert to Judaism. He says I am a Benjamite, a Hebrew of Hebrews. In other words, I wasn't like all those other Greek guys.

And then he says according to obedience to the law, I was a Pharisee, meaning that at the most, there were only six thousand Pharisees that were perfect at the law. Nobody followed God's rules, or God's laws, or was more morally perfect than me. And then guess what he says. But guess what: all of that is, and here's the fun Greek word that translators never know what to do with. Let's put the slide up. The word is skubalan. Skubala or skubalan is poo. Now we don't know how to translate this because there is an edginess to this word. And granted, we're not supposed to have foul language; swearing is not a good thing, but there are some that say this word has a degree of almost contempt about it. That he has contempt for his good works. That he says all those great things I did that were my identity are skubalan. They are nothing, they are rubbish, they are garbage compared to knowing Christ and to being justified by faith. That all of those things are worthless compared to the intimacy that I have in knowing Christ today. Isn't that good news?

And that is the gospel. See here's Paul, he did everything right. He obeyed the law perfect, and yet he was still killing people. He did everything that his religion said he had to do and he was beating and torturing people as a persecutor of the church. And yet in his religion's eyes, he was doing everything perfectly, but his heart was poison. It was rotten because he didn't know the love of God, and so even his good works were evil. We cannot truly be good people if we're trying to earn our way into heaven, or earn our way into God's good graces by doing good. The work of Christ is enough. You are not what you do. You are what Christ did for you. Can I get an amen?

You are not what you do. You are saved by faith. And when we recognize that all of our works are skubalan compared to the work of Christ on the cross, that everything, all of the good works that we do mean nothing compared to what he did for us. That is when we truly become good. That's the irony! When we stop caring so much about proving ourselves, only then living in God's love do we truly have a heart that beats for hurting people. That says thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth until it is in heaven. Until we completely embrace the mission of God to transform a hurting world. Until our soul breaks for people to be saved. Only when our life is rooted in God's love do we love what is good and hate what is evil. We cannot let our good works be the thing that make us Christian. We have to understand that only being baptized and saturated in God's grace by faith that that is the only thing that can save us.

When Jesus died on the cross, he said it is finished and he meant it. He meant it. Everything you've done in your life, all of the stuff that you regret, all the skeletons in your closet, it doesn't matter. If you have faith in the cross, it's all forgiven. Everything you've done, all the mistakes that you'll make on the hard journey of discipleship. It's okay. His grace is sufficient and that's good news.

We're always trying harder. We're always running out of steam trying to prove ourselves to others, and prove ourselves to God. We find ourselves lost, and depressed, and insufficient. We find ourselves lined up against impossible standards, depressed by our inability to be the people we want to be. Let it go. You are loved. Let it go. You're loved. Live in God's love and you'll watch and see that you will want what is good for others.

Holiness, and this is really important to recognize, and this is the thesis of today: holiness is rooted in intimacy not willpower. Holiness is rooted in intimacy not willpower. You do what is right because you're in love.

Think about young lovers, right? When there's two young lovers and they're mad about each other, you don't have to tell them 'go on a date today.' You don't have to tell them 'hold hands' 'put your arm around each other' 'buy flowers and gifts for one another and say annoying things on Facebook about each other.' Right? You don't have to tell them to do that. They're in love! Right? You don't have to make them feel guilty. Who do you have to do that for? Right? You have to do that for people who have been in a relationship for a long time and are like oh I guess I got to do something for my husband or my wife.

And many of us have become like that. We remember how we used to be so full of zeal and life but we've lost our intimacy with God. We've lost it and that's the problem. We must fall in love again. We must be completely saturated in God's love and we won't be able to help but do what is right.

There's this movie called "Love Actually." There's a really tragic scene where there's a husband and a wife and they're kind of having a rough go in their marriage, and the wife doesn't know that the husband is having an affair. And he buys this beautiful piece of jewelry for his secret girlfriend. It's hovering around Christmas. And the wife is sifting through the drawer and she finds this piece of jewelry and she goes huh? She hides it back and closes the drawer and is all excited for Christmas to come when she's going to open this gift. And when she opens her gift it's a sweater. And then she knows. And in a way.. oh I'm sorry it's a CD. It's a CD. Hannah's correcting me on my romance films, thank you darling. And he's given his treasure to the one he loves, but he's given his passable gift to the women he's in covenant with.

And that's where many of us are in our lives. We're just doing it. We're just giving God the CD. We're doing just enough to be okay to have a present that works, but our treasure, our passion is somewhere else. It's with a mistress.

This is what God was saying to Israel all the time. You are like one who has left her husband. You see legalism is like giving a CD, but holiness is like giving a jewel. True holiness is rooted in passionate intimacy and love with God. When we are passionate, and know God, and live in his presence, and we pray, and we listen to him, and we seek him, and we're crazy about God, then something just happens in us where we get help but do what is right. Can I get an amen?

And that is what we're going to learn to do in this series. We're going to learn to get off of the holy coaster. You know what the holy coaster is? The holy coaster - this week I was pretty good, last week not so much. Right? We find ourselves up and down. We do this with God constantly where we're constantly feeling guilty, or constantly feeling self-righteousness, or pride and both are bad. And so we have these amazing highs and lows that make our faith a horrible experience. When we believe we are what we do, that also becomes the thing that we try and do to get the love and intimacy of others.

Think about a party, when you meet somebody new, what's one of the first things that people love to ask. Hi my name is Jim. Hi my name's Bob. What do you do? Right? There's nothing wrong with that, but this is a way in which society identifies who you are. And really you become Bob the accountant, Bob the pastor, Bob the attorney before you become Bob the friend. That the first touch point in how someone gets to know you is by knowing what you do for a living.

And so many of us we have all of these trophies that are wrapped up in our careers, but what happens when you lose your career? Or wrapped up in our hobbies, or if you're young, your sports. What happens when you get an injury? What happens when you lose your hobbies? Many of us, we have our identities wrapped up in parenting. What happens when you empty nest? What happens when your kids go off to college and they don't call you on your birthday? Right?

And so what we do becomes such a big part of who we are that it also gets on its own sort of roller coaster where we're always, like when we're doing good things, and we're achieving a lot, and we have a lot of trophies on our wall, well we feel really great, but even that is located in self-righteousness and pride. And that whole life that is the world's game. We do not play that. I want you to achieve great things, I want you to have a successful career, I want you to achieve your goals and do amazing things in your life, but if your identity is rooted in what you do, that game will end ultimately in failure. All of life is a journey of letting go. Every, every moment is letting go of something else and trusting God more for us. And if you don't have God you're just losing, you're not letting go.

And so that's what we're going to learn. Learn that I am not what I do, that although what I do matters, that I ought to do great things for God, God has called me to do great things, that I'm called to be moral, that I'm called to do what is right, that I'm called to love what is good and hate what is evil, in the end, until we learn that no matter what I do that God will love me, I'll lack the power to do what is right.

And so I'll just say it again: you are God's beloved. You are loved not because of what you have done, you are pleasing to God. God is not disappointed in you. God loves you as you are, not as you should be. You are loved. And the more we can live there, the more our heart will change, and the more we will want what is good. Amen? Amen.

Let's pray. I want to give everyone an opportunity to know what it means to know the love of God. And so I want to just give a moment. If you come here today or you're watching on television and you say I need to know this love, I'm inviting you today to become a Christian. I ask that you pray this prayer with me and that you take a first step of faith to know God's love. And then I'll just simply ask that the whole church pray. And if you're praying for this the first time, your name will be in the Lambs book of life, and you will be in covenant with God if you say it from your heart.

And so church and if you're on television at home say this with me: Father in heaven you are good and I am loved by you. It is who I am. I am not what I do. And so I ask that you forgive me of my sins. You would help me do what is right but help me to live from a place of love. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. I plead the cross and the resurrection in Jesus' name, amen.

BENEDICTION - BS

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord cause his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen.