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GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

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

HS: Welcome guests and church family, it is a joy, joy to be with you. We know for a fact that God inhabits the praises of His people, that's us, so let's worship Him this morning with all that is within us. Thank you for being here. We love you.

BS: Amen. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father in heaven, we thank you that your presence is here now. We're grateful for you, God. We ask in Jesus' name that in this moment our lives would come completely in line with your word, with your life, with your power, with your victory over us. Thank you, God that you're here even now, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, all God's people said, amen.

HAVEN: Turn to the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Malachi 3:1-4 - Hannah

Would you open your Bibles with me to Malachi 3:1. "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. Thank you, Lord. The word of the Lord.

INTERVIEW – Lisa Whittle

Lisa Whittle is a Bible teacher, podcast host, and bestselling author. She has written a number of books, as well as created communities online for those in ministry who are looking to expand their skills. Her book, *I Want God: How to Love Him with Your Whole Heart and Revive Your Soul*, helps readers who feel stuck in a spiritual rut find their path to a soul revival, and into a deeper relationship with God.

BS: Lisa, hi, welcome. We're so glad you're here.

LW: I'm so grateful to be with you.

BS: Hey, before we get into your book, tell us a little bit about your faith journey and I'd love to hear some context, too, for kind of where this book came from.

LW: Well my faith journey started early. I often said I feel like I was born in a pew. That isn't exactly true, but I was born into a pastor's family, so it might as well be true. I feel like I've known Jesus my whole life, but I came into a personal relationship with Him very early, when I was six years old. And so my journey has been like most people wonderful and complicated during the years of my own personal relationship with Him. But this book came to be because I was at a place that I felt personally desperate for the Lord. I was a young mother, and I needed some revival of my soul. And so I wrote this book actually over a decade ago, and I was looking to be revived, I was looking for the Lord to help me in so many spaces in my life, and so I began to research revivals, actually pastor, and I realized that the God of those revivals, those corporate revivals, the same God that lived inside of me, and that Holy Spirit could bring life into my weary and dead bones. And so I began to seek Him in that way.

BS: A lot of people when they think of revivals, they think of the big tent, fiery preacher, some people think of great movements. A lot of people have no idea what you're talking about. What does a revival even mean, if somebody's never heard of it? What does it mean?

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LW: Well I think you're exactly right. People do think of that big white tent, those preachers that certainly some of us have experienced that, and I think that was what I thought, too, but it really just means when you are in that place where you need more of God, and you are feeling in some way desperate. And so I'm grateful that God can revive our souls. It is really sort of breathing life back into me, coming back to God in some cases, and coming to God, maybe for the very first time in some situations. And God is so good to bring life to our dead spaces.

BS: There was recently, I think, the biggest baptism ever in, I don't know if it was American history or what, but it was like eight thousand people got baptized just down the street from us here at Pirate's Cove. And there's other things like that happening. There's a lot of people who are down on America, but do you feel like there's a revival coming in some way? A lot of people are saying that.

LW: I do sense that. I think that where there is great desperation, which we've seen, there is a great hunger and turning to God. And so I think there is a lot of good news to be found, that is that when we seek God with our whole heart, we know according to scripture He will be found. And so I believe that this is a real moment for us, especially in America where we can turn to the Lord and seek Him with a new longing, and we know that He will be good to draw near to us, and be found in that place. And so I have a real sense that there is going to be a revival in the land, but also in each of our individual hearts, and that's really what I Want God is all about.

BS: It's interesting that this book came out of your own desperation at a season that sounds like was fairly normal or positive. You just had a baby, you're a new mother, everything's going right, but something's not right. And it's interesting how a lot of people think that it's going to come at a really hard time like when you lose a child, for example, but in your case, you just had a baby and your life was changing. It's interesting how many of us find those desperate moments, when on the outside can feel like everything is good, to people watching it, everything's positive, but we can't put a finger on it. Was that kind of what it was like for you and what do you think it was, and tell us about the book. What was the book about really? What were you hoping to get people to read in this book?

LW: I think that is true. I think a lot of times people do think on the outside that our life is altogether in some way. We assume a lot. We feel like we're the only ones that are ever going through something, and we know that not to be true. I think in my case, there were a lot of things in life that I thought I wanted. I thought I wanted a certain career. I thought I wanted a certain measure of popularity or approval from other people; normal things that I think a lot of us think that we want, maybe a certain measure of wealth. All of the kinds of things that I think in America we certainly feel like we want. But I found, pastor, that what I really wanted was to be free from wanting those things. And desire is obviously not wrong, we know that it talks about that in the word. In John 1, Jesus asks I believe the most important questions – what do you want. And so really that's what the book is about is understanding that it's not about what we know we need, because so many times we know we need something. That's not enough to compel us, because throughout life, I've known I'd needed a lot of things, but that's not really propelled me into change. It is the desires that actually create change in our life.

And so I talk a lot about that in I Want God, and I think that's going to be a game changer for a lot of people who don't understand the desire is really want propels us to move forward in life.

BS: People love this book. It's terrific. And I want to encourage you to get ahold of it. The book is called I Want God by Lisa Whittle. Lisa, thank you so much. God loves you and so do we.

LW: Thank you pastor.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

No matter who you are, we're so glad you're here. Would you stand with us? Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. We're going to say this together: 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. Its 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. Amen!

Next week I'm going to change that creed, believe it or not. There's one word I'm going to change and you'll have to come back next week to see it. See that's what you got to do in the church business. You got to keep people coming back for more. So come back next week, and bring a friend, too.

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MESSAGE/PRAYER – Bobby Schuller "Refiners Fire: How Obstacles Fuel Success"

Well today we're going to talk about the principle of the refiner's fire, a Biblical principle, and it basically tells us a refiner's fire is how obstacles fuel success. And we don't like obstacles normally. Obstacles get in the way. When we have momentum and something gets in our way, we sure do not like that at all. Today we're going to talk about how ironically we need those very obstacles to become the people that God has called us to be. In life, there are these rare moments where we can do a sort of reverse Uno card. You guys ever played Uno? Where you're playing and you're like add four and then they pull out the reverse Uno card, no you. Right? Or there are these moments in life where maybe you.. have anybody played dodgeball before? And somebody's got their eyes locked in on you and they throw the ball at you. And what happens if you catch the ball? See that was my favorite part about dodgeball was if you could kind of back up like this and catch the ball, they're out. There's a type of martial arts called Judo. Dakota, have you ever done Judo? No, okay. The type of martial arts called Judo where if somebody throws a punch at you, or strikes at you or something like that, you can use their momentum and throw them. And so Judo teaches you actually to use the inertia and the momentum of the person attacking you to get back at them. The ultimate Judo move happened 2,000 years ago. Satan said to God something like see, if you love your enemies, they'll kill you. Now I will tear you to pieces. And Jesus said back to him, no sir. You. Right? Jesus said no. You take your curse and you take your deception and you take your sickness and you take all your evil and you leave this world. It will end. And that's what happened at the crucifixion. See the crucifixion was the ultimate reverse Uno card. The crucifixion was this incredible moment when Jesus turned it all around; when what seemed like a horrible event, when it seemed like God would be dead, this amazing thing happened. As believers, we have the opportunity in life to do the same thing. When we respond with fear and dread and sleepless nights, and we bottle all of it up and we don't tell anybody, yes, a crucifixion can remain just a crucifixion. But as believers, if we respond in faith, which means standing on God's word and on God's promises, if we respond in faith and we hang on, those same events can become that exact Judo reverse Uno card, or that dodgeball moment. We call it faith. Faith. It's the opposite of fear. It gives power to our hopes, to our dreams, and to God's word. We call it faith. A fair warning, by the way, as we get into the more difficult part of this sermon, I promise you for many of us, this sermon's going to be annoying. Okay? It's going to irritate you a little bit. It's going to say yeah, but my hope is that even though this will be an irritating sermon, especially in the middle part, that you'll stick with me and trust that what I'm saying, I have practiced in my own life. In Malachi 3, there's a prophecy about Jesus and it goes like this: "I will send my messenger who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple, the messenger of the covenant whom you desire will come, says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming. Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiners fire or a launderers soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord as in the days gone by as in former years." Refiner's fire. It's a prophecy about Jesus. He does this literally when He enters into the temple and cleanses the temple. But it's also a deeper metaphor for the Christian life, the life of the disciple, the disciplined one. It's actually about gold. It's a prophecy about gold. You guys ever watch those fun gold shows like on Discovery? What's it called, "Gold Rush?" I don't know if I've had like this weird Dutch gilded love of gold ever since I was a little kid, but I'm pretty sure I have, where it's like kind of fun to see these guys. And they go out and they go panning for gold, and they go into the hills and they get these giant jars of gold nuggets, and then they take the gold nuggets and they schmelt.. is it schmelt or smelt? They smelt it down and they get these like gold bars. And it's always interesting to see how much gold is in there. When they weigh it, you go whoa, that's great. But they always take all that gold and not all of it is gold. A lot of that is dross, dirt, iron, things like that, are all mixed in with it. And so what do they have to do? They have to find.. do you remember the name of it? It's called – a crucible. They pour the gold into a crucible, a refiners fire, and through immense pressure and heat, the crucible melts the gold and separates it from the dross. The dross is the wasted material. A crucible is a useful tool, isn't it? It looks dangerous. It certainly is. It's hot. It's pressurized. And you got to know how to use one. But it's still a useful tool. And here's what it does: it purifies the gold using immense heat and pressure, and it removes the dross, right? And the whole point of a crucible is to answer a simple question. Here's the question that a crucible answers: how much gold is in there?

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Now when you look at some ore, there's some gold and there's some of something else. And the crucible clearly answers the question: how much gold is in there? How much? Maybe you've looked in the mirror and you've asked that question: how much gold is in there? What am I made of? What kind of a man or a woman am I? What is God's point for me? Maybe a negative relative looked at you and asked the same question. They looked at you and they said – not much. Maybe you believe those words; that lie. Maybe you had an inspirational person, positive relative, a teacher or a pastor, a leader, friend who looked at you and said a lot more than you think. I wish you could see what I could see. Maybe there is a lot. Maybe there is a little. But there's only one way to answer the question. There's only one way to really know. Right? There's only one way to know how much gold is in there? There's only one way to answer the question, and the answer is the crucible. To go through the fire and to go through the pressure. Now the gold doesn't like it very much when it gets put into a crucible, does it. It's hot in there. Doesn't feel good to get melted and pressurized and separated from the dross that you've been attached to for so long. Doesn't feel good. But when it gets under the other side, the gold looks in the mirror and says to itself, wow; that was a lot more gold than I thought. There was a lot more gold in there than I thought. I hope that happens for you, whatever it is you're going through. And here's the annoying thing: stress and challenge and heartbreak and disappointments and unfinished dreams can do this for us when we place them in God's hands, and that's the most important part. That even though they're not always from God, that we can take it and give it to God and say I can't handle this. Help me handle this. I give this to you in faith. God can turn that dross into gold, amen? So number one. We're going to talk about two things today about stress. This is the first thing. We all need small stresses to grow and be happy. This is a law of human nature is an unbreakable rule. You need small stresses in life to grow and be happy. You need it. There's two types of two types of stress. The first is eustress, we call it. That's the stress that benefits you, and the second is distress and that's a stress that causes you harm. So whenever you're stressed, you're experiencing usually one of these two types of stress. You might remember a basketball game or a football game or whatever, a sport that you played, and it was very stressful, but it was good for you. Or you might remember a very traumatic moment in your life that was very stressful and it was very bad for you. But ironically, we like to group eustress into basketball games, and bad stress into trauma, but ironically, that is not the kind of stress you're having. In other words, the type of experience you're having does not dictate whether its eustress or distress. Here's what we've seen through research. The biggest indicator of what kind of stress you're going to have is how you view stress in general. Isn't that weird? In other words, if you see stress as an overall positive thing in your life, most of the time whatever stressful experience you're in will grow you. But if you see stress overall as a negative thing, something to be avoided or something to withdraw from, most stress will actually harm you. So in this weird thing, we find in research is that how you view stress actually has the biggest indicator on what it will do to your soul and your life. One of the weirdest things I just read about, and I want to be careful here. I'm not a therapist. Trauma is a real thing and clinical therapy is useful. We've all heard of PTSD – post traumatic stress disorder. World War I, when it was first coming out, was called shell shock when these soldiers were experiencing artillery, shelling and all this stuff. But did you know it's actually more common, although PTSD is a real medical condition, it's actually more common to have post traumatic growth. It's more common. Did you know that? Now in our world, we don't like to talk about post traumatic growth because trauma can really harm you. But I remember when I started leading the Hour of Power, and my grandpa Schuller started getting me around these really successful people, it was amazing how often some of the most successful, impactful, amazing personalities I met were World War II combat veterans. It was very interesting to see that people who had been shot out of the sky, or lost a leg, or seen their buddies blown up, very often seemed like some of the highest achieving, highest capable, and actually very often had really good families and a very strong faith. We call it post traumatic growth. Now I'm not suggesting that if you have PTSD it's because you didn't view it right. I'm not suggesting that. I'm simply saying that sometimes the times when we're attacked by the enemy, the times when Satan lobs things into our lives, we have an opportunity to play the reverse Uno card sometimes. And a lot of it is basically how we view those things. So let's put the big stresses on the shelf for a minute. We're going to come back to that, but the little stresses, right. Financial challenges, right. Hearing you might get laid off. Being given a new project at work. Attempting to start a business. Going through relational issues with your family. Working on yourself as a husband or a wife or a parent or a friend. These are little stresses, and whether we choose them or not, they work on us. The stresses work on us.

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One way to think about it is the work you're working on works on you more than you work on it. Did you catch that? That one's free. Marcus Aurelius said it this way, and one of my favorite quotes, I'll show you this probably once a year because it's so important: "fire thrives on obstacles." You on fire for God? You on fire for life? You on fire for your future? You on fire for opportunity? You on fire for this country? You're on fire for your friendships and your church and your nation? Are you on fire for all that you want in your life? Fire thrives on obstacles. Fire thrives on obstacles. We see it in nature this thing where stresses develop a person. Did you know palm trees actually need storms? When a palm tree is caught in a storm, it catches the wind and it sways back and forth, and it stretches the root system and makes it stronger. And if it doesn't have that bending back and forth, it's not as healthy of a palm tree. Bamboo is strengthened when its cut back. An expression: time under stress is regularly used by elite athletes, whether it's running, or body builders, they know that if they're not growing, if they're not getting better, they did not have enough time under stress. What is the word there? Time. Time under stress. That these things grow us. They make us. They shape us. As Nassim Taleb says, anti-fragile the human body is. How amazing the body is that the more you use it, the better it gets. And the opposite is true. The less you use it, the worse it gets. Use it or lose it, right? Now I think about this a lot. I had the opportunity years ago to meet Jack LaLanne before he passed away. I don't know if you've heard of Jack LaLanne, but I had no idea who he was when I met him, and I'm really bummed about that now that I know who he was. I met this old man. He punched me in the stomach and he said you need to do more sit ups. I'm like oh! Okay! Flexed his arm. He's this little guy. He's a small/big guy. And I didn't know this, but Jack LaLanne is the father of modern athleticism. He built kind of the first gym in 1936 when that was considered kind of kooky. He had this saying that the more that man worked on it, the less you want to eat it. So he's like you eat an apple because it grows on a tree. You eat a steak because it's an animal. You just eat it. And the more you develop the process, the more you should avoid it. He got a really good night's sleep. He worked out. He exercised all the time and he aged really well. He died at the age of 96. Well before I get there, he did these little feats of strength. He swam underwater the length of the Golden Gate bridge carrying oxygen equipment. It was a world record. On his 70th birthday, he was handcuffed and shackled, and in the water, I think he did it with his teeth, pulled 70 rowboats each with one person on it. So 70 people in 70 rowboats one mile through the Long Beach harbor. He died at the age of 96. He got pneumonia and died. But up unto that point, was very healthy. In fact, his family said the day before he died, he did his full workout, even though he had pneumonia. They wanted to take him to the doctor and he refused, and then he just died. We call that a good life. Now we're inspired by people like that, right, but we don't really want to be like them. Why? Because it sounds exhausting. Right? It sounds exhausting. But the truth is, of course, does Jack LaLanne seem like an exhausted person to you? I mean we could make the claim that the only reason he could do the things he could do is because he was the exact opposite of exhausted. You see? And this is the choice we make every day. It's not the big choices that we make, it's these little choices. Will I go for a walk around the block? Will I eat an apple a day? What if that's true, an apple a day keeps the doctor away. Right? That's what Jim Rohn used to say. What if that's true? Doesn't say a candy bar a day. No! What if an apple a day.. what if that's true? Okay. So this is the power of small, consistent stresses with a positive attitude over time. It creates people like Jack LaLanne. Not just the swimming when he's 70, but all the little things every day that led up to a 70-year-old man being able to do something like that. It's like a train. When a train starts, it takes an immense amount of power and energy to just get going a couple of inches. Wow, just hard, hard, push, push just to go super slow. You see those old steam engines, you wonder is it even moving when it first starts? Sometimes the wheels spin underneath it and it has to grip and catch. But man, once that train is going, it's hard to (AUDIENCE – stop). Hey, that's what small, consistent stresses with a positive attitude over time does. It's like indoor versus outdoor plants. I don't know if you guys have indoor plants. I've got them in my office, and they're beautiful, but boy, they drive me crazy. Think about it. You've got this indoor plant, and everything is perfect. Its right in the window, it's perfectly 72 all the time, there's no wind, there's no bugs, it gets watered every day, everything is right, and you just like barely graze it with the leaf, it's like (AHHHHHHHHH) dies, right? You miss one day of watering, (AHHHHHHHHHH) I'm dead. And outdoor plants; outdoor plants: wind, bugs, animals, eaten, hit, hard, it's like no problem. (MMMM, MMMM, MMMM, MMMM) So what's the difference? Look, the modern man and the modern woman have learned the habit of withdraw when we come under stress. And there are a lot of companies that have made a lot of money by giving you socially acceptable ways to withdraw from stress. Didn't use to be that easy.

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Now most of us in this room, when we experience stress, especially on our day off and nobody's looking over our shoulder or paying us to be stressed, when we experience some kind of stress, this is what we typically do – we reach for our phone. In fact, most likely, most people my age, in particular, if you're having dinner with your wife or your husband, the minute they go up to go to the bathroom, you're going to reach for your phone and you don't know why. So you experience stress in life, the first thing you do is instead of leaning into the stress and solving the problem and growing, we reach for the phone. Or, you reach for a drink or two when you're stressed. Or, you take a nap when you're stressed. Or, you overeat when you're stressed. Or, you procrastinate. Or, and the list goes on and on. And this is, again, this weirdly increases our anxiety. This is research again. Though withdraw gives a temporary relief, it increases our anxiety. Did you know that? The more you withdraw from stress, the more anxious you get. So in this weird way, not always, but very often stress and anxiety are inversely related. So the more little stressors in your life you have, actually, the lower the stress tends to be in life. This is a real problem, and the reason is, very often, because as your world is sort of shrinking and getting smaller, and the less triumphs and wins and victories and pressing through you're getting, you tend to have less real faith in yourself and probably in God because you've not done it. You've not done anything. And this is why I think, without getting too much into criticism, but the very many middle class youngish adults today struggle so much with anxiety. You think somebody that grew up in America, in a middle class family, with privilege and money and went to university and had many opportunities given to them, that very often their very low stress lives; if you're stressful, you look at all these people and you think their lives seem pretty low stress, but very high anxiety. And this is very simply because they don't believe in themselves. And sometimes people like to say they're narcissistic and this kind of thing, it's not really true. There's not a real self-belief simply because they haven't pressed through. And they're being reinforced by many friends and peers that you can't do it anymore unless you fix the system, or you can't do it anymore because of the government, or you can't do it anymore because you don't have whatever president or governor you want, or you can't do it anymore because of – whatever – your race or gender. You can't do it because of this. You can't do it because of that. Instead of just trying! And it's that trying, trying, trying, trying and lose, lose, lose, lose, win that causes any person, regardless of who they are, to believe in themselves. It's the stress. Anybody annoyed yet? It's because people have to answer the question – how much gold is in there. And the only way to answer the question – how much gold is in there, is to go into the crucible. To do the work. And the irony about this generation, my generation, many younger, is that there's never been a generation more equipped to change the world in a positive way. And they'll figure it out, we'll figure it out. Don't worry. Many of them have, and some of them are still sorting it out, but they'll figure it out, just like our parents. The boomers really honestly did a lot of the same stuff. They figured it out. So we'll figure it out. God's got a plan. But I'll just tell you from a personal anecdotal, I've never had more stress in my life and more responsibility in my life and I've never had less anxiety. A lot, a lot stress over time, but it's grown me as a person. It's like an athlete or a bodybuilder who can carry a lot of weight, but they've never been stronger. Man, I remember.. my son, some of you know, my son has had a chronic struggle with an illness, with polymicrogyria in his brain. I still remember the first time when he was two years old, watching him have a seizure, literally looking like he was writhing in pain, he was going to die. And spending multiple days in CHOC hospital and feeling tons of anxiety, tons of stress, tons of confusion, tons of anger. We've been through that process a lot now, and I can tell you that the man that went through that the first time is different than the man I am today. So God did not make my son sick. That came from hell. That's a curse from Satan. And God is going to turn that around for Cohen and for us. But in the meantime, there's also this reverse Uno card that allows Hannah and I and those who are on that journey to become different people. You see, the last thing Satan wants from that is for me is to become a bigger faith person, to become a bigger dreamer, to have more energy, to be stronger. And I can tell you Cohen is getting way, way better, which is great. But the real point I want you to get from that is simply that I've learned that in a weird way, I don't want to say it's been good for me, but in a weird way, I like the man I am after that a lot more than the man I was before that. That's all I can say. And I think that leads me to the next one. So we talk about little stresses, what do we do about stuff like that as Christians. What do we do about big stress? What do we do about trauma? What do we do about crisis? What do we do about catastrophe? And I don't mean that your boyfriend broke up with you. I mean what do we do about war, what do we do about a sick child, what do we do about death. There's this saying that God said I'll never give you more than you can handle. Bologna. Bible doesn't say it and it's not true.

Refiners Fire: How Obstacles Fuel Success

Life will give you a lot more than you can handle. Can you handle your own death? I can't. I need the Lord. I cannot handle these things on my own. God has given us the word, He's given us His Holy Spirit, and He's given us the church, don't forget. You really can't be a Christian without the church. That's a false idea. You have to be in a community. Why? Because it's good for us. You can't be alone when you go through these difficult times. So what do we do when we go through catastrophe, when we go through crisis, when we go through stress? Here's the answer: you stand on God's word. That's what you do. Not the answer you were looking for, is it. This is the answer, my friend. You stand on God's word. You have faith. The book of Hebrews tells us how to get faith. Did you know that? You want some faith in your life? The book of Hebrews tells us how to get faith. You don't get faith, according to the Bible, you don't get faith through effort. You don't get faith actually even by worshipping, even though that's a great thing. And you don't even get faith by praying. Did you know that? You don't get faith by praying. Many Christians want to pray – give me faith, God. Give me faith. That's not how you get faith. The Bible says faith cometh or faith comes by, who knows? Hey, what? I can't hear you. (AUDIENCE - hearing) Okay. Faith comes by hearing what? The word of God. It's a formula. It's a math formula. Faith comes by hearing God's word. And that's how we get it. If you have less of God's word, you're going to have less faith. If you have more of God's word, and you're eating it, you're going to have more faith. It's so simple. So, we believe, not doubting, understanding God's word, and when we do this, we destroy the work of the enemy. All evil and death entered the world with one phrase. You know what that phrase was? Did God really say? Just one question just brought all of this. Seminaries today, I love seminary, I think you should go to one. I'm grateful for my seminary, but seminaries love this question: did God really say. You see? That's a problem. And when you pray, this is what you do, you open your Bible and you point. You just like here's how I'm praying right now. Literally, you do that. I learned this from Paul Jensen who when I prayed with him one time, he's like let's pray through the Psalms, so we opened up Psalms and we just prayed from the Psalms. It was great. Hannah and I, we spend time praying every Monday, and we bring up issues we're going to pray about, we don't say what do we pray about, we say what scriptures should we stand on for these issues. So for sickness, say we're going to pray about this, for financial need, we're going to pray about that, for overcoming, whatever, difficulty, we're going to pray this, and so we say God we're praying according to your word. We know God's will. He's revealed it to us in the scripture. It's the only way we can know God's will is through the scripture. So you build your house on the rock. Now when I was a kid, I thought building my house on the rock meant believing in Jesus. And that's kind of true, because I think there's songs and stuff that say that. I'm trying to remember the old Sunday school hymn. But that's not what Jesus says. He doesn't say you build your house on the rock when you build it on Him as a person, even though we ought to do that. This is what He says: anyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock. Again, anyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice. See I thought it was just some sort of abstract belief in Jesus. No, Jesus is saying believe in what I say! Take my word as natural phenomenal law that's unbreakable in the universe, and stand on that. The Bible doesn't say storms won't come if you stand on the word. It actually tells you storms are going to come, the rains going to come down, the streams are going to rise. But you will get through because of my word. You want to hear this interesting thing. I've had COVID so many times, got to stop counting. But last time I had COVID, every time I get it the worst. Everybody in my family, they're fine, and then I'm always the worst. And it was like three/four days in, and I was like just still rotten, and Hannah just took her phone with healing scriptures. It was like an hour long YouTube video of only Bible verses about healing, put it next to my bed and it just kind of like kept playing it on the phone. I'll tell you what – that's when I turned around. Call me whatever you want to call me, weird, I know it's not a very modern thing to say, but just listening to those scriptures over and over works like the best medicine ever. I'm going to do it all the time now anytime I'm sick. You can do it, too. You can, you can take it, you can leave it, whatever. Here's the last idea. Give God time for His word to grow and accomplish its work. Remember what the Bible says that the word of God is a seed. You put a seed in the ground, it has to grow. Don't pull it up before its done being grown. Remember what happens? Daniel prays to God, and he doesn't hear anything. Three weeks later, the angel shows up and says I had to fight a spiritual battle to get through the king of Persia, Prince of Persia to get here to you, and I'm so sorry, and I had this battle, and I had to get these guys, but anyway, I'm here now. Look, that's all we derive from that is there's a lot going on we're not going to understand. It's very weird. Sometimes you got to give it time, and sometimes you don't. Even Jesus needed three days to resurrect.

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Do you ever wonder why didn't He just resurrect right after He died? Like why didn't He wait three hours, and then boom? See the disciples had to wait three days. There was a guy named Ken Baldwin who jumped from the Golden Gate Bridge when he was 28-years-old and he survived. But he gave this testimony. He said right when I jumped from the Golden Gate bridge, I instantly realized that everything in my life I thought was unfixable was totally fixable except for the fact that I just jumped from a bridge. Isn't that interesting? Here's what I'm asking you to do if you're going through a trauma and difficulty. I'm just asking you to hang on. All you have to do is hang on. Hang onto what? Hang onto the word. Hang onto the word. If you have to sleep with the Bible, use it as a pillow, listen to it, hang onto God. Just hang on. God will get you through. I can't tell you how many amazing victories I've had in my life, not because I'm gifted or because I'm sophisticated, because I just have this unique ability to be like a honey badger and hang on. I've had that weird thing inside of me and if you can get it, you'll get through a lot. Here's a promise: God's going to bring you victory. You will be healed. You will get well. You will be saved. You will recover. You will have financial victory. You will have emotional victory. You will succeed, you will thrive, you will die at a ripe old age, you are going to do well, but stand on God's word. Hold on. And in that way when the enemy attacks you, you play the Judo card, the reverse Uno card, the dodgeball thing, and that feels very good when you get to the other side to know that that will come for you. If you don't know the Lord, I want to encourage you today to make a decision today to invite Jesus Christ in your heart. How can you get through life without God? How can you face death and sickness and challenge without His word and His people? Won't you make a decision today to invite Christ into your heart? Today's a great day to become a Christian. If you do that, text me the word HOPE to the number on the screen. Now thousands of people have texted us HOPE, by the way, who have given us the word that they know the Lord. We're measuring it, and so if you make that decision, text us that word. We'll pray for you. Stand with us, Jesus. Help us to understand in your word and your spirit and your power. Thank you, God that if we hang onto you, we cannot be destroyed. We love you and we thank you that your spirit is within us. Your strength, your life, your purpose, your freedom, your promises. We're standing on the promises this morning, and we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you His peace, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen.