

Hour of Power vom 07.05.2017

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## GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby and Hannah Schuller

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

HS: And welcome church family. The Lord has a word for you today.

Would you turn around and shake the hand of the person next to you or give them a big hug and say God loves you and so do I.

BS: We're so glad you're here and so honored that you're here. God invited you to this place and you said yes, you came. And I think he's going to bless you for that.

Let's pray: Father, we thank you that you are here. We thank you that you're going to do great things for everyone who comes with an open heart and says Lord, I have this need, help me. So Lord, we thank you that in Jesus' name you'll break every chain because you're going to encourage people, that you're going to give us the miracle we're looking for. We're trusting in you, Lord, and we thank you. You're a good God and we love you in Christ' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

## SCRIPTURE – Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 7:12 – Hannah Schuller

You may be seated. In preparation for Bobby's message, the words of our Lord found in Romans and Matthew:

Let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Love is the summation of everything God asks of us. We are living the best life there is as we love those around us. Amen.

## PASTORAL PRAYER/THE LORD'S PRAYER – Chad Blake

Will you join me in prayer this morning: Father, we delight as your people gathered here together. We delight in you, we delight that you look to us and call us your beloved. You call us children. Father, we join with all of the heavenly hosts and say holy, holy, holy are you, Lord God Almighty. All heaven and earth reveals your glory.

Lord, we remember all of the missionaries and government officials and armed forces who are serving you and this country all around the world, Lord. Many times they are away from family and friends and loved ones, and we pray that today especially they sense your presence with them, they sense that there is a people back home that is praying for them and cares them and loves them.

Lord, we pray for our own government here as new leaders start in their new roles, Lord, we pray for your guidance. We pray for our whole country and all that is represented in this country. Lord, we pray that this be a country that is on fire for you, that revival breaks out here in the United States, Lord.

Lord, we pray for our congregation and all the needs that are present here, Lord. We are praying in faith and we are believing that chains are being broken. We believe in miracles, Lord. We believe that bondage will be no more and that your spirit is here and alive and active in our hearts. Lord, set this church on fire for you.

Lord, we love you, we praise you. Lord, we worship you and we pray the way that Jesus taught us to pray, saying: Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give

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us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.

### PREP FOR OFFERING – Chad Blake

First John chapter 3 tells us this is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. I love that last line. Let us not love with words or speech but in action and truth.

We talk a lot about faith in action, love in action. You've heard Bobby say if you have a need, plant a seed, or talk about doing something bold for God, stepping out in boldness and your faith. And I think the same is true of our generosity, doing something bold for God. Doing something in action.

So I challenge you to do something bold, something maybe you've never done before with a friend or a neighbor or co-worker, an organization, your church, anything. Do something bold for God. Put that faith into action for God.

### WELCOME/COME VISIT – Bobby Schuller

Welcome, thank you for joining us today. We're so glad that you're here with us on Hour of Power and that's our church welcoming you. We want you to know we believe in you, you're a part of our church even if you're in Hong Kong or Holland or Australia or wherever you are, we want you to know we love you and you're family to us. And if you live here in Southern California, come down, come worship with us. We want to meet you. This is a great community of joy. We love people here and we'd love to love on you. Come down here, we'd love to meet you.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

All right friends, this is something we do every Sunday. Would you hold your hands out like this as a sign of receiving: 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.

Amen, you can have a seat.

### MESSAGE/PRAYER "The Golden Rule" – Bobby Schuller

I feel like oftentimes when I preach a sermon I'll be challenged the next week on it. I don't know if you remember last Sunday I preached about faith. I'd be surprised if you did. Nobody ever remembers. Even I don't remember. What'd you preach on last week? Oh, I don't know.

But anyway, I was talking about how safe flying is. I don't know if you remember that. And yesterday I missed my flight. I scheduled my own flight. I should have had Bonnie do it. She always does everything; it's the one time I do it myself, I scheduled my flight for Friday instead of Saturday. So yesterday, on Saturday, I get to the airport to check in. And he's like your flight was yesterday. I'm in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And now it's hard to explain but I may have told you this story about the crash landing at LAX and I was on that one airline I swore I would never go on. And the one time I broke it and went on that airline, crash landing at LAX. Okay? And it was like a very serious, like dangerous thing. And so I was like that's it, never again.

So yesterday he's like there's one flight out of here and it's not on our airline. There's only one flight out if you want to make it home tonight and it's at airline X, we're going to call them, just on the next booth over. And I was seriously like instantly thought about the sermon that I just gave last week on how safe flying is. And I was like instantly in tune with all of my friends who are afraid of flying and I'm like thinking about all these statistics. And I'm like all right, I got to do it. I got to get to church.

So I get on this plane.. everybody's like what airline is it? I won't tell you because I have a friend who works for them and I don't want to get in trouble. Anyway, so I'm in Dallas and it's full on Texas sized wall cloud right here. Rain, lightning, and I was actually worried. I was like a little bit like.. this is weird. And guess what, I'm here safe and sound. You can trust God. It'll be okay. So I beat it! That was completely anecdotal, there's nothing to learn from that other than I'm here because I love you guys and I want to preach today and I feel like God put a good word on my heart for today.

Okay, this morning we're going to talk about love. And it's hard to talk about love because I feel very often the word love is used so much and so generally and spoken of so vapidly in an empty shallow

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way that my worry about the sermon today is it'll be boring, honestly. Like okay, ho hum, you got to love people; you got to be a loving person. And I talk about love all the time, so I was a little concerned about that and yet I think that at the heart of it, to understand love truly is to really understand what life is all about. That the greatest human need is to love others and to be loved. And the most important person you can love and be loved by is God, and that's what we believe, and that Christ creates a way for that to happen.

You model in your life the kind of love the world really needs: Christian love. Your love is proactive. Your love is brave. Your love is the kind of love that the world needs. You're not afraid to lay it all out there. And I'm not talking about just romantic love, I'm talking about friends, I'm even talking about loving your enemies or your competitors or people who disagree with you politically or religiously. I'm proud of you because your love is not segregated or cut off but it reaches out and in a way is even messy and dangerous, and that's okay.

Christian love is proactive. It's empathetic. It's caring and in some ways it's simple. It's simple because it's just as simple as this – you care, you actually care about people and I want to just affirm that in you today. That you are a loving, Christ-filled person and when you are a loving person, things get messy, and that's okay. You have not withdrawn your love, your affection, your kindness, your goodness to other people because you've gotten angry or because people have hurt you, or because you've messed up sometimes, you are a loving good person, and I'm proud of you. You're not judging, you're seeking to understand before you assess, and that's good. That's what the world needs.

And I want to affirm in you that God is getting ready to pour out in new ways his love on your life. God's going to open up new windows, he's going to create new opportunity for you, and his love is not going to be just something you kind of feel. You're going to see God working in new ways in your life. And I believe that as you experience that, it's going to push you to love others. It's going to make you feel full of courage, faith and even safety to in a trusting way reach out to love others. Can I get an amen? It's going to happen if you want it. It's coming.

So today we're talking about the narrow road. And the narrow road is a series on how to be energized and alive. I believe that Jesus offered to us a way that's difficult, that's narrow, that's hard, that can be treacherous and even dangerous. But he says if you take that path instead of the easy way, you're going to be filled with so much life. You're going to be overwhelmed with my joy if you just do what I tell you to do.

And so the series that we're in now is a study of these key teachings that Jesus gave during his life. And the thing that we're going to talk about today is love, particularly in the context of what's known as the golden rule. Who can name the golden rule off the top of their heads? Do unto others (so famous, right) what you'd have them do unto you. So another way that Jesus would say this is love your neighbor as yourself. So this is the golden rule. And what he says is this is the total fulfillment of my law and command. Now I want to talk a little bit of history because I find this so fascinating – this saying, in a way, was a twist on an older saying. What Jesus said here that's so famous today was actually shocking because he changed the wording of something that was already common in his day. So there are two characters in the gospels that a lot of people are unfamiliar with, kind of a villain and a hero. And any first century reader of the gospels probably would have known who these two people were. Their names were Hillel; everybody say Hillel. Hillel's going to be on my right. This is Hillel. Hi, Hillel. Nice to meet you. Hillel the elder. And Shammai. Everybody say Shammai. Hillel - Shammai. It's a little bit wimpy; I'm going to do it one more time. Hillel - Shammai. All right, good.

So Hillel and Shammai, two educated Jewish men, both of them major influences on Jewish life today. And Hillel lived to be 120, the same age as Moses. He was the leader of the Jewish community and built this incredible Jewish school upon which today Rabbinic Judaism is built on. He was one of the major influences of a book called The Talmud and the Mishnah. And Hillel the elder's an incredibly wonderful man. His contemporary, Shammai, created a different house called The House of Shammai. They were friends, they were competitors, but they worked together to build a sort of contemporary, for their day, contemporary view of Judaism. And so they were always arguing.

Hillel's view of everything was Judaism is meant to be for the peace of the world, the shalom of the world. We're meant to reach out to the world, to be there for other people. Shammai said the purpose of Judaism is holiness; rightness in the sense of separateness. And as they both get older and they both lived to be a pretty ripe old age, they had these sort of two views and they became the main two influencers and leaders of Jewish thought up until Jesus' day. Jesus would have been in his teens, maybe 12 to 18 when Hillel the elder or Hillel the sage died.

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And would have had a big influence on Jewish life, and Jesus would have heard many of his sermons, and maybe even met him, which is astonishing. I'm surprised there's not more writing on that. And Shammai, who's always disagreeing with Hillel, takes over after Hillel dies. The golden rule is not original to Jesus, in a way. It's sort of original to Hillel.

But Hillel's rule we now call the silver rule of reciprocity and the way that it came about was this; this legend. Shammai is standing here and Shammai is all about do all the Torah right, Gentile's stay away. If you're rich it's because God's blessing you. If it's poor, its cause God's cursing you. Hillel says no, that's not true. You want to follow Toray to the T, but Torah is meant to bring shalom to the world, to reach out to people, right? So it's two very different. One's cut off, one is integrative.

So a Gentile comes to both of them, and he says I want to convert to Judaism, but before I convert, I want you to explain to me while standing on one foot, (in other words in a short amount of time), the whole Torah. Shammai rebukes him in an angry way, and storms out of the room. Hillel, however, who is a bit like Yoda from Star Wars, just to give you character. Old man, lived to be 120. Looks at the man.. still rebukes him, and then says this: "What is hateful for you do not do to your fellow. This is the whole Torah. The rest is the explanation. Now go and learn." Okay, so this saying that's now in the Talmud becomes a famous saying in Jesus' day. So people go around saying don't do what is hateful to others, or in other words, cause no harm. The Hippocratic oath, for example, that the doctors take. Very similar thing. Don't hurt people, don't harm people. So there's this view that there needs to be like you can keep to yourself, you can do your own thing, just don't harm other people.

So when Jesus is then asked how to inherit eternal life, he says love your neighbor as yourself, or another place he says, instead of saying don't do to others what you wouldn't want them to do, he says what? Do! Do unto others what you'd have them do unto you. So he takes a famous saying and turns it around. And this is a big deal because in Jesus' day, Hillel has died and as Jesus is teaching, very likely Shammai is the guy in control. So a lot of the legalistic, angry stuff is coming from Shammai people, and there are still some of these Hillel disciples around, but Shammai is kind of the big dog. And Jesus sort of takes the place of Hillel as a counter voice to Shammai. Isn't that interesting? And what he does, as he always does, he turns silver to gold. He takes what Hillel said that was true and good cause no harm, and turns it to gold. Love one another. Reach out to one another. Reach to others. Don't just segregate, go to others. Reach out to other people. People need you. Don't just isolate yourself, you need to go to others, and that is Christian love.

Both Hillel and Jesus were invoking Leviticus chapter 19. I'm glad you didn't know I was teaching on Leviticus today, you might not have come to church. But this is a good one. It's a good one. It starts with sounding like what Hillel said: do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Right? Don't hurt anybody. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. Fair enough. Keep them accountable. But then it says do not seek revenge or bare a grudge against anyone among your people but what: love your neighbor as yourself. Love your neighbor as yourself.

And one time one Pharisee asked Jesus how can I inherit eternal life? And Jesus says to this Pharisee, well what do you say? And he says love the Lord with all my heart and love my neighbor as yourself, something like that. Love my neighbor.. love my neighbor as myself. And Jesus said do this and you will inherit eternal life, right? Simple enough. But then the Pharisee won't let it sit. Well he says well who's my neighbor? And in response to that question Jesus tells the famous story of the Good Samaritan.

There's a man dying in the road, and a bunch of religious people just walk around him and forget about him, but the Samaritan, that is the most unreligious, one of the most rejected people in the group in that day, stops and he's the one who helps the man. In other words, it's the Samaritan who inherits eternal life and the Samaritan is your neighbor. It's your near dweller. It's anyone that's in the 15 feet of space around you.

So Christian love is about what you do, it is proactive, it is empathetic and it's actually quite simple. It means you care. Jesus totally, totally epitomizes Christian love in everything he does. He's proactive. God comes from heaven to us. He doesn't wait for us to go to him, he comes to us. Jesus said you did not choose me, I chose you! Jesus said you are my beloved. And so God is proactive in his love to us. And he's empathetic. Jesus took on himself the nature of a man; to know our pain, to know our suffering, and the cross in and of itself is total proactive, empathetic love. It is God knowing our suffering and our sin, dies to take our place that we can have life purging the world of all sin and death in one great act of courage. That's Christian love. You want to know Christian love? Look at the cross.

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Christian love is not easy. It's not easy to lay down your life for another, but Jesus says to us no servant is greater than his master, and I have served you, now go and serve one another. And that's what Christian love is, amen? And you're doing it and I'm proud of you. See and that's the thing is Christian love doesn't walk away because it gets offended. Christian love doesn't judge. It seeks to understand. Christian love doesn't cut people out because of offense or anger or disagreement. The only time it cuts out is when there are boundaries.

So what is love? (SINGS – what is love?) Anybody else hear it? As soon as I.. it echoed. Sorry, I digress. What is love? See I think that's one of the reasons that love can be boring is because the answers are so bland and honestly hard to understand. Love is very simple for Christians. Love means you care about somebody. It means you care

So I once had a guy who.. I loved this question. I'm so glad he asked it. He said pastor, you always have us turn around and shake hands and say God loves you and so do I. But half the people I'm shaking hands with, I don't know them. How can I say I love you? I mean I know God loves them but I don't even know them. How can I love them? And it's a perfect question. I asked him – do you care about the person even though they're a stranger? If they were hurting, would you help them? If they fell down, would you lift them up? If they were hungry would you feed them? If they were sad, would you be there for them? Then you love them. Love means you care. It's care for human good. That's why for Christians, and our definition of love, you can love your enemies. You can love people that annoy you. You can love people you don't have happy feelings towards. You can love your enemies. If you have someone who has wounded you, hurt you, is a terrible, nasty person, but you still want the best for them, you love them. It doesn't mean you're not angry, it doesn't mean they don't bother you, it doesn't mean you don't feel wounded, and it doesn't mean you're besties and you're good friends. To love them means you care about the best outcome. And love becomes the greatest measure by which we judge all Christian morality.

So the bible tells us, for example, to give generously, right? And that's a good thing. We should give. But what if it's your brother and your brother's an addict. Do you give him money? Is that a loving thing to do? No, that's enabling. You're actually causing him harm. That's not a loving thing to do, and it's in a way, a little cowardly. You're afraid to confront the addiction of your brother by giving him money. So the loving thing to do is to withhold the money but to give a big hug and to help your brother or sister get on the road to recovery, and to walk with them. That's caring about where their life is going.

The bible tells us to turn the other cheek, and that's true. So does that mean love is never violent? Hardly! Love is one of the most violent things there is! If you've ever had love in your life, you know it can get violent. But there are scenarios in which love means you care about what's going to happen to this person. What if you don't have feelings for someone? Can you love them? Absolutely!

I remember once a guy told me a story about how he was caring for his mom and he'd been caring for her for years. And he was beginning to resent her and resent where he was, and he was getting disappointed. And I said to him but you continue to care for her. And he said yeah. And I said do you say mean things or do nasty things to her? And he said no, I've always taken care of her. I'm like then you love your mom. Love is what you do and what you say. Love is not what you feel. And in fact, there's something really courageous about being faithful to care for someone in spite of anger, resentment, exhaustion you might feel in the midst of that. Can I get an amen?

So Christian love is not a feeling, Christian love doesn't mean you're a doormat, and Christian love trumps every command in the bible that if what you're doing is not loving, it's not Christian because God is love. Amen? So Christian love, at its heart, means to care particularly for the outcome of the individual. And Christian love is proactive and empathetic. And that is you! You are proactive and empathetic. You're not reactive, you're not angry, you're not judging. And yet you have principles, you have boundaries, you speak your mind, and sometimes you get angry, and that's okay. That doesn't mean you're not a loving person. In fact loving people sometimes are the most angry because they refuse to give up on people. The anger is their passion that they feel for the people they love. Can I get an amen from angry people? Amen. Amen. We don't want to be angry, but we don't want to turn our anger to shame, either, right?

So your love is proactive. Proactive love means it's brave. It means that it's not afraid of getting hurt, it's not afraid of messing up because it will mess up, it's not afraid of reaching out, and whether its romantic love or friend love or whatever, whatever kind of love it is, love is brave and it requires courage because there's so much risk. We're risking fear of abandonment, fear of rejection, right?

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And so to reach out to love other people, to love a stranger, to love someone in need, it requires courage and you are so brave. Your love is brave, your love is courageous, your love is proactive and that's a good thing.

An example of this: I remember when there was this girl I was so in to in high school for a long time, many years. And you probably heard me tell the story. Her name was Hannah Presley, and she was dating some guy, and then she broke up with the guy, and then I moved away, and then I came back, and then there was this weird thing where I was like very tepidly, like, not seeking out this girl. And then I remember I was like I'm just going to go for it. I'm going to just put all my cards on the table. And I remember when we were getting to know each other, I said I will come out to your brother's wedding if you give me either the first dance or the last dance. And her answer was so great. She said I'll give you both. Whoa! Yes! Ba, ba ba! That's what I'm talking about! Yeah!

First flight out, Orange County to Tulsa Oklahoma I was at that wedding. And it was funny because we danced and there were other guys who were there.. oh there's the picture. There were other guys there who wanted to dance with her, and I would kind of stand back and let them, and they wouldn't ask. And I feel like so many guys my age in college have gotten so wimpy. They don't ask girls to dance, they don't ask girls for numbers even though they like them, they don't tell girls they love them because they're scared, so if you're a young guy, man up. Be a man. Girls want men. Okay. Can I get an amen from girls? All right, yeah. Okay.

I don't look like a man there, but I'm only 18 and so is she. And we weren't even dating. We just happened to be there at the same time, we took this picture together not knowing we'd be married three years later, two years later. Anyway, it's so cute.

So love is brave, right? And whether its romantic love or friends or loving anyone, it requires courage, it requires reaching out and doing very often what's uncomfortable. Maybe God's calling you to love someone in your life. Maybe it's your spouse. God can make you fall in love with your spouse again. Maybe God's asking you to date again after a bad divorce. God wants you to have love in your life. Maybe you had a falling out with a dear friend and you want to rekindle with them. Or maybe you need a new friend, but you're afraid to be vulnerable again. God wants you to have dear friends in your life. Maybe you've been burned by church and you really want to be in a community of people and experience Christian love again, but you're afraid that you're just going to get burned again at church. Churches are filled with wounded people, you might get hurt, but I want to encourage you, you can get a great church in your life. Love is brave. It's proactive. It's not afraid of reaching out and that's who you are. I'm so proud of you. So proud of how brave you've been, how brave you are, and I know you're not going to give up in your search for deep friendships, and your need to care for those who are in need. I'm so, so proud of you, so proud of how you've cared for your kids, or those who have needed you, so proud of you guys.

Love is proactive, and that's what Jesus did. You know Jesus was the first disciple that was going to disciples. He was recruiting disciples. He didn't have them come to him like everybody else. So follow the spirit. Listen to the spirit of God and if the Holy Spirit nudges you to share your faith with someone or to pray with someone or to hear from someone, listen to that. Be brave. Be proactive in your love, and you are, and I'm so proud of you.

So love is proactive, and love is empathetic. Love is empathetic. Empathy is medicine for the soul. The word empathy means that you feel what somebody else feels, or it's like you walk in that person's shoes. You use your imagination to really feel what that person's feeling, and then say how that would feel in your own words.

I am one of the most enthusiastic guys, positive guys you'll ever meet. But one of the things I had to learn as a pastor, see very often when people were hurting and they'd come to me, I'd want to encourage them out of it. Pastor, I'm suffering, and I'd say it's okay! You're going to be great! Things are going to be alright. And sometimes that's good, but a lot of times that feels like rejecting the person's suffering. Or it feels like I'm trying to fix it. I think if you're an encouraging person, positive person like me, be encouraging. Say encouraging things, but do it spontaneously, not reacting to somebody's suffering. So always say hey you look good today. Or I'm thankful for you. Or you're going to do great in life. Those are good things to say, unless the person says I'm really suffering.

Ironically, if you try and encourage someone who tells you they're suffering, it's like you diminish their suffering and push them away. If you acknowledge their suffering and just be a quiet loving presence, or hug them, or don't say anything at all but even in your face show that you feel what they're feeling, that gives them energy. That gives them strength to endure.

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Sometimes if you've gone through depression, or you've gone through just a rough patch in life, sometimes you just need somebody to sit there and be a quiet loving presence. Somebody that's not going to leave you while you're hurting. Somebody that's not going to say passively get better, more comfortable to be around, right? So when you empathize with someone, it's like saying I know you're suffering, and it's okay to be with me right now. I want to be with you while you're hurting. And to know you're not alone in your suffering is so energizing and life giving and important if you want to experience life. And that's your love. Your Christian love is the kind of love that seeks to understand before it judges; seeks to feel the pain of other people so that they don't have to feel it alone.

You are an empathetic, loving person and I'm proud of you for that. You have decided to give people a piece of your heart before you give them a piece of your mind. You've decided to be the kind of person that doesn't always have to fix everything, but can be present with the messy people in your life and let them know that you're not going to abandon them just because they've messed up a few times. And that's why people feel safe around you, and that's why people are drawn to you, and that's a very good thing. Empathy is medicine for the soul.

I remember Hannah and I, you know our son Cohen has gone through a lot. He's doing much better, by the way. It's been about a year since he had a seizure, which is great, and he's a little delayed, which is not great, but we are happy for that. But I remember once when he was going through a rough time, and Chad and I were flying to Israel, and we landed in Newark New Jersey, and both of our phones right when we landed filled with texts and voice mails that Cohen had almost died. So when Hannah found him, she thought he was dead. She had total trauma. She's still recouping from the pain of that one experience. Later the ambulance drivers who took him that time, came another time for another seizure, and I've never seen people so happy to see.. they thought he died because they were having trouble resuscitating him or something in the ambulance. So it was very serious. And I sent Chad on to Israel, he went to lead that group, and we landed at like eleven or midnight, something like that. And I was like okay I have to get back to California, so the airline I was with, United, good airline. Hear that United? Give me some free miles. Free miles. So they gave me a free ticket back home. But it was at five in the morning, so I had about five or six hours and I decided okay, I'm going to try and get some sleep. The only motel that had a room near the airport, I went there, it was the jenkiest thing. There was a big pile of trash in the thing. I'm walking back to my motel room. I walked by this like gang of guys walking by who were not looking at me in a friendly way. My room is under a stairwell. There's a prostitute smoking on it, and I go into my room and like there's cracks on the walls, and I don't know if it's clean. I lay in the bed and it's just like the worst night of my life. I don't know if my kid's okay, I don't know if my wife's okay. I don't sleep at all. I lay there for about two hours and I realize its three in the morning, I haven't slept at all, okay, I'm just going to go to the airport.

I go back to the airport and I fly home, and my mind is totally on Cohen and Hannah, thinking about them. I walk into the hospital and the first person I see is my sister-in-law, Bonnie. And she is one of the most loving serving people, and she comes up to me and she just gives me this big hug. And she says something like you have been through so much. You came all the way back and all the things you've gone through, I'm so sorry you're going through so much. I can't imagine what you've been through. And it was weird because one, I hadn't really thought about how rough it was for me, even though it was, but when she said that, not only did I recognize that, but it pulled this.. it's weird, like to just have my suffering recognized and hugged out, it was like it didn't make it better, but it gave me the strength to carry on and be there for Hannah and Cohen in the way I needed to be.

See that's what empathy does. Empathy doesn't require much. It just requires seeing that the people you love are hurting, and just saying it. And there's something about that kind of caring, it's like it draws a poison out. It can even sting a little, but it's like pulling a splinter out. It's so good.

And that's who you are. You know, this church is so full of people that are so loving, and I just want to say I'm so grateful for you, in particular. You have not given up on people. That when people are hurting, you've learned what it means to imagine what it's like to be in their shoes, to not leave them because they messed up or have fallen, but to hold out with people and walk with people and never give up on them, especially the ones who love you. Man I'm so grateful for you. Christian love is proactive. It's empathetic.

So don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to love others. Don't be afraid to keep boundaries. Don't be afraid to open your heart to new people and to love others. God's going to do a great thing in your life in your friendships, in your marriage, in your relationships.

## The Golden Rule

God's going to do good things if you keep acting with faith and empathy, seeking to understand and being proactive, and that's who you are. I'm so proud of you. And I love you.

Let's pray: Father, we only love others because you loved us first. How you've loved us and lavished us with so many blessings, we are so grateful. I pray, Lord, that you'd continue to galvanize, strengthen, reinforce the love we have for one another. Help us to love the stranger, to love the enemy, to love those who persecute us and hate us, and help us to love our friends, our spouses, our church members, the people in our life that care for us. Lord, we thank you that you give us everything we need to be your loving people. We love you, God, in Jesus' name, amen.