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### GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

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

HS: Yes and welcome, church family. We are joy to have you here with us. We are joy to have you tuned in with us today. We love you.

You know I believe a big reason that God loves faith so much is because it is the reflective weapon against all those lies the enemy speaks to you. God is not pointing His finger in fault finding in you. He is speaking love and life over you. Amen?

BS: Amen.

HS: Would you turn around and shake the hand of the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

BS: You know, you're going to have such a good week and a good day today, and we just are believing the best for you and for your family and we know you're going to have just a relaxed joy-filled day. So let's just enter the house of the Lord today with prayer.

So Father, we thank you that you've called us. You're a good father to us. You love us; you're good and only good. You've called us; you believe in us, you propel us into our destiny. You forgive us of our sins. You've renewed us and restored us, so we just receive on this Sabbath, just all the good that comes from heaven, by faith. Not because we've earned it or deserved it or worked for it, but you just give it to us because you are prodigal, you're wasteful in your generosity, and we are so thankful for that; that you love us and you care about us, so we receive, by faith, in Jesus' name, amen.

HS: Amen.

### SCRIPTURE – Romans 4:18-25 – Hannah Schuller

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

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact his body was as good as dead – since he was about a hundred years old – and Sarah's womb was also dead.

Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded God had power to do what He had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Church family, God loves using imperfect people to do impossible things. Amen.

### INTERVIEW Bobby Schuller (BS) with AJ Rafael (AJ)

BS: With us today is AJ Rafael. AJ is an extremely talented artist and performer with a massive following on YouTube and other social platforms. I think you had over 140 million views on YouTube. That's a lot of people.

AJ: Yes.

BS: And that's just that platform. He's remained strong in his faith and he continues to share his joy through music with his thousands of fans, so would you please welcome with me, AJ Rafael. So glad to have you here.

AJ: Thanks for having me.

## Yahweh Tsidkenu: I Am Your Righteousness

BS: So let's just start there. There's this thing called the internet that allows sort of everyday people to bypass publishers and record labels and reach a humongous audience just because of sheer talent. How did you build such a big following?

AJ: Oh man, I wrote my first song when I was 14, and that was quite a while ago now. But I started on this website called MySpace..

BS: I've heard of it.

AJ: ..and yes, that's long and gone now. It still exists but I use it as a platform to upload my music on there that I recorded in my garage. My mom bought me this thousand dollar track recorder: 24 track recorder so I could make some tracks and I had to like do HTML codes just to get my music on there, before the music player, and I remember this website came out in 2000.. so that was 2004, and in 2006 this website came out called YouTube and I began posting videos to post on my MySpace.

BS: So like you started like right when YouTube..

AJ: Yes, right when it started..

BS: ..got off the ground. You didn't care about YouTube, you cared about MySpace.

AJ: Yes! I was really just putting my MySpace URL at the end of all my YouTube videos to try to get people to go to my MySpace, become my friend and get plays. But over the years, my YouTube following started growing and there was this thing called subscribers, which I didn't even know was a thing until I reached a thousand. And over the years, with a click of a mouse, to be able to reach places like the Philippines and Australia and Canada where I've toured and played music for people, and all because of this weird thing; well back then it was weird, and meeting people online was kind of weird back then..

BS: I do remember that.

AJ: ..but now I feel like most of you all probably met online.

BS: Yes, that's right.

AJ: But now it's, I mean what a blessing to be able to just travel the world because of the internet.

BS: It's so great how it allows everyday musicians to.. it used to be the only way you could get your stuff out there is if somebody made a record and distributed it for you.

AJ: Right, and knock on someone's door.

BS: Yes, totally, and now you can just get it out there just through the internet and through making great music. I think it's so awesome. You've got a huge following, people love your music. If you want to check out his album, it's Red Roses, right?

AJ: Right, yes.

BS: It's so good. It's been out for about six years, but people love it. A big influence for your music was your dad.

AJ: Yes.

BS: Tell us a little bit about him.

AJ: Yes, my dad, wow. What a guy. My family is musical and I feel like a huge part of that is because of him. I started playing piano when I was five. My mom says I was 2½ but it's totally unbelievable so I say five.

BS: Yes totally. That sounds like something a mom would say.

AJ: Yes, exactly. But my dad was my first teacher and he taught me a lot about music. I grew up in a choir setting, so being here and watching the conductor on both sides really reminds me of home and growing up in the choir and things like that. And my mom and dad were both there. My dad was the pianist and conductor.

Unfortunately he passed away when I was ten, and it was a very hard time. I mean I remember even stepping up to play piano at his funeral. We took over his job. My mom conducted and I played piano for the church. But I remember him before he passed away, he was trying to get all these like random jobs, like bus driver and wanted to work at a gas station, because as a musician, especially back then, he wasn't really making the money for the family. My mom's a nurse. And I know that he encouraged my mom to encourage us to not be musicians. But I'm very lucky that my mom wanted me to do what I love. But yes my dad has been a big inspiration from the beginning, still is, and I just want to continue his legacy.

BS: Its interesting how your mom, the nurse, the bread winner sort of, wanted you to like go into music, and your dad, the musician who was like you can't make a good living doing this. You need to go be a nurse!

## Yahweh Tsidkenu: I Am Your Righteousness

AJ: Yes, I mean, I'm very blessed that my mom, like especially being Philippino, in our culture it's like you're Philippino, go be a nurse, or a doctor, or a lawyer. So I am just really lucky in that sense that my mom knew that at a young age I wanted to be a musician. And when I was ten and when my dad passed on, I knew that's what I wanted to do.

BS: It seems like couples who don't like each other encourage their kids not to do what the other did, but in the opposite, in your case, I think the fact that your mom, the nurse, said go be a musician, and your dad, the musician, said go get a real job.

AJ: A real job.

BS: A real job. But the fact that they said that, I think, is a sign of their deep love for one another, which I think is really sweet.

AJ: Right. And you know they're both immigrants. They came from the same city in the Philippines and moving here to provide a better life for their future children, which was me and my sister, so I'm very grateful for that.

BS: AJ, you've gone through a lot in your life, but faith has been an important part of that journey, too, hasn't it.

AJ: Yes, and a lot of it does have to do with the musical aspect. I believe that when I'm singing and when I'm playing at church, I feel truly connected to God. And music has been like a soundtrack throughout all the loss that I've experienced. The song that I'm about to sing, "Lord, I Need You" was helping me a lot during my uncle's recent passing. So yes, music plays a big role in everything. My dad played for all kinds of churches. We play at a Catholic church now, but I remember on Sunday's we would go to like a Methodist church and to all these different things, and then come back home after a long day of services and masses.

BS: So you got to experience all these traditions and like all these..

AJ: Yes all these traditions and cultures. It was really amazing to see him do that and to see his love for the Lord through his music.

BS: Well we can't wait to hear your music. I remember I met a guy who became a Christian because he said I needed something to write about. I remember when I first heard that, I was 16 and I was really on fire and it really bothered me, but later through what I've been through in my own life, I realize that's actually really beautiful thing. That he realized that there's nothing better to play for or sing for than the name of Jesus Christ.

AJ: Amen.

BS: And that's what you do. It's just so great and we appreciate you so much.

AJ: Oh of course. Thank you. Thank you. That brings up a crazy thing, too, where it's like I've performed for like sold out shows across the country, but when I am preparing specifically like a special song to sing during our mass or for even today, I get way more nervous because I mean it's for the Lord. You know what I mean?

BS: That's right, that's right. Oh, AJ thank you so much. You can check him out on YouTube. I just love your heart and it shines through your personality, it shines through your music, and we're just so lucky to have you in the house today. Ladies and gentlemen, would you please welcome AJ Rafael.

### WELCOME/COME VISIT – Bobby Schuller

Thank you for joining us on television and online. We're so glad that you're joining us today. You are a part of Shepherd's Grove. We want you to know that no matter where you are, we believe in you and we think you're a part of this church. Right church? That's right. That's an affirmative.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Something we do every single Sunday is we love to realign our identities with the word of God. Would you stand with me and we're going to say this and receive it in Jesus' name. Hold your hands out like this as a sign of receiving and say this with me: 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. Man, that's an encouraging thought. You're not what you do. What you do matters, but what you do as a Christian comes from a place of having your identity being in the very fact that you are loved, despite your imperfections and your short comings, and that is true today and it will always be true.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Yahweh Tsidkenu: I Am Your Righteousness"

Faith is God's delivery system. I've heard that said before by many pastors and it is true. God wants to bless you. God loves to see you do well in life. God loves to see you healthy. God loves to see your family thriving. God wants you to go to heaven when you die. God wants all the best for you. And God's delivery system is a thing called faith. Faith! That's why Jesus talks about faith so much. It's the thing that opens up our soul to heaven and it opens up heaven to our whole life. That we can inherit all that is good from God right now. That despite my imperfections, my sin, my weakness, being too old or too young, my lack of education, whatever, God can do great things through someone like me. God can do great things through you and will if you just decide to stop beating yourself up and respond in faith.

Jesus taught us that if we live by faith, if we take a step by faith in the direction of the thing that scares us, that we could move a mountain. That we could walk on water. That we could change the world. I believe it because I've seen it and I've lived it. Maybe you've lived it. Maybe you remember a time in your life when you were scared or worried. Or you thought I can't do that. I can't do that. God might be asking me to do that, but there's no way someone like me could do that. And instead of living in doubt and shame and fear, you instead lived in courage and faith, and you stepped in the direction of the thing that you were scared of. Do you remember how that felt? Probably felt pretty good. To say to your fear or to your shame 'I won't let you control my life, but I will do something that God wants me to do and not trust in my abilities, but trust in His.'

That's why Jesus is always talking about faith because Jesus loved to.. Jesus was always calling people that were told in their religious circles that God didn't want anything to do with them. That their religious report card wasn't very good. So they can sit on the fringes of religious society but that's about it. They should ply their trade. And those are the very people that Jesus went to. He had very normal people, some of them teenagers, some of them old people, some of them sick people were following Him and He was teaching them to walk by faith and not have pride in their works. But to have faith to believe that despite all their shortcomings and their imperfections, they could do something great for God. God loves using imperfect people to do impossible things. He's going to use you today. Just have faith. He's going to use you. I can't wait to see it and do something great. Faith doesn't mean believing in me, faith means believing the God who lives in me. I know many of us go I don't know, how could I believe in someone like me? Well God believes in you, and God is giving you everything you need to succeed. And so yes, you might have shortcomings and you might have weaknesses and you might have sickness, but it's by God's power and God's name that we're able to do great things. So to have faith is to have faith in the name of God.

For the last few weeks we've been studying the name of God and if you're just here today, you're not behind but it's been a wild ride, choir. Study the names of God. That He is bore, our creator. Nissi, our banner. Raah, our shepherd. Rapha, our healer. Shalom, peace. Shammah, He's there for us. Tseboath, He's fighting for us. Yireh, our provider. God has so many names, but all of them point to one thing – that God is for you. That He's fighting for you. That He is on your side. That He's here to make His good creation better and not worse. That He's not abandoned us and that you can do great things if you put your trust in the name of the Lord. It is a good name. It is a strong name. It is a chain breaking name and all you have to do is respond with faith. I know you will.

As we've studied these names, we've found how these names were actually located in stories. And we find that all the way from Abraham until just before Jesus, you see that God is working to redeem His good creation and to save His children through a family. He picks a family whose father's name is Abraham and He says to Abraham, 'I'm going to make a covenant with you and here's my promise. You are going to be so blessed so that you can be a blessing to the whole world. I am going to make your posterity outnumber all the sands of the seashore and all the stars of the sky. And yes, Abraham, you're a hundred and your wife is 90 and you have no children, but I'm going to do this through you.' And you just watch how Abraham responds in faith.

Now you hear a story like this, if God's going to choose one guy on the whole planet, one guy to do this through, He's probably going to be like pretty much a saint, I mean the world's greatest human being, right? That's who God's going to pick. Abraham, if he had a spiritual report card was probably a D-plus. He was not in general a really very good person. Abraham, when he went to Egypt with his wife, she was so beautiful he was afraid Egyptians were going to murder him and take his wife that he secretly said she was his sister and gave her to Pharaoh. Everybody's like oooooo, I know! I know! Right?

## Yahweh Tsidkenu: I Am Your Righteousness

Sarah, who didn't believe that God could give birth to her because she was 90, said Abraham sleep with my servant girl and God will fulfill His promise through her and Abraham was like, okay. He didn't say no, he didn't like talk to her about it. He was like are you sure? Okay! On my way.

Abraham had a lot of imperfections, flaws, sin and shortcomings, but Abraham responded in faith. And you watch as from him all the way to Jesus, all of these guys, men and women were very flawed, oftentimes very sinful. From Abraham, Isaac was flawed, Jacob was flawed. Jacob tricked his blind father into giving him the blessing and not his older brother, and his very name means deception. Moses had plenty of imperfections. He couldn't speak, he stuttered and yet he was the one who's supposed to prophesy and he was a murderer. You just look at all these stories from Joshua to Hannah, Rebekah, Gideon, David, just imperfect people who had so many flaws, so many shortcomings, none of them were saints, and yet all of them fulfilled God's destiny. Why? Not because they were perfect, but because they responded in faith. God said I will make you a blessing and you will be a blessing to the world, and they said yes Lord, I receive. And you do see how God made them better through the process of faith. He didn't say get things perfect and be perfect and then we'll see if I make covenant with you. No, they believed God and it was accredited to them as righteousness. That's good news. Because the thesis of this family, of which we are all a part now through the cross and resurrection of Jesus, is that despite their imperfections, God got them to their destiny.

Stop telling God all the reasons why He's not going to get you to your destiny. Stop telling God all the reasons why you're a mess up, or you're a failure, or you're an addict, or you're sick, or you're clumsy or foolish or embarrassed. You're so much more than that. The word of God says you're chosen. It says you're called. It says you're blessed. It says you're loved. It says you're forgiven. It says you're righteous. It says you're justified. It says you are known. It says you are at home. You are so loved. God has stacked the deck in your favor and that's very good news.

And that's why today, as we sort of finish this series, I come to the last name of God, which is Jehovah Tsidkenu: I am the Lord your righteousness. He's your righteousness. He's your righteousness. I think the greatest barrier to faith today is shame. Shame says something like I am not worthy of love and belonging. I need to prove myself. Shame is a constant sense of deep embarrassment about something in my life. I'm embarrassed that I'm not where I wanted to be, I'm embarrassed that I continue to struggle with sin or failure, I'm embarrassed that I haven't succeeded in the way that my peers have. Shame looks like strictness, rigidity, fear, and faith is the opposite of that. Faith says that despite my shortcomings, my justification is not in me, it's in Jesus. I'm not righteous because of what I've done, I'm righteous because of what Christ did for me. And when He died on the cross, He said it is finished, and He meant it. And now I can come boldly before the throne of God, redeemed, forgiven, loved, and it is by grace through faith. You receive God's unending, unmerited favor and love for you by faith. Just believe it and watch heaven open up to you.

This is what Paul talks about in Romans, our scripture reading for today. It's interesting, this is our only New Testament reading for this series, and I like this passage because Paul is giving us a commentary of Abraham. So you heard all the nasty things I said about Abraham, right? Listen to all the good things Paul says about him: "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations just as it had been said to him. So shall your offspring be. Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was about, well, a hundred years old. And that Sarah's womb was also dead. That he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God. Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He promised." Do you believe God has power to do what He promised in your life? I do, too. I do, too.

"This is why it was credit to him as righteousness. The words it was credited to him were written not for him alone, but also for us to whom God will credit righteousness. For us who believe in Him, who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification." You have nothing to worry about. Just believe. Just believe that you are loved just as you are. Be at peace with your imperfections. Stop bullying yourself, beating yourself up, talking about how horrible you are. Pay attention to your self talk and notice that many of the things that you are saying about yourself are not the things God is saying about you. God is saying you are loved, you are chosen, you are able. So believe that. The word of God is true and it endures forever.

## Yahweh Tsidkenu: I Am Your Righteousness

Paul, who wrote this passage in Romans came out of a society immersed in shame. He was a Pharisee, you know, so like Pharisees were all about if you do everything perfectly you're in, and if you mess up, you're out. And so here you see that Paul, who struggled with strictness, now becomes this guy who teaches us no, it's not by being perfect, it's by living by faith. And you watch how vulnerable he is. He says 'I do the things I shouldn't do. I struggle with the things I shouldn't struggle with. I do what I hate and I don't do what I want to do.' He talks about this thorn in his side. And we don't even know what that was. Was that a sickness? Was it just an addiction, a sin? None of us know. What we do know is that was imperfection. It was something Paul hated and despite it, God used him to change the world. God is going to use you to change the world.

One of my favorite things that we learned from studying Paul that we ought to examine, and I need you to listen to this. So let me preface it this way. We should confess our sins. James says that, and I think John says that, so its mentioned only twice in the New Testament, but towards the end. But Paul, the author of the majority of the New Testament never says to confess our sins. This is super important because in Christianity, it seems like there's a lot of emphasis on confessing your sins and yes, you should confess your sins from time to time, but Paul who hates sin, who talks about how sin is death and how sin cuts us from God, says to confess in faith the lordship of Christ over your sin. To confess that you are justified. To confess grace. To confess that He who knew no sin became sin that I might be called the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Paul teaches us in a religion that says confess your sin and feel bad and beat yourself up, Paul says confess you're the righteousness of Christ! Confess that! When I look at my life and when many of us look at our lives, we don't see ourselves confessing we're the righteousness of Christ. We catch ourselves and preachers reinforcing this that I'm a messed up sinner, I'm a horrible person, I'm unwanted, I'm broken, I'm not good enough, I have to hide, I'm unworthy of love and belonging. Hey, God loves you so much. He gave Jesus for you. It was a trade. He traded Jesus for you. Did you know God loves you as much as He loves Jesus? God loves you as much as He loves Mary. God loves you as much as He loves Paul. God loves you as much as He loves Michael Skidgel. God loves you that much.

Why? Because you're His kids and a good father loves his children. And just as I would say to my daughter if she were saying horrible things about herself, I would give her a big hug and say Haven, you're doing so good and I love you so much. And say better things about yourself. See what I see. So does the Father. Put His arms around you and say my beloved child. You're doing much better than you think. You are loved. I'm going to get you through this. I'm going to give you everything you need to endure unto victory. That's good news, isn't it. He loves you. And that's why I think the greatest barrier between your destiny and you is shame. The greatest barrier to faith is shame.

Shame is this thing that says I'm not worthy of love and belonging. I'm embarrassed of who I am. I'm embarrassed of my sin. People think I'm this one thing, but really I'm this. I can't really do much more than I'm doing now because well just look at me. I'm not where I should be. Look at my peers. There's this sort of inner embarrassnness that comes with shame that should never be there. You are chosen, called, loved, blessed, needed. Believe it with faith! It's the enemies voice, by the way, that says you're worthless. You're a sinner. The bible calls him the accuser of the brethren. When you hear yourself, or when you hear the voice saying you're worthless, you're a sinner, you're a mess up, you're a screw up, you don't belong, and you say that to yourself, you are agreeing with the devil! When we bully ourselves and others, we're agreeing with the enemy. The bible calls him the persecutor of the brethren.

But when we say over ourselves all things are possible, we are agreeing with Jesus. When you say over yourself I can do this because of what He's given me, you're agreeing with Jesus. When you say I'm loved, I'm called, I'm chosen, I'm blessed, you're agreeing with Jesus. When you take a step on the water, when you step in the direction of the thing you're afraid of, you are living by faith and not by shame and that pleases God. It opens the doors. It opens up heaven. That you say Lord, despite all my imperfections and here they are, I'm a big old yard sale, a big old mess. Just as long as you know that with me going in, I'm going to do this. I'm going to take a step forward. God says my beloved child, I see it, I forgive it, I know it, let's go. Let's do this. Right? That's what faith is.

That's why Isaiah, when he was called, they saw the temple filled with glory, and God said who will go for us? Whom shall I send? And what did Isaiah say? He got on his knees, he was scared for his life and he said I'm a man of unclean lips and I'm not a people with unclean lips and I just told the nastiest joke at the bar last night and I feel really bad about this right now. I'm just not going to lie about that. But here I am, Lord, send me. Right?

## Yahweh Tsidkenu: I Am Your Righteousness

And you see that the characters, throughout the scripture, are these very every day kind of broken, oftentimes messed up people. And they just respond in faith. They're vulnerable, they're honest, they're hurting, they're messed up, but they say no more shame. No more beating myself up. No more fear. If God has called me, He has called me. If God has chosen me, He has chosen me. Do you believe it? I believe it for you. He's called you, He's chosen you because we serve a God who loves to use imperfect people to do impossible things. That's good news.

So you are not what you do, but you will do great things. And this is so important that very often the reason we don't do the great things in life that we want to do is because we have our identity rooted in what we do. It is only at the point that our identity is rooted in the belovedness of God that we get all the freedom, joy and fresh vision we need to do amazing things. You know what separates great artists from the rest? The artists that have the freedom to make the art they want to make. The thing that makes great leaders great is the freedom to make the right decisions, despite what people will think of them. What makes people great is giving up their identity and what they do so that they can do great things for God, despite what it will say about their reputation. So let go. Let go what people say about you. Let go of your reputation. Let go of all those things that you think matter so much. Let go of everything and fix your eyes on Him and take a step out of the boat in faith. All right? And watch as God does great things in your life. He's already doing great things, but He's going to do even more. Amen.

### BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Thank you for being here. You're going to have an awesome week. You're going to be blessed this week. You're going to make the right choices. You're going to go down the path of life and not the path of death. God's going to bless every step you take. He's going to open doors no man can shut. He's going to shut doors no man could open. It's going to be a good week. If you believe it, say amen.

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.