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

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

HS: Yes, welcome church family. If this is your first time to come, we are so thrilled to have you here. We love you. Thank you for coming today.

Did you know that the person you talk to the most is not your best friend, it's not your spouse, or a parent, or your kids, it's yourself. You are actually continually talking to yourself in your mind. And guess what – your words are powerful. That's why it's so important we speak life to ourselves, amen?

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

INVOCATION – Bobby Schuller

Well it's going to be a good day. We're so glad that you're here and we're going to believe that you're going to leave here with victory, fresh life, fresh vision, new song in your heart, amen?

So Lord, thank you that you've called us here and that you love us. And that you don't call us wretched, horrible sinners. You call us beloved sons and daughters. That you're lifting us up, not casting us down. That you're calling us to holiness, but you're doing it through love and grace and peace, and so we just receive it by faith. Thank you, Lord, that you did it. That when you said it is finished, it truly was. So we just let go of all of our worries about our behavior and things like this. We just thank you that you're walking with us, you haven't abandoned us, you're not punishing us, but you believe in us and love us, so we just receive that, in Jesus' name, amen.

SCRIPTURE – 1 John 4:12-19 – Hannah Schuller

You may be seated. In preparation for Bobby's message, the words of our Lord found in 1st John:

No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in Him, and He in us. He has given us His spirit, and we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the son of God, God lives in them and they in God.

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us, so that we will have confidence on the Day of Judgment. In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us.

Family, we are the righteousness of Christ. Amen.

INTERVIEW – with Andrea Logan-White – Bobby Schuller (BS)

BS: Well visiting with us today is Andrea Logan-White. She is a critically acclaimed actress known for her roles in films like "Moms Night Out," as well as her work in PureFlix with her husband David, which is such an awesome project, by the way. We're so proud of you guys with that. Andrea has written a very vulnerable and empowering memoir of her struggles entitled Perfectly Unfinished which gives an honest, unabashed portrayal of the struggles with image and self-love.

Would you please welcome with me, Andrea. Hi Andrea! Good to see you!

ALW: Hi Bobby, thank you so much.

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BS: So glad you're here. So I mean you're in Hollywood, you guys are at red carpet events all the time, you're with some of the most wealthy, famous, attractive people in LA, of all places, and can I just say I love the title of your book, *Perfectly Unfinished* because for you as a believer in that place, for a long time this was a struggle, wasn't it.

ALW: Yes, I mean since childhood when I was growing up in the cornfields of a small town outside of Chicago. I felt invisible, and I felt like I could never be enough, and so it was bounce forward to Hollywood and Hollywood is great at telling you what you're not, and God is great at telling you what you are.

BS: That's right, yes. Good word. So did you grow up in a Christian home?

ALW: I didn't. I mean I did the Christmas, the Easter and I thought of Jesus as some dude up in the sky, so I didn't grow up knowing Christ and having that foundation of the Father's love, which is key to everything.

BS: Yes, and so in your book, you talk kind of about the story of discovering that love, but it was a long kind of struggle to not only believe that God loved you just as you were, but also even to find your place in the world, right? You often felt like you weren't enough, and that led to all sorts of struggles in your life.

ALW: Yes and Christian or not, and that's why I feel compelled and responsible to share my story is because whether we're a believer or not and we're following Christ and we know the word and we love Him, we still have things that.. we're hurting and we're trying to walk out and get healed of. And I was really great at being a champion of self-destruction, and so that was something that I had to learn to be unfinished and surrender all of my imperfections to God until I could finally just be okay with the mess that I am.

BS: Why do you say unfinished?

ALW: Well I feel like this describes something that I've been searching for my entire life that I could never attain the lens of perfection that I always expected myself to live up to. There was always somebody smarter, prettier, wealthier. That's reality of life. Right? But we will always be unfinished till the day we meet Jesus and the perfect one lives inside of us. And it's His job to perfect us, as opposed to us trying to be.. perfecting ourselves and He allows all of those things to be on our knees and to keep seeking Him.

BS: So for you, I mean you dabbled in drugs, and then you struggled with anorexia, and a lot of these things, I mean, I like to say often that everyone's a little addicted to something, you know? Like we all have these ways in which we try and find our place in the world, find belonging, find meaning in life, and for you, I mean and I think everybody, a lot of this was this kind of inner feeling like I'm not enough, I'm not worthy enough, and that still carried on even after you became a believer, right? It wasn't like it magically went away and all of a sudden everything was perfect, right?

ALW: In fact I think that the struggle was even harder because we feel like okay now we know Jesus, so we're supposed to have it right, right? I mean this is the way it's supposed to be. And then when you're still struggling, then the guilt comes in, and then the condemnation, and then the shame, and then I questioned my salvation – do I really know Jesus? If I believe the word and like why am I struggling still? And I truly believe that we heal from each other's stories, and that we need to share the good, the bad and the ugly, not just the good. Not just the pretty side of us.

BS: So like anorexia, then, I mean you got pretty bad. You write about how I think you got down to.. it was like 80 pounds?

ALW: It was under 80 pounds, so I was a walking skeleton. It was like a slow suicide, and it was a way to cope with some really bad things that were going on in my life as a teenager, that we all have to cope somehow, and that's the thing is God is our ultimate coping mechanism, but we use things to try to get out of things and all we do is our best.

BS: Well the way that you sort of became healthy, and this is the irony, right? As I understand it, it wasn't trying harder, but it was simply being at peace with your imperfections, and being at peace with the fact that it's okay that you're not where maybe you want to be as a Christian, or that you don't, you know, whatever.

ALW: It's everything. I mean I feel like as soon as I surrendered that I haven't arrived, I will never arrive, and that I'm embracing all of the imperfections that we have, and fully receiving God's grace because we can't live by the law, we try and we set ourselves our own rules, and then we try to live up to these expectations of the world, and we have the pressures of society that we're always going to be doing something wrong. And so until we fully receive God's love and mercy, I think we can have that peace.

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BS: Absolutely, and I think that's why your book *Perfectly Unfinished* is such a good book for today is because everybody struggles with this. It's not only unbelievers that have trouble, believers too because you come to church and it seems like everybody's family is perfect, and everybody's perfect, and everybody's great, and then you see everybody's best and then you see the worst in yourself. Actually one statistic said that the number one reason people leave church is because they have some sin or big flaw in their life. Isn't that an irony?

ALW: Wow.

BS: So we leave church when we feel like we're not good enough and we come to church oftentimes when we feel like we're doing pretty good, like you got a B- or better, okay I can go to church now. But the scriptures don't even teach that. That's the world's game. Right?

BS: Right, that's so true. And I always say I could never relate to the beautiful girl sitting in a church pew, but I can relate to the drug addict in the alley because they're cooler and more transparent in at least they have a heart and I just felt like there was something missing, and I feel like what our heart is as believers is to share that, is to share the love of God, regardless.

BS: Jesus shows us what God is like, right? And you look at Jesus and look who He's asking to follow Him. He's not asking the pastors and the seminary professors, and all the super godly people. He's asking prostitutes and widows and fisherman and drunkards and guys who cuss a lot. He's like you can be like me. Come follow me. And that's the hope of the gospel is that not that one was good and the other was bad, but that kind of all of us are messed up and some of us are maybe a little more honest about it.

ALW: That's right.

BS: Isn't that a big part.. I mean that's a big part of your message isn't it?

ALW: It's so much of it. And that's the beauty in relationships of having each other is when somebody actually looks like they have it all together, you're like wow, they're really shallow and boring, but when you actually connect with somebody, you're just like.. you love them more, and God's love shines through them, and there's compassion there. That's what God wants.

BS: And of course you're not saying it's good to sin, but what you're saying is like look all of us are imperfect, and we're unfinished, as you say perfectly unfinished, and I think that that's just a great way to say it. That no matter where you are in your life, God's not done with you.

ALW: That's right.

BS: And He'll do the finishing, and we can be at peace with where we are, right?

ALW: That's right, yes, I don't condone sin, but I condone God's love and receiving God's love, yes.

BS: Of course, and all the people here in church and the millions listening around the world, if you just had one thing you'd say to that girl or that guy who's just really struggling with their sense of worth, and belonging, and they just need hope. What would you say to them?

ALW: I would say come as you are. Come to Jesus, come as you are, with all of your flaws and He is the ultimate. He is the healer. The world wants to judge you but God is a loving God, and God loves you and He doesn't judge you.

BS: Well the book is called *Perfectly Unfinished*; the author acclaimed actor, director, and manager of PureFlix, another venue, we're just so happy to have you here, Andrea Logan-White. Thank you.

ALW: Thank you so much.

BS: And I can't wait to see how this book is going to change people's lives. Thank you so much for being here.

ALW: Thank you so much, Bobby.

BS: We love you guys so much.

ALW: Thank you, thank you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, would you do this with me? Hold your hands out like this and let's 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. 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.

That creed is so true. Saying it really has changed my life and it's great to hear from others who have said the same thing, that it touched them in some deep way. And in a way, it's sort of like well we are what we do, right? I mean if you do accounting, you're an accountant, and if you murder a guy, you're a murderer. And we are what we have, right? I mean if you've got a million bucks, you're a

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millionaire. If you got nothing, you're broke. Right? And we are what people say about us. If you cross that finish line first and you won a gold medal, you're a gold medal Olympian.

So we have these labels and in some ways they're true, but the reason we in a way reject those things as our identity is because the deepest, truest thing about you is that you're loved by God. And all those other things, what you have, what you do, what people say about you, all those things can change. There's one thing that will never change in your life and that is that you are so utterly loved, adored and cherished by God. No one loves you more than God does; no one wants you go to heaven more than God does. He is on your side a hundred percent. Even when you're evil and doing wrong, He is at work to turn you into the kind of person that does what is good and what is right.

And so the reason we say this every week is that we reject our identities and any of those things because when our identity is firmly rooted in God's love, we do good. When our identity is firmly rooted in God's love, we have all that you can have in the world. When our identity is rooted in God's love, people are going to be saying better things about us, but even when those who curse us and reject us and insult us, we have a deeper strength that helps us endure the roller coaster of life!

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Dignity: Know Your Value in the Father's World"

And that's what we're talking about today. Today, I want to convince you that you actually are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Maybe you come to church today and you're like Bobby, you don't know what I did this week. Or maybe you're coming in, you're just feeling beat up. Man, there are a lot of bullies in this world. There are a lot of passive aggressive people. We have parents and co-workers and kids and colleagues, and they can sometimes say the meanest things. And maybe you're just coming in feeling beat up. Maybe you just lost something, and the things you're saying to yourself are not according to God's word. You're saying things like I'm never going to succeed, I'm never going to thrive, I'm never going to be a good person, I'm never going to beat this addiction, I'm never going to beat my depression or my anxiety or my fear. I'm never going to get where I want to be. I'm not enough.

And maybe you're thinking these things today, and I want you to know that that is not what God wants for you. He wants you to say what the word of God says about you that you're above and not beneath; that you're the head and not the tail. That you're the apple of God's eye. That you're beloved, that you're forgiven, that you're chosen, that you're victorious, that you're favored, that you're blessed, that you have nowhere to go but good places because you are in Christ Jesus. And that's the way we need to change our thinking.

Today, we're in the middle of a series, if you're just joining us, that's fine, and the series is called As a Man Thinketh, and it's based on the Proverb that says as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Or as a woman thinketh in her heart, so is she. Literally you are what you think. And I've said this every week, I'm going to keep saying it, but good thoughts bear good fruit, and bad thoughts bear bad fruit. Therefore, pay attention to what you think about and what you dwell on.

The mind is like a garden, right? And if you plant good seeds in that garden, it'll bear a good fruit. If you plant bad seeds or you let it run wild, it's going to bear bad fruit. And so tend to the garden of your mind because the things you dwell on and the things you think about, the things you study and read about, those are going to bear fruit in your life.

And very often we're just somewhere because of hard luck, you know, something happens, but even your ability to endure the suffering that has nothing to do with your thinking, that enduring will 100% have to do with how you think and the kind of thoughts you foster. Man, thoughts are powerful! You can go into shock because you're afraid. Your mind can cure the body. We don't know how, but when a drug is tested in the market, there's a 30% chance that when you take a fake drug, it's going to cure you just because you're thinking the right kind of thoughts. That's crazy!

You can go delirious. You can have a heart attack. A million things can happen to your body just based on your thoughts. Your mind is powerful. It has an effect on your body, your soul, your behavior, your outcomes, your relationships, therefore pay attention to what you think about.

And today I just felt like the Lord impressed on my heart to remind everyone to do what Paul said. Whatever is noble, whatever is pure, whatever is holy, whatever is good, think on such things, right? To think about who you are in Christ Jesus. And maybe you grew up in a church where you were taught to beat yourself up and bully yourself. But I want to tell you there's a big difference between being a bully and being a coach. And many of you, you're not coaching yourself, you're bullying yourself, you're putting yourself down. You're constantly saying I'm not good enough, I'm never going to get there, I'm never going to thrive. And if you dwell on those thoughts, it will be so. If you

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constantly say to yourself I'm a dirty, rotten sinner, it will be so. Those are not holy thoughts. God never tells us to think that way in scripture. In fact, He teaches us to think I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. I am above and not beneath. I am chosen. I am called. I'm free from the bondage of the law. I'm given total grace. Heaven is my home. These are the kinds of thoughts that the scripture teaches us to think, amen? So today I want to convince you to replace your thoughts of shame with thoughts of grace. Go easy on yourself. Can we do that?

I think oftentimes as believers, we think that if we beat ourselves up, or if we foster thoughts of shame, that it will lead to holiness, but we are utterly wrong. Shame always leads to sin. Grace always leads to holiness. Shame leads to sin! It does. When you beat yourself up and you say I'm a horrible, rotten person, you're going to see that that only triggers you to do more sinful things in life. In addiction theory, this is called the addiction cycle. So what happens is you have an emotional trigger, right? Something in your life; you get stressed out. You have a bad day at work. You get in a fight with your spouse or your best friend, and now you're sort of emotionally raw and you need something to deal with that. And so the next step in that cycle is craving. You begin to crave a drink. You just want a drink, but you're like no, I'm not going to drink anymore. I'm not going to do that. And I'm just not going to do that.

But then you engage. The next step is ritual. Ritual is like you drive by your favorite bar, but you're not going to go in. And so you drive by, well we'll just say Moe's Tavern, and there's Moe's and then you see all of your friends, they're getting out of the car, and you think oh maybe I'll just go in and say hi. So you park and you go in to say hi, and then your buddy's, they say hey man have a drink. And you're like oh no, no I don't want to drink anymore. I've really been drinking too much, I'm trying to stop. And they say oh this one's on us. Just have one. Just for the road, you know?

Next thing you know, you've pulled a full on bender. That's the next step, the using. You know it takes so much willpower to resist that trigger, whatever it is. And so you use and you stumble home drunk, or maybe you get in a horrible accident, and this triggers then shame. Shame is both guilt and fear combined into one. It's not only did I do something wrong, not only did I make a mistake, its saying I am a mistake. I'm never going to get over this. I'm never going to beat this thing. That's who I am. I'm just made this way so I just going to have to deal with it and I stink.

And so that shame then becomes in and of itself an emotional trigger, and that's the cycle. The emotional trigger, the craving, the ritual, the using, the shame, the emotional trigger, and it goes like that over and over, and that's the cycle of addiction. Whether its substance abuse, like drugs and alcohol; pornography, which that addiction is at an all time high, is ruining relationships; gambling, compulsive shopping, work-aholism, over-eating, under-eating, cutting, I mean the list goes on and on, that we as people, at the root of our addictions, and I sort of believe all of us are just a little addicted to something. At the root of our addictions is this one thing, shame. Shame says I'm not good enough, I stink, this is how I am, I'll never get there, and shame always leads to sin. Beating yourself up, bullying yourself will never get you where you want to be. It's the positive confessions of the scripture, the good things, the promises of God, professing those things over your life, even when they are overtly and obviously not true, proclaiming them over yourself makes it true! That's what faith is. That's what Jesus did. Jesus was constantly proclaiming things over people that in the natural just weren't true.

You remember when a bunch of people wanted Jesus to heal that girl, and He takes too long, and they finally say she's dead, and He says oh she's not dead, she's sleeping. She was dead. Right? But what did He do? He said she is just sleeping and it became so. And He said rise up and walk, and she did. And so the scripture, Jesus shows us what God is like, right? And here you see, Jesus proclaiming over sinners, holiness. Over lepers, cleanliness. Over dead people, life. And when He says it to be so, it is.

The power of Christ in your baptism came upon you. Whatever you say becomes so when you say it by faith. If you call yourself a dirty rotten, horrible sinner, you will never escape the pit of where you are. But if you call yourself the apple of God's eye, which is who you are, if you call yourself the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, which is who you are, if you call yourself chosen, victor, intelligent, called, it shall be so! Believe that your words have power, even when they're said in quiet rooms, even when they're said alone. Pay attention to what you think about, and how do you speak to yourself? What Hannah said this morning was a hundred percent right. The person you talk to the most is you. What's your self-talk like? What are you saying to yourself? When you mess up, do you go I'm an idiot? Sure you do! I do, too! So change that. Change that.

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Maybe you grew up with catholic guilt. Maybe you grew up with a rough evangelical family that always said you're horrible. Maybe you were abandoned when you were a kid. Maybe you didn't have a dad, or you didn't have a mom, or you didn't have a loving family and so you never felt like you were enough and so even when you do good you just feel like you're not enough, you're not where you want to be in life. Let go of those things. Change your thoughts. Begin to say the scripture to yourself in the promises of God, which is that you absolutely are loved.

There's this guy here in town, big preacher, and every time I listen to it, I just think this is the meanest person I think I've ever heard in my life. Like he's just mean. He's just like everybody's wrong and he's the only one that's right. Everybody's going to hell and that God hates you. He's got a big church. And I was talking to one of his colleagues once about this, and I actually had some grace in my heart because he had an abusive father. Of course he never talks about it.

But one story, for example, when he was a kid, he messed up and so his dad took him and chained him to a tree and put a sign around his neck that said, I am worthless. And he left him there overnight. So this guy, when he's preaching, he's preaching from that place of a worthless child. That's how he views himself: worthless child that's only worth being chained to a tree. And so all these mean things that he's saying to his congregation, I one hundred percent guarantee he's saying them to himself a hundred times more. You stink, you're the worst, you're a sinner, you're horrible, you're going to hell. And that's why I believe shame creates sin, grace creates holiness. Scripture creates holiness, faith creates good victory in your life, and that's why we are free from the law and we are given this great thing, which is grace.

So God adores you, did you know that? I mean He loves you. You take the greatest, kindest, best father on earth, and that guy, Jesus almost says, is evil compared to how good God's love is for you. Nobody wants you to go to heaven more than God, nobody loves you more than God, nobody's on your side more than God, and nobody is saying good things about you more than the Lord.

Now I know if you grew up in church and you're a theologian, the temptation is to hear this message and to say well Bobby, what about things like sin, and judgment, and hell, and God's wrath. You're rejecting those things. I am not at all. If anything, the fact that we have victory over those things, and the price that was paid that we could have victory over those things, if anything shows us how great and deep and undying the love of God is for you and for me. Amen?

Niebuhr's criticism was this – he says that the modern church of God without wrath brought people without sin into a kingdom without judgment, through ministrations of Christ without the cross. I'm sure you've heard sermons like that, and that's not at all what I'm saying. There is a heaven and there is a hell, and some people will go to hell. But God made a way that none of us should perish; that none of us should enter into that place. How can a loving God send someone to hell? I think, this is me personally, but I think a lot of it is more like chemistry where God is not only so powerful but so holy that sin literally can't be in His presence. And so He created a way that we could be sinless before Him. Putting something sinful in heaven is like, I don't know, putting aluminum in a microwave - it just doesn't work. There has to be a way in which we can be renewed, cleansed and restored, and He made that way. The way that that happens is you trade places with Jesus.

It's so unfair, isn't it? Jesus, the perfect life, did everything right, God in human form, gave His life on the cross that we could be renewed, restored, called holy and righteous and justified before the throne of God, and that's who you are. All your sin, past, present and future, they're all wiped away if just one thing happens – you confess the lordship of Jesus in your life. It's that simple. It's that simple.

And that is indeed the one thing that makes our faith, Christianity, utterly unique and singular, it makes it different than every other world view, it's that every other religion says do this, do this, do this, do this over your life and you'll be saved. Christianity begins with you're saved! Now respond to that.

Every other religion says work hard, do it right, be the elite, be the best, follow the rules perfectly, and then you'll probably go to heaven, or nirvana, or wherever. Christianity doesn't say that. It says believe simply in the cross and resurrection and you begin with it is finished! You begin with it is done! You begin with heaven. And everything flows from what the Lord has done in your life. It doesn't come from trying harder. It certainly doesn't come from beating yourself up. It comes from meditating on God's love and grace. Isn't that good news? God's not going to let you go. If you trust in Him, He'll never ever let you go. Never.

He'll never let you go. He'll never, ever let you go. Never. He will never, ever, ever let you go, ever. He loves you. I mean God loves you as much as He loves His son Jesus. He wouldn't have sent

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Jesus to take your place if He didn't. Jesus struggled. He didn't want to go to the cross. Father, take this cup from me. But not my will, yours be done. Right? Christ was obedient to the Father. A true hero and He gave His life for us. Don't reject that gift. Just receive it. It's not your works, it's His works, amen? It's not what you've done, it's what He's done. You're renewed, so believing that by faith makes it so.

Speak to yourself the way that Jesus spoke to that dead girl. Speak to yourself the way Jesus spoke to that leper. Speak to yourself the way that Jesus spoke to those sinners who thought they would never be men of God, and He made them priests and prophets and apostles. Speak to yourself that way. You are called, you are loved, you are chosen, you are forgiven, you are renewed, you're restored, you have a bright future, believe it. You're not a horrible, worthless sinner. You're wonderful. So change your thoughts and it'll change your world. Change your thoughts and meditate on these things and it'll become so.

You are not disqualified. If the enemy wants to convince you of anything, it's that you need to be qualified for ministry or whatever it is you're called to do by never messing up. You are not disqualified. In fact God has made you qualified for whatever He's called you to do, even though you still struggle with certain sins and things in your life. Guess what – none of us will be perfect. You are loved.

Today's scripture that Hannah read, I just want to read it again to reinforce everything that I am saying. And of course this is all through the New Testament, but I love the way John puts it because he frames it as God's love. John says, "No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us." In other words, you want to see God? Just look at what is loving and you've seen God at work. Just like nobody has seen the wind, but you've seen a tornado. Nobody has seen God but when you see love, you see the Lord.

"This is how we know that we live in Him and He in us. He has given us His spirit. And we have been seen and testified that the Father has sent His son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the son of God, God lives in them and they in God." Notice, it's not if anybody acts perfectly, if anyone gets it all right, if anyone obeys the Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments every day. But we want to do those things, right? We don't want to sin, we want to be good people.

But He says the thing that saves us is "anyone who acknowledges that Jesus is the son of God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love." That's a powerful statement. Not God is loving. That doesn't say God is loving. It's even deeper than that. God is love! When you experience true agape love, you are experiencing God. "Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them." Did you catch that one, too? "This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment. In this world, we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment." See fear of punishment is not love. It's not godly. It's not faith.

"The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us." Theologians call this the principle of first love. It all begins with God's love. It all begins with God's work in us. So we can't make ourselves holy. The only way to be truly holy is to live in God's grace and love, and it flows naturally out of us, just as planting flower seeds in a garden and nurturing them will bear flowers, so will planting your life in the love of God naturally cause you to blossom and thrive in life. I've talked about this before, and I'll finish with this – I want to be careful here because it is good to confess your sins, on occasion. It is good to, especially confess your sins in terms of like I'm struggling with this, I need help. But very often as Christians, our confession of sins doesn't look like I'm struggling with this, I need help, can you come alongside me. It's more like Martin Luther, which I think this was a mistake, I'm a rotten sinner, I'm trash, I'm garbage, I'm worthless. Scripture never tells us to do that. And by the way, the scripture only tells us twice to confess our sins.

Its only in two places in the bible – one is in James, confess your sins that you may be healed, and I think this is in part because when we sin, though we don't fall away from God, we do lose spiritual authority, right? So there's a certain power to our prayers when we walk in holiness. And then the other one is first John, confess your sins to one another and He will be faithful and just to forgive you. Is that right? So those are the two places. But Paul, the Apostle Paul who wrote almost all of the New Testament never once says to confess your sins. Did you catch that? It's not in Romans, it's not in Corinthians, it's not in Galatians. Neither does Jesus say to confess your sins.

What does the scripture teach us? It teaches us to confess the promises of God! It teaches us confess the name of Jesus. It teaches us to confess that He is Lord. And when this happens, true

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change happens in our life. Never confess your sins unless afterwards you also confess that you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Never confess your sins without also confessing that they have been forgiven, and that you have been restored, and that you are chosen, and that you are called and that it's okay. Confessing your sins without confessing your justification is like confessing the cross without confessing the resurrection.

So yeah, it's like when the devil is the one who is called the accuser of the brethren. He's the one that points at you and says you're a rotten, horrible sinner. Oftentimes from Paul you get this image of your life sort of being in a courtroom and you've got the prosecutor, the devil, who's on one side, and Jesus, your brother, who's on the other, and your brother is your attorney. And the devil is looking at the judge and he's saying she is a rotten, horrible sinner, she's a bad mother, she's never achieved anything in life, she's passive aggressive and anxious, and she probably has mental problems and honestly, she's a rotten sinner. And did you see what she did to her sister?

And you've got Jesus over here saying she is loved, she is forgiven, she is called, it is paid for. Yes, she messed up, but I paid for it. It's taken care of a hundred fold past, present and future. Your honor, this case is closed. And then you stand up and you're like no, the devil's right. No, no, no, your honor. He's right. You're subverting your case.

And that's the thing. Why would you agree with the enemy when the scripture tells us to agree with all these great promises? We're called, you're loved. And that's the difference. Sometimes we're like well should we never feel guilt or shame? You should never feel shame, you should often feel guilt. And this is a nuance, but it's important. Guilt says - when you mess up, it's good to feel guilt because guilt stretches you to be better. Guilt says I made a mistake. I can do better. Shame says I am a mistake. I'm going into hiding. When you say to yourself I messed up, that's okay. And that's good, actually. When you say to yourself I am a mess up, that's bad and that's not from the scripture.

And so when you juxtapose, when you do something that's not coming from a place of God's love in your life, you can fix it. But never think that your messing up will ever cause God to let you go. I'd never let go of my kids. I would never let go of my kids, would you? Never. And God loves you more than I love my kids, which is crazy to think about. He won't let you go.

Zechariah talks about Jerusalem, and he says someday I know my people, you've been harmed, but one day Jerusalem will have no walls. In fact, there will be a wall of fire around it that will protect you. Zechariah says whoever touches you, touches the apple of God's eye. That's how much God loves you. He protects you, He guards you, He calls you. The only one who can throw your life away is you. And the only way you throw it away is in your thinking.

So meditate. When you're tempted to say I'm worthless, I'm horrible, I'm going to hell, I've lost my salvation, I'm a mess up, whatever the things are that you say about yourself, cast those thoughts away. They are not from the Lord. They are from the enemy. And confess out loud I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. I am chosen. I am loved. I am called. I'm above and not beneath. My future is bright and watch how meditating on those things will transform your future forever. Amen.