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Hour of Power vom 08.07.2018

GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – BS/HS

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

HS: And welcome, welcome. We are so honored that you came today. The Lord has a plan for you in this moment and his plans are life giving. Would you turn around and shake the hand of the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

BS: And so Father, we come both grieving with anger but also with joy; joy at the affirmation by faith that the kingdom of God is here. Jesus, you can break every chain. You can defeat every enemy. We remember many of the words of Psalms when we feel and think about what's happening. We pray, Father, that your peace, life and goodness would come to those who are suffering this week from the loss of someone they love at the hand of reckless evil. And so we pray in the name of Jesus that you would give us courage and faith, and thank you that we have nothing to be afraid of. That we will not fear; that we'll have courage, and trust and faith in the name and power of Jesus Christ. It's in his name we pray, amen.

SCRIPTURE – 2 Timothy 1:3-7 - HS

In preparation for Bobby's message, the words of our Lord found in 2nd Timothy: I thank God whom I serve with a pure conscious and as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day greatly desiring to see you. Being mindful of your tears that I may be filled with joy when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you which dwelt first in your grandmother, Lois, and your mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you, also. Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God that is in you the laying on of hands for God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

May we as God's people face our fears with courage and be brave enough to always do the next right thing.

INTERVIEW – SIERRA & ROXANNE ELLISON

BS: Well my guests today are the Ellison sisters, Roxanne and Sierra. Which one's Roxanne and which one's Sierra? Roxanne and Sierra. They began their tennis careers as kids on the neighborhood courts of Coto De Caza, California but rocketed to the top where they became the number one USA National doubles junior champions, winning numerous top matches and championships along the way. They're ambassadors for the Be Love World Initiative, a non-profit that encourages teens and young people to use the web and social media intelligently and positively. Be Love World wants young people to stop the bullying and start to be love to the world instead. Please welcome with me this morning, Roxanne and Sierra. So it's really cool to have a couple tennis champions here in the church. Tell us why did you guys decide to start with tennis?

SE: So as a lot of things happen in life, we were two and three when we started so we didn't necessarily go I'm going to play tennis. Our parents helped us. So we started playing tennis when we were two and three and then played through the juniors and then went to San Diego State and played there and then played on the pro-circuit.

BS: And you're not twins, you're Irish twins right?

SE: Correct

RE: So we're eleven and a half months apart. Very close.

BS: So your mom got pregnant after delivering.. who's older?

RE: I'm older.

BS: Roxanne.

RE: Yes.

BS: And so your mom delivered you and two and a half months later was pregnant.

RE: Yes, and so every year we are the same age for ten days. So that's always a fun story when people ask us well how old are you? We're the same age, but we're not twins.

BS: Wow so ten days of the year you're both whatever...yes that's great. That's really cool. So your faith is a big part of what you do with tennis, with business, with speaking. Tell me about that. How does your faith work into everything?

RE: Absolutely. In life and especially in sports, you're going to have your wins and you're going to have your losses. And for Sierra and I, we've used our faith to trust that God has a plan in everything that he wants for us and for everyone. And with that, we've taken the wins and the losses and we've stayed positive and we've worked together as a team, but we've also used so many affirmations from the bible to get us through all of our struggles and our setbacks and also to keep us on track with everything that God has in store for us.

BS: Yes it seems like a lot of people today think of the bible as this obscure old book that doesn't have anything to do with my life today. And as Christians but also athletes, business owners, that's something that you really want to share with the world is like look this is a practical book for today that has real wisdom.

BOTH: Absolutely

RE: I think that it relates to so many different ventures that you pursue and different stages of your life. And we have different affirmations that we've used at sixteen and then now we're using it again at twenty-five and twenty-six. And just depending on your life I think that it's so helpful.

SE: Absolutely.

BS: So you kind of took a turn when online something happened. Tell us a little bit about that.

SE: Yes so when we were on the pro-circuit, we decided that we wanted to create a... we had an idea for a television show that was called Tennis Runway and it's on the tennis channel.

BS: And you're doing it right?

SE: Yes and we were very, very excited and we came up with the idea and produced it and made it happen and all we wanted to do was be excited about it. But then when you put yourself out there in the media or in social media online, you get so much happiness and so much praise, but then there's those few tiny people that like to say something terrible.

BS: So evil.

SE: And the funny thing is it can be about how you look, it could be about your morals, it could be about who you are, and they have never met you before in your entire life. And so it really was challenging to stay happy and we were surprised that that had such an affect. And so we made it clear, we're like okay there must be a reason for this and why not go after to try not to fight against them but to create something that people can support each other online and create a family so that you can feel safe because that's going to happen no matter what.

BS: But it hurt, didn't it. I mean you see this stuff online. Isn't it weird it's some person you don't know. They're called trolls, by the way. So the online urban dictionary a troll is someone like this that goes around just being mean. Online bullies, but this is real. There are kids today that are committing suicide, that are going into depression because they have kids or there's a number like yik yak and other things that allow kids to really bully anonymously. And that's a big deal, isn't it?

SE: I mean it makes you question what you're doing and why you're doing it and if it's the right thing to do, even if you were completely passionate about it and excited about it in the beginning. And that's not okay.

BS: Just to encourage you guys and to encourage anybody else, public figures, any public figure always is going to get online bullying. I get lots of this. I mean with TV and online, especially when people can make comments.

And one thing that really helped me and I felt like this was from God was looking at it as training that if you're going to be an influence maker, if you're going to make a difference in the world, you're going to have critics. You're going to have people that hate you; you're going to have people that bully you. Jesus said blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you.

And so I tried to think about how could I be blessed when that happens? And so for me it was really helpful and my guess is God's going to do great things in your life. So brace yourself, more is coming. Pray for more because that means you have more influence..

BS: ..and you have a bigger impact, right?

RE: Exactly.

BS: So you've created this online thing where people can make this pledge. Tell us a little bit about how that works.

RE: Absolutely. So we created an online initiative. It's called BeLove.world and basically what it is is we want to create a community where you can stand up against cyber bullying. We don't want to stand up in maybe the traditional sense, we want to make it just be about spreading love and people feel that they can inspire one another, and that everyone truly can achieve all their dreams and really love and be accepting of themselves. And so what Sierra and I have done is we have the belowe.world logo right here.

BS: I didn't know .world. So .world replaces .com, okay, so this is a new thing. You guys are on the cutting edge.

RE: We try to be. We try to be.

BS: Good.

RE: So what you have to do, you can go to this website and you can download this actual little logo right here and then you take a selfie with it and then you post it. And basically what it is, it's an affirmation to the world that you are not going to be doing anything mean and malicious and you're going to do unto others as you would like them to do unto you. And I think that's what Sierra and I are so passionate about and we would love to be able to spread the love that we want..

SE: That the world needs.

RE: ..that the world needs, yes.

BS: Are you guys getting a good response so far to this initiative?

SE: Yes absolutely we talked to a lot of young girls recently and you could see how much it affected them and how many of them; we would have them raise their hands and how many of you have dealt with this, whether it's online or in the classroom or outside? And it's touching people in a way that they're saying okay well I can have that family, I can have that friendship outside and just go to those people and care about them rather than worrying about these people that don't mean anything to you.

BS: Well I just really want to encourage everyone to get on top of this. It's belowe.world and it would be so great to see you take a picture with this selfie, post it on your Instagram... take a picture with the selfie... take a picture with this poster and put it on your Facebook, your Instagram. I'm going to do it and I encourage you to do it, too. We need to put an end to online bullying. And you guys have Facebook, Twitter, things like that?

BOTH: Yes, absolutely.

RE: So Facebook is the Ellison Sisters and the same with Instagram and then Ellison sisters for twitter, as well.

BS: Well Roxanne and Sierra, thank you so much. We'll look for you on the Tennis Channel and thanks for all you're doing to help lift up young people today, everybody who feels bullied. We're going to do our best to help you. God bless you..

SE: Yes, God bless you thank you.

RE: Thank you.

BS: ..and thanks for being here today. Let's give them another hand.

DECLARATION – BS

We're going to say this confession together. Hold your hands out like this as a sign of receiving God's love: 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. If you believe it say amen. Have a seat.

MESSAGE – BOBBY SCHULLER "From Fear to Power, Love and a Sound Mind"

Today we're talking about fear. We're talking about the idea that you don't have to be afraid, and that you can move from fear to a power, love and a sound mind. That that is a promise from God in his word.

If we talk about the mind, fear is one of the most important things to talk about and although we have control over many of our thoughts, the way we view others, the way we think about our situation, one thing that's really hard to control directly is fear. All of us, when we're afraid, we feel plagued. When you're afraid, it feels like your life has been completely poisoned.

Every aspect of your life, when you worry or you have fear, anything that would be enjoyable, a movie, time with loved ones, learning; all of these things sort of lose a bit of their goodness because this fear thing, this worry thing is poisoning everything.

And so we try and will ourselves free of fear but we find that's very hard to do, don't we? It's hard to just not be afraid anymore, not worry, especially when you get something kind of scary that's very personal to you, especially when you feel alone. We do, however, have control over fear, though not in a direct way; we do have control in an indirect way. This church really believes in the power of indirection. That the third party things I do, the media I consume, the friends I have, that those things actually do affect my life in a big way.

And so today we won't be able to spend as much time on some really important things like meditating on scripture, like keeping track of the kind of media you consume. Don't watch news too much. I mean honestly. Things like that that we know are causing us to worry. And the friends we keep. Don't keep company with people that are really, really worried. Don't keep too much company with them unless they change their ways or you have a serious talk with them. So there are things that indirectly affect us being afraid. But the biggest thing that you have control over and this is what we'll talk about today is facing your fears. Face your fears. That's what we're talking about this morning.

The method we have for finding peace in our world today isn't working. Most of us, when we feel afraid of something, when something scares us, our gut response, the way that we're trained to respond is to withdraw; to avoid it. To not attack it. To pretend like it's not there and then go to bed at night hoping that I'll just forget it. And the thing is very often you do forget it up here but it sort of goes to a deeper place, and if you don't face your fears, you still have that fear in your body. You become a worrisome person. And so today I want to encourage you, face your fears. Face your fears. Face 'em. No matter how scared you are of whatever it is that's happening in your life, be courageous, have faith, and face your fears with God. He is a good God and he will carry you through. You don't have to be afraid.

In the passage Hannah read today from 1st Timothy chapter one verse three, Paul the apostle is in Rome and we believe that this is sort of his farewell address to his protégé Timothy. He's probably about to die and so these are sort of his final words to this pastor in Ephesus that he loves dearly. And we included this part of the passage but he begins by talking about Timothy's mom and grandma. He says "I remember your Grandmother Lois and the deep faith that she had and I remember your mother Eunice and the deep faith that she had." And he says "Timothy, that faith is in you." That faith is in you. And he says "fan into flame the gift of God for God has not given you a spirit of fear but of power, of love and of a sound mind."

When I read this passage I think that, and I don't know but I think Grandma Lois and Mother Eunice died. I don't think they're around anymore and that's why their faith lives on in Timothy. Here Paul is about to die and Timothy is going to feel very lonely, he's going to feel afraid, and this is a commandment from Paul to a pastor, to an important church, to Ephesus to be courageous, and to remember his example and the example of his mother, and the example of his grandmother. And the idea that though people have died and suffered their faith lives on in the next generation. That's a reminder to all of us that we can remember the great faith of the spiritual ancestors and the people in our lives that helped make you who you are. God did not give you a spirit of fear. God did not give you a spirit of fear. He has given to you a spirit of power, a spirit of love and of a sound mind. You don't have to worry. Amen?

I think Paul is encouraging Timothy to have courage. That's quite what the word encouragement means, right? To give courage. To put courage into someone. Courage is not fearlessness, courage, and I'm going to read this to you, and we have a slide: Courage is doing what is right and good even when you feel afraid. Courage does not mean being fearless. Being fearless means you're insane, literally. Being brave, having courage is admitting I am afraid, I feel fear but I refuse to allow fear to dictate my future. I refuse to allow worry to dictate the decisions I am going to make. I have the ability and the freedom to do what is right, to do what is good, to follow God's calling even though I feel afraid. Courage is moving forward in spite of being worried or afraid. And the only way you diminish fear in your life is by facing the things you're afraid of. Only when we go to fight the monsters do they go away. Amen?

So what are you afraid of today? What is God encouraging you to press against? What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of people? Are you afraid of sickness? Are you afraid of conflict or confession? Are you afraid of a break up? What are you afraid of? You don't have to be. You can trust in the goodness of God.

I want to talk a little bit about the story of Jonah. Now Jonah was an important story in the Old Testament and it models so clearly the human condition. Here's this guy Jonah who is called to the city of Nineveh. And the sad thing is unless you're a big history buff, most people don't know about the most important city, one of the most important cities in human history, Nineveh.

In 400 B.C., there was a Greek commander named Zanephon and it's this amazing story. This guy Zanephon has this group of mercenaries. It's right out of a movie. I hope somebody makes this movie some day. And he was hired to fight the Persians and he loses big time. And so he's with this band of mercenaries and they're fleeing from the Persians and they keep fighting and running and fighting and running. And Zanephon tells the story in his historic book called the *Persian Expeditions*.

And he ends up in the middle of Mesopotamia somewhere he's never been and they come across this skeleton city. A city of bones and sand that's bigger than any city he's ever seen. And in his reflection, he says there is this ghost town and he says the base of the walls were fifty feet high and plated with marble. And upon those fifty foot walls were hundred foot walls totaling a hundred fifty foot high walls. This is 400 B.C., guys. This is 400 years before Jesus.

And then he says the parameter of these walls was eighteen miles. And he said we were marveling at the size of the city and what used to be here and we asked the locals and they said this is a Median city called I think Larissa. They had forgotten. Nobody knew what this city was. It was a mystery. Nobody knew what this was. That city that they came upon was Nineveh. Nineveh, when it was destroyed, was so hated by the locals it was literally wiped out of history. They burned and destroyed everything and nobody wept for the Ninehvites. Nobody wept for the Assyrians.

A little bit about this empire - the Acadian Assyrian Empire is the first empire, the longest running, most ruthless empire in human history. These guys, it's amazing actually they existed for.. depending on how you measure it, the Acadian Assyrian empire went for two thousand years. An empire going all the way from us to Jesus, can you imagine the length of an ongoing empire. And the capitol of this empire during the Jonah story is Nineveh which is the biggest, most powerful city in the world. And here it comes. Right?

There's an account on these reliefs which are these walls of things that this guy Ashurbanipal and other kings did to their enemies that are so disgusting I can't talk about them in church. Imagine like a really bad eighties horror film times ten. Imagine like a great heavy metal poster. This is what the Assyrians did to their enemies. These guys were ruthless. And Nineveh was the heart of Assyria, this major city. And it was like Saron's tower if he got the ring. It was like the Death Star. It was this thing that loomed over the whole known world. Everybody was afraid of Nineveh. It was this terrible place where they murdered and tortured and maimed people. Where these different kings did horrible things to their enemies and had a terrible grip. And God says to Jonah go to that city and tell them I'm going to destroy it. What would you do?

Jonah hates the Ninehvites. Jonah is afraid of the Ninehvites. Jonah doesn't want to go to Nineveh because he doesn't want them to turn and fear God. He wants God to destroy Nineveh, everybody does. And more than that, he's terrified of the place. I would be, too.

In this brief story in the Old Testament, God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh. And do we have the map? Nineveh is 500 miles or so to the East of where Jonah is. He goes to a place called Tarshis in Spain way over there 2500 miles the other direction. Now anyone reading this story, this is what they see. God says go east and Jonah goes west as far as possible.

Jonah's on this boat and something crazy starts happening; the weather is horrible. Jonah is sleeping in the boat. These men come down and they say you're a man of God. Wake up. Something is going on. We need you to fix this right now. And Jonah says I don't know what's going on. And they say well let's cast lots and see what's going on. And the lots fall on Jonah and Jonah says I'm fleeing from the Lord and he says throw me overboard. And they repent to God, they throw him overboard, the weather stops and a fish, a whale, a leviathan, a sea monster whatever it is, something comes and gobbles up Jonah. And for three days this fish takes a journey back to Israel and spits him out on dry land.

Now I just want to pause. There are two things we can learn from this story. And the first lesson, especially when we're talking about fear, is this: life gets worse when we run from God's calling. It's just that simple. When we run away from what God calls us to do, whether it's the little things or the big things, whether it's just simply doing the next right thing, or embracing some big calling God's brought us to, life gets worse when we run from God because of fear. Jonah was more afraid of Nineveh than he was of God. Jonah hated Nineveh more than he loved God. And this was the heart of the problem.

The second lesson we learn from the Jonah story is this: if it's God's calling, D minus is a passing grade. That is true. Listen to this: when you read the prophecies of the Old Testament, they go pages and pages. When you see what these guys say to Israel or whomever, they go on and on and they rhyme and they use all sorts of colorful language, they say what the fire is going to look like and what it's going to feel like and there's going to be clouds and thunder and God will tear you asunder and it's like very violent, horrible stuff. You know what Jonah does when he finally gets to Nineveh? Do you know what his prophecy is? Here I have it right here. And he almost whispers it: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." That's all he says. In fact if you're reading the Old Testament and you're a scholar, you're like shocked by this is it: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

And the funny thing about this is that typically with these long poetic prophecies that the prophets give in the Old Testament, usually everybody ignores them. You know what happens to Jonah? Everybody goes into repentance! He says like one sentence, one time, and everybody decides to fast and to plead with God, and to ask God to save them. And then word gets to the king and the king says we're going to have the animals in sack cloth and no one's going to eat and we're all going to be covered in ashes and ask God to relent from harming us and to save our city. And God responds and saves the city.

Look Jonah didn't even want to go there, even after the whale spit him up, he sort of went kicking and screaming and barely tried and was totally victorious. In the kingdom of God, if you do what God has called you to do even a D minus is a passing grade. Look we have to learn that faith pleases God. God's an expert at using people who you wouldn't think would be the right ones. He's an expert at using these kinds of people to change the world.

When Jesus was going around picking his disciples, he was picking fisherman and prostitutes and tax collectors and lepers, and women who in those days were not seen as like having value. And he wanted them to follow him. I have seen in my life some of the greatest men and women of God are the people you thought never would do it and these are simply people who said I don't know how to do this thing God's called me to do but I guess I'll do it. And they came out with their D minus. They're just flinging it around, D minus everywhere, and God made sure that they were victorious because faith pleases God. Faith pleases God.

For every one victory you get, you're going to have ten failures. If you want to succeed in life, you've got to fail first. Don't be afraid of failing. Don't be afraid of failing and don't be afraid of your future. If God calls you to do something, just respond with courage, do your best, and if you eek out a D minus, it will work. God can use that. Amen? Through your life, you see it happen over and over. If you have the faith, God has the power.

Sometimes we ask the question I don't know if it's God's calling. Do it anyway. Look, another lesson we learn from Nineveh is this: if you think it's God's calling and you're not sure and you do it and it's not his calling, he will send a whale to get you back on track. Many of us know that. We take an action, we go to do something and all of a sudden this whale comes out of nowhere and you're like no! And then it spits you out into your calling. There is something about that in life that even if you're not doing what God has called you to do I think God still loves courage. God loves courage! God loves to see people say no to the things they're afraid of. To stand up with boldness. All of us love courage. Every great movie is about someone doing something brave. God loves it, too. We're his kids. We're like him in that way. Faith pleases God. Don't be afraid. Amen?

So the way to annihilate fear of anything in your life is to fear one thing: to fear God. You know as a pastor I've received questions about well I thought fear was the opposite of love and all this stuff. Fear, the fear of God which is all throughout the bible is an ancient way of understanding that God's the one with the power. That he's the only one that you should be afraid of and yet God is good. So because he loves us, we don't have to be afraid of him. Does that make sense? We don't have feel dread. In a way, the fear of God removes fear. It's an ancient way of understanding that although there is this big scary place called Nineveh, God is bigger. Although there are all of these things in our life: there's sickness, there's disease, there's death, there's challenges, there's deception, God's bigger. And I trust that God has the power and that those things should be afraid of him. Amen?

Dallas Willard said God is not mean but he is dangerous. Huh? He's dangerous but he's on your side. He's on the side of good. He's on the side of what is right. So to fear God is the same way that a camper fears a camp fire. To fear God is the same way that a sailor fears weather. To fear God is the same way that an engineer fears electricity. Or the same way a chemist fears his lab. To fear God is the same way that a son fears his father.

I remember when I was a kid I loved my dad, and I still love my dad, we're very, very close, but there is a fear component of your parents that is healthy and good. It's a respect that if I cross the line, dad's going to uncross it for me. And this comes into play if I were to go on the playground, let's say it's a place where I might be bullied or I might be afraid of some kid or there are scary things on the playground, if dad is there, I'm not afraid of those kids, I'm not afraid of teachers, I'm not afraid of anything because I have fear for dad. Does that make sense?

In the same way, when we fear God, we're intimate with him but we know his power, we know that he's dangerous, we know that he has control, and we know that he loves us, it takes away fear in our life. That's why intimacy with a dangerous God is central to growing as a disciple with Jesus. Intimacy with a dangerous God is central to growing as a disciple of Jesus.

God is bigger than Nineveh and everything else that you face in your life. And when you realize that in your guts and bones, it doesn't always make the fear go away but it gives you courage to say no. It gives you the courage to say yes to God's calling. Amen?

Show the dog picture, please. This is Mozart. Now this is a picture that looks like Mozart. This is Hannah's dog growing up. It's a Shiatsu, yes I said shiatsu in church. It's okay. He's very cute. This dog was a scared dog and he would always be afraid of the mailman and things like that until Hannah's dad would pick him up and once Hannah's dad would hold Mozart, Mozart would go like (BARKS). And then you'd put him down and he'd go and hide.

That's how I feel. That's how I feel. When I know God is holding me and God is carrying me, I'm like a cute little puppy normally, but when God's holding me, I know that I don't have the power but he does and I'm going to bark on his behalf. And that's what we do. We aren't the ones with the power, we aren't the ones with the ability, God is and that's good news. We don't personally have the power to defeat these things but God does. That's why God likes to use people who are blind and people who are deaf. People like Nick Vujicic who's perhaps one of the most powerful Christian voices in the world today. No arms or legs.

God loves to use the people that you don't expect he's going to use, and God wants to use you, and he wants to use you today to do the next right thing. The little things and the big things, but you can't be afraid because fear is the greatest obstacle to your destiny. Don't be afraid. Take courage and do the next right thing. So don't be afraid of your future. Don't be afraid of global politics. Don't be afraid of the doctor. Don't be afraid of tiger moms, or bridezillas, or your boss. Don't be afraid of an AA meeting or of a professor. Don't be afraid of that girl whose number you've been wanting to ask for for a long time. Don't be afraid of surgery. Don't be afraid of confession. Don't be afraid of conflict. Don't be afraid of a break up. And don't be afraid of a break down. God has your back. You can trust that God has not given you a spirit of fear but that of power, that of love, and of a sound mind. Amen?

Let's pray: Lord, we're not afraid and when we feel afraid we can have confidence and trust in the chain breaking name of Jesus Christ. And so we do, Lord. And so I offer to everyone who's hear this morning to pray with me if you want to become a Christian. Repeat these words after me: Father, in the name of Jesus, forgive me of my sins. Mark my name in the Lambs book of life. Teach me your ways and fill me with your Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name. If you prayed that prayer with us, we believe that you've become a Christian and we want you to plug into a church and if you live by, come here.

BENEDICTION - BS

BS: Thanks, friends. We're so glad you're here. We hope you leave feeling encouraged, feel God's love. We want you to know more than ever that God has called you.

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to 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.