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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: And hello, church family. Thank you so much for taking the time to be here. We love you.

This morning I felt like the Lord put it on my heart to speak to those of you who's harshest critic in life is yourself. The Lord says to you, it was not a mistake that I made you exactly the way you are. You are more than enough. I am proud of 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, we're in this series talking about worry, and so much of training our lives into sort of an unworried existence is remembering that on days like today, a Sabbath, Sunday, we ought to take a break from work, take a break from trade, and bond deeply with our friends, our family, and honor God, and that rhythm is so good to help us remember what really matters in life. That many of the things we worry about, they'll be okay. Most of the things, it's just going to be fine.

So today my hope is that you leave here with a sense of joy and that the word that really comes to mind is just relaxed; being relaxed is the fruit of faith. So we're going to ask that God gives us faith, which is a gift, it's not something you can earn, it's something that He gives you. So we're just going to open our minds and our bodies like a receptacle and just ask that the Holy Spirit would give us all the faith we need to leave here full of joy, relaxed and ready for the week, amen?

HS: Amen.

BS: So Lord, we thank you and we love you, and we thank you that you loved us first. That even when we were your enemies, even when we were sinners, even when we harmed our neighbor and were cruel or unkind, and even when we do those things, when we mess up and we fall, you love us just as we are, not as we should be.

Today, Lord, we're going to learn to relax and to trust in your goodness, that you're always on our side. Because of Jesus, our sins are forgiven and He's paved the way that we can live every day in the kingdom of God, and so we do that, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

SCRIPTURE – Matthew 6:25-34 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for Bobby's message, the words of our Lord found in Matthew 6:25: Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; do they not sow or reap or store away in barns? And yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

And why do you worry about your clothes? See how the flowers of the fields grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' for the pagans run after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Church, as we run after the kingdom of God, we will have less worries in our lives. Amen.

Put First Things First

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, would you hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving, and let's say this creed 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.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Put First Things First"

Let's jump right in. We are in the middle of a series talking about this thing that plagues all people: worry, anxiety, dread, fear, late nights, waking up at three going oh my god, okay I'm going to go back to sleep. And just staring into space. Anybody ever do that? And I believe that worry is one of the things that erodes faith. It erodes courage. It erodes our energy. And Jesus and the scriptures have a lot to say about how we are to live in order to move deeper into a worry free life. I think that one of the best fruits of being a believer is the promise that most of the time we can relax. Relaxing is the fruit of faithfulness, and it's the fruit of faith. That when we trust God, even if our current situation is bad and we believe a good future is coming, it makes it easier for us to relax.

And so today I'm going to talk further on this issue of how to win the worry war, and unfortunately I don't have anything to sell you. I don't have any quick fix. The way to win the worry war is discipline. That word that we American's hate. Just like winning any other thing in your life, just if you want to win in sports, it takes discipline. If you want to win in your job, it takes discipline. If you want to win in life, it takes discipline. Discipline meaning training. That you have to train your mind and your heart, and you have to run after and devote your life to what Jesus called the narrow road. It's the narrow road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Only a few. You remember how much a few are, right? Three, four.

Now when He's talking there, He's not talking about going to heaven, I don't believe. He's talking about the eternal zoe life that we live in today. That is made available to every disciple, if you're willing to pay the price. The way to win the worry war is through training, in particular, through learning, through prayer, through wisdom and through knowledge. When we grow in wisdom, experience and knowledge, we become resilient, and we become the kinds of people who can flourish in chaos. I'm going to get to that in just a little bit.

But first, I want to read from the scripture. There are two big scriptures we're going to look at today. And the first is a story about Solomon, it's very famous. Solomon is the new king of Israel. His dad David is a legend. His nation is at war, and he has just become the new king. And here he is, the beginning of 2nd Chronicles 1, and his first act of king is to ascend to the high place at Gibeon, where the tabernacle is and where they believe you can actually encounter God. So he ascends this hill, and he makes a great sacrifice at the bronze altar in the tabernacle, and the scriptures say Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the Lord in the tent of meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it. Imagine that. Quite a sacrifice. That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, 'ask for whatever you want me to give you.' If God appeared to you, by the way, in the middle of the night and said ask me for whatever you want and I'll give it to you. What do you want? What would your answer be? I want money! Don't lie. Me, too.

God appears to Solomon: ask for whatever you want. What do you want? What do you want? What do you want? Solomon answers 'God, you have shown great kindness to David, my father, and made me king in this place. Now Lord God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed. For you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth. Give me,' drum roll please, you guys are such sports, 'wisdom and knowledge!' He says Lord, give me wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge. 'Wisdom and knowledge! That I may lead my people for who is able to govern this great people of yours?' And God said to Solomon, 'since this is your heart's desire,' it's what you really want, it's what you really wake up for in the morning is wisdom and knowledge, 'since this is your heart's desire, and you have not asked for wealth, and you have not asked for possessions or honor, and you have not asked for the death of your enemies,' remember, he's at war. 'And since you have not asked for a long life, but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I've made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth. And I will also give you possessions and honor such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will ever have.' Wow, that's powerful, isn't it.

This famous story about Solomon, when I read it, I think it's so funny how Solomon never mentions those things, but God does. When He says I'll give you anything you want, what do you want, Solomon says, wisdom and knowledge, right?

Put First Things First

He asks and prays for wisdom and knowledge, and what I hear God saying when He says since you did not ask for any of these things, I kind of feel like it's almost like Bruce Almighty where God is like here is the four things that people are always asking for. Here are the four things we always worry about:

Number one, we worry a lot about money. We all have money problems. It happens all the time. I got to pay my bills. You worry about is my business going to get through this quarter? Is my loan going to fund? Am I going to lose my job? Will my employees stay? All of these are functions of money. Can I pay my bills? Will social security stay the same? You know, these things, these money issues that we deal with every time, and so we pray God, help me with my money problem. And that's good. It's good to ask God to help you with your money problem. And I think people do it a lot. Honor. I think people worry about honor a lot. Now we don't talk in words of honor and shame a lot, but we do talk about credit. I did that project with that guy, and I did not get any credit for it. He's going to get the promotion, Lord. I work my butt off for my husband, for my kids, for my wife, and they never thank me! My kids never thank me! That's true, by the way. You too? And so you worry about it. It keeps you up at night. You think about how much you did for that person and you didn't even get a thank you. They didn't even notice. And it was hard, and here you are at three in the morning, can't even sleep because you're so upset about honor. And we worry about our enemies. We worry about our enemies. If you had somebody say something to you in the hall, the way you know if you're worrying about it is if you can sleep, by the way. What keeps you up at night? Somebody says something to you in the hall and work, and you're in bed and you get up to use the bathroom and you lay down, its two in the morning, and you're just thinking about all the great comebacks you could have had and now it's too late. Not all of us have enemies, but many of us have competitors. Do you worry about your competitors?

And then of course, and this is the thing we worry about the most; we don't worry about it a lot, but when we worry about it it's the biggest thing and that's our health, a long life. Is my surgery going to be okay? Am I going to beat cancer? Is my heart going to be alright? You know? If I have the procedure, will I heal okay? And it's not just your health, right? It's your parents, it's your kids, it's your spouse. So these are the things we worry about. These are the things that keep us up at night. You know what doesn't keep us up at night? We don't stay up at three in the morning going gosh, I don't have enough wisdom. Man, I wish I had more knowledge. I'm really concerned about that.

And I think this is what pleased the Lord so much about what Solomon said, is that Solomon had every reason to worry about money, every reason to worry about honor, every reason to worry about his enemies at the gates, and every reason to worry about a long life.

But all he asked for was Lord, give me wisdom! Lord, give me knowledge. And the Lord said to him, since you didn't ask for these things, but asked for wisdom and knowledge, I'm going to give it all to you like no one who has ever had it before you or after you. Wow! What a promise! That if we seek after wisdom and knowledge, all these things will be added to us, as well.

We should be hungry for wisdom, hungry for knowledge, hungry for discipline, hungry for accountability, hungry for righteousness, hungry to know God, hungry to be full of the spirit. If we have those things, all these other things will be added to us as well, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. That's a promise from the scripture. Wisdom and knowledge is the solution to the worry war. It's the solution. There is no easy fast track to stop worrying. I think this is one reason people are so crippled by worry but spend so little time seeking wisdom and knowledge. And so much of our worry is about those four things. And I think this is why withdraws become so common. This is why weed is legal in California, by the way. That's one way to stop worrying. If I hear one more friend of mine say, 'Bobby, you don't understand weed man, has no long-term negative effects on the brain, bro. Harvard's wrong, bro. Harvard's wrong, bro. They're just wrong, bro.'

Look – the sort of effects that people look for from weed, from alcohol, like you don't need that stuff. If you can grow in wisdom and knowledge, you can be relaxed. You can have it for real. You don't need to have a chemical version of it. You can have a real, real full open mind, relaxed, fresh vision, all of the things that you think you're going to get from that stuff, you can have it for real from the Holy Spirit in a healthy way. And the way you get it is through discipline.

This word, we hate this word. We want it free, we want it quick, we want it over the counter, is discipline. Its working into your life the rhythm of knowledge, of learning, of understanding; that's what makes all the difference and God's going to get you there. If you go an inch, God will take you a mile. That's what's so great about Him. He just needs a little bit from you and He can go forever. That's what Jesus says about the seed. Out of a little seed can come great stuff.

Put First Things First

So in Matthew chapter six, Jesus is talking about this very thing. About worry. Jesus sees how much worry plagues people. In Matthew chapter 6, “therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about your clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow? They don’t labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon.” Whoa, there he is right there. “Not even Solomon, in all his splendor, was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, oh you of little faith?”

“So do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear?” Let me stop you right there. How many of you when you’re reading this, you’re like you kind of feel like Jesus is just saying try harder. You’re like I’m trying! Right? I’m trying not to worry, I really am! Okay, I’ll just stop worrying. Tell me how. Right? It feels like He’s just saying just don’t do it. And if it were only that easy, right? But it doesn’t end there, right? He gives us a solution. And so first what He’s really saying here is like look at these flowers, right? They’re beautiful, amazing. They grow, they always have enough, and they are, in a way, worthless. Tomorrow they’re going to be gone. They’re going to be thrown in the fire. And look at these birds. They’re so cute and happy and they’re flying around and they’re playing, and they don’t sow and reap like you do. And look, they have this great life and God cares for them. And I think what Jesus is really saying is like these things are in man’s eyes sort of worthless, but God is caring for them, but compared to them, they’re nothing in God’s eyes, compared to you. When He looks at you, you are His beloved sons and daughters. You’re His beloved child. When He sees you, He’s like how many birds are you worth? How many flowers are you worth? How many flowers are your kids’ worth, even though you take care of the flowers in your garden, right? In the same way, God cares for us. He knows the needs we have. So there’s a good logical reason that you don’t need to worry. And so He says, “For the pagans run after these things” and I love that phrase, they run after it. Pagans devote their whole lives to money and clothing. Everything. It’s like money, clothing, respect, admiration, and He’s like and the Lord knows you need them! He knows you need these things. But in the same way the pagans run after those things, run after the kingdom of God. Run after it. That’s what He says, sort of. He says, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you, as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow has enough.. well tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Ain’t that the truth, right? So He says in the same way the pagans run after glory, and money, and fashion, run after the kingdom, run after the kingdom of God and righteousness, and all these things. Everybody say all these things. All these things! Not some of these things, not a little bit of these things, not like all.. he says all these things. These things will be added to you. If what? You run after the kingdom of God with all your heart. If you devote your life to the kingdom of God.

What is the kingdom of God? Do you know? The kingdom of God is where what God wants done is done. The kingdom of God is the place where God is the king. More specifically, the kingdom of God is where people do what Jesus says to do. The kingdom of God is made up of people full of moral knowledge and wisdom. I believe in Jesus’ teachings so much. I believe that if you are an atheist, and you live by the sermon on the mount, your life will be exponentially better. I believe what Jesus is teaching in the red letters is common grace. A lot of it is made available to everyone, despite, and I think that loving your enemies, for example, and praying for those who persecute you, and settling matters quickly with your enemies, and always being honest and living humbly, that if you do these things, you’re going to do better in every aspect of life. All these things. If you do, if you live in obedience to God, all these things will be added to you. That’s why as believers to stop worrying literally means to stop trying to predict what’s coming next. That’s what worrying is. It’s trying to predict what’s going to happen, trying to solve it, and instead of trying to predict the chaotic future, we merely try and build an established, smart, wise person who can deal with anything.

And I believe so much of the vision of scripture is becoming someone who thrives in chaos. I’m kind of that way. I like chaos. I think that the world is so chaotic, and it’s not actually chaotic. I think God’s at play, but it’s so amazing to see the world’s smartest people trying to predict things, and they’re just wrong, so often. Instead of trying to predict what’s going to happen in the future, try to become the person that can endure anything. And the way you do that is by running after the kingdom of God. By learning. By reading. By praying. By seeking out accountability. By seeking out mentors.

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And by developing within you a true disciple of Jesus' way of life, and you will become a less worrisome, almost indestructible kind of person; the non anxious presence. The leader. That's why Jesus says everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice, is like a man who built his house on the rock. The rains came down, the winds blew and the stream rose, but it stood because it had its foundation on the rock. Jesus is teaching us rains are coming! Winds are coming! Rain is coming. But you don't know how far the winds going to blow, you don't know from which direction it's going to come, you don't know how much rain is going to come down, and you don't know how often it's going to be there so be ready! Be ready. Build yourself up. When life is easy, when life is going well, that is the time when we need to be training the most. That's the time we need to be reading books, we need to be praying, we need to be having quiet times, we need to be studying God's word. Because just as the tide laps up and down the shore, just as there's highs and lows through all of life, when things are going good, that's the best time to train and to learn so that when the time of suffering comes, you're prepared and you come through victorious. Oklahomans, man, they're always prepared for weather.

Yesterday I was sitting around, we were sitting in a circle, and we're sitting there, one person goes well it was colder this morning than I thought it would be. Someone else says yep, it's supposed to be hot this afternoon. And then this other lady says you know it's so funny, if you don't like the weather in Oklahoma, just wait five minutes, it'll change. And then somebody else says ain't it the truth, sister. Ain't it the truth. And that's the thing. So be an Oklahoman in your faith. When the weather's good, that's the time you build up your life. Always be growing, always be growing in wisdom. If you can ask for anything from the Lord, ask for wisdom and knowledge first. Desire it with all your heart. The kingdom of God is made up of people who are wise and full of knowledge. So I promised you last week I was going to do this, but I think one of the best ways to become this kind of person is to have that rhythm in your life. That's one of the best things you can do. So this is something I do every morning. I'm hesitant to talk about it because I don't want it to be legalism. But I'm interested in you trying something like this. So this is Bobby's morning meditation. This is what I do in the morning.

This all started a long time ago when I decided to start writing my goals down every morning. So every morning for a long time, I have a legal pad and I write down my goals. And then I would pray and this little thing I would do for like ten minutes every morning, and it had such a huge impact in my life, it began to evolve into what's now a little bit longer than an hour long process every morning. Now I get up at 5:15 and I do this every day, even on Saturday's. And I already can hear the gasps in the room. I always thought I wasn't a morning person, and then I realized oh you just need to go to bed on time. If you go to bed at 9:15 and wake up at 5:15, you feel great and you're so glad. It's so good to exchange those two hours that would have been spent watching Netflix for a time that you spend on person growth, prayer and meditation. And so what I do is I wake up at 5:15, and the very first thing I do is coffee. You need it. If you don't drink coffee, it's time to start. So I drink coffee and I always have a glass of water because most morning's you wake up dehydrated. And I had Hillary make this a slide so you can take a picture, if you want to try this when you get home.

And then the first thing I do with my coffee is I go to my little desk in my office, or wherever, Hannah does this too, every morning, we do it together. She goes to her place and sometimes we'll do it together as a couple. But the first thing I do I'll mediate on Psalm 23 or the Lord's Prayer. Now meditate is the word. Meditation is a Jewish and Christian thing to do. I know it sounds new agey. The Bible talks about itself in terms of meditating. Eighteen times in the Bible it says to meditate on the scripture. It only says four times to study the scripture. Isn't that interesting? So the way we meditate on the scripture, I love Psalm 23, so you just nice and slow, breath in "the Lord is my shepherd." See this way, even my body is getting oxygen. I'm relaxing. To meditate means you stop thinking about the other stuff and you try and zero your mind in, focus it on what you're reading. "I lack nothing." Just nice and slow.

And sometimes I'll pair this with worship. I'll just begin to lift up the name of Jesus and just begin to worship Jesus in everything I do. I think that just creates a great spiritual environment. And then I go straight out of that into a time of prayer. I pray for this church, I pray for my friends and family, pray over anything that's plaguing my heart. I'll literally extend my hand towards my children in the various rooms of the house as I'm praying. Pray towards Hannah. And this way just kind of like sending out that life towards them and love. So I'm praying and I'm giving it to the Lord. And then I read my Bible. And I underline it, and I ask questions of it. I usually read one chapter of the Old Testament, one chapter of the New Testament, and then I always read from Proverbs from that day.

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So there's 31 Proverbs and there's 30 or 31 days in a month. But whatever the date is, you read from that date, so if today, for example were the 30th, then you would read Proverbs 30.

And then by then I'm sort of awake, I've had my coffee, my cup is pretty much empty, I'm starting to spring to life. It's now 5:45. Or almost 6:00 and I'm just feeling full of energy and life and the Holy Spirit is in the room, and my mind is full of the scriptures.

And then I write down my goals. And believe it or not, I think this is the most important part of the thing. It's almost more important than the other things because what I've found is when you write down your goals and you include spiritual goals, then you come at the scripture not out of legalism, but out of this goal to be a Jesus kind of person.

When I write down my goals, I write them down as though they've already been accomplished, because there's some science that maybe this sort of helps us psychologically believe that our goals are real. So I first begin with my spiritual goals. This is who I want to be as a believer. And then I write down my family goals: what kind of dad I want to be, what kind of husband I want to be. Then I write down my goals for the church. Then I write down my financial goals. And I write down my personal health goals, and that whole thing is about a paragraph. But I write it as like it's already happened.

So for example one of those goals is I want to have ten million viewers for the Hour of Power. We have about two right now. But I don't write I want to have ten million Hour of Power viewers. I write the Hour of Power has ten million viewers. We want 5,000 children in our church, so I write down Shepherd's Grove has five thousand children. So that way it's like getting excited. And then I plan my day; I kind of think about what I'm going to do. I pray for those meetings before hand as I'm there. It doesn't take a long time. And I think through.

And then the last bit, I want broader wisdom than just what's offered in the Bible, so I'll read a nonfiction book. So like right now I'm reading a spiritual book by John Ortberg called Eternity is Now in Session, but I have other authors I enjoy reading, too, that are secular authors on leadership, business, finance, organizational philosophy, philosophy itself, history.

And in these ways, I'm learning and growing as a person, and I'm working a rhythm. That's how I'm able to read so many books. And in fact the average person reads only half of a book a year, but the average CEO reads 60 nonfiction books a year. So you can see clearly that in terms of at least vocational success, the discipline of reading nonfiction books is helpful. And you think you're busy. I mean try and see what the CEO of a blue chip company, what their schedule is like. It's crazy. So that they still make time to do that.

So for me, this rhythm has been so effective in my walk with God, and then it just like bleeds into the rest of the day where the rest of the day like you just are experiencing God's presence and power. But you don't have to do this. You don't have to do this exact thing, but if you want to win the worry war, you have to have some rhythm of training in your life, something. Even if its small, and I would almost recommend starting small. Maybe start with a five minute/ten minute thing that every day in the morning you're going to do it. I think you should do it in the morning. There's no scripture to necessarily support that, but just as a bit of wisdom from experience, giving your first fruits to God, like the first thing you do right out the gate, I think is really useful and practical, and I think will benefit you.

So there it is! I hope that wasn't too boring but I promised I would sort of share with you what I do, and I can tell you, that if you do something, anything like that, over a long enough period you're going to see tremendous impact in the success of your life and in your walk with God. And if you keep doing things like that, you'll become this person that can thrive in the midst of chaos. You're cool. You're cool, man. You've got it because you've built up inside of you everything you need to endure the storm. Okay?

All right. Father, we thank you and we love you, and we thank you that we live in a time when so much knowledge is made available to us. We pray for these things. And then we just pray your Holy Spirit would impart into us fresh vision, that we would have spiritual knowledge, moral knowledge and would know how to walk in your power and in all things. Lord, we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Thank you for coming today. 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.