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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.

HS: And welcome, church family. Today we're talking about what we think about, but have you ever wondered what God thinks about? He thinks about you! You are His child. He thinks about how He can help you thrive, what you need, what you don't need. And I think as a parent, it's a little easier to maybe comprehend how much He loves you just as you are, and we love you, too. Thank you for being here today.

BS: That's right. Well we're just so glad you're here with us at Shepherd's Grove Presbyterian. Can we begin with a word of prayer?

Father, we thank you. Thank you so much that you're here in this space; that you're with every single person under the sound of my voice, and that your words and thoughts towards us are words and thoughts of love. God is love. Thank you, Lord that you're just overflowing with compassion and mercy, joy, and calling on our lives. We love you, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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

### SCRIPTURE – Philippians 4:8– Hannah Schuller

The words of Paul the Apostle, Philippians 4:8:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.

Church family, the quality of our thoughts greatly affects the happiness of our lives. Amen.

### INTERVIEW – Heather Avis (HA) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

BS: Well our guest today is Heather Avis. She's a mom, an author and an advocate of inclusion. Her new book, *Scout Over and Make Some Room* encourages readers to make room for those society tends to exclude, while demonstrating how Jesus always made room for the marginalized.

Would you please welcome with me, Heather Avis.

HA: Thank you.

BS: Hi Heather! Great to see you.

HA: Thank you.

BS: Well you were a guest on Hour of Power in 2015.

HA: Okay.

BS: And I was wondering when that was, and it was so great. I think we talked to you and your husband about kind of your story. Let's tell it again for those who may not remember. Tell me a little bit about your family and..

HA: Sure.. yes, it's a long story. I wrote a whole book about it, but I'll be quick. So my husband and I have been married for 17 years, and we have three kids. All three are adopted and our oldest and our youngest have Down syndrome and our middle child is a different ethnicity than me, so we just have a different kind of a makeup of our family.

BS: So see one thing that's so amazing about that is very often a child with Down syndrome, for example, or a child with autism or some of these other special needs, very often when parents are adopting, maybe they don't feel like they're up for it or whatever, but those kids tend to be passed on often, don't they.

HA: Definitely. And we were not initially planning on adopting a child with Down syndrome. God kind of catapulted us into that space; again, it's a very long story for another conversation.

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BS: But what you really want to tell us today is really what you've learned, you and your husband, in parenting. It's so interesting to me that like the third child, you already had a child with Down syndrome; you'd think your debt to society is paid, but you don't view it that at all, right? It's been a blessing for you.

HA: Oh man, so much so. And the thing when we first brought our daughter, our oldest daughter Mason home, and were just catapulted into this world of Down syndrome, and we realized real quickly that we had been missing out on an entire people group. People who have different abilities, made in the image of God, by God on purpose, and therefore are showing a side of God that I had not seen if I had not been around them. And our eyes were opened up to how incredible people of different abilities are, and we were so thankful that we got to see that. And so when it came to adopt our second child with different abilities with Down syndrome, it was a no brainer.

BS: See and for so many people, they think oh I can't handle that, but you guys really saw it as a blessing.

And for sure, I mean our son has some pretty severe special needs, and I can say there are definitely days you're just like this is so hard, I don't know if I can do this. I don't know if I can handle this. And very often we like to be noble, but in truth, it really is ultimately a blessing. I mean you sort of wish that your child didn't have Down syndrome, but at the same time, they're such a blessing to you.

HA: Sure, and I actually would say that I would never wish my child didn't have Down syndrome. I'm so thankful and what they've taught me is that sometimes hard is just hard, hard is not bad. And when we're talking about people with different abilities, there's such a wide spread in differences between different people who have special needs, but I would never in a million years wish my kids didn't have Down syndrome. I believe it was God's intention and His purpose, and a total gift to the world.

BS: Wow. And I bet that view really helps a lot, too, to just loving people as they are, not wishing they were different.

HA: Yes, absolutely. It's opened my eyes to see humanity and to see the world in such a fuller, richer way. It's been a gift.

BS: Your message reminds me a little bit of Henri Nouwen, who was this professor at Harvard and at Yale and an incredibly successful author, and at the end of his life, he decided I'm going to spend my life at Lark Community with people with double special needs or double handicapped, I think he said at the time. And you could just see in these interviews how it wasn't faked, he wasn't trying to be a saint or religious, he just genuinely learned, not only to love these kids that he's with or they were actually adults, but I think to receive love from them. There was like they didn't see the world through the lens that so many people do, and received such a deep love from these people. Right?

HA: It's so true. And that's kind of the message of this book, like the title Scoot Over and Make Some Room. God has shown me and it has been such a gift and a privilege by doing life alongside people who are different than I am the fullness of God. If we're not doing life with people who are different than us, who have different abilities, different ethnicity, vote differently, think differently, live differently than we do, then we're missing out on the fullness of God.

BS: That's awesome. And that's such a great way to say it, you're missing out on the fullness of God. Do you feel with having two children with special needs, do you feel marginalized? Do you feel like society marginalizes them?

HA: Oh man, that's such a great question. Hundred percent. And as their mom even sometimes I'm trying to figure out, like where do I fit, where do I fit in, and I feel like a lot of the pressure to fit in and a lot of the pressure to make life work for my kids is on me, it's on them, and the message is hey guys, this is for all of us. Your life will be better off if you have people around you who are different than you, if you make space in your life for people with different abilities. It's not just my job. I'm benefitting so greatly, but everyone has an opportunity to benefit from life with people who are different if they make the space.

BS: That's right. And churches could do better at this, too, don't you think?

HA: Oh man, churches should be leading the way..

BS: They should be.

HA: ..I think, and we're not, and it is unfortunate, but we have an opportunity to do that. And I think for church leaders like look around, who's in your room. If there aren't people in your room with different abilities, then something's wrong.

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BS: That's really one of the things that has to happen, I think, is the culture of a church has to become hospitable where it's okay for children or even adults with special needs, to be disruptive, to have a way to have patience with that. I know we've had a lot of a parents with children with autism who the sound.. so we're trying to find ways, so how can we through Hour of Power, or how can we do things even within the building. And I think churches ought to be asking these questions and I think you help churches do that in your book, and you really help people understand what a gift people with special needs are to our community, and how much they add, not take away. Is that right?

HA: Oh it's so true, yes, and it is like I said, and I can say it a hundred times: if we are not doing life with people of different abilities, we're missing out on the fullness of God, and if we are the church, then we're missing out on who God is fully, if we're not saying you who respond.. like someone who responds to the world differently and reacts to the world differently, that may feel like a disruption. It's not a disruption. It's another view of who God is and if we invite those people into our lives, and we adjust and we make space, yes, maybe we change the volume of the music, or we figure out what do we need to do. Like what can we do to scoot over and make room for people who are different than us, and we're going to be so much better for it.

BS: That's right. And sometimes those disruptions, as you said, they're not really disruptions. Sometimes God is in the disruptions.

HA: A hundred percent.

BS: When you read the gospels, like we have all these perfect plans about what we're going to do in church or whatever, and very often it's the outside weird thing that happens that God's in, right?

HA: Absolutely. And I think, I mean you look at Jesus' whole life and He basically like came in and disrupted everything that was happening. At all the social norms, He disrupted all of those and then brought people alongside Him who had been marginalized, who had been outcasts. This is what Jesus did. So it's what we should do, too.

BS: Well it's a super encouraging book, and if you need to encourage a parent, or maybe somebody you think wants to be more outwardly focused in their life, or church leaders, or there's just so many people that I think could benefit from this book. Really want to encourage you guys. The book is called Scoot Over and Make Some Room by Heather Avis. Heather, thank you for all you do. We love you so much and appreciate you.

HA: Thank you. Thanks for having me.

BS: God bless you.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, would you hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. 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.

### MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Your Favored Destiny"

It's so easy in life to feel like you're not enough. Like if you change this thing in your life, then you'll be blessed. Or if you don't change this thing in your life, you're always going to be cursed.

It's easy in life to feel like you don't belong or that people don't truly see you, and if they did see you, they wouldn't love you or be on your side or wouldn't root for you. It's easy for this to happen not only in churches, but to happen where we work and in our families. So very often, we always think that God's mad at us or out to get us. One of the great things about Christianity is its very much like every other religion, only inverted. Every religion says: do this X, Y and Z right, and then the gods will be on your side.

But we say as broken, hurting, addicted, depressed, anxious, suffering, sinning people, God loves us just as we are, saves us just the way we are, and encourages us right where we are. Pastor Jim, thank you. And that the rest of our lives is a natural organic response to this idea that God has a destiny for our lives. That God didn't tell us to bear fruit all the time, but to bear fruit in our season. Think about that. If you planted an avocado tree today, how long would it take for that avocado tree to bear avocados in its season? All of you who have tried, know it takes awhile. God is not in a hurry. We're in a hurry. God is on your side and whatever bumps in the road that you're facing, I want you to know God's with you. He's totally with you. And that everything that God is doing in your life, even if it may seem painful or difficult at the time, it's for your benefit. It's going to help you.

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And I believe that if you trust in the Lord until the end, that you will let perseverance give you a blessing in the end.

Today I just want to get this across to you – to believe in favor; to believe in destiny, to believe God is on your side a hundred percent. God is on your side. You know parents, if you've had kids, no matter how bad they get, you're always on their side, aren't you. You're always rooting for them. You're always for them. You may not agree with everything they're doing, you may wish they behave different, but good parents are always on the side of their children.

And we are saved by grace through faith, right? And this word grace is so misunderstood! Grace is God's favor for us. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, He was receiving grace from God. See if you don't understand that, you don't have a right view of grace. Very often, we think Jesus doesn't need grace. He's perfect. Jesus needs grace more than anyone! In order to do what Jesus was called to do, He needed God's love, God's favor, God's power. See?

And that's how we are saved. We are saved by grace, which literally means unmerited favor, undeserved favor. Christians need grace more than sinners do. The more you're doing in the kingdom of God, the more of this abundant favor, this grace you need in your life. Amen? So what we want to do is when we talk about the mind, believe in God's favor, destiny and blessing on our lives.

Today I want to talk about my new book, *Change Your Thoughts, Change Your World*, and how that statement is actually true; that it's a Biblical way of thinking about the mind. That what we think about ultimately becomes our reality.

What you think about cannot remain a secret. Did you know that? What you dwell on every single day ultimately will become habit in your life, and crystallize into circumstance. If every day you're dwelling on how unfair your life is, or every day you are harboring bitterness in your heart towards your neighbor, eventually that's going to come out in your life in your behavior and in the expressions and in your words. If every day you're harboring incredible love and compassion and blessing, and you're thinking really good things about your spouse, or your kids, or your parents, that can't remain secret, either. Ultimately will come through in the way you spend your money, the way you spend your time, the words you use.

So our thoughts, that is, the things we dwell on cannot remain secret. They will always materialize into something in our life. Therefore, we need to pay attention to what we're dwelling on and make sure that the same way you would tend a garden, that you tend to your mind. You pull up the weeds, you plant the seeds of the things that you want to grow, and you care for it every day. The tending to your thoughts is the most important practice in the life of a Christian disciple.

To be a disciple means to be disciplined. It means that you train your mind to dwell on the right kinds of things. So what you dwell on, what you focus on, what you talk about ultimately will materialize in real life, in real things: in your job and in your family and everything else in your life. When we internalize labels or when we say things about the people around us that eventually will have material real consequences.

So when I was a kid we had this group of friends, and we were sort of forced by providence to be friends with one another. We were all quite different, and we just lived in the same neighborhood, and we were all 14/15, we didn't have cars so we were stuck at Randy's house; that is the only guy with a basketball net.

And so all of us, we'd gather at Randy's house, and there was this kid and I remember once on his birthday, his dad bought him five shares of Nike stock. Now this guy was not into stocks or bonds or securities. He kind of, just to be honest, he kind of seemed sort of dumb. And it was funny because his dad bought him these shares of Nike stock, and I think he got him the Nike stock because he was into basketball or something.

Anyway, because of this, we started calling him Wall Street. All the time that was his name. We used to tell girls that he owned Nike, which was technically true, and even though it was maybe forty or fifty bucks of stock, we were always like 'this is our friend Wall Street. We call him Wall Street because he owns Nike,' and like we just thought that was awesome.

Anyway, so this caught on to the point I don't even remember this kid's name. Everybody just called him Wall Street. For like three years in high school, everyone started calling him Wall Street. And it was so funny because years later, remember that social media program MySpace? It's long gone. I think it still exists but it doesn't exist. I digress. I found him on MySpace and I was like well look at that. Guess what Wall Street had become? An investment banker. He became an investment banker.

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And you would have never guessed that a kid like Wall Street, which the name was almost a joke, would become an investment banker.

And you know what I thought about? Right away, it's probably what you thought about, is just being called over and over – Wall Street, Wall Street, Wall Street, Wall Street, Wall Street, for years, every day, by everyone in your community. What does that do to a person's mind? What does it do to the way they think about things? What does it do to the media that they consume? Well to be honest, when Wall Street finished high school or college or whatever, and he thought well what should I do with my life? You better believe that at the top of that list was maybe I'll go work at Wall Street. Maybe I'll live up to the label that others have put on me.

Friends, I want you to know that what you see in other people very often becomes reality, even if you don't say it out loud. The way you see the world, like a projector projecting screens on a wall, you are actually framing people, defining people, labeling people, and very often they cannot resist the labels that you have placed on them.

Let's put good labels on people, what do you say? I think when we see the best in people we get the best from people. When we see the worst in people, we get the worst in people. That is absolutely true. When you see the best in life, you get the best in life. When you see the worst in life, you'll get the worst in life. This is why, again, focusing on our thoughts, and making sure we're harboring the right kind of thinking is one of the most important tasks in the life of a disciple. In fact to be a disciple means to have a disciplined mind and disciplined behavior.

Philippians 4, Paul says this. He has this great opener, very famous passage about rejoicing in the Lord always, and again he says it – rejoice. And he tells the church to be anxious for nothing, don't be worrying all the time, don't be late up at night wondering what's going to happen, but with prayer and thankfulness, pray unto the Lord, bring your petitions before Him and then He will give you this inner peace, this great peace.

And then I think this is a response to what happens when we get that peace. And he says, "Finally brothers and sisters, whatever" everybody say whatever. So okay, this does not have to mean just Christian stuff, all right? He says whatever. All right? "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable. If" everybody says anything "if anything is excellent" anything? Anything. "If anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things."

God has given direct grace to those who are saved, but there's a common grace that's given to everybody. That there is so much in life that seems like it has nothing to do with God or church or anything that is praiseworthy, noble, good, pure, admirable and excellent. And Paul is telling us dwell on these things. In the Christian faith, we call this common grace. It's just the way that God continues to bless everyone, despite their religion; to bless everyone, despite their socioeconomic class. One thing would be Yosemite. I mean anyone can enjoy Yosemite, not just Christians, right? You can go there and just be at awe with that.

And Paul is telling us, anything, anything that is good, focus on these things. So in other words, we have a choice in life. We have a choice to choose what we're going to focus on, to choose what we see in others, to choose what we see about our future and about our present, and making a decision today that I will see the best and not the worst. That I will believe in the good providence of God, even in my difficult circumstances is a good thing to do that will help you greatly.

I know you're going through a lot. Life is hard, isn't it. It's really difficult. Stress, fears, worries, money problems, health problems, all these things, man God is on your side. He's not abandoned you and the best is yet to come for you. For you. God has a destiny for you and it's so good. And I just don't believe that some bad behavior or some low moments in your life is going to take away God's destiny for your life. Believe that.

Okay. So what you see is what you get, very often. When you see the worst in people, you get the worst. I remember there's this person in my extended family, and she was so annoying. And as a little kid, she used to always say "Bobby, you're so clumsy." She used to tell people, "Bobby is so clumsy." And what was funny is I'm not really a clumsy person. Actually, I feel like I have Jedi Ninja reflexes. At a Chick-Filet one time, the bag fell out and I caught in the air, and I was like here you go, so I mean.. not so bad.

No, but she used to always say when I was a little kid, Bobby, you're so clumsy. And as a kid, it seems like petty, but as a child, you internalize these things, and it was like just made me.. it just made me feel, I don't know, demeaned.

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Anyway, so then what would happen is, I would get clumsy around her. So whenever she's around, I would trip, or drop something, or mess something up, and then of course she would announce to the whole world that I just did this thing, and then label me again: Bobby is so clumsy, and everyone would laugh or giggle, and then you'd think after that I become less clumsy or more clumsy? Obviously more, right?! You become more anxious, more clumsy.

And very often, we think with our spouse, hey if I really point out the bad stuff, he's going to fix it. He'll realize she's right, he's right, I need to fix this thing. No friends, I want to tell you, when you point out the good stuff with your spouse, you're going to get more of the good stuff. It doesn't mean you don't talk about things that are bothering you in process, but this passive/aggressive like you never take the trash out. That doesn't help! Or whatever.

And the opposite is true, too. When you say good things about your kids, when you see the best in your kids, in your neighbor, you're going to get the best. I remember once with Haven, where she like wiped up the table a little bit, and I was like Haven.. I didn't say Haven thank you, I labeled her in a good way. I said Haven you're such a servant leader, and I wasn't being intentional. I was like Haven, you're such a servant leader. And I didn't think about it, and we came back down and the whole kitchen was clean. It was clean like a nine-year-old would clean it, but it was clean. And then she was like.. what do you think? So sweet.

So this is so important that we don't understand that the way God heals us is the way we heal our neighbor and ourselves. God doesn't heal us by calling us horrible, rotten sinners, God heals us by calling us the beloved. By calling us called. By calling us worthy of love and belonging. By calling us whatever it is that we need to be called in that moment. But He calls us, doesn't He. And then we turn around and think, well I'm going to make sure that I speak my mind and tell it like it is.

If that's how God heals people, that's how we heal people, amen? By seeing the best in others. And furthermore, seeing the best in ourselves. That we stop disagreeing with what God says about us. That when God says we are the righteousness of God, that we're chosen, that we're called, that we're forgiven, that we're loved, that we stop agreeing with Satan who says you're worthless, you're a sinner, you're horrible, you're rotten, and we start agreeing with God. We stop calling God a liar when He says we're loved. We stop calling God a liar, right? We agree with God.

Okay. So this is important that we gear our minds that despite our circumstances and our difficulties and the things we're going through, that we make a decision to even so, I trust in God. To make a decision that no matter how bad things are getting, I trust in God. That He is on my side. That He's a good Father and not a bad Father. That God can only do good. That God IS love. That all He is is just overflowing with love and compassion towards me. That God is patient! And that God is on my side. And that God is in no hurry with me. God's a lot of things, and one of the most annoying things is that He's unhurried.

And this leads me to show you that this kind of change in our thought: I have a destiny, I'm favored, I'm called, good things are coming, this is the way Christians ought to think. This keeps us from sinning, too, by the way. That's what the Bible says. Encourage one another to keep each other from sinning. Interesting, huh?

I'm interested in this thing called luck studies. It's a real thing that started in the 80's. In 1990.. or 90's, rather. In 1995, there was this woman named Anat Ben-Tov, and her story was published in the New York Times. And it was amazing, an Israeli woman, she was a 35-year-old secretary and she was sitting in a hospital because she had just survived her second bus bombing.

The first bus bombing, 22 died and she was one of a handful of people that lived unscathed. The second time, thirty-five people were injured and six people died. And as she's sitting there thinking two bus bombings in this short amount of time? They were interviewing her and she said this: "I have no luck or I have all the luck. I don't know what it is." It's interesting, isn't it? What would you say? Would you say she's lucky or unlucky? Unlucky because she got in two bus bombings, but lucky because she survived? I don't know.

And this led a guy named Richard Weismann, who is one of the spearhead professors in the studies of luck on psychology and superstition, to really wonder what happens to people who answer that question one way or the other; to say I'm lucky or I'm unlucky because of what happened. And he found out pretty quickly through several clinical studies that people who viewed themselves as lucky just ultimately became lucky because they believed they were so. That they had definitely lower anxiety, they had better stuff going on in their body, they were healthier, they were more confident, and that he believed that so much of that was theoretically coming from just simply believing they were lucky.

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One study that he did was a famous study called the newspaper study, where he took groups of people: one group that can call themselves unlucky, and another group that thought they were lucky, and he gave them a newspaper and in the newspaper there were a number of pictures and they were given a task to find out how many pictures were in a newspaper. But the catch was on the second page, there was this little cheat sheet and in bold writing it said “there are 32 pictures in this newspaper.” And he wanted to see who would catch that, and overwhelmingly they found that people who viewed themselves as lucky found the cheat sheet, and people who viewed themselves as unlucky didn’t find the cheat sheet. Often got the number wrong.

And so this is interesting the inverted, if you look at people who could call themselves unlucky or believe they have bad luck, you find very quickly, according to John Maltby from the University of Leicester, he says that “people who believe in bad luck don’t engage in some of the processes needed to bring about positive outcomes.” That they have all sorts of negative things happening in their life, and so that reinforces the idea that they’re unlucky.

So this is important. Another study that I think that was so great was the lucky parker’s study. Man, we all know that guy, don’t we? The guy. I always get the spot in the front, right in the front of the mall, in front of the thing, right? And there are people who consider themselves lucky that think they will always get a lucky parking spot because they’re blessed.

And so they actually studied this. They saw that people who believed themselves to be lucky, in a lucky parker study, would almost always go to the front and they would drive slow and like eagles, just like analyzing everything. So somebody coming out, is there somebody, and then of course it’s the white lights go on, you’d blinker the spot. Everybody knows that’s how you save the spot. It’s whoever blinkers first. Apparently that’s not common knowledge. Hannah, I think its.. I think everybody.. right? Am I right? Yes, everybody knows that, okay. You blinker, you save it.

And they found out very quickly people thought that they were lucky, went through the things that would happen in order to get a good spot, and then people who thought they were unlucky, very often wouldn’t even go to the front. And if they did, they will go very quickly, oftentimes missing somebody who would come out, right? And then they would very often just sort of park in the back. Actually when I was telling this to my father-in-law, he said well the real lucky people are the unlucky people because they’re going to get more exercise and burn more calories and have healthier hearts. Right? That’s right.

All this to say that believing good things are to come in your life will actually materialize; as I said before, it will crystallize in your life. It won’t be kept secret. And believing you’re unlucky or that bad things are coming, will materialize into bad things in your life.

And this is why changing the way we think about life is so important, and as Christians, we must reject superstition and the ideas of luck. That the idea of lucky or unlucky is not from God at all. That we believe in this thing called grace. That there’s no such thing as lucky or unlucky people, that we have this thing unmerited favor. Unmerited means you don’t lose it. Unmerited. Unmerited. It’s not a meritocracy. It is given to anyone who trusts their life to Jesus Christ; that there’s this just abundant favor that pours out.

And so what happens is in the hard times in life, we’re able to say I’m not going to lose my joy, I’m not going to lose my hope. We’re honest with people about our pain and our struggles, and we’re not hiding or in denial, but at the same time, we never allow ourselves to just always dwell on what we’ve lost. We make the disciplined decision to focus on what we have left!

And to believe that good things are coming. To speak good things about our families and about the people in our life, and to be encouragers, and to be ourselves encouraged.

And this is what Paul tells us very clearly to do. It’s interesting because Paul, who writes this thing about whatever is noble, whatever is good, whatever is excellent, whatever is praiseworthy, think on such things, right? This is not some guy with a silver spoon in his mouth. Paul really suffered. The Apostle Paul was probably very short. And that’s unfortunate because the name Paul actually means little one. So isn’t that a bummer?

People thought his sermons were boring. Apparently like there was another guy named Apollos who was this very eloquent preacher that everybody loved to listen to, but Paul, nobody liked to hear Paul preach. Apparently he was super boring. One time he was giving a sermon that was so boring, that a guy sitting in a third story window sill listening to him, fell asleep and fell back out of the door. That’s how boring it was, and died when he landed, and then Paul goes and raises him back from the dead, sits him back in a chair, and goes back to preaching his boring sermon.

## Your Favored Destiny

Paul was shipwrecked. Paul was beaten. He was imprisoned several times. He's actually imprisoned when he's writing many of the letters in the Bible. And one time he was stoned, and he was stoned.. just imagine somebody being stoned to death: the bruises and the blood and the swelling. And so there he's lying, they thought he was dead, and after a couple hours later, just like a honey badger, he gets up and goes back to preaching. He wasn't dead. And so this is the Paul that says to us to think on these things: what's praiseworthy, what's noble, what's good, what's excellent, to think on these things so that this peace can enter into our hearts, so that we can inherit the kind of life that God has for us.

In Romans 8:30, Paul says that for those He predestined, meaning before you were born, God had a destiny for your life and that destiny was good. Whoever He predestined, He called. In other words, so there comes at a point in your life that now the calling has come. And those He called are justified. Okay so now, isn't that interesting? Justification comes after the calling? In other words, God calls unjustified people, God calls sinners, God calls broken people, God calls addicted people because they were already predestined to be called, and then justifies them. Just wipes them down clean for the job. And those He justified, He also what? Glorified! God's call for the saints is glory! That doesn't sound very religious, does it? That the purpose of a church and the purpose of a Christian that all we do is for God's glory, right?

But maybe a lot of what God is doing in your life is to glorify your life, not that you can be like Caesar and be proud and egotistical, but that your life will shine. That it will be overflowing with compassion and joy and mercy and blessing and abundance, purpose. That when you leave this world, people will have been touched by the way you lived because you lived your life like Jesus Christ. And that glory is a part of your pre-destiny; that when you are in your mothers' womb, God already planned that you would be glorified in Him; that your life would matter. That you'd make a difference. That you'd have a grand destiny.

And I don't care how sick you are, how old you are, how hurting you are, how doubting you are, you're alive today and you're in this building for a reason, because God wants to do something awesome in your life. And all He's waiting for you to do is to stop saying I'm unlucky, I'm a sinner, I'm addicted, I'm horrible, and start saying I'm the righteousness of God according to the scripture. I'm in covenant with God. I'm a child of God. I'm loved by God. God's not done with me yet. I may not be bearing fruit now, but I'm going to bear fruit when? In my season; when its right. And you'll find out, wow He was right all along, He never left me, and your life will be a testimony to other folks who are hurting.

Let's pray: Father, we love you and we thank you that you're not done with us yet. And we decide today to pay attention to our thinking. We decide today to not dwell on all the horrible stuff that's happening, but Lord, to dwell on you. To not dwell on bitterness towards our neighbor, and unforgiveness, but to do whatever we can to see the best in the people that are in our lives. Lord, we want you to change us. We want you to change our minds.

And I pray a special blessing over anyone who's here that has some chemical issue in their brain, or anything like that. Lord, we ask for healing, healing of anxiety, healing of depression, healing of chronic fear and loneliness and just all the sad and low things that we go through. Thank you, God that you have joy in store for us.

Someone here needs to hear this today. For those of you that are going through something like this, God wants you to know it will not be like this forever. It will not be like this forever.

Don't throw away tomorrow. So Lord we won't. We will trust in you and believe and with you, we will get through this together, we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

### BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

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.