

Hour of Power Deutschland
Steinerne Furt 78
86167 Augsburg

Telefon: 08 21 / 420 96 96
Telefax: 08 21 / 420 96 97

E-Mail: info@hourofpower.de
www.hourofpower.de

Baden-Württembergische Bank
BLZ: 600 501 01
Konto: 28 94 829

BAN:
DE43600501010002894829

BIC:
SOLADEST600

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz
Seestr. 8
3594 Güttingen
Tel.: 071 690 07 81
info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch
www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern
Konto: 61-18359-6
BAN:
CH1609000000610183596

Hour of Power, 27.10.2019

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 and visitors. Today, remember that God did not make a mistake when He made you exactly the way you are right now. You are called just as you are and you are loved just as you are, and we love you, too.

BS: We do and we're so glad you're here. It's so important that we believe that in our discipleship. It makes all the difference in the world and we're going to be talking about that later today. But let's begin with a word of prayer, shall we?

Father, we thank you so, so much that you love us. A lot of us are coming here today or watching on television beating ourselves up, feeling like we'll never beat this addiction, we'll never be happy, we're always going to be depressed or anxious, we're never going to do well in our relationships. And there's all these things going on in our minds.

And so Father, I pray that you just like breaking, as the sun breaks through the clouds, Lord, that you'd break through that bad thinking and reveal to us, God that we're loved, that we're worthy of love and belonging, that we're saved by grace, not by our works. Thank you, God that we can celebrate today and enjoy your good company, your favor, your life and your love for us, and we love you, 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 – Romans 8:38-39 – Hannah Schuller

The words of Paul in Romans 8:38:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Friend, God's love can never, ever be taken from you. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Dr. Willie Jolley (WJ) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

BS: Well our guest today is Dr. Willie Jolley. He is an incredible speaker, an author, he's a longtime friend of this ministry, and he's helped numerous companies with his inspirational speeches and people all over the world through his books. He truly embodies a joyous and encouraging spirit, and we are just absolutely thrilled to have him here today.

Would you please welcome with me, Dr. Willie Jolley. Hello sir!

WJ: Thank you, Bobby!

BS: Great to see you.

WJ: Thank you! Good to be back to my Southern California home.

BS: Amen to that.

WJ: Well I have only just a minute, only sixty seconds in it. Forced upon me, can't refuse it, didn't seek it, didn't choose it but it's up to me to use it. I must suffer if I lose it, give a count if I abuse it, just a tiny little minute but an eternity is in it. Good morning to the Hour of Power.

BS: That's good man. It's a minute of power.

WJ: Yes, a minute of power, right.

BS: That's it, that's good.

WJ: Yes.

BS: Well we're so glad to have you here and last time you were here, you actually preached. I was away. And I remember when I was here you preached, you spoke on your set up is a set up for a comeback.

Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging

WJ: A set back is a set up for a comeback. And that book, because of that program, all the people around the world saw it, that book became a global best seller and so I'm very just excited about the opportunity to be back here and just come. Last time I was here, as you said, was to speak and I have been here a number of times to speak; I have been here three or four times to speak when you weren't here. But then today with the first time to be able to be an interview guest, so I'm able to be here. I would come and speak and sing because a lot of folks said are you singing. I said next time. But I'm here to talk about how to have the best life ever right now.

BS: That's good, man. Well good. So one of the things, I mean your name is perfect: your name is Willie Jolley. You're one of the most jolly people I've ever known. How is it that you can stay so upbeat and encouraged and positive all the time?

WJ: Well I'm grateful. I wake up every day with an attitude of gratitude. Every day I wake up without a chalk outline around my body, I say it's a good day. So I'm so grateful. You know, I was here with the setback setup for a comeback book the last time, which you helped to make it a global best seller. Now I'm here because I've got two new books. One is my marriage book. My wife and I have been married for thirty-four years, haven't had an argument in over thirty years. Now someone asked on a radio or television show in Portland, a television show, said you've never had an argument? I said I didn't say that. I said I haven't had an argument in thirty years. Those first couple years were like world war III. But we learned some principles from some wise mentors. The book is called Make Love Make Money Make it Last. And people can go to JolleyMarriage.com and get a free chapter. But the new book is about what you talked about, an attitude of excellence and comebacks. In 2006, I got a call to work with a company that had a setback, Ford Motor Company. They said we need a comeback. I worked with Ford in 2006, 2007, 2008. In 2009, Ford was the only one of the big three auto makers to be able to reject a government bailout. They went from losing a million dollars to making a billion dollars. And so the Detroit Free Press wrote about Ford's comeback and put my name in it as one of their tools to help them comeback. Well then General Motors called and Wal-Mart and Prudential and Verizon and Johnson and Johnson. They said we want what Ford got. So I'm grateful. So the new book is Attitude of Excellence. The principles I learned from working with Ford that we share now with companies and organizations as well as people to make it possible for them to have a comeback spirit and a great attitude. Attitude is mindset. Excellence is skill set. When you put them both together, incredible things happen.

BS: I love it, Dr. Jolley. One of the things that I think, we always sort of feel is how do I have an attitude of gratitude, or how do I have an attitude of excellence, as your new book is, when things are just going so bad and they've been going so bad for so long? A lot of people have health problems, divorce, relational issues, things with their kids.

WJ: Well that's what's exciting. You know last time I was here, it was just Willie Jolley. After that message in 2012, I went back and got my doctorate, and in 2013 I got my doctorate of ministry from the California Graduate School of Theology in faith driven achievement. And now we're launching.. this is the launch of jolleygoodnews.org. It's a ministry to give people good news because we can wake up in the morning with bad news, fake news, terrible news, and it depresses you.

But the Bible says in Proverbs fifteen and thirty that good news is good for your bones. It puts you as fit as a fiddle. Or as Maya Angelou would say: good bones give you starch for your spine.

So I'm encouraging people to go to jolleygoodnews.org. Jolleygoodnews.org. Become part of our community. We're going to be putting up some of the message from the former messages, and let me tell you the impact good news can have. When I was starting as a speaker, I was struggling to keep my business afloat. I got an opportunity to go give a speech in Orlando, Florida. I went to Orlando, gave the speech, they gave me a standing ovation. Then they gave me my check. I was ecstatic. Well I'm going to the airport, get on the plane and I'm feeling good. I pull the check out the second time and I got depressed because I realized the money was already allocated. An older gentleman across the aisle as we were flying said how you doing? I said uhhh... He said.. we talked for a few minutes. He told me he was minister; he lectured about health and wealth. I said do you speak every day? He said yes. I said you fly every day? He said yes.

And then he changed my life with a good word. He said young man, how old do you think I am? I said I think you're about sixty. He said young man, I'm eighty-eight years old and my best is yet to come.

BS: That's good!

Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging

WJ: In that moment, everything shifted, and I went home with a new attitude. And then the twenty-five years that have gone by, I've been inducted in the speaker hall of fame, named one of the top five speakers in the world, I've had best-selling books, television radio. It's just the tip of the iceberg. And I came here today to say to you without a question in my mind: your best is yet to come. Your best is yet to come. Your best is yet to come!!

BS: Amen! Thank you, Dr. Jolley.

WJ: Hey Bobby, amen, the best is yet to come. Your best is yet to come.

BS: Yes!! Okay!!

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, would you hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving. 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 "Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging"

Well today we are continuing a series on my new book, *Change your Thoughts, Change your World*; really hopeful that you get a copy. But we're talking about the power of thinking and how it basically creates our whole reality. So everything that we think and that we dwell on bears fruit eventually. The longer we think about a certain thing, the greater the fruit will be and that fruit can be negative or positive. Whatever we dwell on, whatever we're always thinking about eventually will work its way out into our circumstances. And so very often we want our circumstances to change, but we want to keep the kind of thinking that got us there. Your thinking cannot remain secret. I know I say this every single week, but whatever you dwell on every day, every moment, the things that you dwell on, they will eventually come out. If you're embittered towards your neighbor, it's going to show in your body language, in your words, in what you do, the way you spend your money. If you are excited and positive and joyful and loving that stuff is also hard to hide, isn't it. That's hard to keep secret.

So no matter what, what we think about, what we dwell on day in and day out, eventually will become our circumstances. And so what we want to do is take some time over the next few weeks to continue to think about what we think about. To pay attention to, not only our thoughts, but our emotions and how we react to those things; what are we thinking about when we're alone.

And today is one that is very near and dear to my heart. Today we're going to be talking about self-talk, the stuff we say to ourselves, particularly about shame, and how so much of the stuff that we don't like about ourselves is driven by shame. And how we can change our thinking.

You know it's interesting because today the type of thinking we're talking about is the thinking in the heart. It's interesting because when you read in the Hebrew Bible, there is no Hebrew word for mind. Isn't that interesting? All the thinking is done in the heart. That's why Proverbs says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

So today we're going to talk about that: the will and some of the emotional stuff that we think about, and its relation in particular to the science of addiction. Don't raise your hand, but how many of you are addicted to something? Statistically, if everybody were honest and had to raise their hand if they were addicted, almost every hand in this room would go up; that you have some kind of compulsive behavior in life. There's something in your life that you have little or no control over that you don't like that you wish you didn't do anymore. And I want to talk today about the upside down answer to that problem, that the problem is not to beat ourselves up, it's not even to try harder, the answer is actually to be loved as you are with your addiction, and to be known that you have it, and to be loved just with whatever it is that you have.

So today I want to talk about that as well as other things similar to that, like anxiety, depression. But the answer is this: that you are worthy of love and belonging. You are chosen, you are alive, you are God's creature, you are a created being. In His eyes, you are one of the most rare, beautiful, amazing, wonderful things. God is so proud of you. He is so on your side. Everything God is doing in your life is good and only good. The Bible says that God is only good. The Bible says God is love. It doesn't say He is loving, it says He is love. His whole posture towards you is compassionate, it's encouraging, He's on your side, He's for you. He's not against you. It is preachers that are against you! God is for you. Okay? God is on your side. And it is Satan who wants you to feel discouraged. It is Satan who is called the accuser. It is the Holy Spirit who is called the comforter. It is Satan who is called the divider. It is Satan who is called the accuser of the brethren.

Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging

When you look in the mirror and you accuse yourself and shame yourself and blame yourself, you are not agreeing with God. If you were to look in the mirror and say that person is loved, is called, God is on her or his side, you're agreeing with God; you're agreeing with God's word when you say those things.

So I want you to know more than anything that God loves you. God loves you despite your sin, despite your failings, despite your mistakes, He's on your side. And in fact the only way your behavior, I guess, is going to improve the way you want it to improve is ironically when you let go of finding your identity in what you do; finding your identity in your morality, finding your identity in those things. That is the bizarre irony is as much as you want to do better, be better, you have to actually let go of it. It's the weird thing about Christianity. This is what makes Christianity utterly unique from every other religion. Every other religion says do everything right and then you'll get to heaven. Do everything right and then you'll get the religious reward.

But Christianity says you can't do anything right until you go to heaven. And what we mean by heaven is the presence of the kingdom of God with us. So you can't do things right until you're in God's love. So it's backwards! First God loves you, then you do the right things. But everything else says do the right things and then God'll, you know, when the scales are ballast, if it tips towards good then you'll be okay. Isn't that amazing? That even when we were enemies of God, He loved us. Even when we cursed His name, when we rejected Him, when we said He didn't exist, even when we did evil, He still loved us. And He's on our side. When I say He's on our side, is even when He corrects us and points us in the right direction, even though God hates evil, He loves you.

So we're going to talk about this. One of my favorite passages is from Romans chapter 8, and Hannah read it earlier, and it's the end of the probably most famous chapter of the most famous epistle written by the Apostle Paul, and he finishes with this great, it's really a doxology. And he says, "For I am convinced." Are you convinced? We need this conviction. "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Let's believe the word today, shall we? Let's believe that there is nothing that can happen to you, there is nothing that can be done to you, there's nothing you can do, there's nothing in the whole universe that can separate you from God's love. He loves you. He's on your side. And Satan hates you because he knows the only way he can harm God is by getting to you. And you want to know something? The main way that Satan attacks God's people is by isolating them.

We always think the first thing Satan does is come at us with temptation. Steal that thing, or whatever. He comes at us to tempt us to do something evil. But before he tempts us, the first thing he does is he tries to isolate us. He tries to convince us that God is against us or God doesn't exist or God hates us or that our neighbors don't love us or that we're always going to be a victim, we're always going to be taken advantage of, to always be embittered. So Satan's primary goal is to isolate you. That is what he always wants to do. And that is why one of our primary goals as disciples of Jesus should to not be isolated. To reach up to God and to reach out to our neighbor. Just like a tree, reaching up to the Lord, reaching out to our neighbor. And as we do this, we stretch and we grow as people, and it takes time, but the more we do this – reaching up to God, reaching out to our neighbor, the better we will be.

I love John chapter 15, again, another thing. John chapter 15 has this reoccurring theme. It just says it over and over: abide in my love and you will bear fruit. Now John fifteen is this long, it's part of what's called the departure sermon. It's one of the most important sermons Jesus ever gives, and He basically says this thing over and over: I am the vine, you are the branches. Abide in me and you will bear fruit. Abide in me and you will bear fruit. And He just keeps saying it: abide in my love and you will bear fruit. How many Christians think if I bear enough fruit, then I'll be in God's love, right? If I just on my own, a broken branch, unattached to the vine, will some grapes out of me, then God will love me. But God says no, abide in my love and you will bear fruit. This is so, so key. Very often we think if I bear fruit, then I'll be in God's love. But it's the other way around.

And so what we need to learn is in our times of stress, our times of loneliness, our times of anxiety, depression or temptation that we ought to not be isolated, that we ought to run to God and run to our neighbor. Run to God when you're stressed. Run to God when you're lonely and watch Him welcome you with loving arms.

Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging

I think it's so funny that even that, we sometimes feel shame about not spending enough time with God. Let's not do that, either. You ever feel that way? You're like I haven't had a devotion or a quiet time or a day of solitude in a long, long time. God's upset at me or I feel ashamed about that.

I remember Hannah's dad was talking about this. Hannah's dad is also a grandpa. What does he have, 13 kids and three on the way. I have three sisters-in-law who are all pregnant. There's something in the water in Oklahoma, I'm telling you. Oh I guess they're.. not even in Ok.. yeah, yeah, anyway.

So Hannah's dad, Doc, everybody calls him, just loves his grandkids. He has six kids and they kind of all over the country. When we get together, he says when I haven't seen my grandkids in awhile and they haven't called me in awhile and they haven't written me a letter in a awhile. And then we get together and I see them in the distance and they're running at me saying grandpa! Grandpa! Grandpa! It's so good to see you! I don't stand there with my arms crossed and say how come you haven't called me? How come you haven't visited me in weeks?

And we think very often that if we run to God and it's been awhile that maybe He'll cross His arms and look down His nose at us, and say how disappointed He is that we've taken so long to come into His presence. I just don't think that happens. Anyway, a year for God's like a second, right? I mean that's not very long. It's a long time for us. We ought to just think of God's presence and God's love in our life as nothing but a gift. There's no shame in it. It's always available to us. There's no shame in a thirsty man wanting to drink some water. There is no shame in you running to the fountain of life. If you're thirsty, run to Him, drink from His goodness and watch the good that can come from that.

And the reason I just continue to harp on the fact that God loves us just as we are, right where we are, with all of our problems and our doubts and everything we're facing, is I believe the answer to becoming truly Jesus kind of people is first to begin with grace, or in other words, to begin with I am worthy of love and belonging. That God loves me right now. He sees everything. He just loves me. He loves you, He loves you, He loves you. And also, it doesn't always feel this way, but there are people in your life who love you so, so much. There are people in your life who love you so, so much. And many of those people are in this room right now.

And this gets me to the thing about addiction I want to talk about. Don't raise your hand, but how many of you are addicted? So again, almost every hand would go up in this room if the truth were told that compulsive behavior that you do something you don't want to do, you literally don't have any control. It's a part of a cycle, and I learned this in a counseling course I took in seminary, and I think is so useful to all of us.

So there's this thing called the addiction cycle. And addiction is rooted in shame. So can we have that slide and just leave it up for a minute. The addiction cycle begins with shame, and the shame creates what's called emotional triggers. Those emotional triggers create a craving for the thing it is that we want. And then that craving causes us to go into the ritual. It's the same thing – it's when we like get close to the edge, but we don't jump in. And then using is eventually what happens, and then that using creates shame, which is the basis for the whole thing.

So let's use the obvious example of an alcoholic. We're going to say the guy's name is Joe. Sorry if your name is Joe. Joe the alcoholic. So Joe is in many ways a good man, but he drinks way too much. And one day he's had too much to drink and his kids just do something annoying and he screams at them and yells at them and says some horrible things he regrets, uses some language. And then he goes into his room and stomps and slams the door. And after a couple hours, he sobers up enough to realize that what he did was not only unfair, but maybe abusive. And that this isn't the first time he's done this and may not be the last, and gosh, he's really not a very good dad because of all this drinking. And he just finally says you know what? I'm going to stop drinking. I'm done. I'm done drinking, I'm going to sober up, and I'm going to get better.

And so it actually goes pretty good. He goes about two weeks and he doesn't have a drink, and he's sober and he's being nicer to his kids, and to his wife, even though they're not sure, they're not reciprocating. But he gets this idea. He's like you know what, my wife and I, we need a vacation. I'm going to take her to New York City where we went on our anniversary, and we're going to rekindle things and it's going to be great.

And so he begins to save up money for this vacation to New York. Well eventually what happen.. can we leave that slide up, by the way, is that all right? Just so people can follow that. So that shame then leads to.. so he's like okay, I am not worthy of love and belonging as an alcoholic. Therefore, I need to stop being an alcoholic and begin to re-earn the love back.

Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging

So one day, he decides to work late because he's like if I do that, I'll earn a little extra money for this trip to New York. And he comes home a little bit late and when he comes in the door, his wife begins yelling at him: where have you been. I've texted you, I've called you, you haven't answered the phone, you always do this. He realizes his phone has been on airplane mode because he wanted to really focus on his work, and so when he turns his phone back on regular, he realizes he missed all this and never called his wife back. So they have this big fight, and they're yelling – you don't understand me, etc., and they just end up going to bed angry.

Well the next day he wakes up and he's wanted a drink every single day, but this morning it is bad. It is like in his body, he really, really feels like he needs a drink. He's starting to wonder if he should even go to New York. Is his wife done with their marriage? Are they still into it? So this functions as an emotional trigger, this fight that creates this craving. So the craving, which is normal, like now is this huge, huge craving, and all day he's struggling with it.

So on his way home, he does this thing called the ritual where he's going to drive by the bar, he's going to go by the lily tavern. And he's not going to get a drink, he just wants to go by and see how the old place is holding up. And he goes by and he sees one of his friends, Bill, and as Bill is out there smoking a cigarette and he says, Joe, it's so good to see you! How have you been? You should come in. And he says no, no, no, I'm done drinking, I'm quitting, I need to get my life together. I'm trying to be healthy. And he says well just come on in. You don't have to have a drink. Why don't you come on in and say hi to the guys. So he says okay, I'll go in.

So he goes into the bar and says hello to his friends, and he sits down at the bar, and immediately the bartender puts his favorite beer down and says this one's on the house. Haven't seen you in awhile, Joe. And now it's really bad, I mean it's the moment of truth. Does he take a drink of this beer? He says no, no, I've quit, and his friends of course say, you can have one beer. One beer won't get you drunk. It won't even get you tipsy. Just enjoy a beer. Just be with your friends. Have one. And before you know it, one leads to two, and two leads to four, and four leads to eight, and eventually he's on this bender and he comes home so slobbering drunk. He walks home, his wife doesn't even say anything, she's just ice cold.

They both go to bed and now he wakes up with this tremendous amount of shame and it just reinforces it: I'll never be sober. I'll never get my life together.

And what addiction, science actually shows us, and what the scriptures show us is that the biggest problem is that Joe believes he is not worthy of love and belonging as an alcoholic. That the only time he'll truly be worthy of love and belonging is when he's sober, when he's got his life together, when he's figured everything out. When that happens, then he'll be worthy of love and belonging. And so what he feels like he has to do is white knuckle his way into sobriety, white knuckle his way into worthiness all alone, and that's the worst thing he can do.

And this is true of any addiction, any substance addiction, eating disorders, shopping, sexual addiction, which is through the roof, pornography use is incredibly high in the U.S. now, gambling addiction, cutting, exercise. Some people are addicted to exercise. I wish I had that addiction. If I had to pick one, that wouldn't be so bad to me, but if that's your addiction.

There is this thing that reinforces so anything that we have that I am only worthy of love and belonging when I beat this thing. And what Joe could have done, maybe, was instead of saying I'm going to get better, I'm going to white knuckle my way through. What his wife probably needed was for him to say I'm an alcoholic. I don't have any control. I hate this thing about myself. I need you to help me. I need you to be on my side and I need the support to get through this because I can't do it alone. See there, he would have realized from his wife, that would have been one, so meaningful to her, but more than that, he would have experienced, more than likely, some love from her towards him as in imperfect man. And this is what we all need.

This is why, you know, alcoholics anonymous isn't perfect, but one of the most important things they do is when you walk into an AA meeting, they love you as an alcoholic. So if Joe goes to an AA meeting and he walks in and he says hi, my name is Joe, I am an alcoholic, they don't say here's how we're going to fix you, here's what you got to do. I mean that stuff does come but it's later. That's not the first thing they say. When Joe walks in and says I am an alcoholic, what does everybody say? (AUDIENCE & BOBBY: Hi Joe) Right? It's a way of totally accepting Joe right where he is on his journey, just as he is with all of his flaws.

What happens when people come into a church and they say hi, I'm Joe, I'm an alcoholic? What do we say to them? We say let us fix you. We can fix you. And what we're unconsciously saying to that person is you'll belong in this church when you're fixed.

Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging

You see the difference between you belong when you're fixed and you belong just as you are? And that's why so much of the vision, our vision for this church is to love people right where they are, just as they are whether or not they're ready to get better or to get whole or to get sober, to get clean, or to do any of those things. That they always know that when they're at their worst, when they're drunk, addicted, high, broken, divorced, hurting, depressed, anxious, that at a place like Shepherd's Grove, they will always have a home. They will always have a community of people who just love on them because God did that for us when we were hurting and we were broken. And quite frankly, there's a lot of broken people already in the church, and so we need each other. Amen?

And that's the vision. That is the vision – the idea that God healed us through grace. See human beings are not machines. They don't need fixing, they need healing. Living things need healing and healing comes through being loved even when you're sick, and so that's what we're trying to do.

Speaking of sick, this is the medicine – bonding. Bonding is medicine. To bond with someone means that someone sees you deeply and loves you just as you are. People, we need this. We can't get it from everybody, but we need it with our closest friends, with our family members, and especially with the Lord. We need to bond with God and with our neighbor.

One story that kind of spells this out, I remember hearing a story about a young girl, she bounced around the foster care system. And her whole life, she would like go to a home and she'd misbehave, and then she would do something bad enough that finally the family would kick her out and say you got to take her back, we can't handle this girl anymore. And this kept happening over and over. She'd misbehave, and then she'd have to leave her home.

And one day this family came and they said little girl, we're adopting you, even though you have some behavioral traits that need some work. We're going to just take you into our family just as you are. And they even rolled out a contract, they changed her last name to their last name, everybody signed the contract, they framed it, and they put it on the wall so that every day she could see it and they could see it, and guess what happened to her behavior? It got worse than ever! Right? It was the worst. Worse than any other family. She was getting in fights at school, she was cussing and stealing, and doing all this horrible stuff.

Why did her behavior get worse and not better? What do you think? Anyone who has ever struggled with the idea that someone could know me and love me, even when I'm out of line, knows why she did this. It's because she didn't have faith in it. She didn't believe it. She didn't believe that there wasn't a line she could cross. And so she's like I'm just going to speed this process up. And what she found out was that those parents of hers, no matter how bad she got, they continued to love her. They made boundaries, they disciplined her, they said no, but they never shamed her. They were never condescending. They were never mean. They just continued to love her and guide her, and eventually she healed and she got better because doing that long enough led her to believe that these parents are for real; that they really do love me. And so as an adult, she tells this story that I needed to believe that I was a family member, not a well behaved guest.

You are a family member of God. You are not one of His well behaved guests. He is on your side. He is for you. He is with you. Everything He does in your life is good and only good, and we can trust that. That's His favor in your life. That's what grace means – it means favor. Like Haven's jog-a-thon I talked about last week. He's just rooting for you and cheering for you. He is on your side. I think that when we think God is against us, we get really mean, and it becomes really hard to bond with our neighbor.

Just one last story – this one's a little dark, but I remember there's a pastor who's very well known, and very judgmental. He's actually a really good Bible teacher in many ways. But I remember talking to one of his colleagues and I said why is.. he's this old guy. Why is this guy so mean all the time. He's always mean, everybody: you're worthless, you're worthless, you're worthless, you're worthless! And he said Bobby let me tell you a story. When this guy was a little boy, he was like nine years old, or something, and one day he did something really bad and his dad was pretty strict, and his dad was so upset he took him out of the back of the house, dragged him across the lawn, and chained him to a tree and put a sign around his neck that said "worthless" and left him out there overnight.

And then he said, and I began to think, imagine what that would have been like as a child to have your father do that. You know boys, they want to earn their dads love and respect and then to be just treated with such contempt. Imagine at two, three in the morning its cold and you hear animal sounds. Where was his mother? All these feelings and emotions. And it helped me see this old preacher in a new way, this guy who is in his 80's now.

Self-Talk, Shame and Belonging

When I see him preaching and saying you're worthless, and you're going to hell, and you're horrible, I'm like man, this guy is saying it to himself. But you know God loves that old preacher. And I think it's going to be amazing that someday when he comes to the judgment seat, God will say why didn't you believe I loved you? Maybe he'll say because my dad abused me. I don't know.

Let's have grace for mean people. You never know when people have been hurt or wounded by the people they needed love from the most in their life. And let's learn that this kind of thing that we do to people: judgment, proclamations of you're worthless, that it doesn't make people better, that we need to bond deeply with others, with our neighbor in order to heal and to become more like Jesus. That is the gospel and that is the kind of thinking we need to have. Stop beating yourself up. Don't be so hard on yourself. Believe in what the scripture says about you – that there is no condemnation; that you are loved by God.

So Father, we just believe in that, and we agree with that, Lord, that you love us. And we're going to run into your arms, just as we would towards a loving grandfather or parent who is on our side. We want to be happy and overjoyed to see you. We thank you, Lord, that you love us just as we are and not as we should be, it's in Christ' 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.