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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, and visitors. Today, if you have been carrying around a dream or a goal, I want to encourage you to take some action. In the words of Zig Ziglar, you don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great. We love you. Thank you for being here today.

BS: Zig Ziglar. I met him years ago with my grandpa at a motivation thing. He was just a really kind man, really good guy.

So, let's begin this service with a word of prayer and thank the Lord. Father, we thank you so much that you love us, that you've gathered us here. And Lord, we come from so many different backgrounds, opinions, places and we thank you, God that you wanted us all here. That we gather in your name. And that you promised that when we walk in your kingdom, that we'll continue to grow and we'll continue to do great things in your name. Lord, we love you so much 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 – Joshua 24:13-15 – Hannah Schuller

The words of Joshua found in Joshua 24:13:

So I gave you a land on which you did not toil in cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant. Now fear the Lord and serve Him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods of your ancestors worshipped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Church family, may we be people of action and faithfulness. Amen.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving and let's say this: 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 "Feelings vs. Action"

Today we are continuing in my series on my book, which is Change Your Thoughts, Change Your World, and I hope that all of you are able to get a copy of this book. I think it'll make a big difference. One thing I'm not able to speak on because of time is the spiritual disciplines that we include at the end of each chapter. So in order to change our thoughts, we don't just will it, we don't just to learn, but we have to practice things. We have to train our mind to think differently and when we do that, everything in our life changes. Very often in life, people hate their circumstances but they nurture the kind of thinking that gets them there.

The way that we change our thoughts is through spiritual disciplines, through training, through studying and meditating on God's word, and these things can make all the difference in the world, not just in our relationship with God, but in our relationship with our spouse, our kids, our grandkids, our neighbors, and can change, in fact how we feel at work, how we do at work, what we do for fun, how enjoyable life is. Aren't those things important? And so we want to talk about that today.

## Feelings vs. Action

Today, I want to talk about the importance of action in regards to faith, that if we want to be people of faith, we have to be people who take action. And in fact today, I think that there are some people who are impulsive, who don't think, that just act, and sometimes they act really stupidly. Anybody done that before? I've done that before. But most people in my experience are not impulsive, especially people of faith. Very often people of faith do the opposite. They spend too much time thinking, too much time wondering what's the right way to go. And very often out of boredom, laziness, the inability to say no to one thing in order to say yes to another, don't make any decision at all. Anybody done that? And what I've seen is that if you're going to bend the stick in one direction or another, bend it in the direction of action. Be a person who has a biased towards action. And I think this can make all the difference.

Have you ever made a split second decision in your life and maybe you look back and you're like if I hadn't done, made that decision at that time, maybe it seemed small at the time, but you look back – your whole life is different. Maybe you decide to ask that girl for her number. Maybe you decided to, those of you watching at home, to try a new church. And maybe you're here because you decided twenty years ago you were going to visit this church and you've been here ever since, and you've made all sorts of friends, or you met your spouse here, or something like that. We can think of times like that that happened to us.

I actually had an experience like that for myself. Many of you know the story with me and Hannah. I was sort of this loser who had a crush on this gorgeous girl who had a boyfriend who happened to be a friend of mine. And for years and years wanted to date Hannah, and then finally the time came when she finally broke up with this guy, and with her brother, who was one of my close friends, and another friend Nate, they were out in California visiting me from Oklahoma. And we weren't dating at all, but there was, I thought, maybe some chemistry. And her brother's wedding, Chris, was going to be in a week in Tulsa, which was 2,000 miles away. I was 19 years old and broke and had no way to getting to Tulsa, if I wanted to go to this wedding. And she said man, I wish you were coming to my brother's wedding. And I thought to myself, I sort of am too, now.

And I said, I'll tell you what, Hannah, I will come to your brother's wedding if you make me one promise: give me the first or the last dance of the wedding. Everybody say ahhhhh. And she said: I'll one up you. If you come to my brother's wedding next week, ok it's like four days away, I will give you both. And you know what I said? I didn't know how I was going to get there, I didn't have the money to get there, I didn't know how it was going to happen, but I looked at her and I said I'll be there. And I look back and had I not gone out to that wedding, I think she would have gotten back together with her old boyfriend, or maybe she would have started dating someone else, because it would have been two months before I would have gone back to Oklahoma. Hannah had just like vultures flying over her. These are men who want to date her. Like 30 guys that are all waiting on the boundaries just ready to pounce when she's single. Many of them much better looking than me and not as charismatic, though. Not as charismatic.

Anyway. And I look back and I think if I hadn't made that split second decision that I need to be at this wedding; I don't know how I'm going to get there, I don't know how I'm going to do it, but if I have to walk, I will be there. And if I hadn't made that decision, we probably wouldn't be married today.

And I think this is so important that we learn in life that so much of our successes in life is not spinning our wheels so much, not spending so much time deliberating and thinking. I'm a person who believes in thinking and reflection, but sometimes there are these moments when God asks us to move in faith. There are some moments where God asks us to have courage! And courage is always associated with action – to do something; to make a choice that's uncomfortable, to make a choice that is narrow, that is difficult, but to make that choice and to do that thing. And I want to encourage you to do that today. God is always, always asking us to make choices between good and evil, between right and wrong, between here or there. And this is important.

The scripture from today, Joshua chapter 24 finishes the end of the book of Joshua, which is really kind of the end of the story of the Torah.

The first five books of the Bible, and then Joshua, which is the sixth, begin with the story of how the Jewish people became a people, how they come in covenant with God, and how God's fulfillment of His kingdom and His covenant with them is giving them a home – Israel.

And they finally possessed the land. They're in this place, and they have to make a decision. And part of Joshua's final words to his people is this is in Joshua 24:13. He says, "So I gave you a land which you did not toil and cities in which you did not build. And you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant. Now fear the Lord and serve Him with all faithfulness.

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Throw away the gods your ancestors worshipped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves. Choose" – there it is – "this day whom you will serve. Whether the gods of your ancestors, whom they served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Famous passage. Joshua is saying that many of you, he's not talking as the church, but many of you, the people of Israel, want to serve both Yahweh God and the gods of their ancestors. They want to serve God as like the chief of all gods, but they also want to not leave behind the gods of their grandmothers, these pagan gods. And he almost sort of says like if you're going to go that way, fine, but don't be in the middle. Don't do both. He says today make a choice.

Incidentally, this was Billy Graham's favorite Bible verse to preach on because Joshua lays before people this choice. Either choose to follow the Lord, or choose to reject Him. Choose God or choose the gods of your ancestors, but choose. Make a choice today! Not tomorrow, not the next day, but make a choice today.

And of course Billy Graham's call to people was to choose the Lord, and to choose Him today, and to follow God, and to trust your life to God, and to know Him and to be a disciple of Jesus. I hope you make that choice today. Whoever you are, I just believe so much that if you give your life to God, and you trust in His ways and serve Him all the days of your life, that when you come to the end of your life, you'll look back and you'll be so glad you did.

But for those of you who I think maybe have already made that choice, probably most of the people in this room, many of the people watching on television, maybe you've made that choice already, but what we forget is that's not the only choice we make as disciples of Jesus Christ. That life is full of very difficult decisions. There are all sorts of forks in the road that we have to take. And today God is also perhaps asking you to make a choice there. To make a choice about your job. To make a choice about starting a business. To make a choice about dating again, maybe after your husband or wife has passed away. And to believe that maybe there's limitless possibilities in your future, if you trust your life to Jesus Christ. I think that very often, I know I do this, some of us do this, is over-thinking. Or we can't make a choice because we're afraid. Or probably for me the most common thing – I can't make a choice because I'm bored or lazy. You ever feel that way? You're just like let's wait. The path of least resistance; kick the can down the road. I don't need to make a choice today. I'll do it later. No? Apparently not. Every decision, and this is a famous proverb from the Medieval age, every decision is a thousand renunciations.

I think all of us unconsciously know this. If you say yes to one guy, you're saying no to all the other guys, for those of you who are dating. If you say yes to one girl, you're saying no to all the other girls. I think men struggle today in particular with marriage because many men today don't want to say yes to one woman for the rest of their life because it means saying no to every other woman for the rest of their lives. And yet in doing this, they're missing out on so much of the joy, life, love and companionship that comes through a committed relationship and through marriage.

Very often, many of us we don't want to leave our job for a better job because we don't want to say no to the stability of our income. Many of us, we don't want to commit our lives to God because we will have to say no to some things that are immoral in our lives. And on and on it goes that very often many of us are missing out on the best things life has to offer, not because we don't want to say yes to one thing, but we know that saying yes to that one thing means no to another. And that's why hard choices are such a key to a successful, joyful life. One of my favorite quotes that I think every leader, in particular, has to remember, whether you're a manager or a pastor, or leading a sports team, or whatever group it is that you're leading is the fact that leaders have to make hard choices. Jerzy Gregorek, who is an Olympic trainer, said: "hard choices, easy life. Easy choices, hard life."

So today I want you to inherit a new thought, and that new thought is that I can break through over-thinking by taking action now. I can break through over thinking by taking action now. Now when you see in the Bible, God clearly loves faith. Faith pleases God. It's in the Bible. I believe it. And what you see is that when faith is reflected in the stories of the Bible, it's almost always associated with action. When somebody needs a miracle or a breakthrough from God, faith isn't just thinking or believing something to be true, faith is also responding to the belief in that thing. So for example, when the leper cries out to Jesus: 'Jesus heal me,' what does Jesus tell the leper? Go and show yourself to the priest. So as He's talking to him, he's still a leper, but He's saying if you step out in faith and walk to Jerusalem and show yourself as a Samaritan to a Jewish priest, which would have been a very uncomfortable, difficult thing to do, you'll be healed.

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Or when the lady, to be healed of her bleeding disease has to touch the hem of Jesus' garment, she has to plow through people and reach out and do something that she thinks is maybe pretty uncomfortable. Or when Jesus puts the mud in the eyes of a blind man and tells him to go and wash on the Sabbath, which is in a way, something you're not supposed to do.

So here it is, you have so many times that faith is associated with action. And the great thing is that those actions almost always lead to breakthrough.

One of the most famous stories is when Peter walks on water. We always talk about how Jesus walked on water, but we forget Peter walked on water, too. That's pretty cool. Don't you think? Now in Jesus' day, to be a student of a rabbi was a big deal. Rabbis only called students to do exactly what they did, so when a disciple would follow a rabbi, as a mentor, they would kind of want to be a clone of them. So if the rabbi was left-handed, the students would try and write left handed. Literally these teenagers who would follow a rabbi would very often try and walk in the footsteps of the rabbi, like put their feet where their feet went. And the rabbi believed that the students not only can, but should do everything he did the same way he did it.

Now this is important because when the disciples are following Jesus, they have to do miracles because He does miracles. Have you ever caught that? And you actually see throughout the Bible, before the resurrection and crucifixion, Jesus telling them to cast out demons, to heal people, to preach, to speak and to proclaim the kingdom of heaven. And so everywhere they're going, they're actually doing the amazing things that Jesus does.

And finally, one of these great stories you have this thing where the disciples are out on the water and it's nighttime, and it's stormy, and they're kind of scared, and then all of a sudden, because they're afraid of water, they see this ghostly figure walking through the mists on the lake. And they go oh! What's that! And it's Jesus. He's walking.. He's like hey guys. And all of them just can't believe it. Imagine that actually happening where you actually see your rabbi walking on water, and what is the thought that comes to Peter's mind? I am a disciple of Jesus. If Jesus can walk on water, I can walk on water. See this is the thing that a lot of Christians have not inherited from the Bible that is squarely there culturally. Disciples do what the rabbi does. Not only can they, but they should.

And so Peter says to Jesus, all right, if you can walk on water, I guess I got to walk on water. And he says Jesus, if you would, master, rabbi, have me walk on the water to you. Jesus looks at Peter and He says to him, come. Now the water's deep. Back then most fisherman and sailors couldn't swim. We don't know if Peter can swim, so he may be stepping to his death. But Jesus says come. And he gets out of the boat and it's stormy, and somehow his feet get perched on the surface of the water, and he takes one step after another and walks towards Jesus. And then the winds begin to blow and he begins to sink. I always picture him sort of sinking as if you would if you'd walked on a lake full of Jell-O. You're not like (POOF) you would in water. It's kind of like quicksand. By the way, I thought when I was a kid I would run into a lot more quicksand than I have as an adult. Just a random thought. I was ready at nine years old.

So here is Peter and he begins to sink, and Jesus saves him, and then the famous line, Jesus looks at him and he pulls him up out of the water, and He says to Peter – why did you doubt? Now very often this is taught as why did you doubt in God, or something like this, but the real question is why did you doubt that you could do what I can do?

This is so important. If you don't think this is true, I mean there are many places where Jesus is constantly challenging His disciples to do what He did, but one of the most famous places, he says in John chapter 14: "Very truly I tell you whoever believes in me will do the works." Everybody say do the works. See, its action. It's not about just ideas, it's about doing something. "Will do the works I have been doing, and they will do" everybody say even greater things. "They will do even greater things than these because I am going to my Father."

Now we are left to interpret that however we want according to our various traditions, but Jesus said it and I believe it. It is the word of God and it is true. We are called to do the works He did, and to do even greater things. So for us, if we're saved by grace through faith, it's not just faith that God exists, or faith in the cross and resurrection. It is that, but it's also an action that this affects the way we behave; it affects the things we do. Very squarely, God has called you to do greater things.

And so my challenge to you, and I believe it's in accordance with the word of God, and inspired by the Holy Spirit is to take action today. To align your faith, align your decisions, align your goals with real action, with applying for that class, or emailing this person, or calling that guy or that gal, to actually marry your convictions to action.

## Feelings vs. Action

One of my favorite things to do when I was a kid was to go fishing with my dad and my grandpa. My grandpa Schuller, who was a minister and the founder of this church, was so big on the idea that faith was not just what we believed, but it was believing and acting that anything is possible. Changing our imagination to understand what it means that anything could be possible, and to take action in that direction.

And so I remember when I first came to faith like as a 16-year-old, I was actually pretty legalistic and rigid. I think as a 16-year-old coming from where I was, I needed almost a really strict religious environment, as weird as that sounds. I kind of needed rules. I needed like black and white, do this, don't do that. And although I don't think that's good for most disciples, at the time, I feel like as a kid, I needed it.

But what that meant was that anybody who was sort of outside of those rules, or outside of my exact definition of what's right and wrong, or good and evil, or Christian or not Christian, then I would always wonder is this person a heretic? And by the way, one of those people on my list was my grandpa. Who by the way, I was very close to! I never told him ever in his life, even just before he died that I had.. but there were like two years where I'm like I'm pretty sure my grandpa might be a heretic.

And so it was during this time that he gave me his newest book called *If It's Going to Be, It's Up to Me*. And we were fishing on a boat. Do we have a picture of him? So this is one of my favorite pictures of my grandpa. That's what he was really like, just always joyful, and huggable and loveable. And I remember, we would sit in the boat, and my dad was always really into fishing, but kind of my grandpa and I, we'd spend a lot of time just talking and waiting, and he would drink coffee and I would have Diet Coke.

And I remember, he said "read this book to me" because we're bored. "This is my new book." And I'm looking at it: "if it's going to be, it's up to me." And in my head I'm thinking, if it's going to be, it's up to God, all right, heretic? You know, I'm like take this book back! This is what I'm thinking in my head. But incredible also respect and love for my grandpa.

So I took this book and he goes, "Read this book to me. Read this title." And I said, "if it's going to be, it's up to me." He goes, "No, read it with passion." I said, "if it's going to be, it's up to me." He said, "No! With passion and like.." "If it's going to be, it's up to me." He's like "No!" He was like really getting bothered by this. He's like this: "if it's going to be, it's up to me!" And so like at this point, I'm really trying to make fun of him, so I actually do it like that times ten. And I hold the book almost like I'm in *Macbeth* or something like: "If it's going to be, it's up to me!" then finished with a smile. And then the funniest thing is he goes "Yes! Perfect! Perfect!"

What really helped me, though, is I ended up taking that book home and I read it. It was the first and only time I read one of my grandpa.. it was not the only time, it was the first time I read one of my grandpa's books. And it really helped me understand what he was doing. He was trying to help people understand that because of God, they could do anything, but that God still required a choice! That God required of us courage as defined by action. And that was important.

Later on, when we would spend a lot of time together, I found out that he was actually a pretty deep theologian. You know he wrote a whole commentary on Calvin's institutes of the Christian religion, which is like volumes and volumes. I mean he wrote a commentary on it. I haven't even read it. And I couldn't read it. It would take forever. So what I found is that he really wanted people to see, everyday people; not theologians. He wanted everyday people to understand that God loves people who believe that anything is possible in their life, and that they ought to take action and see in that action the great thing that God could do. And later on I realized that for those who are in covenant with God, at this point, if it's going to be it really is up to me. Let me ask you a question: if Bill Gates said to me, Bobby, I want to give you ten million dollars to build a new children's center at your new campus. Bill Gates, you know? All you have to do is call my secretary, set up an appointment for lunch with me, and I'm going to bring the check, and I'm going to hand it to you. At that point, who's it up to? Is it up to Bill Gates or is it up to me? I mean ultimately it's up to Bill Gates, but really at that point it's up to me. All I have to do is make a phone call and go to lunch with Bill Gates and I will have a children's center. And I think this is very, very true in many ways of our faith. If it's going to be, it's up to you. Take action today. Take action today and see the great things that God can do in your life. Maybe today you say Bobby, you don't understand. I can't. All I've done is fail, fail, fail. I'm exhausted. I don't have the energy. Reminds me of the old parable. They say that back in the day with circuses, that when you would raise a circus elephant from a baby, as a little baby they would put a stake in the ground and tie a chain to that stake. And as a baby, it can't pull it out.

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But as the elephant grows, elephants are some of the strongest animals on the planet. They can pull whole trees out by the roots. But as they grow into adults, they feel just that little tug, that little stop, and they sit down and they give up.

I think many of us are like that in our hearts. Maybe when we were younger, when we didn't have the ability to do some of the things we wanted to do, or maybe in our childhood we were just always told you can't do anything, you're worthless, you can't achieve anything. We feel this little tug, little bit of resistance and we give up. But little do you know that God has given you everything you need to do whatever you need to do in His name. That like an elephant, you have this incredible strength inside of you, but it won't be realized unless you take action.

Many of us say, Bobby, you don't understand. If I do this thing, if I try and reestablish a relationship with my kids, or if I try and confess something to a friend or a spouse, you don't understand how messy things will be. But I think that's also important to understand that messy is okay, too. It's okay for things to be messy sometimes. Whenever you spring clean your house, everything gets messier before it gets cleaner, doesn't it. You pull all the stuff out of the closets and other things, and it looks like the house is dirtier, not cleaner, but it's actually on its way to getting better.

Proverbs 14:4 says, "Where there are no ox the manger is clean. But from the strength of ox comes abundant harvest." You know what He's saying, right? If you don't have ox, your barn is going to be clean all the time, but you're not going to have a harvest. That if you want to have a harvest, you have to be okay with dirty barns. Farmers get it, right? Right farmers? You get it.

And that's it. That's it. We have to be okay with messy. We have to be okay with rejection. We have to be okay with failure. And we have to learn that all of those things might be associated with action, but when we take action because of what God's called us to do, we're going to feel so, so glad we did.

Father, we thank you and we love you. Lord, we ask in Jesus' name that you would help us today. Maybe there are certain things in our life that have been on the sidelines, and we need to take action. Lord, I pray your Holy Spirit would just address and speak to those things to everyone under the sound of my voice. Help us, Lord, to understand what it is you want us to do next. Lord, we trust you and we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

### BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Well thank you for being here today, and hope you leave feeling encouraged and full of life.

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.