

Hour of Power Deutschland
Steinerne Furt 78
86167 Augsburg

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

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

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

BAN:
DE43600501010002894829

BIC:
SOLADEST600

Büro Schweiz:

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

Spendenkonto:

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

Hour of Power, 15.12.2019

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. You are so beloved. Thank you for being here today. You know God loves to see His kids cross a finish line. If you've been in a long struggle, remember to create space to try to hear God's voice because when you hear His voice, it gives you the patience to endure. And remember, He's going to get you across that finish line. God will get you to where you need to be.

BS: Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for Christmas and for gathering us here. And Lord, we are just so thankful for a time in which you can build up our hopes and our dreams; we're thankful that you've made us a hopeful people. And I pray, Lord, that as we leave this place, we'd leave encouraged and full of the Holy Spirit. Lord, we love you and it's in Jesus name we pray, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:25-35 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for Bobby's message, the words of our Lord found in Luke 2:25:

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

Moved by the spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for Him what the custom of the law required, Simeon took Him in his arms and praised God, saying, sovereign Lord as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the sight of all nations; a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel. The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about Him.

Church, hearing God's voice gave Simeon the patience to wait his whole life to see the Messiah. God desires to speak to us as well. Amen.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

All right would you guys stand with me? We're going to say this creed together. 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. Thanks, you can be seated.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Patience: It Will Be Worth the Wait "

You know if you grew up in a legalistic church that always talked about how angry and mad God was with you and how you could never be enough, or some churches have taught in the past that once you become a Christian you never sin again.

All this to say if you grew up in a church that was legalistic, or a church in which people were very often judging others and maybe you felt that way in this church sometimes, I sure hope you haven't. But it's easy to think that God sort of secretly wants you to fail. I think it was Voltaire that said; I'm going to get this quote wrong, but it's something like we take all of our insecurities and all of our jealousies and we think God is that way.

But I'm a person and a pastor that believes when I read the scripture, I believe that God does allow us to struggle and even suffer at times, but at the same time, God loves seeing us cross the finish line. He loves to be there waiting for us, rooting us, cheering us on as a proud dad would seeing his kids cross the finish line.

Patience: It Will Be Worth the Wait

I was at my daughter's jog-a-thon and nobody was really there to win or lose, which I found disappointing. I think kids need to learn what it means to lose, but at any rate these kids are jogging around this thing and everybody is cheering them, but I'm like passing her cups of water, taking pictures. But we forget that God is a dad, don't we? And we forget that we're not God's adults, we're God's children. You might be old, but compared to God, you're still pretty young. You're like, Bobby you don't know how old I am. I was alive during World War I. That was two world wars ago.

No, it doesn't matter how old you are, you are God's child. And I think that there are some things we do that we don't think bugs God that really does, and there are some things that we do that we think God really hates and maybe He doesn't so much.

And the most important thing is that I think we forget that God wants to see us cross the finish line. In our race, in our jogging, in our running we forget sometimes that God is rooting for us. You think well why doesn't He save us? Well it's the same reason I don't save my daughter and pick her up and run her around the jog-a-thon.

Sometimes these struggles in life, well God will save you from the things that might kill you, but the little struggles, the little things you're waiting for; the new job, maybe meeting someone new in your life, maybe hearing God's voice again. These can feel like real suffering, but when we look back, we often wonder maybe God was in that the whole time.

That's what Paul says when he's writing to the church and I believe he's about to die, and he says I've run the race, right? I've run the race. I've achieved the crown, or the prize, rather. And I think that there's something great about crossing the finish lines in our lives; of achievement that comes from resilience, perseverance, enduring, being faithful to God, being faithful to the thing that you were called to do. I think that's so important.

Last week we talked about this idea of being anti-fragile. I think it's so important to remember that when we think about patience. That human beings, but Christians in particular, are anti-fragile. Does everybody remember what anti-fragile means? Anti-fragile, very shortly if you weren't here last week, is the opposite of fragile. Fragile means if you hit something or harm something it gets worse or becomes worthless. But anti-fragile means that to a point, as you harm things, they get better. Trees are to a degree anti-fragile. That's why you cut all the branches off so that it will be fuller. It doesn't make any sense, does it? But that's the way things are in nature, and that's the way Christians are. The way you destroy something that's anti-fragile is by treating it as though it were fragile.

In other words, the way you destroy a tree, for example, is by protecting it from the environment. Don't let the sun get it, don't let the wind get it, don't cut its branches off. Are we ever doing that with our children or with our churches? Treating anti-fragile things as though they are fragile, and in so doing actually causing harm when we're trying to benefit those things?

What if every race that we're running in life is, you know, if you're a video game nerd and I've never played video games, but let's just say I had. I was playing video games last night literally before I went to bed. Your pastor plays video games, congratulations. It only gets worse from here, guys. It only gets worse from here.

When you spend too much time being too safe, too well fed, too out of the rain, it actually makes you weak. And when you struggle, suffer, train, work hard, endure, move towards the barking dog, move towards the thing that you're afraid of, hypothetically, I mean, that it actually will make you better, to a degree. And so all of this to merely say that we are anti-fragile. It reminds me of.. there's this theory in sports that the winning-est team, it's a surprise how often you can have a team in football or baseball that is so utterly dominant, and because of that, they get the longest break after the regular season before the post season. And very often those teams come out of that little two week break where everybody else got a week or something, and they just get obliterated. And there's this theory that because of that two week time, they got out of the rhythm of being hit, of working hard, of being in these things, and so that because of the anti-fragility of sports, that perhaps there actually is a disadvantage to have a longer break than the other teams. Just a theory.

But all of this to say that during tough times, during difficulty, during this time when we're supposed to be patient, the greatest temptation for believers is to hurry, or to take the path of least resistance, which in our heart is essentially the same thing. Hurrying or taking the path of least resistance is the greatest temptation and maybe one of the greatest things that can erode our victory, right?

So all of this to say that when we're in Advent, don't hurry ahead of God. Go at God's pace. Don't hurry out of the challenge that has to do with your dreams, your goals or the thing that God has called you to do. Look at God's creation and look at the speed at which God goes. I mean everything that God makes is wonderful and tends to last a very, very long time, if not forever.

Patience: It Will Be Worth the Wait

But look at how slow it takes for that thing to get where it needs to be. Sequoias are a great example, olive trees are a great example. The human soul is a great example. That it takes process, it takes a little bit of harm, it takes stress, it takes pushing through for God's creations to develop and grow and mature into what they've been called to be.

We hate to acknowledge this about ourselves when we have to be patient, or when we have to endure to something because nobody likes being there, and we certainly don't have to be there all of the time, but when we're there, the temptation is always going to be to hurry to the end, or to take the path of least resistance instead of walking with God at God's pace.

Don't feel guilty about that, by the way, because we're all that way. All of us are that way. Even Jesus was a little bit that way. After all it was a temptation, wasn't it, when the devil looked at Him and said bow down before me and I'll give you all of this. I think Jesus was tempted by that, otherwise it would have just called it the three not temptations of Jesus, I don't know.

But I think there was a temptation for Jesus because He wanted to save the world and He wanted to help these people, and I don't think He wanted to endure the cross. I mean you look at Galatians, or you look at the Garden of Gethsemane and you see Him asking Lord, Father take this cup from me, but not my will yours be done. So that was a real temptation for Jesus to take the path of least of resistance, to hurry to His destiny, but I'm thankful for the faithfulness of Jesus and that He was willing to go at the pace of His Father.

And it's a lesson for all of us that to be like Christ, sometimes there is a cross between us and our destiny, or between we and our destiny. Can I get an amen? If you're carrying a cross this morning, God's going to help you carry that cross. If you're in a tough time, I heard a smart man say one time that tough times never last but tough people do.

You know that simply means that whatever it is you're going through, you'll get through it, just endure. I believe it was Thoreau that said the hero is no braver than the regular man. He's just braver five minutes longer. It's important. Patience is such a key when it comes to enduring unto victory in life. So just own the suffering that lays between you and your destiny. The victory will be so much more greater and so much sweeter.

Advent, of course, is that time. It's that waiting season. It's that time of believing that God is a God who does what He says He will do! It's a time of remembering that God calls every living believer to a purpose and calling, and believing with all your heart that if God wants you to be there, He will get you there. And be willing to take as Jesus calls the narrow road; the difficult road that leads to life. Don't take the wide gate and the easy road that leads to destruction. Many take that road, He says. The passage for today is Luke chapter 2 and it was read by Hannah. And for the sake of time, I'm not going to read the whole pericope, which is a dorky way of saying a section of scripture. You learn that in seminary. It was expensive to learn that word.

In Luke chapter 2, I love this story because the scripture doesn't overtly say this but tradition tells us Simeon, in this passage, was a very young man, actually, when God told him that in his lifetime he would see the coming of the Messiah.

Now remember when Jesus comes on the scene, the Jewish people are sort of pregnant with this desire to see the coming of the Messiah. They're under Roman occupation. It's not as bad as it was under the Seleucid or Greek Empire, but it's bad in the sense that just everything seems to be going wrong and they're just believing and hoping that the Messiah will come.

And so there's this man who says the Holy Spirit is upon him, and it says that the Holy Spirit tells him that in his lifetime he will see the coming of the Messiah. I like to think this guy was a teenager when he heard this, although the Bible doesn't say that, because he's a very, very old man when he sees the Lord born.

And over these many years, this man, he lives in Jerusalem, says that he's a righteous man and a godly man and that the Holy Spirit is upon him. And he waits year after year after year. I almost wonder if he wanders around Jerusalem looking for this child.

And now it's like one random day in Jerusalem, and I imagine him to be a very, very old man. It says he was old. And imagine thinking that he's there sitting somewhere in the city and the spirit that is always speaking to him and always upon him says Simeon, Simeon, the Messiah has come. He's in the temple. Go and see Him. And I imagine that Simeon, which was so full and it does say this, was just full of the spirit. I imagine that he's running to the temple. Running up the stairs, even though it's difficult and his knees hurt and his feet hurt, his mind is just pounding with excitement as this thing he's waited his whole life has finally come to pass.

Patience: It Will Be Worth the Wait

And remember the temple in the ancient world is gigantic, I mean humungous. It could be full of thousands of people at times. And somehow through the crowd, he's wandering and looking and trying to find, and there he sees Mary and Joseph, and he sees Mary holding this baby boy. And they're there for the consecration of the baby. He goes and I assume with permission, takes the baby in his arms and blesses the baby Jesus.

And he says this famous song that actually became an early church Christmas song: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace for my eyes have seen the coming of your salvation." And real quick, presumably he was saying this in Aramaic and the word salvation in Aramaic is Yeshua. Yeshua is also the name for Jesus, so it's a word play. So my eyes have seen the coming of your Jesus or your salvation, which was very cool. "What you have prepared in the sight of all nations a light for revelation to the Gentiles in the glory of your people Israel."

That song is essentially saying, he's saying Lord I can die now because the thing that you promised, the thing that I've waited for has finally happened. And there's this satiation of the soul that I read in the text, that he's just so full of joy and so happy, and so utterly content with this experience knowing that the Messiah has come, that his people Israel will be saved. That he just says I can die now. I can die now.

And it was so great because the song that came out.. I told you a Latin song.. the choir has sung it in the past was: (SINGS A SONG IN LATIN) It's very sweet and it's like a nighttime song. So it's an idea that like I can die now because I found Jesus.

Do you ever feel that way? You ever feel like when you have a great experience with the Lord and you encounter the Holy Spirit in such a profound, wonderful way, that you think everything's going to be okay. Whether I live or I die, I'm in God's loving arms. See that is what people need today. So much fear, so much anxiety and worry, so much stress, we need to hear the voice of the Lord, we need to experience the real presence of the Holy Spirit. Without that everything else is just fake. That's what it feels like.

And so you know that's the thing is that we need to hear God's voice because we need to know He is with us, especially when we're suffering and we're going through difficult times, to know we are not alone! You are not alone. You are not alone. The Lord is with you, and even in your shortcomings and your failures, as long as you keep your heart soft to the voice of the Lord, God can get you to your destiny, and that is what's so good about the Lord.

You know a soul without God is like an arrow without a bow. A soul without God is like an arrow without a bow. If I found the most athletic person in this room, and I took them out to a field and handed them an arrow and said throw this arrow as far as you can throw it, they'd probably do pretty good. But if I took a meagerly athletic person that just had a roughly tough grip and handed them a bow and arrow, they could send that thing way further.

I think much of life and much of what we try to do in ministry, in particular, but in many things is we're like someone trying to throw that arrow in our own strength. But what God teaches us is that when we're saved and in our baptism, we receive this power to move in the easy rhythms of grace; to go at God's pace, and to go to where God has called us to, which is so much farther and so much better than anything we can do in our own strength.

But God is an unhurried God. And God takes time to grow things and to make things, but God goes farther than anyone else and the things God makes last longer than anyone else. Just like an arrow, you might see people whizzing by and you feel like you're going backwards in life. But just like an arrow that is going backwards in the bow, the tension between you and your destiny is merely growing. Let that feed your patience that the tension you feel now between yourself and where you believe God has called you to be is a good thing. And when God releases you, it's going to tip in a way that is really wonderful.

Finally, I just want to reflect that I believe, and this is my Pentecostal side coming out now, okay? I'm not sounding as Presbyterian as maybe I should right now, but I want you to know that I think the reason Simeon could wait is because he knew, because he clearly heard God's voice.

He clearly heard God's voice. I love the Bible and I believe the Bible is cannon and pure revelation and I'm going to talk about that in just a minute, but remember the first and second century church only had bits and pieces of the Bible. They were the generation that wrote the Bible because in the midst of their persecution, and bleeding, and turmoil, and difficulty, and stress, and in-fighting they heard the voice of the Holy Spirit and were moved by the spirit. They were miracle workers. I think God wants that for our generation, too.

Patience: It Will Be Worth the Wait

So it's important that the Bible not only gives us wisdom, but it attaches us to our spiritual ancestry where we can see what a Bible mind is like. And so I think Simeon was able to be patient his whole life because he knew! He clearly heard God's voice and he just knew. Jesus tells us that this is essential to Christian living. He says that the sheep hear my voice and they know it. And they know it differently than the thief. I want to know Jesus' voice that way. I want to hear the voice of God clearly.

If you want to know, I'm just going to finish with this. To be patient, we must learn what it means to differentiate like is this my voice or my thoughts? Or is this God's voice? Or is this the enemy? And I'm going to give you three things in three minutes that can help you discern how to hear God's voice, but this will only work if you actually do the things I'm going to ask you to do.

Number one, and this is the most important thing: to build a Biblical mind. Now one thing that many people in Bible churches make the mistake of doing is this thing called proof texting, which isn't always bad, but it's almost like if I believe something, I have to attach a Bible verse to it. I once heard a guy say you can't use cocaine because the Bible says do not get drunk on wine, and using cocaine is doing the same thing as getting drunk on wine. It's like this ergo thing. I'm like, no dude, you don't use cocaine because it's stupid. And getting a Biblical mind helps you discern for yourself what's not clearly written letter of the law in the Bible, it helps you think if cocaine were being used in the first century by Christians, how would Paul address that? You just know he would say no cocaine everybody, no cocaine.

Okay so building a Biblical mind means that you read the Bible every day or as often as you can. It's not like you have to like be reading it for hours, but five minutes in the morning, reading a chapter here, a little bit there. Don't get hung up, by the way, on the little verses maybe that you don't understand, or that bug you. Just hold it loosely and ask a friend.

The second thing is that when God speaks, He usually doesn't speak in words, in my experience. Now I think there's some people that have this prophetic gift where that can happen, but I think for the most part when people hear from the Lord, they just instantly understand something. I wrote it this way: God's language is knowledge. God has a language and the language is knowledge. This is important.

So it comes as epiphany. And you can clearly understand, if you have a Biblical mind, if this is within what is God's voice, or maybe this is something else. So when God speaks, don't be looking for specific words, but be looking for knowledge.

And number three, and man this is so important: be around people who listen to God's voice. Look most Christians, most Christians are not listening to God's voice. Most Christians are not taking time every day to quiet their heart and just say, Lord, what do you want? And then most Christians, whenever they pray, all they do is talk. You ever have a friend like that? You sit with them and all they do is talk and they never listen?

Look a big part of prayer is, it's a two way street, man. You've got to listen, too. And I don't mean that in a condescending way, I'm just saying that a lot of Christians haven't been taught to listen and actually hear that maybe God has something to say.

There's this passage in Psalms that says "if today you hear His voice, don't harden your hearts." I want to warn you about being around Christians and other people too much who if God spoke to them, they would harden their heart. You know that type of person. We talked about seminary earlier; it's full of people like that. If you say I sense that God was leading me in this direction, or even I really sense that God was saying this to me, instantly their hearts are going to get hard towards you.

If you want to be someone who is sensitive to the voice of the Lord, be wary of spending too much time bonding with those types of people. Rather, it's good to be around sane people who hear the voice of the Lord. Notice the disclaimer. You hear God's voice a little too much it can actually be taxing on your mind. But make sure to open your heart up and your company up to being around people who at least, at the very least, want to hear God's voice. Maybe they don't, but they're open to the things of the Holy Spirit.

Last thing is when we don't do that, I feel that we try to lead God. You don't hear God's voice, it's like God wants to do this. Well it's like how do you know? Because the Bible says. But does the Bible say that? You notice very often it's that proof texting again. The Bible says this, that.

So anyway, I think if you focus on those three things: a Biblical mind, an openness to the things of the Spirit, that over time, you'll begin to hear God's voice in a good way, and it's not always going to be what you want to hear. You might get some conviction about some things in your life, too, which is also very good. But all of those things are necessary for you to get to where you need to be in life.

Patience: It Will Be Worth the Wait

Let's just take a minute and even just listen to the Lord now. Father, we bring before you our hearts and our minds, and we're listening to you, God, just for a moment. Maybe if you have something in your heart or mind that you've been struggling with, if you could ask God one question, what would it be? Just ask that question in your mind quietly right now. We do this with children sometime in our children's ministry. What do you sense that God is saying about that, or do you sense anything at all? It's okay if you don't. But maybe the Holy Spirit would be giving you some type of knowledge in your life.

Lord, we're always in such a hurry. So hard for us to give time for moments of silence like this. Even now I sense the pressure of another service and all the things that we have to do today. These things are taxing on our relationship with you. So Father, I just pray for everyone in this church that as we go into the rest of the day today that we would take some time to be with you, and to ask these questions of you, God, and to listen to your voice, and to be patient, and to walk with God at a walking pace. And Lord we ask all these things in Jesus' name, we love you, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Thank you guys for being here today. We love you so much.

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.