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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: Welcome, church family and visitors. It is refreshing to be with you; thank you for being here today.

Today know the truth that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. You have never been a mistake; you are called and you are so, so loved by the living God. Thank you, again, for being here, we love you.

BS: We really are so glad that you're in the house today, and we're excited to hear from Voices of Hope this morning; it'll be great. And also overjoyed to hear from Jefferson Bethke, who's here to talk about his new book. Jefferson, we're so glad you're here. Welcome.

And more than anything, we're just so excited that you're here, and we believe that everybody is here for a reason and that being here and taking time to be a part of this just makes God's heart swell with joy and I think it's an awesome thing.

So let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you that you love us just as we are and not as we should be. Lord, thank you that we can be our true selves, and we just ask in Jesus' name that you'd help us to be more like Christ every day – to work harder and harder at it, but also not to beat ourselves up. Lord, I pray everybody would leave here feeling encouraged, full of life, and we thank you, Lord. 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.

INTERVIEW – Jefferson Bethke (JB) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

(VIDEO ROLL IN: What if I told you Jesus came to abolish religion? Jefferson Bethke is an author and content creator with his wife Alyssa. Three miles per hour. Yes, specifically three miles per hour. Why? Because that's the precise speed you are going when you are walking in a peaceful and loving way. They've written eight books, five workbooks and have created e-courses on relationships, theology and identity. His new book To Hell with the Hustle.. I'm so excited, I hope it blesses you. This is available anywhere books are sold.. looks at how we should let go of what our culture tells us to do, and embrace the life God wants for us. Which is why salvation is freely mine and forgiveness is my own, not based on my merits but Jesus' obedience alone. Please welcome Jefferson Bethke.

BS: Jefferson, hi!

JB: Thank you.

BS: So great to have you back..

JB: Morning..

BS: ..and it's so good to have you in the house.

JB: Thanks for having me.

BS: We're friends and I love this idea of this book that came out. And one thing that I think is really cool is you say this creed that we say every Sunday with your family in the morning. Tell me about that.

JB: Yes, which got it totally from you, totally stole it. Hope that was okay. I asked your permission.

BS: No, it's totally.. you did! It's totally..

JB: I remember texting you.

BS: Yes.

JB: But yes, it's such a gift and we brought that that you do on Sunday to our table every single morning. We say it to our kids. My favorite part about it with our kids, too, I don't think you do it here in church, is at the end of it, every kid gets an M&M which is totally the law of the Lord.

Leading Through Giving

BS: Should we do that? Should we have..

JB: Yes, right, right?

BS: ..M&M's under your..

JB: It's totally us playing off that that the law of the Lord is sweet, like honey on my lips, and I tried honey, it was too messy so we went with fake American sugar.

BS: Yes, that's good. And that's old Jewish thing, too, that's what they used to do in the Midrash. That's great.

Well super, we're so glad you're here and on that thing, a lot of people might think oh that seems offensive to name a book To Hell with the Hustle, but really you mean it literally, don't you? I mean you think that this spirit of hurry is from hell; that it's a bad thing, that it's eroding our discipleship. Tell us about this book. It's exciting.

JB: Well like I told you before, my wife thought of the title, so get mad at her.

BS: So we'll blame her, okay.

JB: Yes, exactly. I mean it's a serious problem and we wanted to name it something that made the problem serious, making people take it seriously. I think I forget where I was reading it, but someone called hustle and hurry almost the fundamental iniquity. It's like man I don't even know how to spell that! But what they meant by that is it's this baseline sin at some level because when you're hustling and hurrying, then it's incompatible with walking with Jesus. You cannot listen to Him when you're hustled and hurried. You cannot be in His cadence and be in His pace, and so then because of that, it's this baseline thing that then allows something else to you that you go in another direction that's not God's design for you.

BS: And of course, I believe that. When you're in a hurry it's hard to be listening to the needs of others; when you're in a hurry, it's really hard to empathize with others, to think clearly. But what about, I mean there are so many people that struggle with this that are enthusiastic, which is a good thing, full of energy, which is a good thing. How does someone who just wakes up in the morning excited about life that also because of that tend to be a little more hurried, how do we find the balance?

JB: Well I think Jesus is our perfect example, right? So you see Jesus, He wasn't just vegging out watching football or something like that, right? He was a man of intention, He was a man of purpose, and He was a man going somewhere; He was on His way to Jerusalem during His ministry, but yet it was clear because of His cadence or His pace on that mission, He was able to be uninterrupted.

And so I think that's a really good question we can ask ourselves. You're probably too hustled and too hurried if you're not able to be interrupted, and I think it's like 80% of Jesus' miracles were miracles of interruption, meaning He wasn't planning to do that. He was paying attention to the moment God had Him in, and then He was able to actually enter into that moment.

BS: You're a spoken word artist and you rap quickly, even your talking.. responding to my questions is almost hurried. Is there something about..

JB: No this is me non-hurried.

BS: Oh this is non-hurried?

JB: This is non-hurried.

BS: I'm just asking is this something that you.. it's something I struggle with personally. You know, Russ Jacobson, who's kind of the ying to my yang says 'Bobby Schuller's glass is half full and the other half was delicious.' So I'm always known as this enthusiastic positive person. So I struggle with it. Is it something you struggle with personally to hurry?

JB: Yes, yes, clearly in how I talk, as well. And you should ask my wife because this is my non-hurried voice, so she gets the hurried voice at home. But yes, I think all of us do. Like this is the air we're breathing. This is the water we're swimming in in the west. And I think to be faithful followers of Jesus you constantly have to be asking in your contextual cultural moment what do we as 21st century followers of Jesus have to resist because there's always things every culture has to resist to be a faithful follower of Jesus.

To me, its hurry and hustle; that God actually calls us to be non-anxious faithful presences in our culture to our neighbors, in our workplaces, and that does something beautiful.

BS: How has slowing down for you affected your life personally? Has it? Have you seen a change in your parenting or in your marriage?

JB: Yes, in everything.

BS: Or your discipleship.. in everything.

Leading Through Giving

JB: Right? I mean first of all, like who ever parents well when you're hurried, right? That's the worst moments, right? The times I've lost my temper, the times I've been angry, in marriage as well. When I get frustrated or we get in arguments, it's always coming out of a place of hurry.

The one thing I'll say is that I've noticed when you live in God's cadence, God's music, I kind of use that analogy, and you're listening to that tune and you're trying to dance to it, what it does is it lets you hear His voice better, right? I think I like to talk about in the book where I say everything in the world is screaming at you, and when something's screaming at you, it gets your attention without you looking at it. But I think God is the only thing that actually whispers when He tries to talk, and to hear a whisper, you have to be paying attention. And I think you can only pay attention when you're non-hurried and non-hustled.

BS: When I hear hustle instead of hurry in the title of your book, it makes me think of competition. It makes me think of grinding out a win. And there's a good side of that, the sort of American industrialist, the entrepreneur, the spirit to pursue your dreams and grind out your vision, but on the flip side of that, I think there might be somebody when they hear you talking about hustle, they're like well are you saying I can't achieve? Or here's the real question: do you think slowing down makes you less successful?

JB: No, and I could go on and on, but I'll try to give the quickest analogy that I think is really helpful. Chick-Filet, anyone else love Chick-Filet? Okay, they make four to five times the amount of revenue per store in the nation than any other fast food chain, right? Per year. So they make more: four to five times any other fast food chain per store per year. But yet, they're closed 52 days less than those businesses. So to me that sounds like a perfect picture of I think God can do more with less, and so Chick-Filet is the ultimate metaphor for our spiritual lives, amen?

BS: Well and I think one of the reasons they do that is they're encouraging people to spend time with their families, to slow down and to go to church, and I think that is a really good thing.

JB: And they're more successful and they make more, but they're open less.

BS: Yes, wow. Well Jefferson, I just want to encourage everybody to get this book, To Hell with the Hustle. If you know a successful person, a driven person, this is not going to discourage them from being successful. If anything, you'll find out, I realized in my life, when I slowed down I became more successful, more clear in my thinking, and I was able to do a better job of discerning what was a total waste of my time and what was useful, and that made me more productive, actually.

So Jefferson, thank you so much for your work. It's blessing a lot of people. We appreciate your ministry. You're the best.

JB: Thank you, man. Thank you.

SCRIPTURE 2 Samuel 23:14-17 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, 2nd Samuel 23:14:

At that time, David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" So the three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord. "Far be it from me, Lord, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty warriors.

Church family, may we lead through generosity and give wastefully to reach the next generation. Amen.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, will 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.

Thanks, you can be seated.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Leading Through Giving"

Today we're continuing our fall series on stewardship, which is a very Christian-y way of saying money, of talking about our money being not ours but God's, and what do we do with it, and how are we wise with it, and how should we be generous?

Leading Through Giving

Or should we be generous and how generous should we be? And today we're going to talk about that, and we're talking about the value of actually leading with generosity. I remember when I was a teenager and had a new bustling faith that there were people in my life who at the time gave me sums of money that I thought were just an incredible amount of money to do ministry type things, or to be involved in these different things. And I look back and I'm so grateful. And one example: a guy who gave me \$50 a week to play guitar for a little high school group. I mean to me that was like easily four hundred and sixty cups of Ramen. I mean that was like a years' worth of food. So I want us to talk about the value of leading our teams. Everybody in this space is a leader. The right definition of leadership means someone who influences, and some of us influence a lot of people, some of us influence a few people, but if you're a parent, you're a leader. If you're a grandparent, you're a leader. You lead your colleagues. You're leading people in this church when you engage with them. And it's important that when we lead, if we're trying to lead people to a certain place, which we should be doing as Christians, leading people to the life, that we use generosity as one of the most effective means of leadership. In other words, that we give to our teams. We give to people who are following us. We think that investing in children, investing in those on our teams is one of the best things we can do with our money and with our time. And I want to encourage you that especially when it comes to children, or to worship, I believe that you almost want to give so much that someone in the room might be tempted to look at you and say why all this waste? Why this waste? And this is a central theme, actually, in the scriptures, and we're going to jump right into it, okay? So one of my favorite stories in the Bible, especially when I was a teenager and loved movies like "Braveheart" and "Three Hundred," and things like this; it was fun for me as a kid to read these amazing war stories about David and his men and all this stuff. And one of them towards the end of 2nd Samuel is a story about David's thirty brave men. These were guys that were just beasts. I mean they were insane at fighting. They were just tough and grizzly. There were three of them that say okay these are the three that are the chief among the thirty.

The first who is the chief of the chiefs, the greatest of the greatest was a guy named Josheb. Everybody say Josheb. Even sounds tough, doesn't it? Josheb was a chief and they say in one battle he himself killed 800 men, to give an example of how tough and war strong this guy was.

The second who was for some reason very famous, a guy named Eleazar, says that Eleazar was with King David, and they were defending this area called Pas Dammim. It was probably maybe a hill or a pass through one of the mountains. And they believed that this pass was important, it was strategic, and they're trying to hold this position against the Philistines and there is Eleazar, the captain of the unit, and they're fighting hand to hand melee combat, and something happens and everybody leaves. But the captain, Eleazar holds his ground and just continues to fight with his sword. And it says that he fought for hours and hours, and it said that he actually all by himself won this great victory holding the Pas Dammim. And it said that eventually the troops returned to Eleazar but only to strip and sort the dead. Pretty sweet, huh, the Old Testament coolness.

Finally the third in the group was a guy named Shammah, who was surrounded in a lentil field all by himself. We don't know how many, but all of these guys almost like a Bruce Lee type figure, he was able to fight off every single soldier that surrounded him. And so because of exploits like these and other legends, these three guys become these just amazing fighters and soldiers. And they are young, they are tougher than a coffin nail, they are scarred and muscular and trained and attuned to suffering, and they are held up in a cave with the other thirty men, and the vast army with King David in the cave of Adullam, it's a stronghold. And they're wanting to siege and take back David's hometown, the city of Bethlehem. We got all that? Okay, so super.. it's a war thing. Obviously.

Okay, so they're held up in a cave. Now David is a king, but he's also a general and he has been with these men through thick and thin, through victory, through sacrifice, and now they are held up in a cave. And it's a cave but it's also the desert and everybody is thirsty. Have you ever been super thirsty? You ever been super thirsty? I remember times when I've been thirsty; you know being hungry is one thing, being thirsty is somehow way worse. Even when I was writing this sermon, it's late fall here in Orange County California, and it was like a hundred degrees with like 15 mile an hour blow dryer wind, and I was like writing this sermon, I was seven miles into my walk, and man I was thirsty, there's nothing around, and there's this gas station, and I was like I would kill for a Diet Coke. Lord, a Diet Coke; then I remembered, like a lot of those gas stations, they have like the small is like 40 ounces, and then there's like the middle and it's like 60 ounces, and then the big big gulp, which looks like those water things that you use; that they drop off at your door and you need a strong person. And that was what I got. It cost me a whole 97 cents.

Leading Through Giving

But when you drink something, you were so thirsty, you drink something amazing like a Gatorade or a Diet Coke and it feels like your head just gets all this relief and you can almost feel your heart pulse in your temples. So this is how David is. He's in the desert, and he's drinking cave water, okay? Cave water. Everybody say cave water. Now cave water, imagine it's going to be brown, it's going to have bat dung in it, maybe some other stuff, some moss. And so the water has to be strained and boiled for dysentery to make sure all the worms and everything is out of it, and then even when its handed to you, it's going to be handed either hot or room temperature, and it's going to have a grayish brown color, and David is thirsty. And his hometown is occupied by the enemy, and someone hands him another cup of dirty brown cave water. Just looks at this thing and he takes a sip and he just says out loud in his frustration – 'oh that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!' And takes that cup and throws it against the wall. I'm a king and I'm stuck in a cave drinking cave water! This isn't fair!

Well of course his men hear this, and they know he's frustrated, they know he doesn't mean it literally, but Josheb, the guy that killed 800 people all by himself? He pulls those other two guys, Eleazar, the guy with frozen sword hands, and Shammah, the guy who defended the lentil field, he's like hey guys, hey, hey guys, hey, hey, hey, what if we did that? No seriously, what if we did that? What if we like broke through the enemy lines and like got some Bethlehem water and like brought it back to King David. What if we did that?

So they get all dressed up in their light armor and they grab their spear and put on a little helmet, and they go through the enemy camp. So it's not an actual military line, there's no fight going on, they just like sneak up to the military camp and just start running through the camp towards the gate of Bethlehem. Now picture the gate; a military camp you're going to have tents and there's going to be guys like sitting down, hanging up their clothes and cooking bacon and other people playing dice, and they're just hanging out and all of a sudden you see these three Hebrew soldiers go (FOO, FOO, FOO) running through. And all of a.. what was that? What was that? They all come popping out and they look and they see these three guys running, darting towards something at the gate, and everybody grabs their weapons, they start running in their underwear or whatever, and they're chasing after these guys, and one guy kneels down and he starts filling up with the other, the other two guys are fighting him off, he's like hurry, get some water! And they're fighting, when they break through, and they run, and they get out of the camp, and the Philistines shake their fists and say you get out of here! This is our town!

And these three mighty men come to David, sweaty and covered in mud and blood and cuts and bashes, and they have this thing of Bethlehem Evian, and they're like here you go, sir! Here you go! Now picture this: King David is in utter shock. He didn't even know they were gone. They bring this thing of fresh ice cold water from his fountain, and he's thirsty and they're thirsty, everybody's sick of bat water, and here he is holding it, and he looks at all the men, and they're all wondering what's going to happen, what's his speech going to be, and he says 'far be it for me to do this, Lord.' A prayer, huh? 'Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?' And the Bible says he took the water and he poured it out as a sacrifice to the Lord.

Now everybody here who's listening to this, you might ask this question: why such waste? What a waste. At least give it to the guys that brought it to him. But I want to guarantee you something: none of those men there said why such waste. Nobody there was frustrated or confused. These were Jews and they understood the message. Everyone there was inspired.

Now through the centuries, rabbis have talked a lot about this very, very cool, very bravado kind of story. And the Midrash, the faith lesson comes down to two really popular ones, and I think they're both very useful in this discussion, especially when it comes to generosity.

The first is this: when David did that, see there's something about David. People really, really like David a lot. The fact that these three guys literally risked their lives to get him a glass of water is evidence that there was something alluring, endearing, something about David that just caused people to want to be around him, to follow him, to impress him, to be in his inner circle. And I think that it's things like this that make David a great leader. David's message to his men when he poured it out before the Lord, was we drink together, or not at all. It was a call to take Bethlehem back. You think David didn't want to drink that water? Of course he wanted to drink that iced cold Bethlehem water. But he poured it out because he believed, as Simon Sinek says, leaders eat last, leaders drink last. That the purpose of a leader is to invest in, to serve and to give to one's team; that generosity to the team is what it's all about. And this is what David believed.

Leading Through Giving

And this is what Jesus teaches us, remember? The last shall be first, the first shall be last. This is a practice that's actually used in the military, according to that same book, is General George J. Flynn, who talks about how in the Marines; there's no rule about this at all, but when the Marines go to the mess hall to eat, they always eat from the junior to the senior. So the privates and the corporals, they eat first and then on and on it goes until the highest officers present are the ones who eat last. And very often sometimes those officers will serve the infantry. And he would say this is just one thing about how leadership is meant to be done in the Marines or how leadership is done in effective groups. It clearly says that the purpose of our achievement is not about the leader. It's not about the one leading the charge. It is about us as a team reaching a common goal. And if you're a leader, if you're a CEO or a pastor or a group leader, or a dad or a mom, it is so important to remember that this is one of the best things we can do to invest our time and our money in effectively leading our children, that we all say we eat together, or we don't eat at all. We drink together or we don't drink at all. And this was a call to take back Bethlehem, and they do take it back. So be generous to your team, if you're a leader.

But the second and actually more important thing was that when David received this water, it's almost like it's the most precious gift he's ever received. And remember, he doesn't waste it. He doesn't just pour it out like he's getting rid of it, the Bible says he pours it out, like as an act of worship to the Lord, which is actually a part of Levitical worship. That he actually pours out; it's like this water is so special and so sacred, that no man is worthy to drink of it. Only the Lord. Only the Lord deserves something this great. It is, to me, the Midrash is that we give the very, very best that we have. That's what we give to God. Our first fruits. Abel's fruits, not Cain's. That we give the best of what we have in worship to the Lord.

And I think this is so, so important that as we worship the Lord, and as we give to the Lord, that we do it in a way that some people that don't know the Lord might ask what a waste. What a waste. I love this part about the Bible, this teaching that it brings balance to the practicality of everyday life, that some things are meant to be just over the top in their generosity.

Well one story that's a totally a hyperlink back to this story is the story of the Alabaster jar. In Mark chapter 14, Jesus is in Bethany. Now how many of you are named Bethany? Don't raise your hand, actually. The word Bethany in Hebrew is a beautiful name, isn't it? Bethany? My sister-in-law is named Bethany, but it actually means house of affliction in Hebrew. I think it's silly but anyway, house of affliction. And it's probably we think about Mary and Martha in Bethany with Lazarus, and in this case he's at the house of Simon the leper. Scholars believe that Bethany was actually a leper colony. And it might be that Mary and Martha were lepers, or it might be that they were actually like nurses, or saintly women who were there to care for those who were lepers, but it's important that you recognize that Jesus was there with them. And lepers in Jesus' day because of House of Shammai and the very strict views of leprosy and Levitical law, if you were a leper, you were outcast. So imagine having a daughter, a son, a husband or wife, a good friend, and they come down with some form of leprosy, well they become outcasts and they have to go live in these isolated colonies. And back in those days, it wasn't like full blown leprosy alone where you have like fingers and toes falling off, it was like if you had eczema or like really bad dandruff or something like that, that could be a case if someone didn't like you, that they could bring up against you that now you have to live outside of the city and you have to be in this place in Bethany.

It's there that Jesus is at the house of Simon the leper. And when Jews in those days would eat, I'm trying to think of something other than what I said in the first service because it was inappropriate. I don't know how else to describe this, they lean.. like okay. So think about them laying on their side with like one hand like this, or it could go this way, and use your right hand to eat. And so everybody sits around this low table in that way. And as he's doing this, talking to everybody, eating, enjoying the company, a woman comes in and she has this Alabaster jar. It seems like in the Mark text, nobody has any idea who this woman is. And she just comes before the Lord and she begins weeping, and she pours this whole thing on His feet. Now the Bible tells us that this Alabaster jar was worth \$300 denari, which is an incredible, incredible sum of money. We know from another part of the text that \$200 denari is enough to feed five thousand people. The translators say that \$300 denari is roughly a good year's salary. We could say that for inflation, this was forty or fifty thousand US dollars of perfume. And we don't know why she has it. A lot of people speculate. And I'll tell you my theory: the Bible doesn't say it, but there's some evidence for this that she was a leper. And someone gave her this perfume as an outcast now, maybe she's a beautiful woman, maybe it was a gift from her father, and maybe it was given to her to hide the smell of the sores or the sickness.

Leading Through Giving

She's embarrassed about it. And so she uses just a little drop, so it lasts ten years, just a little drop to put on her sores, to maybe help it smell better or look better or feel better, or maybe it helps her. And one day in desperation she sees the great rabbi, and she's just.. we don't know why she's weeping, but she just pours out the whole thing, \$50,000 dollars worth of this stuff on Jesus' feet and wipes it with her hands. And the disciples rebuke her. Judas, in particular. And they say these words: why this waste? They say specifically: that jar could have been sold and the money could have been given to the poor. It could have fed seven thousand people, let's say. And you just poured it out and wasted it on Jesus' feet, no less. And Jesus looks at His disciples, and rebukes him. Jesus, the guy that always stands up for the poor, Jesus that says that in the end of days we'll be separated into sheep and goats and it'll be based on who we helped and cared for. He rebukes His disciples, and He says this is a beautiful thing that she has done, and wherever the gospel is preached, she will be remembered. Wow – that is saying something, isn't it. He says the poor you will always have, but me you will only have for this short amount of time.

I think that there is a Midrash in this, as well, that very often in the church, I feel like we tend to take sides when it comes to issues of caring for the poor, for example, or other things where we think that all the money needs to go to this one thing. But here's a clear case of Jesus, one of the greatest advocates of the poor, also advocating that sometimes there is like a waste in the way that we worship. And guess what: there's also sometimes a waste in the way that we reach our kids or our families.

And many of us, we know people who are like Judas. By the way, do you know that Mark 14 says that after this moment, this was the last straw for Judas. It's after this story when he looks at Him and says that money's supposed to go to the poor, and Jesus says no, this is a beautiful thing she's done. She'll be remembered. It's at that moment that Judas leaves and goes to the Sadducees and says okay, I'll turn Him in. I'm done with this. I have to remember that.

I remember when I was in college, just coming out of college, and can I tell you I knew everything. Oh man, I was an advocate, I was a living saint. I just knew it all everybody was doing it wrong. If only they had me in charge, they would know. And I remember coming to the Crystal Cathedral as a college pastor, and being a Schuller, feeling okay being critical of my own church. And I remember when I was leading a group there, talking to a young man in my group in a way probably part of this was trying to be motivated to be cooler, accepted by him, and I looked at him and I said this Crystal Cathedral, look at all of this stuff. This could have been used to help the poor. And he said help the poor? I said yes. He said we do help the poor. I was like no, I mean, think about it, like this could be a homeless shelter, this could be groceries. And he said when was the last time you helped the poor? I said, it hasn't been that long, I don't know. The truth was years? Sitting around playing World of Warcraft.

When was the last time you helped the poor. I was like I don't know. He's like well we went to the food shelter just last Saturday and fed a hundred kids. I was like oh, oh, that's great, that's great, that's great. And he said and also on Thursday, we handed out groceries to people all over town here. I was like oh, that's also really.. that's great. He's like and we have inner city kids that come and do break dancing on Friday nights, and many of them, they have no place to go and there's hundreds of them. I was like oh that's awesome. He's like – you should come sometime because it sounds like you haven't helped the poor in awhile. I was like oh yeah, I should do that.

Isn't it interesting how we just assume that if there's a lot of money spent on some beautiful thing that money is not spent on the other thing? And that's how we're like in a church, so quick to judge, so quick to criticize each other. In fact I was an advocate for the poor and did serve a lot for the poor and still am, and one thing I started to notice is the Crystal Cathedral was a gift to the poor.

Many of the poor folks, homeless people, they would go to the gym and take a shower and put a suit on, and there's probably people like that here, I'm sure, they'd go to church and they'd see their friends, and they'd have a great time.

And I remember one guy, in particular, a guy named Ray. I said Ray, can we try and get you an apartment, because he was like a part of our church. We all knew he was homeless, he struggled with paranoid schizophrenia, I said we want to get you an apartment. And he looked at me and he said, Bobby, I've been like this for twenty years. I can't live in an apartment. He's like when I have my moments, I think things are watching me and there's something in the corner and I run away. He's like I can't live in an apartment. He said just keep this church alive. This is my home. I just thought that's powerful.

Leading Through Giving

See we're so self-righteous, aren't we, when we think give it to the poor. We'll always advocate for the poor, always be a prophet for the poor, but don't be too quick to judge the woman who pours the Alabaster jar on the feet of Jesus. There's something really beautiful about giving so much to the Lord that someone looks and says what a waste. Why such waste?

And I think this is especially true when it comes to children, and I'll just finish with this. This is a phrase my father-in-law loves to use a lot; Hannah's dad loves teenagers, loves reaching teenagers. He's a businessman, and he's taken so much of the money that he could have used to open another location; he has a retail company, but he used that money to have volleyball courts for kids, and to create places where kids could work and raise money and support missions. And there was a lot of time that he could have used to be more successful in his business, but he said no, I wanted my first fruits to go towards my kids and my kid's friends. I don't care if it was wasteful for my business. I wanted people to be reached for the gospel of Christ. And God has blessed him for it. I was one of those kids. I was the kid that he paid \$50 to go and play worship for that I said at the beginning, and it changed my life. And I also married Hannah. Although I would say that it was inverse order. I was in love with Hannah before I met her dad.

So give wastefully! Give to the Lord and give to people who are in need, and don't be worried in the things you do with your time, to your children and to teens, and to reaching kids, and for missions. The place that the Lord has put on your heart, don't be afraid to pour out the water. Don't be afraid to look at your team and say we're going to cross the finish line together. And always remember that generosity is one of the best ways you can lead people.

Lord, we thank you that there's no more generous person in the whole world than you. You so loved the world that you gave, and we're so thankful for your Son Jesus, it's in His name we pray, amen.