

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. 11
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

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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. Hello.

HS: And welcome visitors and church family. We miss seeing you. Thank you for joining us. You know it's easy to believe that God loves us when things in life are going well, but it is human nature to have a hard time believing that God loves us when we are going through really tough times. But the Bible says that what can separate us from Christ' love. Can trouble or hardship, can persecution or famine, can nakedness or danger of the sword? And it goes on to say that nothing, absolutely nothing can separate you from how much God loves you. You are so loved right now.

BS: Yes, it's easy to feel like when we're going through these difficult times that maybe God has forgotten us or abandoned us, and it's an easy trap to fall into, but want you to know not only that God loves you, but we love you here at Shepherd's Grove and at Hour of Power. We want you to know that we're on your side and we're praying for you; we haven't forgotten about you.

More than anything though, we just want you to know that we love you and we're so glad you're joining us. Let's begin with a word of prayer: Father, we ask in Jesus' name that you'd send your Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of everyone under the sound of our voice. We pray for everybody who is fighting this disease in some way or another, fighting the boredom or loneliness, fighting the disease itself by wanting to be healthy. We pray for first responders, we pray for everyone who misses family, friends and work. We pray for people with businesses. Lord, we just ask that your Holy Spirit would bring a sense of grace and peace to us so that we would be able to take this with a type of calm. And I pray for wisdom and favor over everyone under the sound of my voice, and we pray this all in Jesus' name, amen.

HS: Amen. Turn around and turn to the person next to you or maybe an imaginary friend, and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Revelation 2:17, 1 John 3:1-2 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Revelation 2:17.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone and with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

1st John 3:1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Church family, may we know the hope to which God has called us to the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Pepper Peale (PP) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

(VIDEO ROLL IN)

VOICE OVER: Pepper Peale is the granddaughter-in-law of the late Norman Vincent and Ruth Peale, founders of the Peale Foundation, which was founded on the idea of positive thinking and how to spiritually grow your faith with positive thinking and actions. The foundation currently helps fund organizations who uphold the same values to what the foundation was based. Please welcome, Pepper Peale! (END OF VIDEO)

New Name on a White Stone

BS: Well welcome, Pepper, we're so glad that you're here with us. What a joy. You know it's been such an interesting time for us. Well first, welcome. We're so glad to have you.

PP: Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to be here. That hymn was fantastic.

BS: Yes, you know this is an interesting time for us as a ministry because this is the 50 year anniversary, and even being a Schuller, I've always known your grandfather/grandfather-in-law, well we knew him personally when he was alive, and he was such an important part of our ministry, had an enormous impact on my grandpa personally through his writing, through his mentoring, and then of course the kind of tipping point for our church was when he flew out from New York to California to the drive in church, when my grandpa was in his 30's, and was just this explosive response of people. You must have some amazing memories about him and about his message.

PP: I do. Because I am an in-law, I married into the family so I'm one of the lucky people that knew of Norman Vincent Peale before I knew him. And so that was really a blessing.

And my favorite story is when I was 28, he said to me well how old are you today? It was my birthday, and he said oh, you're just getting started. And I remember thinking I was very old and very wise and now when I look back, 28 is really just getting started. Such a positive way to look at the world and he lived that every day.

BS: See that's one of the things, you always wonder, some intellectuals that are humanitarian have this; their family will say they didn't really like people, they liked humanity but they didn't like individuals. But Norman Vincent Peale wasn't that way. He was really a pastor at heart, wasn't he?

PP: I felt that way certainly. I felt his influence, his joy. I always say about him that he was interesting and interested, and probably those two things fed on one another.

BS: I was actually with my grandpa when my grandma told him that Norman Vincent Peale had died. And I remember him weeping and this sad thing on his face, and at the time I think I was 11 or something. I didn't totally understand, but he was really devastated by that.

PP: Oh, well I appreciate that. He was a person who affected people deeply worldwide, and just a blessing as part of the family to know that and to raise my children with that history, that influence is really wonderful.

BS: Well it's so great that we both, too, are the sort of third generation, sort of helping carry on the legacy of the giants on whose shoulders we're standing on. What's it like for you to sort of be a part of carrying on Dr. Peale's legacy and how has that message sort of evolved for the 21st century. Do you think it's still palatable today in the way it was in his day?

PP: Oh I think it is. I think what has turned out maybe even more recently in the recent past is that those messages that were conceived of and printed and published and distributed worldwide and preached from pulpits, were timely at the time, but they are timeless. We are still struggling with so much of the same issues and the same demons, and the way to help one another is to help one another and to actually do justice and love kindness and to walk humbly, and to do that is a gift to be able to do that. And that's why thinking positively is not being Pollyanna, it's not not acknowledging the negative, it's actually embracing what could be, and how we can help one another, and that's what I believe that the foundation, the Peale Foundation is really all about.

BS: How do you that your grandfather-in-law, and your grandmother-in-law, Ruth, I mean if they were alive today and they wanted to give some sort of matronly or patronly wisdom to this generation, in this time, you think about the pandemic, it's certainly hard to feel positive about anything. I mean we have no idea what the future holds, it certainly doesn't look good. People are getting sick and now politics are getting involved in all of this thing, which I think is really unfortunate, and there's just so many layers to this and reasons. There are like a hundred and one reasons why people could feel negative about what's going on. What do you think they would say or what do you think Dr. Peale would say to us right now?

PP: I hesitate to speak on his behalf, but I like to think that he would say Jesus told us to love one another as you love yourself and so those two things. And for something, one is that you should love yourself. You are a gift from God. You were created in an image - love that. And then turn around and love your neighbor as yourself, as you would want to be treated. I often say to people it's simple, but it isn't easy and sometimes we have to struggle with being human. Being human isn't easy. So give yourself a break, try to look at things better and treat someone in a situation, leave it better than you found it.

BS: It's easy to be negative and it's hard to be positive.

PP: Absolutely.

BS: Don't you think?

New Name on a White Stone

PP: Absolutely.

BS: I think positivity takes effort, and it has a reward, and I think that's one thing that we're learning from your ministry and we're so grateful for that.

PP: Oh well thank you so much. And that's why the Peale Foundation feels really strongly about, and I think you and I were discussing about trying to do online ministry and having a service when we'd rather be in the pews with our friends. We'd rather be together but knowing that it's good for other people. It's a gift. You're doing something wise and loving for somebody else, so the idea for us is to drive people to be on social media, and to use a hash tag that we've come up with called ever positive.

BS: Now that's launching this week! Isn't it? I wanted to talk to you about that. We're really excited about it..

PP: Yes, it's actually..

BS: ..it's just starting.

PP: ..we're just starting and the hope is that people will, wherever they are on social media, because we're all social distancing and we probably have more time on social media, to post something positive. Shoot a quick video, maybe a meme that you love, a Bible verse, maybe it's just pictures of your kids. Whatever it is that's helping you get through a really difficult time, and use the hash tag ever positive, and the hope is that it will help you yourself feel better because you're concentrating on something positive in your own life. Maybe it helps the people that you're commenting around and for, your family, your loved ones, and who knows, it might even affect somebody you don't even know on the other side of the world. Grandpa Peale published more than 40 books that were published in all sorts of languages, and still being published today. You can download.. we have an APP that you can hear him preaching from the pulpit at Marble Collegiate Church with timeless messaging. Do that. Use this time to use the ever positive hash tag and I would invite you to do the same thing, Bobby. We would love to have how you and your family are getting through this tough time. It's hard.

BS: We have lots of people watching live on YouTube and Face book and now would even be a great time to put something out there positive as you're watching the service, and just type # ever positive. Pepper Peale, thank you so much. We are just so grateful for what you're doing and excited about the future of the Peale Foundation. We know it's in great hands.

PP: Thank you so much. And if anybody has questions about the Peale Foundation, they can visit us at PealeFoundation.org. We'd welcome anything they'd like to share.

BS: Pepper Peale and Peale Foundation org. That was like a tongue twister like Peter piper.

PP: I know, I'm so sorry.

BS: We're so thankful that you were here today, and thank you for reminding us about the importance of staying positive in our thinking and our mindset in this time. I think it's going to make the difference between victory and failure for so many people.

PP: We certainly hope so and thank you so much for your ministry. All God's blessings on you.

BS: Thank you, Pepper. God bless you. Take care.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Would you stand with me? Hold your hands out like this and say this creed with me. We need to say it now more than ever. Let's say it 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 "New Name on a White Stone"

Today we're starting a new series. The new series is God's Name for His Children. Now a couple years ago, we did a series about God's own names. God has over 70 names in the Hebrew Bible. I picked out my favorite. But don't forget God also has names for you. He's got lots of names for you, and they're wonderful names. Like He calls you soldier. He calls you ambassador. He calls you Israel. He calls you disciple. But more than anything, He calls you beloved child. And as we go on, we're going to talk about these different names and these different ways that God feels about us and thinks about us. Isn't that interesting to think of God as having emotion and God as having daily thoughts, that God is looking at you now and He's watching you, but He's watching you with adoration and love the same way that a mother or father would look at their child. I want you to know that you are loved. And so today we're going to talk about some of these names.

New Name on a White Stone

Now if I've learned anything in my life, learned anything about myself, names have power. The names we give ourselves, the flags we fly, the names we give our places, names have deep meaning and power in our lives. Throughout my life, I have been called lots of names. I've had all sorts of nicknames. In fact, about ten years ago, I was going through a name crisis because all of my nicknames started catching up with me.

My first name that I was born with after my grandfather and father is Robert. This is a name I don't use very often. It's the one on my driver license from college behind me. That's me with kind of long hair. I look like what's the tallest lanky guy from Scooby Doo? Shaggy, I look like Shaggy with straighter hair maybe. Yes, Robert is the name that they call when I'm at the DMV or at the hospital. And it's an official name, it's this name. I don't go by Robert very often. When I was called Robert by my parents when I was a kid, it meant I was in trouble.

And then as you get older, now as a kid, Bobby became my nickname. This is me Bobby when I turned 10, same age as my daughter. Look at me, all tan, loving California, living the life. It was clearly a pool party. And Bobby is a name that I've had going back as long as I can remember. My dad when I was a kid went by Bob, he switched to Robert later, and so we carry that name. Bobby has a memory for me.

And then later when I went to college, I switched to Robbie. I felt like it was a little more manly. My friends in hockey had called me Robbie on accident, I just sort of went with it, and so when I moved to a new state to go to college, I'm like I'm Robbie now. Meet Robbie.

And then I started dating this beautiful girl named Hannah, who had a cousin named Robbie who she was close to and was uncomfortable kissing a guy named Robbie, it's like kissing your cousin, so she said we got to find a new name for you. You can't keep going by Robbie. And for a brief time in history, you've probably forgotten this, Hannah, I went by another nickname for Robert that a lot of people don't know – Bo. Now there are only a handful of people who called me Bo in my life, and it really didn't last, but there were friends of Hannah's that we went to visit in Albuquerque and we just like tried it on. They didn't know any of our friends or anything and we went out there and she's like this is my boyfriend. Were we married or dating at the time? I can't remember. I think we were just married, but I hadn't met them. And she said this is my husband Bo. And I was like good afternoon, I am Bo. To this day, that couple, they still call me Bo. Did you know that? Well at least her husband does, and I still kind of like it. It has a good memory. Every time someone calls me Bo, I think of Albuquerque. I love you, Albuquerque.

And when we moved back to California, I had forgotten that I had all these friends here and family who had called me Bobby my whole life, and refused to call me Robbie or Rob or Bo, and they were like its Bobby. So I was like you know what, that's good. We're going back to Bobby. It's a true crisis. All jokes aside, all those names for me have different; when someone calls me Robert, Robbie, Bobby, Bo, any of these things, they invoke memories and feelings of my past, of sort of who I was in the timeline of my life. Maybe you have some names like that in your life and some of them are good memories, maybe some of them are not great memories.

When I was a kid, I also had other nicknames. I had a coach who called me Lion Heart. Even to this day when I think about that, it means a lot to me that he saw that personality trait in me. I met a girl named Hannah who started calling me Babe. I met a couple of kids who to this day still call me daddy. And these are all real names. One day people started calling me pastor. And in fact even to this day, every single Sunday morning of my life, there is a pastor of a humungous church in Texas, and every Sunday morning this guy with all this responsibility and influence, a ministry much bigger than mine, texts me and his text always begins with the sentence: Bobby the great. And it always finishes with I love you and I'm proud of you. And I think about that, that name Bobby the great. What if I can embrace that name in my life? Someone tells you enough times that you're great and that you're loved, you start to believe it. When I was a kid, too, and even as an adult, I've had other nicknames, too that weren't great. I had someone when I was a kid that called me expletive s-head all the time. I had a guy that called me scar face. I've had people call me a clown. I've had people call me an f-up and a loser. Maybe you've had people call you these types of names in your life. Somebody calls you a loser, an f-up enough times, you start to believe it. At the end of the day, the only name that matters is the one you believe in! You've had ten/twenty/thirty/a hundred names that parents, friends, enemies, people at stores, people online have called you, and one of these days, some of these days you look in the mirror and you embraced some of those names, the good ones, the bad ones, but this is important that we understand that there are names we have that cannot be taken from us, that are given to us by God, that when we put faith in those things, we become them.

New Name on a White Stone

We become them. We become the names that God puts on us and very often we become the names that our enemies put on us. Don't listen to those names.

I've told you this story before, but when I was a teenager, we had a friend we played basketball with all the time, and his dad bought him ten shares of Nike because he liked basketball, and he didn't really know anything about stocks, he was 16 at the time. And once we found out that he got ten shares of Nike, I don't even remember his real name – we called him Wall Street all the time. He was just Wall Street. That was his nickname for like two years in high school, and actually when we met girls, we used to tell them that he owned Nike, which always went over really well, it was always a fun thing to do and we always got a good response.

Guess what Wall Street became? When he left high school, he went to college and graduate school and became an investment banker. To this day, I wish I could meet this guy again. It's such a great analogy to what we do in our life. Somebody just keeps calling him Wall Street, Wall Street, Wall Street, Wall Street his whole life, and doesn't even know anything about finance, hates math, and yet ends up being an investment banker. Because people have put this label on him.

That can happen in a good way, but it can also happen in a bad way. My uncle, when he was a kid going to church, he had a youth pastor at this very strict holiness church who saw my uncle with long hair, thought that was a sin, didn't like that even though my uncle's a pretty good person, and he called him Charlie Manson. This was a nickname he had, my Uncle Larry: Charlie Manson, Charlie Manson, Charlie Manson. And my uncle went through a very difficult time in his life but came to this total conversion and faith in God, but he points back to that time where he's like when people saw Charlie Manson in me, it just made it so hard for me to believe I could do anything good for God; to believe that there was anything good about me. And it's so silly when you look back at that name, it was just about him having long hair instead of short hair, how much harm that youth pastor caused to my uncle.

Names matter. God has names for you. One of these days, when you get to heaven, God's going to call you a name. I think He'll call you by your first name, but I think He's going to call you something else and that's the name that matters the most. I believe that when God sees you, well God sees you now, but when you see God face to face in heaven, I just think there is going to be an incredible moment where He calls you something like beloved son, beloved daughter, and its going to mean the world to you.

And I think that so much of being a faithful disciple to Jesus is not waiting until we get to heaven to hear God call us by that name, but to now, not only understand in our minds, but believe in our hearts, in our bones that this is what God calls me now. This is what God calls you now! And to put your full faith and belief that God loves you so much, that God is cheering for you, that God has not given up on you, that God has great plans for your future, and that God intends for your future to be much better than your past, and to trust that He's not angry at you and judging you, but He's on your side rooting for you as a father or mother would root for their child. God is rooting for you and is on your side. He's with you, amen? So what the Lord calls us in heaven, He's calling us that now and it's important that we understand that. It's interesting when you read the Bible, you see name changes all the time and usually it's God doing the name change. God loves to change the name of places after important events happen there. God loves to change the names of people. Off the top of your head, you can probably think of a lot of Bible characters whose names were changed. Abram, which means exalted father, becomes Abraham, the father of many. Sarai, which means the princess of Yahweh, becomes Sarah, which actually means either princess or it means female minister.

I'm not going to unpack that for you; but some other time, its preach able, though. Jacob becomes Israel, Daniel becomes Belshazzar, Jesus changes Shimon, which means the obedient one, Simon, He changes his name to Peter. But there's only one person in the Bible I can think of who God didn't change their name, they changed their own name. And he wrote most of the New Testament – his name is Paul. I love Paul's story. Now when we hear Saul to Paul, we think like Abram to Abraham, like it sounds the same, but in the original language it doesn't sound anything like it. It's more like Daniel to Belshazzar. There is no connection in the original languages between Saul and Paul. Saul in Hebrew was Shaool. Everybody at home say Shaool. Let me hear you. All three of you guys, thank you. He goes from Shaool to Paulus. They're not phonetically similar at all.

So Shaool, we have some original sources that are not in the Bible, and Paul's story is an amazing one. Paul's parents were born in a zealot city called Gischala. Zealots were.. I don't want to go too far off here, but zealots were these people in Jesus' day who were almost the level of I hate to say this, but like terrorists today.

New Name on a White Stone

Militant theocrats who used violence, treachery and things like that to try and engage in a type of guerilla warfare to get occupiers out of Israel. And Paul's parents were like this. They were these zealots, both of them; his father was a Pharisee and they grew up in this Gischala city, and they were a part of this major event called the tax revolt, which is a major issue for the Romans. And during this time, his parents were arrested and as the Roman custom was, they were sold into slavery, and were sold to a Roman citizen in the town of Tarsus.

Now think about that just for a moment. The apostle Paul was born a slave, a literal slave. What do you think it's like to be a teenager in the Roman Empire and be a slave? Your owners can do anything they want with you, anything what they want to you, anytime they want, any way they want, you have no rights, you have no property, you have no freedom, you don't have anything. This is Paul.

Paul grows up a Roman slave. His master maybe wasn't too bad because after Paul's master died, he manumitted his parents, freed them, and when that happens in the Roman Empire, you go from slave status to freed man status, and you're actually a Roman citizen. This is how Paul gets his Shaool, I should say. Saul gets his freedom. And so Saul now is this guy and he becomes a Pharisee, and he studies under Gamaliel. Gamaliel is considered one of the greatest rabbis in Judaism. To say that he studied under Gamaliel, imagine you met an astrophysicist today, an old astrophysicist from Princeton, and he said I studied under a guy named Albert Einstein. You'd think that's pretty amazing. When Paul says I was a disciple to Gamaliel, it's like the same impact in his day. He studied under maybe the greatest teaching rabbi in Judaism even today; an important part of all sorts of rabbinic documents.

But Gamaliel is kind of like Jesus in the sense that he taught his students to love their neighbor. Gamaliel said that the greatest commandment was to love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself, quoting the Torah. And even said that your neighbor was the Roman occupier. Now I don't think Paul believed that. Paul studied under Gamaliel, but Paul seemed to struggle with this bitterness, this dislike for Gentiles, and you see it in his origin story. In fact when he's on his way to Damascus, we know that Saul becomes Paul. We know that Saul is persecuting the church, and one of the first churches he's going to persecute is one in Damascus. Damascus was known for inviting Gentiles into this Jewish Christianity that is sort of blossoming. And we know that Saul sort of just hates this. And it's on that road to Damascus that Jesus knocks him off of his horse and covers his eyes in scales and says to him – Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?!

Just a moment – notice how Jesus; Saul's never met Jesus, but Jesus says you're persecuting me. Notice how he totally ties His own person to the church. Anyway. Saul has this amazing conversion experience, spends some time in Jerusalem, and then goes to Arabia to be trained, and then his first convert, and I just love this, now this is Bobby talking. I think Saul the Jewish Pharisee, I believe Saul the Jewish Pharisee hated Gentiles. Saul the Jewish Pharisee hated Romans. He carried bitterness in his heart. He believed in this sort of end of the world view that many Jews of the day had that God was going to wipe out the Gentiles and only Jews would be left. I think that that's what maybe Saul believed.

And he goes from that to becoming maybe the most vocal supporter of Gentiles coming into the church and becoming God's people. In fact, his first convert is a man named Sergius Paulus. You might hear something in that name, huh? Sergius Paulus who was a proconsul to Caesar. This is Paul's first convert. Sergius Paulus. Proconsul is like saying he was the secretary of state. Maybe the number three, number four person in power. Hugely influential.

Saul goes to convert this guy; this is the first convert. Imagine you've just come to faith and your first convert is, I don't know, some key member of the administration. I got to avoid politics. I had all sorts of great jokes that I chose not to tell. Moving along.

Sergius Paulus comes to faith, and it is then that Shaool changes his name to Paul. Why did he choose that name? Look, all these other Bible characters, God changes their names. God changes their names to some new meaning. Do you know what Paul means in Greek? It means short! Short! And this adds to the fact that Paul himself was short and bald. And Paul chooses a name short one. Why? Despite the pejorative nature of the name Paul, he picks Paul because it was his first convert. Paul decides to make the calling of his life his name. He chooses this name Paulus to remind him that the reason he is here on earth is because God forgave him and sent him to bring the Gentiles, and even people of influence into the kingdom of God to be world changers. I think that Paul believed that that old way, that old pharisaical life of bitterness and anger and legalism and the harm that he did to so many people, he would never be that man again. He would be the man that Jesus made on the road to Damascus. He would become Paul.

New Name on a White Stone

Although he's short and literal, he's a man of power and his calling is the thing that drives him and the thing that makes him wake up in the morning. I am Paul! And God has a name for you.

Maybe when you look in the mirror, and you see all the things you don't like about yourself, you remember all the stories of your life that you're really embarrassed about. You think of all the things you feel guilty about. All the ways you don't fit in or you're not like this person or that person. It's easy to embrace those really horrible, negative names that others or maybe you yourself said to you. And I want to say to you that God has such an awesome name for you, as it says in Revelation, as Hannah read this morning. He says "whoever has ears, let them hear. But the spirit says to the churches, to the one who is victorious" that's you, "I will give some hidden manna" that means He's going to sustain you and nurture you "and I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it known only to the one who receives it."

I want you to believe that as Paul said that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. You are free. And I just want to speak over you the things that God thinks about you. That you are loved, that you are a conqueror, that you are great, that you are victorious, that you are the head and not the tail, that you are above and not beneath, that you are righteous in His name, that you are justified, that the path before you is good and not evil, that you walk by faith and not by sight, that you are a person of power, an influencer full of light and full of love, you're a leader and people need people like you. And I'm so proud, so proud of you, and so happy for you because I know that so much good is coming in your life. You are so, so loved.

I'll just finish with this. Every single week, we say this creed and sometimes it's kind of hard to believe. We always say I'm not what I do, I'm not what I have, I'm not what people say about me. Man, the world says the exact opposite. You are what you do. You are your stuff, and you are your reputation. And we just cast that idol down. In a time when you can't do anything, it's hard not to feel kind of worthless. There's very little we can do right now that's productive in the world's eyes, but there's a lot we can do that's productive for the kingdom like pray and love our neighbor and grow deeper in our friendships and our relationships, and commit our lives in ministry to God.

It's easy to think I am what I have, and most of us have lost a lot. We've lost a lot financially. We've lost a lot of progress that we've made in our careers or projects. I know lots of people like here in L.A. who are gig workers and they had all these amazing things lined up that have just gone away. Those things do matter and they do matter to God, but it's hard not to feel like a part of your identity is gone because a lot of what you have is gone. In fact most of us, the only thing we've gained during this time is the COVID-19; that is 19 pounds. That's what I've gained.

No, but it's hard not to feel bummed and sad about what we've lost. And we may have more physical things to lose, and that's also part of it, but remember that has nothing to do with God's love for you. That God loves to replace ten/sixty/a hundred fold what we've lost when we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. God loves to turn tragedy into triumph. He is someone that's going to turn this story around. You're in the middle of the book, not the end, and I just believe that if you are able to not get too worried about what you've lost, you're going to see God bring new things in your life. And of course you're not what other people say about you. That is one saving grace about the coronavirus is we are all lazy together, so that's kind of nice.

There's not a lot of judgment going around in terms of not being produced, but I am starting to see party lines being drawn for some reason, which I think is really not a good idea right now to get political. I'm starting to see that people are being really vicious to others. There's not a lot of grace, and I just want to say none of us have gone through this before. This is really hard for everybody. And everyone is going to respond in different ways. Pastor Russ said something like this earlier. It's just like some of us we feel like we have to be angry but we don't know who to be angry at. And I just want to encourage you that during this time you relax and be careful not to give negative names to other people because you feel frustrated. In fact, people need the kind of person you are, which is an encourager, the one who is putting good names on others. You put a good name on someone enough times they're going to start to believe it. That's the power that your words have in your neighbors life.

When you begin to encourage your husband, encourage your wife, encourage your children, encourage your parents, encourage your neighbors, be slow to anger, be quick to mercy and forgiveness, and compliment and help and don't feel like anybody owes you. During this time, the more gracious you can be, you'll be just like cool water to a thirsty person in the desert. To just be an encourager, and that's who you are.

New Name on a White Stone

You're such an encouraging person and that's who the world needs today. They need someone like you who's not going around judging and getting all angry, but somebody who's super encouraging, and I'm so grateful for you.

Friends, we are all in this together alone, aren't we. That's kind of a way of thinking about it. We're all alone, but we're not alone. We're separate, but we're not divided. We're together and I just so love that things like this have made available for us to gather as a church virtually, for us to worship together as a church. And I do know that you miss this place and we miss you so much and can't wait to see you again soon. Remember you are God's beloved. No one can take that from you and I just believe this is going to be the best week so far for you during this shelter in place.

Let's close with a word of prayer: Father, we thank you so much that you love us just as we are. And so Lord, as children reaching up to their parents, we reach out to you and say Lord, we open our hearts and our minds to your spirit. Thank you for the spirit of joy and life and love. We thank you that's who you are, God, and we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.