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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're so happy that you've joined us. God knows you fully and He loves you fully so you can trust Him completely. You really can. Thank you so much for joining us today. We love you.

BS: Hey we're so glad you're joining us and no matter where you are, we're just so grateful you're here and we believe that God is going to have a special word for you this morning or this evening, wherever you're watching. And we believe that you're watching for a reason, so let's begin with a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you that your Holy Spirit is on the move. Lord, we don't always understand why things are happening in the world the way they are, but you do. You know why and we can trust you. We can trust your vision, your power and your life. And we thank you, God, that you haven't walked out on us, you haven't abandoned us, you're not cursing us, but Lord, in Jesus' name we come before your throne boldly as a child would come to her or his father. And we just say thank you, Lord, for the way that you love us, and we pray in Jesus' name for your peace today, and we ask it, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen. Turn around to the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Joshua 1:7-9 – Hannah Schuller

So recently I just finished reading the book of Judges, and it's such an interesting book of the Bible because you see this repetition thing going over and over, and you see how God does all of these miracles to deliver His people from slavery, and then when they finally settle into the Promised Land, they're enjoying peace and great prosperity as they honor God. But then after the last person from that generation dies, it says the next generation does not know God, and they forsake God, and they turn from Him and they start worshipping idols of these other cultures that are around them, and they become corrupt.

And God becomes angry because these are His kids. He loves and they've broken their covenant with Him and His blessing leaves them. And because His blessing isn't with them anymore, they end up falling back into slavery. And once they're in slavery they're in torment, agony again, and they're crying out to God – God, forgive us, save us.

So then what does God do? He raises up a prophet and the prophet helps deliver them. And then that generation lives in prosperity and peace and they honor God, they live with God. And then what's so sad to me is as soon as the prophet dies, it says the next generation after that forsakes God and they don't know God. And you see this pattern going over and over again all through Judges. And in my mind, I'm like man, what is going on here? Why is it that whole generations can do this? And I believe it's because in their peace and prosperity, growing up in that, they become comfortable and they stop pursuing God, and stop going after Him, and when you stop pursuing you can easily let the other things around you, the other cultures overtake and they became like the people that they are around, the cultures that worshipped other idols.

And when I read this, I thought to myself, I'm like Lord, I want my generation to know you. I want us to love you with all of our hearts and our souls and our mind and our strength. I want us to enjoy your peace and prosperity and your goodness. I want generations after us to walk with you.

Then I thought about how grateful I am for you, church family, that you seek God and that you love Him.

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And then two or three days ago, I saw the scripture for today and I said yes! Lord, let it be so. So now in preparation for the message, Joshua 1:7-9.

Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn from it to the right or to the left that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this book of the law always on your lips. Meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid and do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. Amen.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

If you're at home or those who are here, would you stand with me? We're going to say this creed together as we do every single Sunday. 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. Amen!

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller " Fear God for a Fearless Life"

Well we are certainly living in strange times. Seems like every single day you can get online and find another Karen screaming at somebody about wearing a mask or not wanting this or that. I can be Karen sometimes. I was that way when I found out Disneyland was postponing their opening, and maybe it's a smart thing to do, but it was still sad!

And it's weird how everybody in this environment seems to have their temperatures really high about everything. I think there's a reason for this. I was recently listening to a podcast and I don't know how valid this is but it seemed to make sense to me. He was talking about road rage. You remember what it was like to learn how to drive? Maybe you don't. I do. I remember learning to drive was such a weird thing. It was like I would see my sister, my older sister driving and she'd be like driving with a knee and like eating a hamburger and like doing her makeup. And I got behind the wheel and I was instantly like really scared. Kind of excited but really scared and I'm like blinker turn right, and like fast accelerate, hard brake, and my dad slamming his head on the dashboard. And over time, you learn to be less like that kid and more like my sister where it just becomes a casual thing.

But it's interesting how you see people on the road. They get this road rage thing. And his explanation was that psycho dynamically we have sort of our conscious stuff that's going on, and then we have our unconscious stuff that's going on. And when you get good at driving, consciously you're relaxed, you're listening to the radio, you're talking on the phone, but unconsciously every time you drive, your body and mind sort of knows that you're going 80 miles an hour. You're going 60 miles an hour. That there are these other giant thousand pound chunks of metal within a couple of feet of you and they're going fast and that your life is in danger. And so even consciously you're relaxed, unconsciously your senses are heightened; your spidey senses. You're like you're ready for everything. And so when somebody cuts you off, consciously it makes you mad, but unconsciously that tension makes what would be a little thing become a big thing because unconsciously you know you're in a dangerous situation.

And I think what's happening with COVID, if that's true, I think something similar is going on with COVID-19. Again, this is just Bobby talking, right? That consciously you might feel relaxed, bored, maybe a little lazy, kind of not really sure what's coming, but unconsciously all these news reports, which are serious news reports, and all these things that are going on, unconsciously we know we're in danger and so our senses are heightened. And they've stayed heightened for months now so underneath we've got this fearful anxiety going on where up top, we're just like oh whatever, so that when someone crosses us, when something bad happens, we tend to react in a much bigger, more intense way because there's a severity in what's going on. Does that make sense?

Ultimately what I'm getting at is that even though many of us don't think maybe we're scared at this time, unconsciously or consciously a lot of us are really scared. And it's affecting the way we're thinking, it's affecting the way we're praying, people with addiction issues are going to be having a harder time during this time, wanting to sort of self-medicate after not having coping mechanisms.

And there's all these ways that we're feeling scared and it can cause problems in our work, for those of us who still have to work, or in having fun or in our social life, and especially in our spiritual lives.

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And it is so important that we understand that fear, that worry, it just poisons everything. It makes us do foolish things sometimes. It makes us overreact in ways that we shouldn't.

And I want you to know that you can today receive peace from the Holy Spirit that no matter what happens, God holds you in His hand. That you are safer than you think, and that God is watching over you and this is a good thing and we can live every day relaxed, trusting in His kingdom. And more than relaxed, in this world we can live with bold faith and bold purpose in all that we do. We can be courageous, as the Bible says, and bold in our faith and in our walk.

One of my favorite stories is about John Wesley. John Wesley who founded the Wesleyan Movement, the Methodists, etc., and is probably the most important early modern theologian for Christianity, he had this radical conversion experience, and one of the most important memories he shares is being on a boat. He was on a boat going from Europe to the America's, and there were all sorts of different people in the boat, mostly English people. He himself was English. But there was this small group of Moravian German missionaries who were on their way to the America's to share the gospels with the colonies.

And while they were on the boat, it's a dangerous thing when you think about how it would take weeks or months, I don't really know, in 1736, I don't know how long it took, but it was awhile, and it's a scary and dangerous journey. And these Moravian missionaries would have worship every single day. And they were having this worship gathering and they're singing the Psalms together, and Wesley says that there's this terrible storm that comes, and it gets worse and worse and the waves start crashing and it gets worse and worse, and people begin to panic. All while everybody is panicking, these Moravians in this bizarre sort of peaceful spirit continue to sing the Psalms. It gets so bad that one of the main masts which is the pole that goes up, shatters and breaks and splits over the boat. And this point, everybody freaks out except these Moravians who continue to sing and worship the Lord.

Now am I saying I would be like one of those Moravians? I would not. I would be probably one of those people that are freaking out. But it also makes me want to be like those Moravians and it made Wesley want to be like those Moravians. He asked them afterward, why weren't you scared? Were you scared? And they said no, we were trusting the Lord. We're not afraid of death. We're not afraid of storms. We're not afraid of any of this. And he just talked about how deep their faith was in God that even in this horrible time where everybody is freaking out, they were able to remain calm and continue to worship. And because of that, John Wesley points to that experience as one of the most compelling things that made him want to become an on fire Christian, and of course, he did and fire is the word.

Your boldness and your faith and your calm when your family is going through a tough time, when your business is going through a tough time, your ability to not deny that things are scary, but at least to stay calm and sing the Psalms and trust the Lord and have bold confidence, it does more than just get you through. It causes other people to say I want that. I want to be a follower of Jesus. I want to be more like this person. I want to be a person that has bold faith, that has confidence even when things get tough. And I want you to know today that God will give you today, if you open up your heart, a spirit of confidence, of power, of a sound mind. He's not given you a spirit of fear. And today, if we're feeling afraid or we're feeling worried, we're going to receive from the Holy Spirit a peace that only Christ can give us, an inner peace that has fruits of joy and compassion, and we're going to bring down those spidey senses and we're going to relax and live with bold faith and confidence towards where God wants us to go.

God loves bold faith. When I read these scriptures, Hannah was reading Judges, Judges and Joshua and the whole Bible seems to point to so much of this, just how much the Lord loves bold faith. Jesus even, when He was talking to His disciples, His little teaser, nickname for His disciples was 'you of little faith,' or maybe a better way to say it is He would say you little faiths, and He would pat them on the head. Jesus wanted His disciples to walk with faith, which is utter and complete trust. That you utterly and completely trust God with your life to the point that you're able to do super natural things in His kingdom, and I believe that's what God wants for you today.

You are bold, you are faith filled, you are courageous, you are stronger than you know, and I just believe that even at the end of this message, God's going to do something special in your life to give you the kind of faith you need to endure whatever it is you're going through. It's the kind of faith that we can only receive through the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus. God loves bold faith, so receive that faith today and release the faith that God has given you as you walk every day in this COVID-19 thing, or whatever it is you're going through.

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Okay, I want to get to the scripture today. Hannah read this wonderful scripture that I think I will use as my benediction someday down the line, but I have to get better at memorizing it. I always fumble it up. Every time I try to do it, I forget it in the middle, so I got to do it a few more times. Okay. And this comes from Joshua.

But before we get to Joshua, there's a background to this story. Many of us we know the story that God freed the Hebrew people from the hand of Pharaoh, and He brings these people, His chosen people, covenant people, He's bringing them on a path to the Promised Land. First they stop at Mt. Sinai for a year, and then when they're ready to go, the cloud begins to move and they begin to walk towards the Promised Land. Now here's something that a lot of us don't know. This is Bobby talking, okay. The Bible doesn't explicitly say this, but I don't think it was supposed to take 40 years. I think it was supposed to take 11 or 12 days. That's how long it would take if you went uber slow to walk from Egypt to the Promised Land, its 11 days, and it took them 40 years.

And this is why it took 40 years. When they got close after going through wilderness of Paran, when they got close, Moses gathers 12 spies, one from each tribe. And he tells each of these spies, guys, go down to the Promised Land, take a look and tell me what you see. All 12 of them come back and they say everyone, nation of Israel, this land is amazing. It's flowing with milk and honey, which is an expression that means it has a lot of cattle and a lot of farm. There's tons of food. This is a prosperous, beautiful, wonderful place. But ten of those spies say 'but there is no way we can conquer and settle in this place.' They say there are walled cities, and these armies are strong, and they even have nephilim. Nephilim are these.. don't get me started, but they're this half angel, half man titan type giants. It might just mean giants, but anyway, there's nephilim or giants in the land. And so ten of these tribes say there's no way we can do it. But there's two: Joshua and Caleb who say absolutely we should do it! God said this is our land, God has commanded us to do it. Look what God has done. We should go into Israel and we should take it.

And so what happens is the ten spies who doubted, they start to rile everybody up, and everybody's already grumpy anyway, because they're in the middle of the desert and they're hungry and they're thirsty. And they start to get upset at Moses, and they start to like begin this mutiny where they're going to pick a new leader and they're going to go back to Egypt and be slaves again. And then like the Shekinah glory shows up in the tent and it kind of scares off the mutiny. And Moses goes before God and says what do I do with these people? And God looks at Moses and He says I got a great idea. Let's just wipe 'em out and we're going to start all over with you. I'm done with them. You have a bunch of new kids and your family and your household, they're going to be the new people.

And we're going to talk about this later about loving your enemies and sticking up. Remember, these are people who hate Moses, maybe even want to kill him. And Moses is arguing with God to save them or protect them, and Moses says something like you can't kill them because then the nations will say look at what kind of God you serve. He just takes them out into the desert and kills them, and then God says all right, I'll forgive them, I'll forgive them, I will. These hard necked people, I forgive them, but I'm going to give them what they want. If they don't want to go into the Promised Land, they don't have to go into the Promised Land, and they never will.

Have you ever noticed that the 40 year wandering through the desert is God in a way giving those people everything they wanted? They didn't want to go into the Promised Land. They didn't want to fight. They didn't want to stand up for something. They didn't want to do anything dangerous. They wanted to have manna from heaven, a cloud over their head, a fire over their head at night when it got cold. They wanted to be safe. They never wanted to leave. And God said fine! If that's what you want, take it!

I don't want to be like them. God said any single man or woman that saw me part the Red Sea, that saw me send the angel of death, that saw me spare the first born, that saw me send the river of blood, that saw me do these amazing things through Moses, that saw the pillar of fire, that saw the cloud by day, that saw me protect them this far and still said no, we can't go into Canaan, they shall never enter! Anyone who saw that and still said no will never enter the Promised Land.

And I remember, I feel like when I read this Joshua passage, this is 40 years after that event, Joshua is standing on the precipice about to cross the river and to enter the Promised Land. I think he remembers the story. It was 40 years ago now, he's an old man, and he remembers what it was like to be a young man and to see the promise, and to have a bunch of people who were scared, who didn't trust God, to say no, we're staying here forever. And I think this is why, one, why God chose Joshua to be the new Moses to Israel, and two, why Joshua, the book of Joshua begins with this passage.

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Moses dies in the book of Joshua, Joshua's supposed to bring the people into the Promised Land, they're about to cross the Jordan River and enter into the Promised Land, and before this happens, God says to Moses in Joshua 1, "be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn from it to the right or to the left that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this book of the law always on your lips. Meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." I think bold and courageous is what Joshua already was, and it was everything he wanted to be.

I sometimes read this passage and I wonder if God was giving Joshua permission to be strong and courageous. People like you, people who are strong, people who are bold and courageous – sometimes it's easy to feel guilty for being bold, for being strong, for being courageous, but I believe that God wants you to be that way. That God is happy with courage. That God loves the kind of bold faith that you have.

And in a season like this in COVID-19, we need people like you who are strong, who are courageous, who are clear minded, who are brave to say and to do what is right, and to do it in a spirit of kindness, love and boldness. God loves bold faith, the kind of bold faith that you have and the kind of bold faith that God will continue to give you and pour into your heart. The more afraid you are, I believe the more God is going to pour the spirit of peace upon you; to give you a sense of trust and wisdom to get through whatever it is you're going through. One of those keys is to understand how involved and how powerful God is in your life and in the universe. I remember when I was a kid, I had a very good friend named Ian, and I never forgot this as a kid. He said.. it was like nine years old, and he said 'Bobby, you want to know something? My grandma is afraid of God.' I said 'she's what?' He goes 'she's afraid of God.' I remember thinking why would somebody be afraid of God? Of course as I got older, I realized he didn't understand that his grandmother feared the Lord. And as a kid, when you hear the word "fear the Lord," it's like well what does that mean? And it made me instantly think that his grandma was probably not a very scared person, but a very brave person because anyone who truly fears God and is at peace with God, is a person with bold faith. If you have fear God but you're at peace with God, you're a person of bold faith.

Proverbs 9:10 says, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the holy one is understanding." What does that mean – the fear of the Lord. Well, I think a lot of times people say it means respect. I think it's more than that. I mean that's a good start, but it reminds me of this. I like etymology. Did you know the word "awful" and the word "awesome" in their roots effectively mean the same thing. It's like the word "awe" is supposed to mean wonder but with a tinge of like ooo, this is scary. One place I'm in utter awe is when I go to Yosemite and I stand at the foot of El Capitan, a three thousand foot granite cliff. The first time I saw it, I was filled with a sense of wonder, but it was also in weird way scary to me. You might say that if you're standing in the woods by the river looking up at El Capitan, that it's awesome. But if you're in the middle of El Capitan as a free climber and you're trying to get to the top and your fingers are getting shaky, that it's awful.

You might say that if you are at peace with God, that God is awesome, and if you're in rebellion towards God, that God is awful. And that is because God is so full of power that He is something to be not scared of, but that when you truly meditate and think of God, that there's something in your heart that says wondrous but heavy. Not to be played around with. Not to be teased. And that's important when it comes to living a life of faith because if you fear God and you're at peace with God, you have nothing else in the universe to be afraid of because this is a God who loves you. He loves you. Will save you from anything, and He saves us even from death. It's the same way that we think of fire. You treat it with a sense of respect. Or maybe you might think of like back in the day when I was a little kid, my dad was really into like working out and he got huge and buff and he turned into this like muscle man, and it was really kind of a cool thing for like a ten year old boy. And I remember thinking that like if I was in trouble with my dad, that was kind of a scary thing to have my dad be 'Bobby, what did you do to your sisters.' But when I was on the playground, if I saw some kid that maybe intimidated me or was a bully and my dad was there, I felt very safe. I feared my dad, but I certainly was not worried of anything bad happening as long as my dad stood by my side.

Or it's like this. I remember Hannah had this very cute dog, a shiatzu named Mozart. This is a picture of Mozart here. What a lovely dog. And Mozart had this way of like being really scared about everything, and like a big dog would come by and Mozart would like kind of hide, but then when Hannah's dad or mom would pick up Mozart, all of a sudden it would go (BARKING SOUNDS),

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barking at the big dog, (BARKING SOUNDS) and then they put the dog down and he'd like scamper away. This is kind of what walking in the life of faith is like, where when we feel and experience the protection and the embrace of God though nobody else can see it, it gives us not the boldness to bark and scream and be rude, but it gives us the boldness to do the next right thing. To be the people we've been called to be. To not worry every single day about everything that's going to happen, but to be smart and responsible and wise and full of joy and full of life, to continue to be the people who can let things, excuse me, let things go, and to love our neighbor, and to be kind to those who need it, especially in this time that's very difficult, and that's who you are.

I'm so grateful for people like you who do not live in a spirit of fear, but in a spirit of boldness, of faith. And people who are not always worried about themselves, but can see the pain of their spouse, their kids, their next door neighbor, even their enemies, even the people at the grocery store who maybe don't wear a mask and are screaming at everybody, but you can be like that calm grocery attendant who is kind to that person. And I just think it's so important that we have more and more people like you who are at peace with God, and that gives them a sense of peace even in a time like this in the world we live in.

I'll close with this. The number one command in the Bible, its mentioned more than any other command, is "fear not." Every time an angel appears and is about to do something great for the people that are seeing them, the first thing they say in almost every case is don't be afraid. Fear not. And that is God's command to you today. Just don't be afraid. It's going to be okay. Don't be afraid of people who hate you. Maybe during this time as people just are continuing to be more anxious and frustrated and take things out, it can feel like there are people who hate you because of your faith, or maybe because of your race, or because of something in your background, or your job for some reason they hate you. And I just want to say don't be afraid of people who hate you. In fact, just be afraid if everybody loves you.

I think there's a greater danger in trying to live a life where you just please everybody and make everybody happy. Remember that God has told us that if we're following after Him with all our heart, that there are going to be people who mock us, who persecute us, who tease us, let it go. Love your neighbor. Show them what it means to have the spirit of humility and life within you where you can love your enemies, love your competitors and pray for those who maybe don't like you or whatever, having a weird posture towards you. Let it go. Move on. Don't let them poison your life. Life is too good to be brought down by people like that.

Number two: don't fear desperate circumstances. Maybe your company has run out of cash. Maybe your unemployment is over and you don't have a job lined up. Maybe you're in a time where you yourself are struggling with a health issue and the worst thing that we can do when we get into desperate circumstances is to be gripped by fear and to freeze. The best thing we can do when we're in desperate circumstances is turn our hearts towards God and trust in Him. One of the best places to see people turning to the Lord is on an airplane when it goes through turbulence. There's something that naturally happens to us. When people are afraid of flying, they're not religious at all. All of a sudden the plane starts shaking and you see people praying and that's a good thing. It's good that when we're afraid, we turn to the Lord. That we don't be gripped by fear but we can rest in Him and in His will.

Don't be afraid of demons or evil spirits. There's always going to be something that goes bump in the night, and sometimes maybe you've grown up where you have this deep sense of this type of thing. Don't even worry about it! God has already conquered hell,

He's already conquered everything like that. He has filled you with the light and power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus literally dwells inside your body. Remember what happened to demons in the gospels anytime Jesus came around? The demons cowered, and that's what happens with you.

There's this story, and I'm sure it's apocryphal. It's too good to be true. This story about Martin Luther, that he heard a bump in the night and he woke up and he looked in the corner and he saw Satan sitting in the corner. And he looked at him and he said, "oh its only you," and he just want back to bed. That's the exact posture you should have towards these types of things. Don't worry about evil spirits or things that go bump in the night, or anything scary like that. God's given you all the authority in the world.

And finally, and maybe most importantly, don't be afraid of the dreams that God has given you. It's hard when you've pursued so many dreams and goals and so many of those dreams have been shattered or broken. You think I can't go through that another time. Maybe you've had multiple miscarriages and you're just done trying, and you think I can't have another miscarriage.

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Or maybe you've tried to start a business and you're just.. I just can't do it again. Maybe God's put a ministry on your heart, and it just hasn't worked out. We can learn from what went wrong. We can learn from the past, but if you really believe that God has put a dream on your heart, it's okay to nurture that dream. Maybe you don't do it, or whatever, but at least don't be afraid of it. Don't back away from it. Don't say to yourself I can't go through that ever again. Life is always going to be full of difficult things, but I want you to know that God gave it to you because He knew you could do it. That God made you the kind of courageous, bold person you are, and He's going to help you do what you need to do next, if it's the right thing. Reach for His word, reach for His spirit, do your best to be more like Christ as a disciple, and all of those other things will take care of themselves. You don't have to be afraid and you're not. You are a bold, brave, smart, intelligent person. God has filled you with His spirit, and He's going to help you get through whatever it is you're going through. Remember, He loves you and I love you and this church loves you, and you're going to do it, and we trust the Lord with whatever it is we're going through.

Father, we thank you and we love you and we know, God, that you love bold faith. Help us understand what it means to release our faith with power and courage and authority, the kind of authority you've given us through your spirit to walk in all that we do as though you're doing it right with us. And we thank you God that everything we do is yours. That Lord, we can trust these things that are important to us, that they're important to you, too. Lord, we love you and we trust you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.