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Hour of Power vom 11.10.2020

GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Hello.

HS: Welcome visitors and church family. It feels great to be with you. Thank you for being here today. Remember today that worrying and prayer is not the same thing; that prayer is a time to cast all your cares upon Him for He cares for you. Thank you so much for being here! We love you. You are loved.

BS: We are so glad that you're in the house today. And you know this is a hospitality church. We just want to welcome you no matter where you're coming from, or how you're feeling today, we're so, so glad that you're here and we want you to know that we love you, we like you. We want you to know that God loves you just as you are and not as you should be. And we just really pray that you'll leave this place today with a full heart, we really do. We're so excited because today we have Christine Caine who's going to be preaching for us. Christine, welcome! I heard the sermon last service; it's going to be wonderful. You really are going to be encouraged.

HS: You're in for a treat.

BS: Let's begin with a word of prayer. Lord, we thank you that you love us; that your Holy Spirit is here, even now dwelling with us, speaking to us, healing us, renewing us, calling us. I pray in Jesus' name, Lord, that all of us would hear from you today. I also pray, God, that we would all remember this is all for an audience of one. This is for you, Jesus Christ. We're doing this to lift up your name and let you know, God, that we are so committed to following you with all our heart, all our soul and all our strength. Lord, we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 3:1-13 (ESV) - Hannah

In preparation for the message, Genesis 3:1-13, English Standard version: Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and she ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Amen.

INTERVIEW – CHRISTINE CAINE

(VIDEO ROLL IN: Christine Caine is an incredibly gifted author and speaker who pours the message of purpose into millions of lives all over the world. She and her husband Nick also founded A21, the human trafficking organization that aims to abolish modern day slavery. Please welcome, Christine Caine.)

BS: Christine, hi! It is so awesome to have you here. We're so thrilled and I know a lot of people have been looking forward to this visit. Thank you for coming.

CC: I'm pumped to be here.

BS: So tell us, for those who don't know you, a little bit about your ministry. First you started in Hillsong and you had a platform, you did a lot of work with youth and women. Tell us a little bit about how that all began.

CC: I did, I came to faith in Christ when I was in my early 20's at Hillsong in Sydney Australia, and then I started working in youth ministry and then began to oversee a national youth movement in Australia from there. Sort of around 2007/2006, I was at an airport and I saw kind of posters of missing children and women, and my friend from UNICEF, this was my first contact, said to me that these are the alleged victims of human trafficking. At that point, I've got to be honest, I went what do you mean human trafficking? And she said you know there are more slaves on the earth today than ever before. And I said there can't be. We've had the Emancipation Proclamation Act, we had the Freedom from Slavery Act, I honestly did not think it really existed. I went on to find out that it's the fastest growing crime worldwide, and that was where things really began to shift. My husband and I went..

BS: Wait that's true. Slavery is the fastest growing crime worldwide.

CC: Crime worldwide. Bigger than the crime of selling drugs or armaments, the buying and selling of human beings is the number one crime that's growing. And so in that I had never thought that was something I was going to do. We were doing a lot of kind of evangelism and helping churches around the world, a lot of mission, a lot of working with young people, and just to briefly say it, I was about to teach from the parable of the Good Samaritan and I felt just the Lord in my heart say to me as I was preparing: Christine, you think you're the Samaritan, don't you, because you're running around doing all this work around the world, but you're more like the Levite and the priest. Yes I know, the Lord's very subtle when He speaks to me. And it was more like you're so busy going to do your next Christian thing and speak at your next Christian conference that you see those posters, those women and those children as an interruption to your ministry rather than the object of your ministry. And so it was then that I knew this wasn't something that I was supposed to just walk by but that God let me notice because He had something that I could never have fathomed what we see today, but the Lord had to arrest my heart so that I wouldn't look away because that's what happens when we see so much injustice. And when you look, you can look away, but when you really see, you can never un-see, and that's what happened for me.

BS: We had Kate from your ministry recently and she told us a bit about what you're doing, and it is mind blowing the huge effect A21 is. Isn't it amazing when you just do what God tells you to do, the stuff He can do.

CC: And look what happened even.. right now we're standing here, but a lot of my teams launching It's a Penalty where the Super Bowl is about to happen, just.. I mean so there are going to be millions..

BS: You're doing something in Cambodia now..

CC: ..being educated right now, all of that happening in Thailand and the UK, 15 countries around the world.

BS: I really love, too, how you're helping women. You're not just pulling women out of this trafficking, but you're taking time to help them heal, to be saved, and redeeming.

CC: Oh yes, our after care is bringing through.. and it's not just women, its men. I posted the other day we had 18 men rescued out of forced labor trafficking and so I mean it's a real thing.

BS: That's awesome. Wow, Christine, well we're just so glad you're here today and we just really believe that what you're doing matters, its important, people need to know about it, and we're just very thankful that you're here today. Also excited to hear what you're going to be preaching about, and so we'll be anticipating that, so thank you, Christine, for being here. And where do you hope A21 will be if you have five/ten/twenty years from now, what do you hope you guys will be doing?

CC: Oh, pastor my major hope would be that we don't need to exist. That all of us together.

BS: What a good answer! That's so awesome!

CC: It would be awesome. Our goal is to abolish slavery everywhere forever so I know I've done my job when I don't need to do my job anymore.

BS: Christine, we're going to hear you speak in just a little bit. Thank you so much for being here. What an encouragement!

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, would you hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with the world. Thanks.

MESSAGE – CHRISTINE CAINE – "Shame Off You"

Hello, church! I am honored to be here this morning, and I am here, incidentally with the single most ravishing piece of masculine flesh on planet earth. You're like freaking out. This is my husband of 24 years, Nick, he's on front row. And we love your pastors, Pastor Bobby and Hannah, they are just absolutely awesome. You ought to thank God that you're planted in such a great church with such great leaders, because they are fantastic. And you all can sing over there. And Bridgette, you took us to church. I was ready to run a lap. That was fantastic.

I'm so excited to be here. If you're wondering what the accent is, you'll love the accent. This is how the queen speaks English on her better days. She sent us all out as convicts to Australia and I tell everyone here in America you all threw the tea out in Boston, but we still drink tea in Australia. But I live down the road now. We moved and so I'm a local. And it's just my privilege to be here.

I'm both Greek and a woman, and so I only speak three ways: hard, fast and continuously, so you won't go to sleep this morning, and you will get out for lunch, so don't freak out. But we're going to dive straight into the text and read the word of God, and I'm so glad that Hannah read it because I love reading God's word several times. We're going to draw some things from it today.

Let me introduce you first to my daughters, if you have a photo. This is my daughters: Catherine Bobbie is going to be 18 in a few weeks and Sophia Joyce just turned 14. And my husband, I tell everyone he's the 14th of 15 children and so his mother had 15 full term pregnancies in 17 years. I know all the women have just crossed their legs and they're freaking out. But I tell everyone there was like no television in that part of Australia so there was nothing else to do. And so I would take my children to my mother-in-law, and I'd say 'this is Catherine Bobbie my Alpha, and this is Sophia Joyce my Omega' and I wanted her to know this is the beginning and the end of my child bearing years. And so that's how it kind of works and you could tell that good Catholic stock there. So they're my kids.

My eldest has just started dating a boy, which is fascinating because my husband had him come over for an interview. He had to call our secretary and book an interview to come to our office because he wanted him to come to the office to see and know that we put human traffickers in jail for a living, so he wanted him to understand that. And then he said to him, to this boy Jackson, 'I need you to know the purpose of this interview is not for us to become friends, but I have printed out the data and according to the data, only one point two percent of high school romances end up in marriage. So Jackson, the purpose of this interview is I want you to know that there is a 98.8% probability that you will not be marrying my daughter. So I want you to explain to me what your plan is for dating somebody else's wife.' And so that was the beginning of the meeting. So just want you to know the kind of man that I'm married to, but we might just jump in and for all of our television audience, there you go. That's what we are.

The Bible says now in Genesis chapter 3, Hannah read the text: "but now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'did God actually say.'" I want you to catch this this morning. Very briefly we're going to talk about three of the most important questions in scripture. Three of the first questions that arrive in scripture. Those three questions are all in Genesis chapter 3. Did God really say is question number one. "Did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" And the woman said to the serpent, 'we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die.'

But the serpent said to the woman, 'you will not surely die.'" That's what the enemy loves to do. He loves to tell you that if you do the opposite of what God said to do, then it's all going to be okay. I'm not sure how that's working for the world, but last time I checked, not that well.

And so it goes on and he says, "for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be open and you'll be like God knowing good and evil." Again, another lie of the enemy. He just thinks like God's in heaven very nervous about you might be like God. We are created, He is creator. Whichever way you slice it up, we are not going to be Him.

And so it goes on. "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband." Why sin alone when you can do it with someone else. It's more fun. "Who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths, and they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden, but the Lord God called to the man and He said 'where are you?'" Question number two. First question God asks humanity in the Bible. Where are you? Where are you?

It goes on: "and he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid cause I was naked and I hid myself.' He said 'who told you that you were naked?'" Question number three. "Who told you? Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said 'the woman whom you gave to be with me.'" Some things never change. It's not my fault, its hers, but anyway. Just putting it out there. "The women whom you gave you to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'what is this that you have done?' The woman said 'the serpent deceived me and I ate.'" And therein lies the origin of the victim culture. Therein lies the origin of the blame culture. It didn't start in 2020 on a hash tag on Twitter. It started right here in the garden of Eden. It's not my fault! She made me do it. He made me do it. It's not my fault. The absence and the abdication of personal responsibility started right there, and it has just permeated our lives ever since.

But here we go. The enemy comes in, the Bible says that he's more crafty than any other animal, and that would be because he understood the power of trying to undermine the word of God. You see he understood that all I have to do is get humanity to not believe what God said. Or I'm going to twist what God said to make it sound like what God wants for you is not good. So that if I can undermine the very character and nature of God, I am going to set it process something that is going to destroy humanity, and it hasn't changed. Not even in the 21st century, the plan of the enemy is always the same. First question he asks humanity is did God really say? Do you wonder why the word of God is under so much attack in our society? Do you wonder why the word of God has always tried to be undermined throughout all of history. Because if the enemy can make you think that what God has for you is not good for you, or what God has said about you is not good for you, then you will live your life contrary to the truth of the word of God. You'll listen to the wisdom of the world; the wisdom of somebody else or someone on TV or whatever the latest magazine says, instead of knowing who you are based on the word of God.

I have to tell you today there is nothing more important than knowing what God says about you. I could testify to that out of my own life. I was left in a hospital unnamed and unwanted when I was born. I didn't even find out that I was adopted until I was 33 years old. We grew up in one family. My older brother, my younger brother, myself, and the fact is we thought we were all biologically related until we found out by a letter that came from the government that my older brother was adopted. That same day, then I found out that I was adopted. Do you know how strange it is to find out you are not who you thought you were at 33?

And then I grew up and I was born second generation migrant Greek and I tell everyone it was before "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" was released, and so it was when it was not cool to be Greek in Australia. We were very marginalized because of our ethnicity, because of my gender. I grew up in a very staunch Greek Orthodox home where women were not encouraged to necessarily flourish and fulfill their purpose in the way that I believed God had for me. I grew up in the poorest zip code in my state, the third poorest zip code in all of Australia, and very, very kind of marginalized because of my ethnicity, my gender, my socioeconomic background. I mean tick all of the boxes. I was sexually abused from before I went to school right through into my teenage years.

So I was a young woman that was so full of shame. I was so full of guilt. I was so full of condemnation. I was so full of anger. I was so full of bitterness. See when you first start being abused, you think what they're doing to you is wrong. When it continues to happen, and it's not stopped by those that should be protecting you, you begin to believe the lie that there's something wrong with you – that's why it's happening.

So I grew up most of my life thinking there's something wrong with me. There's something broken with me. That's what shame does. Shame attacks your who. The very essence of who you are. That's what the enemy did in this text – came in to attack the very essence of who the people of God are. It hasn't changed. I tell everyone everywhere I fit every government funding category in Australia. I'm like a poor, marginalized, oppressed, dispossessed, ethnic, minority, abused, adopted, check. I can make a fortune on government funding. I mean they fund people like me and they say victim, let's label you to stay that way. We're going to write you a check and remind you that you're a victim for the rest of your life.

But church, I read the book, and my Bible says He's redeemed my life from the pit that I don't need to live as any kind of victim, but we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. More than.

Your history does not need to define your destiny. You are more than what happened to you, you are more than your failures, you are more than your mistakes, you are what God says you are, and you can do what God says you can do. I am living proof of that. By the grace of God today we've been married for 24 years and by God's grace, flourishing, raised two daughters, that shouldn't happen with people with my kind of background. And then in the midst of that, God has raised us up to help to rescue the victims of human trafficking around the world, and to help those that have been abused and marginalized. So much of what happened to me, God has turned it around and worked it together for good. None of it was good. Abuse is never okay. Abuse is never good. What happened was not good, but God was even able to take those fragments of my life that were not good, and weave them together and work them together for my good and for His glory.

Do you know, church, every time we put a trafficker in jail, every time we see a young woman or a man or a child rescued, I think devil you can stick that in your pipe and smoke it. What the enemy meant for evil, God turned it around and worked it together for good. I feel like Joseph in Genesis chapter 50, verse 20 when he said to his brothers: "you meant this for evil against me, but God meant it for this very purpose to save many people alive." God could take the broken fragments of your past. God can take those failures, those mistakes, He can weave them together for your good and for His glory. What the enemy meant for evil, God can use for good. Your history does not need to define your destiny. Your greatest days are still ahead of you. God can do something awesome in and through your life. That's the power of the cross of Jesus Christ. That's what resurrection power is all about; that we don't have to be defined by what happened to us. We can make what Jesus did for us bigger than what anybody else did to us.

Did God really say is absolutely crucial. If I didn't know what God said. I remember when my mother said to me, Christine you've been adopted, too. It was like shocking, as it would be, that you would expect. And I remember that day. Everything changed in my life, everything. Everything. And I didn't even know, and to this day, I don't know the exact circumstances surrounding my conception. I don't know if I was the result of a one night stand. I do not know if I was the result of an on-going adulterous affair or a rape. But although I do not know the facts surrounding the origin of my conception, I know what the truth is because Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10, church, it does not say that I am the workmanship of a rape or the workmanship of an adulterous affair. It says that we are His workmanship and that we've been recreated in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand in eternity, that we should outwork here on earth. Now we do have an enemy and he wants to steal, kill and destroy the plan and the purpose that God has for our lives, so before I even came to this planet, God had a plan and a purpose for my life. And I'm walking in that, but the truth is, when I was still in my mother's womb, the enemy sent an assignment to try to steal, kill and destroy that destiny. And then when that didn't work, when I was three years old, he sent someone into my room to try to steal, kill and destroy that destiny.

But God said to His Son Jesus, I've got a plan, purpose and destiny for Christine and all of humanity. And so would you go to earth? Would you die on a cross? Would you shed your blood and would you rise again from the dead so that Christine and all of humanity could have not only forgiveness for their past, but a brand new life and a hope for the future?

And Jesus came and because of the work, the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross, because of His resurrection power, the enemy cannot thwart the plan and the purpose of God for your life.

No matter if that teacher said you're dumb, you're stupid, you'll never amount to anything. Or if that parent said you're a mistake, you should never have been born. Whether you've made your own mistakes from your own volition and you think I've blown it, there is no hope for me, there is no purpose for me, it's too late, I'm too old, it's too over. Tell Caleb he's too old, who at 85 said I'm as young now as I was then. Give me this mountain. That's my inheritance. Honey, if you woke up today and there is not a white chalk mark around your body, it means that you're alive! It means God's got a plan for you, God's got a purpose for you, and the enemy cannot thwart that plan or purpose. The only one that can is you. It's your decision. It's your decision. It's your decision to either appropriate the purpose of God for your life, even through Jesus Christ or not.

And I am living proof that even through a relationship with Jesus Christ you can start bad and you can finish good. You can fulfill your purpose and your destiny. It is not too late for anyone. You are not forgotten by God. You are not discarded by God. God's plan, purpose and destiny for you can come to pass if you surrender your life and your heart to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Let me tell you, I'm one of those Christians that believes this stuff is true. I'm one of those Christians that believe God's word is true because I've lived it, and I'm experiencing it in my life, and I know that you can, too. Did God really say – the most important thing. Most important thing. That word brings life. That word brings hope.

I remember when I received my documents from the government. It's so weird to get a birth certificate when you thought you had one your whole life, or to receive your reports from the hospital that is your social work report. And I remember, I'm going to show you, when I received my birth certificate, you can see here: particulars of child prior to adoption. Child's name – do you know what it's like to see typed in the word "unnamed." I mean it's quite sobering. Number 2-5-0-8 of 1966. People say Christine, how are you so passionate about helping to rescue 40 million slaves. Or how does this not overwhelm you? Because the truth is, numbers are numbing and dehumanizing and desensitizing, and it's so easy to ignore suffering when its nameless and faceless.

But the minute you put a name and a face to a number, it changes everything. So 2-5-0-8 means nothing to you, but now that you know that 2-5-0-8 of 1966 is Christine Caine, it suddenly changes everything. You have to know that to God, there are no numbers. That's not 40 million people just stuck in slavery, its human beings created in the image of God filled with God given destiny, filled with God given potential, filled with God given purpose. Everyone matters. But it's very shocking to kind of see typed in the word "unnamed" the tape recorder started in my mind, see Christine? Your mother didn't even want you. She didn't even give you a name. See Christine? No wonder you were abused for all of those years because you don't deserve any better. You know we've all got that tape recorder. It just starts for all of us.

And so I could have believed that, I could have allowed that to limit me. The social work report here's another document from the Royal Hospital for Women. It said if you bring that one up, it says that I'm.. I think it's the next one, look at this an excerpt. This talks about my biological mother. "She does not seem to be too emotionally involved with the child. She seems to want to get it all over and done with and get back to work as soon as possible." It's quite sobering to read that. You think wow, unwanted, there it is.

I've got another document I want to show you from a university that had the most prestigious social work school in Australia at the time. And this was dated in March 1993. So twenty.. do the math, seven/twenty eight years ago, whatever it is. You can tell I'm an English major. And so the fact is that basically this document I was wanting to run a national youth center, community based youth center, the students in the fourth year program here were wanting to do their placement, their internship at our youth center, but this institution didn't want them to come there, primarily because we were faith based, but also because my degree is in English and Economic History, so I didn't have the right qualifications. And of course in no way am I demeaning qualifications, but I just want to show you and give an example to you that if God calls you, it's amazing what doors God will open for you. But this document essentially says that I am not qualified to do what I'm doing. Essentially, by God's grace today, we're running one of the largest anti trafficking organizations in the world. We work with governments, we work with the U.N., we work with FBI, with people all over the world. But this document says that I was unqualified to do that.

I want you to see the three documents that I've got. This is what most of us limit our lives by - what the experts say. What the professionals say. What some ex lover or ex spouse or a parent. We limit and define the boundaries of our life based on what somebody else is saying. So here I am. I mean, obviously the government says I'm unnamed and of course if the government said it, we know it's true. And then of course we've got here the medical profession and I love all of these professions. I work with them day in and day out. Thank God when I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, thank God for doctors doing surgery and helping to remove that. So I'm so grateful for the medical profession. I'm so grateful for the education department. I'm so grateful for various aspects of government work. I'm grateful for it all. But I am not going to limit and define my life here on earth based on what they say. Because here it is black and white, and so many of us are like well Christine, look at the facts! And we live in such a scientific rational post everything society. We're post modern; we're so posted we're in orbit. We don't believe in anything. Supernatural sounds a bit weird, so Christine just stick to the facts. Stick to the black and white facts. Stick to what's empirical. Stick to what we can prove. If we can stick it in a science test tube, if we can put it in a mathematical formula, it's got to be true. But God does not work in those boxes alone.

So here we have the facts – black and white ink on paper. But church, I found myself another black and white ink on paper and it's called the truth of the word of God and the truth overrides the facts. That document says that I'm unnamed, but Isaiah 49 verse 1 says "from the womb of your mother, I have named your name." That document says that I'm unwanted, but Psalm 139 says honey, before you ever got in that womb, I wanted you. That document says that I'm unqualified, but the word of God says that "He whom He calls, He qualifies." If you are going to fulfill your God given destiny, you've got to build your life on the truth of the word of God, and not the facts of your circumstances. Did God really say is the most important thing you will ever, ever have to decide in your life. No wonder it's the first question in the Bible. Did God really say?

She said well God did say that we could eat of all the trees, not that one. See you can go to Bible study, you can be in church, you can be doing this Christian thing for 30 years. You can be able to quote the Bible better than me, but the issue is not whether you can quote it, because He quoted it back to the devil. She just didn't do it. It's not just knowing it, you've got to actually apply it and appropriate it. Faith without works is dead. Why do people go Christine, well you've got a different personality. That's why you're able to believe. I'm like what? Freedom is not a personality type. Freedom is a blood type. It's the blood of Jesus Christ that sets us free. It's the blood of Jesus.

So she quoted it, but then they just went about and did the opposite of what God told them to do. And what did it result in? They ran and hid. That's what the enemy wanted. It's always what he wants. He doesn't really care about what you do. He doesn't want your car or your house. He doesn't drive. And so the point is it's not about that. What he wants to do is break your intimacy with God. He wants you to run away and hide from God. There's where shame entered humanity and we've been living in shame ever since. They hid.

God comes into the garden and He says where are you? I mean how sad that the first question in the Bible that God asks humans is where are you? Fellowship was broken. It would be the first time He walked in and they're not there. Where are you? And they said when God asks you a question, it's not because He doesn't know. It's okay. But He's asking them to locate themselves. Where are you? I'm sure the Lord does that to us. Where are you? Where are you? This morning in church, on TV, where are you? Where is the you that God created? Where is the you full of God given destiny, full of God given potential, where did you go into hiding? Where did you shrink? Where were you paralyzed? Where did you stop flourishing because of what was done to you, said about you, or you did yourself? Where are you?

And then Adam goes we ate and we were naked and afraid, and so I hid. Fear, shame, hiding. First conversation between God and man. And that's the way a lot of us continue to talk to God. Full of fear, full of shame, full of hiding rather than understanding that through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross that you and I now are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, that we have full access to Him. Created in His image, filled with God given destiny, purpose and potential. We don't need to come to God in fear, shame and hiding.

And then the saddest question for me in the scripture, final question in this text, the Lord says who told you? I imagine Him, and of course this is not in the text, I just imagine Him crying in the garden going who told you? Who told you? Who told you that you were naked? Who told you that you were dumb? Who told you that you were stupid? Who told you that you were too old?

Who told you that you're not qualified enough? Who told you that you're not connected enough? Who told you that you have committed the unpardonable sin? Where did you believe the lie? At what point in your life and for some of you it could have been 30 years ago. At what point did you believe the lie where you elevated somebody else's voice above the voice of God. Because when you elevate someone else's voice, whether its society, the news media, a teacher, somebody else, the minute you elevate someone's voice above the voice of God, you instantly start to shrink down and not fulfill what God has for you. We were never meant to live according to what other people think of us or say about us. We were meant to respond to the truth of the word of God. "If you abide in my word, then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." But if you're not abiding in the word of God, and in Christ Himself, you're not going to know the truth, and therefore you cannot be set free. Let me just end with a story that I think most effectively depicts this. My daughter, you know my kids have grown up on the road with us, and ever since they were born, I've always spoken over my kids: Catherine Bobbie, you are the head and not the tail, you're above only and not beneath, you're a leader and not a follower, you're a woman of God, you're a woman of prayer, you love the house of God, you're a holy ghost terrorist. And then I always tell her, you are going to grow up and you're going to marry a very, very, very wealthy Christian man. And so I've told her since she was born, because I had my kids so old, I need someone to look after me when I grow up. And her father has always spoken over both my daughters all the time. You are intelligent, you are courageous, you are strong, you are beautiful, you can be anything God's called you to be, you can do anything God's called you to do.

And so this is what they believed, and then my daughter went to kindergarten. How many know at school they don't quite tell you the same truth. But the teacher said to me 'Christine, you should have seen your daughter went in and this little boy wanted her teddy bear at lunch time, so he went up to her, he ripped the teddy bear out of her hands, and he said to her Catherine Bobbie, you are dumb and you are ugly.' And I was like shocked thinking I don't even know if my daughter's ever heard those terms. The teacher said to me 'Christine it's okay. You should have seen your daughter. She put her shoulders back, she eye balled this kid,' and I honestly thought the teacher was going to say to me – and she king hit him and just like I'm like yes! Yes! That's how we train them in Australia. Train up a child in the way they should go. Yes!

But she said 'no, Chris, it was fine. She looked at him, put her shoulders back and she said to him, no I'm not! I am not dumb and I am not ugly. My daddy says that I am intelligent, and I am beautiful.' And why am I telling you that, church? I'm telling you that because when the enemy comes and He will come every single day, mostly before your eyes are even open, and wants to speak lies into you, and wants to tell you who you're not and where you failed and how bad you are and how much shame you should have. You and I need to learn to say oh no, not today, Satan. My daddy says I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. My daddy says there is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. My daddy says I am forgiven, I am redeemed, I am called, I am chosen, I am a daughter of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. My daddy says if you abide in my word, then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free in Jesus' name. Amen, church, amen, amen, amen.