

# HOUR of POWER

Chuzpe: Becoming Today Who You Need to be Tomorrow!

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## GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Hannah

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

HS: Hello visitors and hello church family. Thank you for joining us. The Bible says the same spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead dwells inside of us right now. May that Holy Spirit stir in you and give you the power to grasp the depth, and the length, and the width, and the height of God's love for you. You are so loved.

BS: Amen if you're watching live on TV, we want to recommend that you share this, maybe start a viewing party or share it on your Facebook, or wherever it is that you're watching. I think that people today are going to be really encouraged by especially the music and the interview. I have a message today that I think will encourage people during this tough coronavirus time. I'm also going to be talking about UFO's and murder hornets, but we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. But we're so glad you're joining us today. Let's begin with a word of prayer: Father, we thank you so much that you love us. Thank you, God that you've not abandoned us, and we thank you that the future is a lot brighter than it feels. We just trust, God, that you are always moving us in the direction of what is good; good for us, good for your kingdom. Lord, we thank you that every single day we can change and develop and make progress in our lives, and become the kinds of people you called us to be. Lord, forgive us of our sins, renew us, restore us, help us to be more like Christ. It's in His name we pray, amen.

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

## SCRIPTURE – Romans 4, 1 bis 5 - Hannah

In preparation for the message, Romans 4:1-5.

What then shall we say that Abraham our forefather according to the flesh discovered in this matter. If in fact Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. What does scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work, but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

Church family, faith pleases God. Amen.

## Interview Bobby Schuller (BS) with Dawn Barton (DB):

{VOICE OVER: Dawn Barton is an author and finder of joy! She has endured greater pain and more trials than most people will ever face; yet while dealing with loss and heartbreak, she found a way to maintain joy. Her new book, "Laughing Through the Ugly Cry:... and Finding Unstoppable Joy" chronicles her life and how she discovered an intimate relationship with Jesus among the difficulties and hardship. She hopes that all her readers can learn to do the same and find unexpected joy, regardless of what comes their way.

DAWN: Joy is a choice. Joy is God, God is joy, and that is truly what I feel like my purpose on our planet today is.

VOICE OVER: Please welcome, Dawn Barton!}

BS: Dawn, hi! Welcome! We're so glad to have you today. Tell people first of all how you came to faith.

DB: I was raised what I kind of call Catholic-lite, and throughout my life I have.. we had a daughter who passed away from a rare bacteria of pneumonia, and then in that season when that happened, I broke up with God. God didn't break up with me, but I broke up with God.

I just thought I wasn't going to worship a God that took babies from mommies and I was angry and I was mad. And six months after that, I was raped and it went to full jury trial. But from that time after my daughter died, God is so fantastic; He just sprinkled this beautiful path back to Him. And so it wasn't till my 30's that I fully, totally, utterly and completely gave myself to Him. It took me a little bit.

BS: I can't imagine, I mean I imagine that there's so many things people could suffer in life, but losing a child, I think has to be at the top of the list. I mean I'd rather be tortured than to lose one of my kids. I can't imagine what you went through, but that wasn't the end for you. I mean the list of different things you went through are enormous. Would you be okay kind of sharing some of those other things that you had to face in your life?

DB: As I said, we lost our daughter, and then a few months later a man broke in my home and I was raped and it went to a full jury trial. I was diagnosed several years later with stage 3 triple negative breast cancer. My husband battled with alcoholism. He's more than five years sober today. My mother had a brain aneurism that burst, and my sister passed away from breast cancer as well, a different kind and not to mention divorce and the normal things that maybe we hear a little bit more often. And through all hardships in life, we lost my uncle who was one of the great loves of my life in March with COVID and my aunt was in the parking lot by herself and I remember driving to their house and I was supposed to be speaking on joy the next day and I thought I can't. There will never be joy again. I will never laugh again. In that moment, in that feeling, I was devastated. And then an hour later, I got over there, we were in her living room, and hugging my aunt and we were laughing because there was always laughter and joy even around the tsunami's of pain.

BS: I think that's such an important point is just because right now you emotionally feel like I'm never going to be happy again, I'm never going to be joyful, I'm never going to beat this thing that I'm facing. Maybe for some people its depression, anxiety or addiction or things like that. Sometimes you have these moments where you're just like I'm never going to be happy again. But it's a fleeting moment, right? You just got to ride it like a wave.

DB: Yes, and I love the saying joy is a focus, and it brings about the feeling. So we have to be on purpose all the time for that focus of joy. I don't think it just sits back or that we sit back and watch Netflix and it just happens, although I've done a lot of that lately. I think that it has to be an on purpose behavior, just like we get dressed and we put on a shirt, we put on a purpose of seeking joy.

BS: What do you say to the people that are watching today, we have a lot of people who are not churched who say well can I still have.. like how important is faith in Christ to have this joy? Like can you still have it and not have a faith or do you have it to some degree? What do you think about that?

DB: I can tell you I've been through life without it and I have been through life with it and there is a very different joy that is the joy of God, a divine joy versus just joy. I can tell you that because I have been in both places. I have gone through heartache with Him.. well He was always with me, right? I just want to make that clear. He's always with you whether you're in it or not, He's there. But it feels very different. There is a covering that happens when you seek God. And I'm not saying my faith was perfect, and you know it took me awhile, it took me baby steps. It doesn't mean you have to be out there quoting perfect scripture for you to have divine joy at all. That's not what it means. I think it can be baby steps for people.

BS: I think that one thing is it kind of feels like this book is just for people who have gone through horrible tragedies, but it's really for everybody. I mean who do you hope reads this book? I mean who are you thinking of when you wrote your book, really?

DB: Actually I wrote it to myself. I wrote it to the woman I was 15 years ago when I was thinking this is hard to say that I wasn't worthy of His love. I thought I can't quote the perfect scripture, I wasn't raised in the perfect Christian household, therefore I will never be worthy of that unstoppable love that He gives us, it took me awhile to come to that. So I'm talking to her.

BS: What do you say to that girl who's watching today and she's been maybe bullied or even raped or faced some horrible thing in her life where she or he just says I'm not worthy of God's love. I'll never be worth anything, I'll never be clean, I'll never be beautiful, I'll never be loved. What do you say to that person?

DB: You are so ridiculously loved, more than you could probably ever wrap your head around it. Like a love that we truly as humans cannot even understand, and you are so worthy, and you are so enough, and you are so fantastic, and I hope that if you don't.. take it from me who doesn't know you and was a girl that where you are today, that you are enough, you are worthy, you are fantastic. That's just what I keep going back to. That you're so enough.

## Chuzpe: Becoming Today Who You Need to be Tomorrow!

BS: Amen. Dawn, that's a great word to end on. Dawn Barton, this book was so good and I want to recommend it to all of you who are watching at home. I am just *Laughing Through the Ugly Cry* with Dawn Barton is such a fun journey. You'll enjoy it. It's a tragedy, you see a lot of this dark side of her life, but if you need encouragement, if you want to be smiling and laughing again, I encourage you to get this book. Dawn Barton, thank you so much. What a privilege it was to have you. And thanks for encouraging us. We love you.

DB: Thank you. Thank you so much for having me. It was a joy.

BS: God bless you.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

BS: For all of you who are at home, would you join me and stand and hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord, we're going to say this creed together as we do every single week. 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 "Becoming Today Who You Need to be Tomorrow"

Today we're beginning a series called Chutzpah, which we'll get to what that word means if you didn't grow up in LA or New York. But Chutzpah is a series on faith. That during, especially this tough time, we can be people of faith; bold people who do great things for God, even though we have all sorts of new restrictions and changes, we can trust that during this time, that God is involved in your life, that God is powerful enough, and that God's going to get you through what you're going through. We're all in a stage, aren't we? All of us are in this weird time where we don't know what's coming next in the world or in our lives, but I can promise you this: have faith in God, trust in Him and you're going to make better decisions. Your path is going to be straighter. The difficulties that you face, you'll be given divine strength to get through them, and God will prepare you for the season that is to come.

The world's getting weird, isn't it? It's interesting how weird 2020 has been. And of course we're facing COVID-19, but then there was the strange thing about murder hornets. Look at those things. That's crazy. And you remember the Sahara dust that was blowing across the Atlantic ocean, making its way to Florida. We have, of course, incredible protests happening all the time. See recently in different parts of Europe even now, protests, not related to Black Lives Matter, other things like Catholic protests and other protests regarding the COVID stuff and apparently a few weeks ago, too, the U.S. government declared and released some videos of UFO's! Who knew that was coming in 2020! And then even a few days ago here in L.A., we had an earthquake at 4:30 in the morning. And it just seems like online, I mean the joke is every week it's something else, isn't it. I think it was Christine Caine put a thing on her Instagram that said "you know, I miss precedented times. Man what I would do for some precedented times." That would be great. Just something really precedented.

It's like everything is 20% harder than it used to be. Even simple stuff like washing the dishes, or getting some gas, or any other kind of task that you have to do at work, there's something in the air with COVID-19, aside from the virus, there's like a worrisome, anxious feeling that makes a drag on our creativity, on our projects, and on our work and it makes it very easy to want to sort of just Netflix and chill all day. To just relax, and there's nothing wrong with some of that, but it makes it so easy to want to just do nothing; to stop growing as a person; to stop learning; to stop developing; to stop seeking after God; to stop memorizing the word.

And this lag, it puts a drain on all of us. But you want to know something? I think almost everyone is experiencing this. I think almost everyone is feeling this worry that kind of always is draining our energy today. And you know what that means? That means if you are the kind of person, and you are, that says yes I feel these emotions, yes I feel this lack of energy, but today I choose to continue to develop as a disciple; to develop as a person. I choose that tomorrow I will be a step closer to my destiny than I am today. If you're the one in a million type person that does that, then when tomorrow comes, what would be setbacks for others are going to be opportunities for you because you've grown, you've read, you've learned, you've developed, you've gained wisdom, you've worked on your life as a person and as a disciple.

In other words, this is my message for you today: have faith and trust in the Lord that things are going to turn around, and by doing so, you will gain more energy. So become today the person that you need to be tomorrow. Don't wait until tomorrow comes to be the person you need to be then. Start today. Become today the person you need to be tomorrow.

Let me tell you, becoming that person is a hard thing, not an easy thing. It takes practice, discipline, hard work, perseverance, good habits, and most of all, faith. And if today you become the kind of person that you need to be tomorrow, then when tomorrow comes, those setbacks, those traps that are going to be there for so many people that didn't take advantage of this opportunity, those things are going to be opportunities for you! So be ready. Be prepared. Have faith and trust that things will turn around.

I can't tell you how many people have said, especially when this thing started, 'Bobby, is the rapture going to come? Has the time come for the Lord's return?' Well my response is almost always the same – I hope so! I really do. There is a crown of glory for those who look forward to the return of the Lord, and be ready for it. Why wouldn't you be ready for something like the rapture? Why wouldn't you have your heart set on the Lord? Even if the rapture doesn't come, death comes for us all. And are you ready for that? Are you ready to approach the throne of God? Are you ready to look at the Lord in the eyes and take an accounting for your life? Do you know the Lord Jesus? Have you depended on Him for your life and for your soul? If you haven't, decide today to become that kind of person. Decide today to be ready for that event. Is the rapture coming? Probably not. Statistically probably not. But you should still be ready for it. You should be ready for death. Because if you're ready for death, it won't be death for you, it'll be life. So prepare today for the person you need to be tomorrow.

I certainly understand. I said more confidently when COVID-19 came that it wasn't the rapture. Every single day I become a little less confident. Every time we see something like murder hornets in the news. But it probably isn't coming anytime soon, but if it is, praise the Lord. I hope it does. And maybe I'm wrong. I hope I'm wrong.

There was a time when everybody was convinced that the end of the world had come. There have been lots of times like that, but I think as a fan of history, there's never been a time like that more so than when the Black Death: pestilence, global pandemic hit the world. The Black Death, also the bubonic plague, came to the Genoese Port from China on some fleas who were on some rats who made their way into Italy and into Europe, and within the 14<sup>th</sup> century they say almost half the world's population, not only old people but children, everyone, died this terrible, painful death. It was an amazing historic event, a horrible event, and you see the journals of priests and kings and leaders, many of whom were physically dying or watching everyone they know die, I mean think of that, 50%. Imagine if 50% of everybody you knew died within a couple of years and died horribly. They thought it was the end of the world. They thought that God was cursing them. They thought that the worst thing that had ever happened had come, and then in fact it had, actually.

But what they didn't know was that this global pandemic would actually lead to a good thing. I know that sounds horrible; it's horrible that all those people died, but it actually leads, many historians say, to things like the reformation, not only the protestant reformation but the new reformation of the Catholic church, and led to the enlightenment, and led to things like the printing press and the free exchange of information and democracy. And the reason it did this, is it showed people that many of the institutions that claimed to have all this incredible power, well the people from those institutions were dying. I also think that those who survived, survived maybe with a sense of, yes, trauma in one hand, but gratitude in the other. A sense that life is fickle and the best in life is worth pursuing, I don't know. But what I can say is that most historians point to that pandemic as a time that changed the world forever. You look at the 14<sup>th</sup> century and it for sure was the thing that made the enlightenment and the reformations and many other modes of technology and changes, good changes within the church, it happened as a result of that horrible, terrible thing that I don't think was from God. I think it was from Satan.

But it's still interesting to think that these types of events tend to bring about, if not the rapture, they tend to bring about a new sort of world and that's what I think is coming. I think we are already on a course to enter a new kind of world. A lot of people are worried that that new world is going to be communistic or socialistic in nature and I don't think it will be. I think it'll be the opposite of that and have hope in that because communism and socialism kills.

I think that you will see that as the world goes on, that actually what may happen as a result of this is people will find the values of technology in the free exchange of information. I think that you're going to see a lower value on government and a higher value on the individual as people are able to exchange ideas and information with one another.

Think about this for a moment. Right now, we are seeing the middleman in so many areas of life, disappear. How many brokers are sort of vanishing, and travel agents, and even doctors. You know, doctors are incredibly important. Nurses are important and they're on the front lines and we're thankful for them. But my brother-in-law, who is a medical doctor, told me it's amazing that anyone, anyone can access all the information that medical doctors do today. It's the first time it's ever been available. You can read all the research. You can watch YouTube videos. You can read articles. You can discover everything that these middle managers have. What if the world that is to come is actually going to be a world with less government; an even smaller world. You know when we were in Nepal once, I remember Nepal, we were in Katmandu, which is actually a pretty big city in the 12<sup>th</sup> poorest country in the world, and it was sort of anarchistic, and actually when we were there, we were there when the king had been overthrown, and so it was literal anarchy. But the street laws were already that way.

I remember watching that people in Nepal in downtown Katmandu, on little motorcycles and cars and bikes, it seemed like there was no rhyme or reason and yet there was never an accident. There were a bunch of like bees or ants just WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH WHOOSH swerving around and in front of each other. I think the world may become a little bit more like that. I think there's going to be more freedom because there's going to be more information, and I think that scares a lot of authoritarian governments that they can't control the narrative and they can't control the message and maybe that's a good thing. Maybe God's going to use that to bring the gospel to more people.

Can you imagine if I could tell the Apostle Paul that I, a pastor, am able to preach to millions of people around the world in countries all over the world in different languages, and that it would be so easy, I just have to get up here and do it and that a team of people would make it possible so that you, whether you're in Hong Kong or Amsterdam or Sydney or Dallas, Texas. No matter where you are, you're able to receive and share in a global church environment where we worship the Lord Jesus together, can you imagine if I had told the Apostle Paul that? Well, he wouldn't have believed it, or perhaps he would have because Paul was a man of faith.

All of this to simply say, a lot of people want to say that the world to come is going to be a bad thing, but what if it's a good thing? What if God has a world coming where the gospel is going to be preached in an even more profound and powerful way to people who couldn't get it before? And what if you're prepared for that world? What if you're ready? What if you take this time to become the kind of person today that you're going to need to be tomorrow? Do it! Don't miss this opportunity. Ninety nine out of a hundred people are going to take this time to eat more cookies, and watch more TV, but what if you're the kind of person who says no, I'm going to take some time to learn, to grow, to go deeper in my faith, to understand this book when I have more time and the ability to do it. I'm don't care that I have this lag. I don't care that I don't feel as much energy. I don't care that I'm worried. I'm going to go after the Lord with all my heart. I'm going to become the kind of person today that I need to be tomorrow. Do it and you'll be happy you did.

Today, we're talking about faith. Faith makes it possible to do this. Faith is trusting that even when everything is bad, even when everything is murky, it's like the whole world is covered in fog, you say I don't care because someone's holding my hand. Someone who sees when I am blind is holding my hand and is carrying me, and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're holding onto His hand tightly, there's nothing that can keep you from a great future; a great future is coming to you if you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. If you hold His hand through this tough time, you'll get where you need to be. That's what faith is.

It's in the first century during the Roman Empire, that the Apostle Paul, maybe we can call him rabbi Paul, is bringing the gospel to the Gentiles in a new and fresh way, and he's preaching that the Gentiles will not be saved by works; they should do righteousness, they should do what is good, they should do what is right, but that won't save them. What will save them is faith. And this is, of course, the gospel that we proclaim and the gospel that we believe. That God saves us just as we are; that He rescues us by grace through faith, and this is what Paul is preaching.

As he's doing this, there are other Christians who are deeply Orthodox Jewish, who disagree with it. And they go to the Gentiles and they say well now that you are a Christian, you have to obey the food laws, and you have to dress the right way, and you have to obey the views on Sabbath, and you can't do things like spit on the Sabbath, and you can't do things like eat kernels. Oh and by the way, men, you need to be circumcised. Imagine being a 36-year-old father of five and you've just become a Christian, and then you get this bait and switch where all of a sudden another pastor comes and he says all right, time to get circumcised, sir.

This is creating problems in the church, and Paul continues, you see it through all of his letters, reemphasizing the idea that no, we're justified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He was circumcised so we don't need to be. He lived the law perfectly and gave His life on the cross; He became sin that we could become the righteousness of God. Okay, we're getting too deep. We know the gospel, the gospel is that you're saved by grace through faith.

One of the ways that he communicates this idea is through the story of Abraham. He says in Romans chapter 4, "what shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter. If in fact Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. What does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation." In other words, if you work for someone and they pay you, they have to pay you. Right? "However, to the one who does not work but trusts in God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is accredited as righteousness." In other words, if it's by your works it's just like you earned it. But if it's not by your works, it's a gift of a loving father to you, just like I'm going to rescue you, I'm going to forgive you. You don't have to do anything. Just have to trust in me. Isn't that great?

David says the same thing. When he speaks the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works. Oh wait, sorry, I'm going too far.

We get it. Abraham is justified by faith. Now in Greek, when Paul is writing, the word for faith is probably; I actually didn't look here, it's probably Amadea, or Pistis, but remember when Jesus preached, even though His words are written in Greek and then translated to English, He originally spoke in Aramaic, which is like a dialect of Hebrew. And the same thing with Paul. Paul writes in Greek and probably speaks some Latin, but he says he's a Hebrew of Hebrews, and he was a rabbi. In other words, he studies in Hebrew. And the Hebrew word for faith that is used for Abraham is a word called Chatzufoe. Everybody use that guttural. For the Germans, it's easy. For the rest of us, it's pretty tough. Ch-atzufoe. In this era of COVID, you make sure you're six feet away from someone before you say that word. Chatzufoe. Chatzufoe. It means faith.

This is where we get the Yiddish word Chutzpah. Chutzpah. Chutzpah. All right. All of us who are from maybe LA or New York, we know what Chutzpah is. But maybe you're from Minnesota, or maybe you're from some region of Canada and you don't have any Jewish friends, or you're not Jewish yourself and you don't really know what this Chutzpah word means. Chutzpah – think about that just for a.. for those of you who do know, Chutzpah and Chatzufoe, that means.. Chutzpah is a Yiddish word is a way of saying faith. I love it.

Chutzpah is shameless audacity, impudence. You might say gall or nerve. It's the ability to abandon social norms to get something maybe you want. I love the story of Lois Tverberg tells about Chutzpah when she's in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, there's so much traffic. I remember when we were there, we had a tour guide that says one of the great things about Jerusalem is all of the lights come with noises, because every time a light turns green every car honks, instantly. If you're from Jerusalem, you know. Like the light turns green and everybody goes HONK!

People in Jerusalem, tons of traffic, and most people take the bus every day. I think it's called the egg bus or something like that. And you get on this bus and it's so amazing to see the eclectic nature of these middle eastern folks, most of them Jewish, some Palestinian, others, getting on the bus and they're different types of Jewish: some Ethiopian or some Russian, but they're all Jewish.

She tells this story about this lady who gets on the bus and she doesn't pay the fare. She just kind of scuttles past the driver and goes and sits down in the front seat like this. And the driver looks at her, and everybody knows what's going on, he says 'madam, where you going? Madam? The fee please, madam.' And she looks out the window like this. And they are on a one way street, and in downtown Jerusalem, and there are cars backing up behind them, everybody's honking. Its going like all of Jerusalem is coming to a halt because this lady will not pay the fee, and the driver, who also has Chutzpah, he says 'madam, the fee.'

She starts barking at him. He puts his feet up, puts the bus into park, turns it off. Keep in mind, there are still people behind them barking and honking, opens a newspaper and begins to read. And this standoff is going on forever. Meanwhile, everybody in the bus is screaming at the lady and she's refusing to go. Finally, she gets off the bus and leaves. But that is Chutzpah. That's her and him having Chutzpah. I love that Lois Tverberg, she's saying you know I'm from Minnesota and we would go out of the way to make sure that what we do is polite, that we're well mannered, that we don't violate these things. And she said it was such a lesson to learn that that is in a roundabout way, the Hebrew word for faith. That idea that I just don't care, I'm going to press into God. I'm coming after God with all my heart.

As this series goes on, we're going to talk more and more about the stories in the Bible when you see this played out. And Jesus even teaches it in the parables, and we'll look at those, but this is the word, I believe, that Paul uses to describe Abraham's faith, and it looks like this. Abraham was 75 when God said at that time Abram, He said Abram, leave the land of your fathers, the land of the Chaldeans, and go to the land I'm preparing for you. And I'm going to make you into a great nation and you're going to have all these children. And Abraham, it hasn't happened yet and he's feeling frustrated at God, and he cries out to God, and he says Lord, when I'm going to have my child? And he's sad because he says this promise is not going to come to pass, and all of my stuff is going to go to my servant, and I'm not going to have any kids.

God comes and He says Abram; takes him by the hand, takes him outside out of the tent and shows him the starry night. I know I've told this story a million times. I love Abraham. But at this time he's Abram. Great father. This is a real desert picture of a starry night. Can you imagine that? Can you see the little photographer in the bottom?

He says Abram, look at the stars of the sky. Look. Your children will outnumber these stars. And you know what Abraham said? Or Abram said? Imagine God giving you a promise and He's showing you the stars and it's this meaning when he goes how do I know? That's Chutzpah! How do I know? Prove it to me! How do I know? And this is where God makes covenant with Abraham.

Paul says and the Torah says that when God told him this, that he believed God and God credited to him as righteousness. See, faith pleases God. When God tells you something and like a child, you just believe and you trust and you take His hand in the middle of the fog. He loves that about you. He loves your faith. He loves your boldness. He loves that unlike the other king's servant, you're like a king's child who doesn't mind coming into the king's bedroom at three in the morning to ask for a glass of water or a cookie or to go on a walk. That's the kind of Chutzpah faith God wants from you. That's the kind of faith you have and never lose it.

Believe and trust during this tough time when everyone says it's bad and it's getting worse, believe you're the kind of person that's preparing for a world that's going to be better. Believe that you already live in that world. It's called the kingdom of God. And trust that while you're here, God's going to prepare you today to become the person that you need to be tomorrow. Become today the person you need to be tomorrow. Trust in Him. Don't make the mistakes of laziness, apathy, procrastination. That's what everybody else is doing! That's not you. Don't be like the 99, be like the one! The one who says I will not be lazy. I will become today who I need to be tomorrow.

When you can't plan, and who can plan today, you can train. When you can't plan, you can train. You can prepare. Paul says that he's finished running the race and that being a disciple of Jesus is like being a marathon runner. If you wanted to go out today, unless you're Bill Gaultiere or some other in shape person, you probably can't go out and run a marathon today, but you could if you prepared. You could if over the next few months you trained and you ate right and you started running a little bit and then running a lot, you could run a marathon.

That's what life is like. It's not about just arriving at a marathon and going, it's about being ready when everybody else is being lazy. It's preparing when everybody else is just being entertained. It's being that unique special person that you are that says today I'm going to learn the word. Today I'm going to learn a skill. Today I'm going to become the person that God needs me to be tomorrow, and when that time comes, you'll be so glad you did.

I know many of you are doing it now. Keep doing it. Keep reading. You say I'm too busy to read. You know the average CEO who tends to work 60 to 80 hours per week, the average CEO in a recent study reads 60 non-fiction books per year. If they can do it, you can do it, and you can do it for something better for the sake of the gospel. There's so much information on YouTube and master classes and so many things that you can do today to become the person you're going to be tomorrow.

Hear this, friends: your habits are perfectly designed to give you the results you're getting. Change your habits. Change a little thing. I know everybody says have big goals, and I like big goals, but maybe have a small goal for once. Maybe decide you're going to read just not one chapter, but one verse of the Bible every day. Maybe you're going to watch, not a long master class, but a two-minute video on some skill you want to develop. Just start doing little things in your life and when you get those small victories, you'll start to grow.

I remember one person saying once, I couldn't get to flossing so I made a deal with myself that I didn't have to floss everything, I'd just do one tooth a day. He said pretty soon I was doing my whole mouth; I couldn't believe it. But there is something to that. There's some value in that. And more than anything, more than anything, follow Jesus today. Stop waiting to make that choice.

Many of you are riding the fence. You know that following Christ means there's going to be some things in your life you're going to have to walk away from; some things that you really enjoy. For some of you, it means there's going to be a friendship or a relationship or a job you're going to have to walk away from. But that choice is a choice you need to make, not tomorrow, but today. All joking aside, we never know when the rapture's going to happen. We never know when death will come for us. But when it comes, be ready for it. Become the person today you're going to need to be when death comes for you. I know many of you are, but make a choice today to follow Christ with all your heart. Don't be a half Christian. Don't be a Christian in name only. Be a disciple. Be someone who's totally committed to the Lord and make that commitment today. Don't wait another second. Follow after Christ with all your heart today and your life will never be the same.

If you do everything else, if you build the world's greatest enterprise, if you become a billionaire, if you become uber famous but you don't know the Lord, it was all for nothing. It's the most important thing in the world. And the better you know Him and the more you know Him, everything else will be blessed. You don't have to do anything except this: believe and make a choice today that for the rest of your life, you will follow after Christ with all your heart and all your soul, and you will be saved. Love the Lord with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself, and you will live in eternal life. That's a promise from the word of God.

Friends, thank you for joining us today and I want to pray with all of you who are going through tough times, and I also want to pray for those of you who want to receive the Lord today.

Father, we come to you in Jesus' name, and for those of us who are already disciples and seeking after you, we pray, God, that you would prepare us professionally, that you would prepare us academically, that you would prepare us biblically, that you would prepare us with faith, that you would fill us with Holy Spirit power. That you would bring to the forefront our spiritual gifts, that for some of us you would even bring in us charismatic gifts; gifts to teach, to preach, to prophesy, to heal, to work in your name for the sake of the gospel.

And for those of us who have walked away or don't know you, Lord, forgive us of our sins, Lord. Forgive us of our sins. We cry out to you, God. Help us to walk in your ways, to seek after what is good and not what is evil. To love what is good and hate what is evil, and to seek after you with all our heart. To love you and to love our neighbor with all our heart. To love our enemies. To love the people that criticize us and hate us and put us down. Help us to feel real love in our hearts for them and for you, God. It's all we want and we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

### **BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller**

Well thank you so much, friends for joining us today. I hope you were encouraged today and not put down. I want you to know we love you, we're on your side, we're rooting for you, we are so with you. Whether you're a Christian or not, we love you so, so much, and we hope that you come to know the Lord. And if the time is not right, we pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to show and sort of lift the veil and help you come closer to Him. We know that it'll be a great thing for you, and we're so glad that you joined us today.

If you're at home or wherever you are, please rise for the benediction: and now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.