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GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION – Bobby & Haven

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Hello. And we're so glad you're joining us today. Unfortunately Hannah isn't with me because she had dental surgery and she's not feeling great, but Haven will be assisting in worship today, along with Tim, but Haven, hi.

HS: Hi.

BS: You want to say "Hello" to everybody at home?

HS: Hello. Thank you for joining us today and thank you for being here with us. God loves you and so do I.

BS: Amen. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much and we love you. God, we just ask that for so many people who right now are going just through very tough time, a lot of people are missing loved ones, missing friends, missing church, missing a lot of the fun things they used to do. Help us to have a sense of peace, and even joy. Help us to even find new ways to have fun during this challenging time. Pray for everybody who struggles with health issues and all those other things, we just pray that your Holy Spirit would do a good thing. Lord, we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Turn around and shake the hand of the person next to you or cat or dog or fish. And say God loves you and so do I.

BS: God loves you and so do I. Thanks Haven!

SCRIPTURE – Exodus 32, 11 - 14 – Haven Schuller

Exodus 32, 11-14.

But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. "Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, to whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why would the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and wipe them off the face of the earth? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all the land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'" Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened. Amen.

Interview Bobby Schuller (BS) with Sheila Walsh (SW):

{VOICE OVER: Sheila Walsh is an author, teacher, and speaker who has shared her story all over the world. Her powerful messages have impacted countless lives through her books and teachings. She also co-hosts the program Life Today with James and Betty Robison. Her newest book, Praying Woman has a practical look at how to pray in the most challenging seasons of life, and how our prayers do not have to be perfect. Please welcome, Sheila Walsh!}

BS: Sheila hi! Welcome! It's so good to see you. How are you?

SW: I am great, and I just adore your little girl.

BS: Thanks. Thanks, I adore her, too.

SW: That was awesome.

BS: This is such a cool thing for me, I don't know if I've told you this before. You've interviewed me twice, but I've been interviewed by a lot of people but you're my favorite person to interview me. I always felt like you were so gracious and really understood the message, and you're just such a gifted interviewer that I'm almost like a little nervous interviewing you.

SW: That's a great question, Pastor Bobby. And really, I see my life in two halves. I was born on the west coast of Scotland, grew up there with a Christian family, which is really unusual. But when I was five years old, my father had a massive brain injury and eventually took his own life and it left a devastating impact on my life. So even when I became a Christian, I thought I have a second chance now. I now have a heavenly Father. If my earthly father seemed to hate me, I need to be good enough so that my heavenly Father will never stop loving me. When I was in my mid 30's, that all collapsed and I ended up in a psychiatric hospital, and it was one of God's greatest gifts to me, because I discovered the truth of Psalm 34. The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saved those who are crushed in spirit. Now my whole passion is for broken people; to let them know that that's where the light shines in.

BS: It's interesting that you mentioned that because now I think is a major crisis for mental health. There's still such a stigma around that. For example if someone who's a godly woman ended up in the situation that you were in, she would feel humiliated, embarrassed; it would be difficult to talk about it in the moment. We really shouldn't feel that, right? Because it's just like any other illness, right? I know we're going a little off the reservation here, but I really want people to see that God was able to use that brokenness for you, wasn't He. That really launched so much of your ministry.

SW: It changed how I saw people, too. Because when you've had your eyes washed a second time, as it were, you see people not as shapes or here's a scripture for you, you see them as real people who need a real God. And I consider a privilege to be able to say to others listen, I've been diagnosed with a mental illness, I take my medication every day and you can survive this. You don't say to somebody who wears glasses – well where's your faith. You say here are your glasses.

BS: What a great answer! I love that. Its super. Well let's get to your book. *Praying Women* is such a wonderful work. I'm glad you wrote this book, and it's a bit of a departure for you, though, isn't it. Tell people at home sort of what inspired you to write this book.

SW: I never actually intended to publish this book. This was a personal two years of study, because I thought Lord, the area of my life that feels weakest is prayer. I love to study your word, I love to speak, I love television, I love all of that, but I really think I stink at prayer. It was really two years of studying, and then one night I threw out a question on my Facebook page and said okay girls, the word "prayer" what comes to mind and don't say what you think you're supposed to say. Say what's really true. And they said things like I get distracted, I'm praying nothing: did I defrost the chicken? Or I get bored or what's the point of praying if God already knows what He's going to do. So I realized that many of us shared this. And then I read this great quote from John Bunyan: it's better to have a heart without words than words without a heart. God is not looking for our perfection, He just wants our presence.

BS: That's really so much what the book is about, right? It's just having that heart for God; just loving Him with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength. Don't you think people get too caught up on the minutia, the mechanics, am I saying the right words. You kind of talk a bit about that, as well.

SW: Absolutely. It's not about the right words. In fact at the moment, during this whole COVID crisis we've been going through, most of my events have been cancelled, and I've found myself struggling a bit. Every morning I go outside and I read a Psalm out loud. It's so good for my ears to hear what my eyes are reading, and declaring what's true no matter how I feel. And then I raise my arms, and it's not even so much Bobby as an act of worship, it's more an act of utter dependence on the God who meets us exactly where we are.

BS: What do you think someone can do today? We have a lot of people who are not Christians or who have just become Christians and are trying to like sort this out, and it's a difficult time during COVID when you can't be in a church. What do you say to someone who's never really prayed in the way you're saying? Like maybe they've said the Our Father, or they come from a Catholic background and they have some rehearsed thing. What do you tell someone, some mom or somebody who really wants to pray, but she doesn't know what to do? What's the best way to start?

SW: There's a Psalm I love. Psalm 62 says "pour out your heart to Him for God is our refuge." I say just start where you are. Just like hey God, its Sheila. I don't know what's going on here. I hear you love me. Help me to understand that. Don't think you have to say the right nice words. If you read through the Psalms, sometimes David is mad and sometimes he's distressed. You bring all of who you are because that's how you're loved – all of you.

BS: Yes, a lot of people I think sometimes are worried when they pray. They're afraid of God. And actually, I think in some ways that's a good thing because they feel respect. They believe God has the power to make a change, but in the same way, it's like say whatever is in your heart, right? That's what you're saying throughout your whole book – just pour yourself out before the Lord and watch, He'll respond. Prayer really does make a difference.

SW: And for me, Christ modeled it perfectly because the only time in the New Testament that Jesus uses the most intimate term – Abba, Daddy, is when He's in the greatest agony. That if you're in pain at the moment, if you don't know how you're going to pay your bills, will your kids go to school, come and tell God everything. Pour out your whole heart.

BS: Yes and the funny thing is when He says that, He's asking God to not send Him to the cross. Abba, take this cup away from me. It's okay for Him to say Lord, I don't want this, I don't like being here, I'm being obedient to you, but you almost feel like He's sad or angry. It's okay to be angry at God, right? Like David is, you said.

SW: I believe to the level we're willing to be honest with God, is an indication of how much we actually trust Him. If you think you have to be too careful with God, your picture is too small. He is big enough to handle all of who you are.

BS: For everybody out there, I'm not a woman but I love this book. This book is called *Praying Women* by Sheila Walsh, and I want to encourage everybody; this is a great time to grow in your prayer life. Last week I talked about become today the person you need to be tomorrow. Prayer is at the heart of that. And Sheila, we are just so grateful that you wrote this book. Thank you so, so much. You're going to help a lot of people grow in their prayer life.

SW: Thank you, Pastor Bobby. I appreciate it.

BS: Thank you for joining us today. Stay safe out there. We love you.

SW: You, too.

BS: Bye Sheila. Thanks.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

For those of you who are at home or wherever you are, would you stand with me? We're going to say this creed together, as we do every single week. Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord, and 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 "Chutzpah on Behalf of Others"

I want to begin by saying how thankful I am for the cross. Aren't you? Aren't you so grateful that Christ gave His life on the cross that we could be redeemed, that we could come before the throne of God, not just forgiven, but completely loved and favored and adored. That God sees us as the righteousness of Christ. By grace through faith, we can come boldly before God's throne. I'm so grateful for that.

I'm grateful that the cross in the way its experienced is not just a onetime event, but it's something that continues to pour out grace so that when I mess up, when I feel guilty about something I've done, that maybe I'm not where I want to be in life, or maybe I struggle with certain things, that I know that God continues to say my son.. to you, He says my son, my daughter, keep going. I forgive you, I love you, I'm on your side. I'm for you, I'm with you. We are going to get you to your destiny. I'm so grateful that the cross is always doing that for us, and we all know that as Christians, and we believe that.

The reason I want to start there is because today I want to talk about what it means to love people that are sometimes hard to love. And also what it means to love and forgive people, even strangers when they're disrespectful, or people that are on the road or at the grocery store, to always be a representative of God's forgiveness. That we remember, man, God has forgiven me of so much. I have friends and family in my life who have forgiven me of so much. I can have grace for this person. I can be different than the rest of the world who's always going to give them at best a cold shoulder, at worst is going to lash out and harm them and scream at them. I'm not going to be like that. I'm going to do my best to be like Christ where I'm willing to love people who hate me. I'm willing to be kind to people who are rude.

And though I'm going to say the truth, and sometimes I'm going to be angry, at the end of the day, I'm going to do my best to love my neighbor with all my heart, and to reach out to hurting people, and to let people know that they are loved, even in a world that's grown cold towards them.

I was talking to a friend the other day on the phone, and she just put it right. She said, everybody in the world today is on edge. Doesn't it feel that way? It just feels like everybody's on edge. It doesn't matter what the issue is, whether its politics, coronavirus, what color shirt I should wear, where we're going to eat tonight or what we're going to eat tonight. People are on edge, and there's like this thing where we feel 20% more angry or 20% nervous or 20% frustrated. Everything feels more intense.

One of the places you see it the most is on the road. I was talking to Hannah the other day, I'm like is everybody driving 90 miles an hour on the freeway constantly? I'm like what is going on? Here in the greater Los Angeles area, in Orange County, we have two big arteries: the 405 and the 5 that have multiple lanes and millions of people drive on them every year, and when there's traffic now, and there rarely is, people are cutting each other off. I mean now this used to happen, right, but it's like ten times more! Maybe it's just me, but I feel like everybody is angry, whether it's on the road, or at the grocery store.

I saw the other day two men in front of a Starbucks screaming at each other. I don't know what it was about. And I waited to kind of see if I needed to help and one guy finally said F-you and walked away, then the other guy went inside the Starbucks. I have no idea what it was about, but I felt like I hardly ever saw that kind of thing back in the day, and now I feel like I see that type of thing all the time. What's going on?

The answer is even those big, brawly men who are shouting, they're hurting. People are hurting: old people, young people, children, men, women, leaders. Everybody is.. at a time when they're feeling stressed, worried, angry, hurrying, a bunch of stuff is coming to the surface that they didn't know was there. People can't be around their friends anymore as much as they used to. People can't see their grandkids!

When we start to experience this kind of loneliness, this kind of political drama, an election year, all sorts of things in the United States, or wherever you are, it seems like every country is this way; that there is just everyone is on edge.

What I want to say to you is now more than ever, people need people like you: calm, loving, priestly, friendly, smiling people like you. Not perfect people. I'm not saying you're perfect. But someone like you who can see that people are hurting, and that you'll be there to help. You'll be there to encourage. You'll be there to love. And although sometimes you got to speak the truth and sometimes you're going to feel angry, you're going to do it in a way that is loving. That's who you are and I'm proud of you. You think about how roles have changed for men and women in the modern era, women today, especially moms, feel like they have to do and be so much all the time. They have to look pretty. They have to be fit. They have to be like achievers, like they got to write a blog or write a book, and they have to be fashionable and they have to show it on Instagram, but they also have to be a good mom to two or three kids, and they have to pay bills, and they got to be good to their husband even when he's no good, and they got to be nice and they got to be polite all the time. I understand why someone like that loses it sometimes!

When we see young women, hurting women, when we see anybody hurting losing it, it's an opportunity. This is your chance to see what so few people see, and it's obvious that people are stressed out! They're stressed out about where the country is going. They're stressed out about money. They have bills to pay. Their kids aren't in school anymore. How are we supposed to work and your kids are home from school now for four or five months. Who knows how long it's going to go. People are stressed. They need people like you: calm, loving, encouraging presence and that's who you are. You see there are times in history where there are opportunities where doing good has like a Ten-X impact where being good, being kind, being loving, that's always a good thing to do, but right now I feel like it has ten times the impact. When everybody else lashes out, or everybody else walks away, or everybody else gives a cold shoulder and you're loving and you pray for people, you encourage people or you just be a quiet loving.. it has like ten times the impact that it used to. Isn't that amazing? Now is your opportunity to make an impact for the kingdom of God, by loving your near-dweller. By loving your near-dweller.

That's what today's message is about. We're in a Chutzpah series. And Chutzpah, if you haven't grown up in LA or New York is a Yiddish word that means almost audacity or rudeness or breaking social norms to get something you want.

And this is a form of the Hebrew word for faith: Chatzuef. And it's where we get the word Chutzpah. So Chatzuef is this idea of faith, but it's a bold faith. When we in the west talk about faith, we talk about believing, for example, and it's that. We talk about trusting, and it is that, but there's something else to it. It's this sort of driven-ness to go after something even when it sort of doesn't make any sense or it breaks the rules.

One of the ways we're supposed to have Chutzpah is for the people that we love. We're supposed to have Chutzpah for people, even for our enemies, even for people that hate us. We're supposed to go after them and love them with all our heart.

In the Hebrew tradition for rabbis, there are two prophets who are not called great prophets. Those two prophets, you may be surprised to know, are Jonah and Noah. So the reason, I've said this before, that Jonah and Noah are not considered great by the rabbis is because in both cases, when God said He was going to destroy, in Jonah's case the city of Nineveh, and in Noah's case the whole world, they just said okay. Okay. You'd think that would be the appropriate response, right? When God says He's going to do something, the response is more or less obedience. Okay. You're going to destroy a million people in Nineveh? Okay. You're going to flood the world? Okay.

But other prophets like Abraham and David and today we're going to talk about Moses, said no God! Don't do it! Forgive them! And this is one reason why these prophets are considered great. They pled for violent, sinful, evil, horrible people. They pled that God would forgive them and save them! Today we're going to talk about Moses' story. Now hopefully everybody here has seen Ten Commandments. If you haven't read the Bible, at least hopefully you've seen Charlton Heston and the Ten Commandments. And you might know this story that God calls up Charlton Heston.. I'm sorry Moses, and he calls the people to leave Egypt and God parts the Red Sea and saves them from disaster. And there is this scene where Moses ascends Mt. Sinai and God is giving him the Ten Commandments and the law and these parts of the Torah that are so important.

While this is going on, the people at the bottom of the hill say where is Moses? Why is he taking so long? And they take all of the gold and all of that treasure that God had given them from Egypt. Isn't this an amazing allegory? That amazing gift that was a symbol of them going from being slaves to being prosperous; from being poor to being rich. They took the symbol of that wealth and that success that was a blessing to them, and they formed with it an idol Baal, and that has all sorts of heavy historic things. We're not going to get into it; some other time, but Baal's evil. It represents child sacrifice and cooking humans alive and all sorts of horrible things.

They built this Baal statue and then they said Baal, the golden calf, brought us out of Egypt, and then it says they engaged in revelry and debauchery. And so while all this is happening down below, Moses is on the mountain with God and God sees it and He says hey, hey Mo, down there, these wicked people have constructed this thing to Baal after I've saved them and rescued them and gave them, they took all that treasure that I gave them, and they made an idol out of it. And God says depart from me, Moses. Give me a minute, I'm going to pour out my wrath. I'm going to destroy them and from your family, Moses, I'm going to create a new, like a new people and your family will be great. Well that seems like kind of a big honor, right? These people have already been pretty rude to Moses, it's already been a struggle, in a way. And Moses goes God, no! Forgive them! Save them, please! God relents and He forgives them because He's loving and merciful.

And then of course Moses goes to the bottom of the hill, and he takes those big tablets and he throws them down. I don't think Moses was actually as good looking as Charlton Heston was, but I hope he was. Right? We can hope, Haven. And he takes that golden calf and he burns it in the fire and then he grounds it into powder and puts it in water and makes everybody drink it. Kind of a fun scene.

A few chapters later, you think they've moved on and this cloud begins to move towards the Promised Land. God is going to bring His people even closer to their destiny, to where they're going to go. He's forgiven them, He's blessed them, they're moving, and then there's story where they've scouted out the Promised Land and there are 12 spies and all of them say it's amazing, but 10 say it's too dangerous, we can't do it, and two say well, look what God's done so far. If God wants us to do it, He'll give us the victory. And the other 10 are like no, it's so dangerous, we can't go, and raises all of these people in this thing. And all of the people now again decide we're going to elect a new leader that will take us back to Egypt! And we're going to stone Moses. So they're literally gathering stones off the ground, this mob is created, they're about to murder Moses, and a bright light shines in the tabernacle, which is the main tent where they worship, will eventually become the temple, and everybody freaks out and scatters like cockroaches.

Moses comes before God and God says again, I'm going to kill these stiff-necked, evil people. They tried to murder you! Let me kill them, and I'm going to start a new family with you. What would you do if you were Moses? I mean there's part of me, I'm like okay, the first time we tried, right? We tried. This time, I mean they tried to kill me. Moses has Chutzpah for his enemies. They're his people, but they hate him and what does he say? No, Lord! No! Save them, please! What will the Egyptians say? They'll say you just took them out here because you're evil, and you just tricked them and you wanted to murder them and hurt them. Think about the witness that will give. Please, forgive it. And God forgives them again.

See Moses is a great prophet, not just because he trusted God, but because he pleads for people, even people who wanted to murder him. Who does that sound like? Sounds like Jesus to me. It sounds like Steven, who when he was being stoned to death, his final words are Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing. Forgive them.

This is what it means in so many ways to be different than everybody else. If you do what everybody else is doing, you're going to get what everybody else is getting. Do you want a different life? Do you want the kind of life that just overflows with joy and purpose and meaning and passion? Trust Jesus' words and love your enemies, love your competitors, love your family, put your relationships first, love your near-dwellers and be willing to make a sacrifice for the people you love and watch how that and that alone will bring you to the kind of meaningful life you so desire.

If you do what everybody else is doing where you just love people that love you and say nice things about you, and then you hate everybody else, you're going to get what everybody else is getting. You're going to get average. And I don't know about you, I did not come before the throne of God to receive an average life. I want an eternal life but the exchange for that means obedience. That you trust in Jesus when He says love your enemies, love your near-dweller, love your neighbor, help those who are hurting and that is what we were called to do now more than ever. People are stressed out, people are hurting, people are broken-hearted, they need someone like you. You are tough-minded, but you're tender-hearted and I love that about you. God's going to use you to touch so many lives during this time. You're not going to waste this time just entertaining yourself the whole time. You are going to use this time, I believe, to bless your near-dweller, to reach out to hurting people. You may even save a life during this time. You may save someone from throwing their life away, and that's what's so amazing about believers, about people like you who are willing to help those who are hurting. I believe in you and God believes in you, especially now.

This is Jesus' way: Chutzpah for sinners. He loves the broken-hearted. And praise God I've been broken-hearted. He loves the sinners. Praise God, I'm a sinner. Augustine said "there is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future." I believe that and that's the message of Jesus; that He goes after people like you and me. Because of that, we also can go after people who are hurting and who are broken-hearted.

Very often we feel like we have to love the whole world, but I heard a quote from Dallas Willard that helped me a lot. He said you can't love the whole world. He actually said that's God's job, right? But you can love your neighbor. Loving your neighbor is enough. Loving your near-dweller is enough. If we all loved our neighbor, the whole world would be loved. God has not put upon you the burden to love three billion people. He's called you to love the people in the 20-feet of space around you. Whether they're drug addicted criminals or whether they're godly, perfect saints, you just love people. And you notice when people are hurting and you listen and you reach out and you be you, the best way you can and love others. Love your near-dweller.

There's this amazing story I heard that really touched my heart in a big way. It was a Ted Talk, actually by this young man, Aaron Stark. Aaron has a Ted Talk called "I Was Going to be a School Shooter." In this story, he says I was on the verge of being a school shooter and then someone invited me to go see a movie. And that's exactly what happened.

When people who knew this young guy in school, they just thought of him as a quiet, a little bit odd person in the corner, didn't have a lot of friends. But what people didn't know was that in Aaron's life, he had two parents who were abusive, both of them addicted to drugs, and because they both had felonies and were on the run, he was at a new school every couple of weeks or months. He said within his teen years, he was in 40 different schools moving around. And so when he came to a new school, he didn't make a lot of friends because he had learned if you make friends here, you're going to lose them and so he was lonely and abused, and broken-hearted.

One day when he was 16 and he was starving, didn't have anything to eat, he actually called Social Services and they picked him up and they picked his mom up. And he said because she was a drug addict and a felon, she knew all the right words to say. She knew everything she needed to say to get him out of there, and she said when she was taking him home, she said I wish you would kill yourself.

When he heard that, he ran away and he said that was like a breaking point for him where he was living.. he had a friend who had a shack who let him live in this shack, and he said it was raining and damp, and there was a hole, and I had this chair, this like lazy boy chair that was soaking wet and that's where I was supposed to sleep and I was hungry and it was kind of rainy outside. And he's like I just decided I'm just going to kill everybody. And he got a gun and he had this gun and he was literally, he was like I'm going to go shoot a mall or a school, I'm not sure which it is, but I'm just going to go and I'm just going to go kill a bunch of people.

As he's getting ready to do this, his friend who he said he had been rude to, his friend came by and he said hey buddy, you want to go see a movie? You want to go get some dinner? Let's go do something. And he said after that, he had a friend, and that's all he needed to get his life on track. And today as he's giving this Ted Talk, he says that friend was there with him. They'd become lifelong friends. Now this guy is in his 30's and he's married and he's got kids and his life has thrived. But in this emotional talk, he says the most important thing was not that that guy said hey can I get you in a program? Hey, can we find a way to get you a house or get you a da, da, da, da, da. It wasn't a friend trying to go and fix him or fix his situation. He said the best thing he did is he reminded me it was just another Tuesday, and that I had a friend in this world.

I think we overcomplicate things. We feel like we got to fix everybody's problems. We feel like we got to go out there and make a plan and get it all right and sometimes people just need a friend to remind them it's just a Tuesday, and that there's good movies we could.. well not now, but there's other things we could do. We'll go to the beach, if you're in California. There are things we can do to. Or just a phone call or a text message or a video of yourself saying something encouraging to someone. These little things just mean a lot. It's a way that you're saying you have a friend in this world and that's a lot.

I'll just finish with this. Don't overcomplicate love. Godly love is care for human good. It means you just care about people. And look there are lots of people that we have to have boundaries with, there are lots of things we have to be careful about, but at the end of the day, if you're a caring person and you recognize the hurts of your neighbor, you're doing enough. Sometimes a smile is enough. Sometimes talking to someone and just listening is enough.

Here are four things love is not. I love the Via Negativa. The best way to teach something is to say what it isn't or sometimes I'll have fun and say like how to be a hateful person, you know how to turn it upside down.

But first number one: love is not enabling. I see this happen a lot sometimes with parents or with spouses. You love your spouse so you buy them more drugs or alcohol. Or you love your kids, your adult children, so you let them live with you. Sometimes that's good, by the way. Sometimes that's good. But you let them live with you forever and they don't get a job. I was talking to a young man who is in his late 20's, early 30's and he's just lived with his mom, and she just buys him weed. It's almost like she needs him to need her. And because of that, she's crippled him. The Bible says that parents who don't discipline their children, hate their children. Did you know that? And you could make an argument from a Biblical standpoint that she hates her son because she needs him to need her. So don't enable people. That's not loving. You don't necessarily cut people off, but you make a plan that you're not going to enable people's issues. That's not love.

Love is not martyrdom. And very often when we're loving our kids or loving our wife or our husband or our parents, it's easy to get into this place of self pity where you just go I do everything and nobody notices, and nobody cares. I'm not going to do it anymore. I did this once. I had a good friend Ander who just had a big heart for homeless people, and we would go down every Saturday and work with the homeless people. And there was this guy I really liked, and I thought he was this nice guy, and I found out that he had done a bunch of drugs and hurt some women or something, and I just said I'm not going down there anymore. I was like these people can't get their lives right. They can't get it together. It's just like trying to bucket water out of a river. It's a waste of time. I was being a martyr. And Ander looked at me and he says think about how many times God's forgiven us, and how many times He's loved us. Think about the cross.

It's like if the Lord can forgive me all the times I'm sinning, I can continue to love my neighbor in the way that God's called me in the season I have. And that was a good reminder for me to not be a martyr.

Love is not enabling, it's not martyrdom. It's not idolatry. I see this a lot, too, with couples who are dating where usually one makes an idol out of the spouse. That my spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend or best friend or my parents or my kids, that loving them is somehow meddled with like they're going to achieve everything I want them to achieve, or because they're going to be great, so that's not good. I was talking to a woman who said after she went through marriage counseling and saved her marriage, that she realized one of the things she was doing was making an idol out of her husband. And I thought that was a really profound insight.

Finally, love is not judgment. I see this a lot, too, especially in churches. I saw this video of this pastor who's just seething ego. Hopefully I don't look that way, maybe I do. If I seethe ego, you'll tell me, right Haven? Okay, cool. This guy just seething ego, and he's judging everybody and he's feeling good about putting people down. And he sees somebody and he goes 'you Bo, you and your fiancé, you come into this church, you think I'm going to do your wedding? I'm not going to do your wedding because you haven't been to church in four weeks, and now you're here and you want me to do your wedding?' And he walks down at him and he's like 'curse both of you! You never come into this church,' and he goes, 'and I'm telling you this because I love you, you know that. I'm telling you this because it's the love of the Lord. I love you.' And he goes, 'stand up, give me a hug, give me a hug. I love you. I love you. You keep coming to church now, you hear?' That's not love! I see a lot of preachers do that. They get really judgmental, really dark, and I often think that a lot of the people in those churches often hate themselves and need someone like that to beat them up.

Don't be like that. Don't be a judgmental person judging others. You can't judge others and say that you love them. You can speak the truth, but if you're going to speak the truth with someone, you got to walk with them. You got to take their hand and be with them.

That's not you anyway. You're not judgmental, you're not an idolatry, you don't do the self-pity thing or enabling thing but you understand that to have eyes to see hurting people is exactly what it means to live according to Jesus' way. There's never been a time like this. This story I told about Aaron, this guy that was going to shoot up a school, how many people are like that. Maybe they're not going to shoot up a school, but they're just done with life. Maybe sometimes they seem weird or they seem rude or they seem unkind or they cut you off in traffic or they cut in front of you in the line or something. Let it go. Let it go. I know it's frustrating, but remember that we don't know people's story, we don't know what they're going through. So many people that come across as rude and unkind, they're that way because everybody's been rude and unkind to them their whole life, usually their parents. They usually have no friends. And when someone like you comes and they're just a little friendly, a little kind, a little forgiving, it goes a long, long way.

I believe God is going to use you during this COVID time to reach and touch so many people's lives. I'm so excited to hear your stories when you say you know I just prayed for this person or I just encouraged this person, or I took this person out for a meal, or I gave this person a phone call, just because I felt like the Lord put it on my heart. And I know that God's going to use that to bless so many people's lives. People need people like you.

Lord, we thank you that you haven't called us to love the whole world. You've called us to love our neighbor, our near-dweller. I pray that you'd give us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and to recognize that God, you have forgiven us of so much. Yes, we have boundaries, yes we should believe and proclaim the truth, and yes, we should do things with wisdom, but Lord give us a heart for people. Help us to feel the pain that's going on near us, and to do our best to just love people right where they're at without fixing them; to just be kind to our neighbor. Lord, we thank you and we love you. You've given us so much, and we're so grateful, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

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.