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INVOCATION – Bobby and Hannah Schuller

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Hello.
HS: Welcome visitors, welcome church family. We are so happy that you're here. You know the age of miracles has not passed. God is still on the throne. Whatever impossible miracle you need today is possible for God. You are so loved.

BS: Amen. So much of miracles, too, is just believing something is possible, and not killing a miracle before it happens in your mind and your heart, so we're praying with all of you who are going through a tough time and believe in God for something that will. I'll just align my heart with yours, Hannah.

Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much for everything you've given us, and we thank you, Lord, that you are a God who loves us and you are a God who is at work in the world. You are a God who loves to sometimes break the rules of nature and help us, and so we just ask, God, in Jesus' name for anybody who needs a miracle this morning or evening, wherever they are, that your Holy Spirit would do a good work in their body, in their mind, or in any other aspect of their life that we need your help. Father, more than anything, we ask that you'd fill us with your Holy Spirit and help us to be true disciples of you, Jesus, and it's in your name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE - Philippians 2, 1 - 4 - Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Philippians 2:1:

Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded and having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather in humility value others above yourselves. Not looking to your own interest but each of you to the interest of others. Church family, God has called us to the heart of Jesus through servant leadership. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Bobby Schuller (BB) with Zim Flores (ZF)

Zim Flores is an entrepreneur, podcast host, and author. She founded Travel Noire, a high-end online travel company that reaches millions of travelers every month. After selling Travel Noire in 2017, she founded the website Italicist, a platform that helps women shop for modest clothing online. By finding her true identity in Christ and pursuing what He's called her to do, she was inspired to write her latest book Dare to Bloom: Trusting God Through Painful Endings and New Beginnings. In the book, she explains how the Lord is the true holder of our identity in any circumstance. Please welcome, Zim Flores!

BS: Zim, welcome! For those who have not maybe heard what I think is an amazing story, can you please share a little bit about your business and your life, and sort of how you got to where you are?

ZF: Yes, absolutely. I grew up in a small town in Minnesota and there weren't very many kids who looked like me, so I was forced to kind of think outside of the box. So my life very much revolved around being able to talk to different people from different backgrounds and move in-between different circles. I was always very different, I was always this weird kid.

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Moved to North Carolina, cloned a gene when I was 19 years old and so that kind of catapulted me in the biology world. I was a freshman in college and so it all started there. After I graduated college, I sold everything that I owned and I moved to India and I worked there. My life has just been a series of these really interesting, beautiful experiences. When I started my travel company, it was in the summer of 2017 that I felt the Lord nudging me to give this thing up; this thing that I had very much tied to my own identity and it was the most painful experience that I had ever kind of experienced in my life, but what I took away from that was that there are these beautiful things that God has for us, but first we have to let go of what we're holding on to. And so that, for me, has been such a beautiful lesson. So right now my husband and I, we run six different businesses, we do a lot of really interesting things, but all of that would not have been possible had I not leaned into what God was saying and really obeyed Him.

BS: That's awesome. For those who don't know, I mean I feel like you're really well-known for this travel business you started, and I think you sold it, right? Tell me a little bit about that business. I mean to me, that seems like a dream job. I mean I'm living my dream job, but to have a travel blog or to be able to travel and tell people where to go, I mean I think my wife and I would love that. It must have been tons of fun for you.

ZF: You know, it was born out of my own experience. When I was living in India, at the time they would eight-dollar flights from India to Malaysia to Cambodia, and so I was always hopping around, and so I wanted other people to have that same kind of experience, so it really was a dream job, like you say. But my identity got lost in that. And I think that was one of the biggest lessons, or the biggest things that I took away was that there are the things that we do, but who we are is not attached to what we do.

BS: What do you mean your identity was lost in that? What does that mean?

ZF: I was known as the travel girl, right? Everybody would come to me for travel advice. Literally, anything that had to do with travel, people came to me. And it got to a point where I was like I don't want to be a travel girl anymore. I want to be God's girl. And so what did that look like? It means that I have to be comfortable with living a life of sacrifice, and not sacrifice in a way where like life isn't abundantly joyful, because I believe that that's what God wants for us, but sacrificial in that we know that whatever God calls us to give up, there is something better on the other side of that.

BS: That's awesome. Well and that really leads you to your book. I mean it sounds like what you've really struck is a nice balance because obviously you and your husband are doing well. You said you have six companies. I mean obviously you believe in building things; you believe in having a big vision. But on the flip side of that is you can get tied up in that, and there's nobody to celebrate with when you cross the line. You have a sort of emptiness on the inside. And so you really want people to strike both those things, don't you, with the most important thing being that discipleship factor to the Lord. That leads us to your new book called Dare to Bloom. Tell us a little bit about why did you write this book and what are you hoping people take away from it?

ZF: I wrote the book after the period that I had when I was dealing with the company that purchased Travel Noire. I sold Travel Noire in September 2017, and I stayed on with our acquiring company for about 18 months. And during that period of time, everything changed. The company that I started was no longer the company that I knew once. I left, and it was heartbreaking. Right, you have this what you built from the ground up and its somehow unrecognizable anymore, or its just unrecognizable. For me, I knew that there were some lessons that God had for me. During the period of time where I just wanted to leave, there was a concept that I thought about a lot called gutting the fish. And when we think about the book of Jonah and how Jonah was swallowed by a fish, I could imagine that Jonah perhaps had a knife on him and he had like a belt or something where he could have gut his way out of the fish. But the fish could have been 500-feet below water, or 500-miles to the shore. If he would have cut himself out of a fish, he could have drowned. When I think about my own life and my own circumstance, I could have said you know what God, I tap out. Like I just want to go back to my normal life and do the normal things, but the Bible says that Jonah was delivered unto dry land. So that reminded me of how much God cares about where we actually land, if we just stay in the belly of the fish, or we stay where God wants us to be, then He will always deliver us unto dry land.

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BS: That sounds like a good sermon. We should have you come preach sometime. That's very, very solid reflection. I agree, and I think one of the hard things is really trying to sort out "when" because there clearly are times when you're supposed to wrap things up, but I guess what you're saying is God will show it to you. When the time comes, He'll make it plain. And that's what I really appreciate about your voice and your writing. I think you're really just helping people clearly understand in these tough times like with COVID and everything, it's like the idea of thriving.. talk about good timing, selling your travel business, by the way, with COVID you can't travel..

ZF: Oh my gosh!

BS: I mean totally God's timing. It's pretty great. But I just want to say thank you so much, Zim, and if you want to know more about Zim you can check out her website zimism, so z-i-m-i-s-m dot com and get this new book Dare to Bloom. I think it's really going to have a big impact on your life, especially when you're going into the new year, really centered like maybe you're a go-getter, you like to build things, but you really want to be centered in the Lord. Check out this book. It'll really help you walk that balance well. Zim, thank you so much for joining us today.

ZF: Thanks for having me.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Would you stand with me? We're going to say this creed together as we do every single week. Hold your hands out as a sign of receiving from the Holy Spirit 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 "Heart of a Servant Leader"

I am an avid fan of history. I love teaching the Bible, looking at it through the lens of history because the Bible is written in a historic language and a historic place from a historic people and God used them to bring His word and His revelation to us. And so I always think to understand it rightly, we have to understand where it came from and that's what we were taught in seminary, too. But when I study history, one thing is that history just ruins fiction for me because some of these stories are incredible. And when I read history and study it, I feel like I get, in some way, the opportunity, or we get the opportunity to see things the way the Lord sees it. When God sees us, He sees us within this giant arc, this elongated story that has been going on for a long time, will go on for much longer, hopefully, has a beginning and an end, and He knows where we are in it. But when you're IN the story, it's so hard to know what's going to happen next, so when you read something that happened two thousand, three thousand or even a hundred years ago, you always know what's going to come next and it's always interesting to think why did He do that? And yet you know if I was in that position, I would do that. And so you kind of see yourself on the villain, you see yourself on the hero. And so I love history for that because it helps me sort of understand not only scripture, but understand myself and understand we as a people. Well one of the things that I find super interesting as a fan of history, I'm no historian or whatever, but as a fan of history, I love to hear revisions by certain groups who benefit by doing so. Today I'm specifically talking about the so-called blue bloods. That's a hard phrase to say. Blue bloods: the aristocrats. Those who say 'I am a king or a queen' or whatever, and have this very strict lineage that sort of goes back and a lot of pride that is found in that, and there's sort of a cleaning up of the historic line when as a fan of history with regular red blood, you read back and you're like well many of these queens, we don't know if their kids were actually sired by their kings, first of all, but two, there was a lot of.. what's another word for in-breeding? That sounds bad. Whatever - in-breeding. And there are all sorts of stuff like this, but most of all, when you look back, these people came from very often the same barbarians you came from. Recently my sister over Christmas bought me a great gift. And I didn't know that this was possible, but apparently there's an organization in Scotland that is trying to save the highlands and Aberdeen, parts of Aberdeen from development.

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I've never been to Scotland so keep in mind I don't really know what I'm talking about, but basically, they're trying to keep it from development. And one way that they're doing that is they're parceling out land that can never be developed because it's only a square or two meters, maybe eight feet or so in a square, and then they're selling it to anyone who would buy it because Scottish law says if you own land in Scotland, you can be a Lord or a Lady. So my sister took advantage of this and Hannah and I have now been proclaimed, according to the laws of Scotland, Lord Robert Vernon Schuller and Lady Hannah Rose Schuller, which is pretty serious, so now you have to call me Lord Pastor when you see me. I had to really look it up and see like is this legit? Is this law really in place? And I found a news article from of course a British journalist who seemed very annoyed that this was happening, because it's really messing things up, and it seems silly, and it is silly, of course. And I just want to say I'm sorry to all of my British, Canadian or others who are in the commonwealth of the United Kingdom. I mean no offense at all to the royal family or anything like that. They seem like wonderful people. But I think all of this is very funny and silly. And he was writing and said about this thing, I had to google it. Like am I really a Lord? Is Hannah really like a legit Scottish lady now? And the answer is, kind of! Kind of. He said yes, you can put your name on, you know, Lord on your credit card, which I'm totally going to do now. Like I didn't even know you could do that. I was like oh yes, Lord Robert Schuller on my Visa? He said yes, you can use it to get a better table when you make a reservation, so technically you can use the title. But then, and I picture it in this voice: "but what does it truly mean? It means that you are a weird fraud with ideas far above your station." I hear it in that voice, maybe picture a monocle. Far above your station. That phrase, as an American, who we were like death to King George, down with the artis.. as an American, just grinded my gears so much that I cannot wait to put that Lord Robert Schuller behind my desk in my office. No, but all of this to simply say that in the aristocracy and aristocracies of Europe, all of these families, especially in the northern parts of Europe, most of them all go back to the Franks, and they all go back to people like this guy: Clovis the First who was the founder of the Merovingian Dynasty. Now when this painting was made probably hundreds of years after King Clovis of the Franks, they definitely cleaned this guy up. The Franks and the Germans, in general, in those days, were like an outlaw biker gang. Picture that. I mean just picture a fifth century outlaw biker gang and you are seeing the queens great, great, great, great grandpa. They're called the Franks after that ax he's holding in his right hand called a franca. It's a type of skull splitting ax that you throw at people. If you were to see the real King Clovis walk in here, he'd be covered in tattoos, he'd have wraps around his arms of this thing, he'd have mud and grease in his hair, or he might have been shaved up to the crown of his head, and then had a long hair turned into like a ponytail, which then he would wrap around his head. He would have looked like a legit barbarian. The only reason I say all of this is because these kings who come from people like even Charlemagne and Pippen the Short and others like that, these were just really good gangsters. There's no such thing as blue blood. And when a king dies, he bleeds red like the rest of us. All of this to simply say, you are a daughter of the King of kings. You are the son of the King of kings. These other kings don't make you more or less fit for anything. And believe it or not, in the story we're going to read today, all of this is relevant. When we are the children of the King of kings, we are not to look for glory, office, prestige, and although I have my certificate, at the end of the day, it's for fun and it's in a way to make fun of these things because I believe though offices are important, when we find our identity in our offices as leaders, it begins to erode our ability to lead, as crazy as that sounds. Today, we're going to talk about Lead Like Jesus, which is an actual seminar that is taught all around the world. It was done by Blanchard and Hodges, it's a wonderful seminar and we do it internally for our staff and volunteers, but I really think it's important to teach throughout the whole church and on Hour of Power because at the end of the day, you are a leader. You are a leader.

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Now a leader I define as anyone who wants to impute influence on the way something is going. You might think Bobby, I'm not much of a leader at all. But if you're a parent, you're leading your children. If you're trying to influence your spouse, you're leading your spouse. If you're in a team meeting at work and you say or do something in that meeting, you are a part of the leadership of that meeting. In church, when you go outside and talk to people, if you give someone advice, or you offer to do something for someone, you're leading them. I want to begin with the idea of admitting that all of us are leading, but not all of us are leading well. And that we need to take responsibility for leading, sometimes we need to step out and lead more, but most of all, when we lead, we need to lead from a place of discipleship. We need to lead like Jesus. Although I'm going to follow the ethos of the Lead Like Jesus seminar, I'm going to like de-Microsoft it a little bit. Do you know what I mean by that? It's a little bit like corporate language, which I don't love. I like historic and theological language, and so I'm going to dial back some of the language, but I'm not going to veer at all from the actual message. And the next four weeks we're going to talk about the heart of Jesus, the head of Jesus, the hands of Jesus, and the habits of Jesus. And so today, we'll be talking about the heart of Jesus. And the heart of Jesus is that the last will be first, and the first will be last. As disciples of Jesus and Christians in general, we are called, not to look first at the outside results, but to first look at the heart, at the will. What is it I desire? What is it I'm moving towards? What is it I care most about? Jesus, when He teaches morals, He always begins with what's happening on the inside, in the invisible parts, the stuff that nobody else sees. The stuff that only you can see when you stare at yourself in the mirror, which I did the other day with my certificate and went 'Bobby, you are Lord Bobby.' That sounds hilarious, Lord Bobby. That's enough of that. Anyway. But no, at the end of the day, Christ cares the most about what's happening in our hearts. It's an inside out transformation. We change what's going on here before we change out what's going on out there. This idea that the European medieval kings and queens took in terms of aristocracy and all of these things were effectively inherited by the Roman Empire. And of course, the Romans weren't the first to do it either, but by the time we got to Jesus' day, there was definitely a hierarchy in place. It's interesting when you look at the Roman Empire, that this one little town that became a big town, that became a city, in the middle of central Italy, swallowed up the whole known world. It's incredible the way that they did this. In Italy, the Roman conquest really began as like safety measures. They kept getting attacked by their neighbors, so they would adapt and change and conquer their neighbor so they would just be left alone. And this began a process of ongoing, never-ending conquest by the republic. This paired with an ethos of a need for fame and glory caused many soldiers and generals to rise up and want to conquer more. Early on in the Roman republic, all the soldiers were land owners, but as the republic grew and grew and eventually became an empire with an emperor, with a Caesar, soldiers now could be from anywhere and the population and its aristocracy and its caste system were changing dramatically over the years, where now you had a very clear system that looked a bit like this. I think we have a pyramid here where you have this guy here, of course at the top is Caesar, and then you have the patricians and the senators, those are the old aristocracy, the old families that go way back in Rome. The equestrians, which are like knights, plebians, which is the everyday guy, freedman's and soldiers. So freedman's are slaves that have been freed. And finally the very lowest of the low, slaves. If you were to go in Jesus' day into the Roman empire, you would see slaves everywhere from everywhere. The Romans, when we study American slavery or European slavery in the early enlightenment, late medieval eras, predominantly most slaves were taken as indigenous peoples or especially from Africa. And in those days, though, the Romans didn't care. They enslaved everybody. Anybody they conquered could be a slave. Women, children. Many of those slaves were white, so like if I would have been; if you were to take me and throw me in an empire, a six foot three, half Dutch, half Irish whatever guy, I would be.. in those days

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for a Celt or I would be from Gaul or something like that, or a German, and I would be paraded.. you'd see me walking around the Middle East, around people whose average height was about five feet tall, and I would have a long moustache going down like this and long hair and I would have my tattoos. I'd probably be a soldier or a worker or something like that, but I would be a slave. In those days, there was nothing lower than a slave. A slave was property, valuable property, but at the end of the day it was property. And so what you had in the Roman Empire in those days was a huge swath of the population that could be used, exploited for anything. Many of the children and most of the slaves who were women were sexually exploited, among other things; horrible. And this of course exists in Jesus' day, this hierarchy is in place, and while this is happening, Jesus is preaching about this thing that He talks about constantly. I think it's in every chapter of the gospels called the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. And no matter how much Jesus uses parables and tries to explain to His disciples that the Kingdom of God is something that comes from the inside out, that the Kingdom of God is God's influence happening wherever it's happening, they are hearing an actual government. His disciples for sure are hearing what would sound like today a small room in a bar somewhere in some block of Europe, a group of communists talking about overthrowing the government, and who's going to do what when the revolution happens. In the wake of the Hasmonaean reign, for sure Jesus' disciples think He's going to be a literal king in a room in Jerusalem and He's going to reign over a kingdom that's going to conquer not only Rome but the whole world. We see this everywhere, but there's this funny story where the sons of Zebedee, their mother - this sounds like something my mom would do - their mother goes to Jesus and says to Him, hey Jesus, hey, when you come into your kingdom make my sons sit at your right hand and your left hand. You know what she means by that? She doesn't mean when you go to heaven, let them in heaven sit at your right.. no she's saying let them be the number two guy with power in your new Jesus theocracy, in your new Jesus government. And the other disciples get super upset by this. Why? Not because what she's doing is totally against what Jesus is preaching, but because they want that job! I want to be at the top! I've done most of the work for you, Lord, let me sit at the right! Let me do the work. Let me be governor, lord, whatever it is. Haven't I been faithful? And you see all of this, they're arguing and they're fighting, and finally Jesus interrupts them and He says this from Matthew chapter 20, verse 25. He says "Jesus called them together and said you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them," meaning they dominate them, "and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you." See look Jesus usually is teaching in parables and stuff, but here He's like I'm done with this. I'm just making this plain to you. "Not so with you. Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you," and here comes this very weighty political word. Remember, this is a part of the social class. "Whoever wants to be first," whoever wants to be at the top, "must be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many." Can you bring that pyramid up again real quick? Jesus is saying okay, they're probably here, they're Plebs, right? They're everyday workers: fishermen, carpenters, construction workers, today you might say. They're here. And they want to be like Jesus is going to be up here, they want to be these guys. They want to be like so all that work, all that effort, they're going to be fighting, they want to be up here and Jesus says no, no, no, if you want to be like me, and you think it's up here, you need to move from here to down here. You need to move from middle class to the most disgraced, unliked, un-aristocratic group there is. You need to be like a slave. Basically, He's saying you need to let go of your ego! Your desire for glory and recognition and power. If you want to lead like Jesus, you can lead but you have to let go of this need to be famous. This need to be a big deal. This need to be thanked all the time.

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And although all of those things can be enjoyable, at the end of the day, if you want to lead like Jesus, you need to become like the least of these, not the greatest of these. This is constantly in Jesus' teaching. We're going to talk more and more about it, but it's totally inescapable that to lead like Christ means to serve. It means you let go of your ego. The Lead Like Jesus seminar says ego is an acronym for edging God out. The more my ego grows, the more I push out my real calling, the more I push out God's leadership, the more I push out the ultimate call of why I'm here and what I'm supposed to do. And I would add to that the sadder you'll get. That even if you succeed in all of that, the more empty you'll feel, the more you'll feel like you need another.. and at the end of the day, we need that. We need to be where Christ is. To double down on this, there's another story and if you've gone to church at all in your life, you've for sure heard at least one sermon on this, and it's probably better than anything I would preach, but it's a story about when Jesus washes the feet of the disciples. And John the evangelist goes a long way to show you that Jesus dresses like a slave. It's interesting because Jesus did have this tunic that doesn't have a seam in it, which in His day would have been very expensive. There's no explanation about how He got it. It would have been super rare and very difficult to make, but basically an artisan tailor would have measured your body and made the whole thing and weaved it so that it would slip over your head and it would fit you perfectly with no seams anywhere. So He had one of those and He removed that. He removed that wealthy piece of clothing. He removed whatever rabbinic and Orthodox Jewish accoutrements He might have been wearing, and He put on the sash of a slave and began to do one of the most embarrassing things a slave can do: He began to wash the feet, wash the mud and animal stuff off of the feet of His disciples, which would have been filthy, and not only filthy, its humiliating. Its humiliating. And He didn't care. He says when He finishes this in John chapter 13, "you call me" we'll say rabbi so the context is right, "you call me rabbi and lord, and rightly so for that is what I am. Now that I, your rabbi.. now that I, your lord and rabbi have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you'll be totally blessed." I added totally blessed. "You will be blessed if you do them." Blessed. You want to be blessed? You want to be a joyful person? Then when we lead, the leadership should not come from a place of self-aggrandizement and ego, it should come from a desire to please the Lord and to bless other people. To be a servant leader. To lead with Jesus' heart. It's a heart of compassion, of joy, of love, not of self-promotion, not of these other things that we see so often in leadership today. So when you lead, and you do lead, lead with Jesus heart. We see all kinds of leaders in the world today, but as leaders we ought to show what it means to lead like rabbi Jesus. In your business meetings or in politics or wherever you look, you're going to find leaders that are domineering, you're going to find leaders that are cowards, you're going to find leaders that are passive aggressive, you're going to find leaders that are leading from the shadows but they're still leading. But not so with you. You lead like Jesus, which is both confidence and humility. Not pride and not ego, not getting your feelings hurt all the time, but leading from a place to serve others. The Lead Like Jesus group calls it a servant leader versus a self-serving leader, or another way of saying it is a called leader versus a driven leader. And they think, and I agree with them, that really the only difference between those two things is who owns what's being led. Obviously as a pastor, I need to know I don't own this ministry. That's easy for me because I didn't start this ministry, I inherited it. I'm a curator of it until it goes to the next person who leads after I'm here. And it's not even totally led by me, it's also led by our.. I keep wanting to say classis.. what is it? Presbyterian? Or session, and that's important. But all of us in leadership, we see the responsibilities, or we ought to see our responsibility as not as something we own.

Heart of a Servant Leader

But if you're a driven leader versus a called leader, it's easy to see everything that I'm leading as mine. It's mine. And to feel threatened and bothered. But everything, even our bodies is on loan from God. We're going to lose everything in this world. We can't take anything out of here. And the Lord shows us that if we are trustworthy, managing and curating His things, that He'll entrust more to us. But if we try and hoard it and do all this, it'll be worse.

So here are three questions and I'll finish with this, I'll go through this quickly. If you want to know if you're a servant leader versus a self-serving leader, these are good questions to ask yourself. Try not to think about your boss, by the way, while I'm saying this, okay? Or someone like.. remember as a leader, think about this as a parent, at work, if you're in ministry, when you're leading your ministry. If you're volunteering here in the church and you're leading a group or involved in a group how you're leading those groups. Ask yourself these three questions, okay? The first is how do I respond to feedback? How do I respond to feedback? If you're married, when your spouse gives you feedback, how do you respond? Husbands – your wife is a marriage book. She will be happy to tell you how to improve your marriage. And at the end of the day, most of us are going to see every bit of feedback we get as either a gift or as a threat. We're going to see it as an insight, a blessing, especially when it comes from our enemies. Your enemies are going to be the most honest with you. Your friends won't tell you what your enemies will be happy to tell you. There is a gift in that. Or are we going to take it as an offense? Are we going to take it as an attack on our authority? An attack on our office. So to lead like Jesus is first to see feedback, even and especially negative feedback, as a gift. Number two: how is your successor planning? Jesus, from the very beginning was designing successors. He said "greater works will you do." From the very beginning, He wanted the 12 to effectively replace Him in leadership on earth, and they too developed successors. When you are in your job, you need to be developing leaders. You need to be a leader of leaders. With your kids, you want to be raising your kids to be.. it's more important that you raise your kids to be strong than it is that you raise them to be safe. You need them as soon as possible to become the kind of people that don't need you anymore. You'll always be there for them, you'll always love them, you'll always comfort them, but what if you die? You will someday, and when you do, you want to know that I did a good job of training my children to lead good lives the way I want them to lead. Train up a child they should go, as the scripture says, and they won't depart from it. As a pastor, I need to be training up other pastors, preachers, leaders, church planters. In your job, you need to be training people to fill your role. And as you do this, you're going to be learning a lot about yourself. People that, especially founding people, there's an old saying that founding pastors don't retire, founding pastors die. That's a sad thing to hear. That some of these gigantic influential ministries that have done so much, they have no successor plan. There's no group of people that can come up from the rear and take over. There's a lot of old legends that are going out that have no plan of what's going to happen when they're gone. Okay. So you always, always need to be training leaders to lead like Jesus. That's how He led. So number one: how do you respond to feedback? Number two: are you training leaders? Are you training successors? And number three: who leads and who follows? It should be ideally if you're leading like Christ, that everything you're doing, you're doing first as a follower then as a leader. Paul said follow me as I follow Christ. That the first question you're asking anytime you're making a decision, anytime you're trying to give influences, what direction is the Lord going? How can I move this corporate meaning, how can I move this family, how can I move this ministry or this group that I'm in, or my classroom if you're in school or university, where would Christ be leading this, and do your best to follow that way and then you say follow me as I follow Christ. So it's not about your personal big vision of what you want to do, it's about how is Christ going to bless this group and how He is going to carry this group.

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And you'll find that it's much more endearing, first of all, and you'll find that you'll find a lot more joy because it's not about your vision, it's about the vision that Christ has that He has put in you. All of this to simply say, actually I want to challenge you if you're listening to this sermon on television or wherever, and maybe you're not a believer or Christian, I want to encourage you to employ these principles because we not only trust Jesus as a spiritual Savior of our life, but we entrust His wisdom. That what He's teaching us is actually smart and good for us. That this is actually going to be beneficial to you as a leader. Not only are you going to be more successful in the long run if you lead like Jesus, but you're going to be a more joyful leader, and you might even come to find out that Jesus is exactly who He said He was. That He's the smartest person who's ever lived. Well, He didn't say that, but I'm saying that. He is the smartest person who's ever lived. That He knows more than anybody's ever known, and that He truly is the way that we can come before the Father redeemed and rescued, and we thank Him for that. Friends, I just think you're doing much better than you think you are. You're a better parent than you are, you're a better leader than you are. And continue to allow the Lord to do a good work in you. Father, we thank you so much for all that you've given to us. All the ways that you entrusted us, and we pray, God, that we would let go of our egos and our need to be recognized and loved and admired or titles or offices, to let go of those things, and to just go where you want us to go. We're not afraid of being embarrassed, Lord. We're not afraid of being ashamed. We're not afraid of not being thanked or not getting recognition. We're not worried about being totally unique and special. Lord, we're going to let go of all of that stuff. We know that in your eyes you treasure us and love us and care for us. That's enough for us, Lord. What a gift that is. That the King of kings and the Lord of lords, He smiles over you, He blesses you, He calls you, He loves you. We don't need anybody else's love. Lord, we can serve and trust and do what you call us to do. We thank you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

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.