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GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

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

HS: Welcome visitors and church family. Thank you for joining us. I want to encourage you to continually renew your mind in God's word. A renewed mind allows for that steadfast faith that will manifest God's miracle promises in your life. You are loved.

BS: Amen. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much for all that you're doing in our lives. We thank you that you're here now. Lord, wherever we are, you're there. We ask in Jesus' name that we would open our hearts to receive of your Holy Spirit, Lord, that we be full of your knowledge and goodness and light. Help us to see things the way you see things. Lord, help us to overcome evil with good. We thank you, it's in Jesus' 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 – Daniel 7, 11 - 14 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Daniel 7:11: Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. The other beasts had been stripped of their authority but were allowed to live for a period of time. In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Amen.

Interview Bobby Schuller (BS) and Daniel Fusco (DF)

Daniel Fusco is a talented speaker and author, who currently serves as the lead pastor of Crossroads Community Church in Vancouver, Washington. Though he was raised as a Catholic in New Jersey, he gave his life to Jesus Christ in his last year at Rutgers University and felt called to pastoral ministry. After being ordained, he went on to plant multiple churches in New Jersey and California before rooting himself at Crossroads Community. His newest book, *Crazy Happy: 9 Surprising Ways to Live the Truly Beautiful Life*, shows us how to be positively transformed by Biblical truth so we can embrace a blessed future.

BS: Daniel, how's it going, my friend?

DF: It's going great, Bobby. Much love to you, your family, Hour of Power, Shepherd's Grove, good to see everybody.

BS: It's great to see you. It's not often I get to interview an actual friend. Very often, I haven't met the person, but I've known you for a few years now and it's really great to see you. I love your ministry, I love what you're doing, and I'm so excited about your new book, because it's on a topic that's near and dear to my heart, to this church's heart, and that's the idea of this biblical principle of happiness. How are you? It's so great to see you. What have you been up to lately and what's going on with your church during COVID and everything else?

DF: Much like you, Bobby, being in Washington state, we've been pretty locked down, but God has been open up the doors. One of the things that we've been finding as we've been going through this season is that everything that we go through is an opportunity from Jesus, if we're willing to accept it, kind of like the mission impossible, like this is your mission if you're willing to accept it. Been seeing the Lord move in really powerful ways, although it's been a very strange season as it has been for everybody with all that's been going on.

Son of Man

BS: Tell me about your book. In a time when so many people are going through such a hard time, right? There's political turmoil, there is issues, we had this shooting recently, there's all sorts of stuff going on obviously with people losing their businesses and people dying from COVID and here you are writing a book about happiness. Is this the time to be writing about a book like this, do you think?

DF: Yes, I think it's absolutely the time because I think really what you have going on is with all the things that are going on in the world today, things are so perplexing; there's so many big questions and there's things that need to get changed and we have all these things going on. But really what you realize is that happiness is not something that has to do with the things on the outside, happiness is what God does inside our heart as we are abiding in Jesus, and as we simply respond to Him. And so what I always tell people is that happiness won't change everything but it will change me, and then I'm a change agent when I'm happy, wherever I find myself. So I think now is as good a time as any to be talking about happiness because this is the only chance we get to live today anyway, and we want to move in the happiness that God created us for.

BS: Yes, when you talk about happiness then, I mean there are books that talk about like the science of happiness, but the idea of happiness is something that philosophers and all sorts of people in religions have talked about for a long time. What makes your message unique, do you think, in an era when so many people are talking.. like where do you really come out on this?

DF: I think what makes my book Crazy Happy unique is I'm just talking about the teachings of Jesus. I think we live in a day and age where everybody knows who Jesus is, no matter what they believe about who Jesus is. I believe He's the Son of God, He's the Savior of all of mankind, and I believe that once they put their faith and trust in Him. But even if people don't believe that, like I live outside of Portland Oregon where there's not a lot of Christianity and people think well Jesus was a healer, He was a teacher, He was a prophet. But what people don't realize is that Jesus explained to us happiness in His most famous passage the Beatitudes, in His most famous sermon, The Sermon on the Mount right there in Matthew chapter 5. For me, it's about wanting to reintroduce our culture and our world to the teachings of Jesus, and also as a Christian, what I realized is that I had also been getting my definitions of happiness not from Jesus but from the culture in which we live. And so as I started studying the teachings of the Bible and of Jesus in regards to the idea of happiness, I was really shocked that I had to redefine happiness for myself the way that Jesus already did.

BS: How does Jesus define happiness, because sometimes I think that like a lot of Christians, they're like 'I have joy on the inside;' they're like talking about joy but I'm like if you're happy and you know it, tell your face! Like let your face smile! Like show me that you're actually a happy.. I mean you just exude joy. I mean you seem like a super happy guy. You are a super happy guy. What do you say to like especially Christians who would either say Jesus doesn't tell us to be happy, like a moral claim, does He? Like what do you say to people. Or like am I really supposed to be like a happy, joyful person, even though things aren't great right now?

DF: Yes, I always say that in the Bible the blessed person or the blessed person is the happy person. That word in the Beatitudes, Makarios in the Greek. It literally means oh how happy or how fortunate. I'm always reminded Psalm 144 verse 15 says "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord." That also says "blessed is the person whose sins are forgiven." So I always say that if you're in Jesus and you put your faith and trust in Him, then happiness is the outgrowth of your relationship with Jesus. I always like to remind that grumpy Christians are bad missionaries. Because nobody ever saw a grumpy person and said I want to follow Jesus like they do because they are so miserable right now. Really what you realize is that the salt and light quality that God has for the people of God, it's meant to be a witness into the world. Jesus, I believe, wants to make us happy in the deepest way possible, not in a trivial or superficial way, but as we move through the world, that happiness that is found in Christ as opposed to just the different things that we're hoping that happens, that actually tells a huge story, it's a testimony to who the Lord is.

BS: I often tell people like be careful to listen to religious people who you can't imagine laughing at a joke. Like if you hear a preacher and you can't imagine him laughing at a decent joke, there's probably something that's not.. because Jesus and the whole Bible does talk about, like you said, Makarios and these other words about being a happy person. Your book is so great and it's a very practical book this nine surprising ways to live a truly happy and beautiful life.. or truly beautiful life. Just as we sign off, I think most the people here are Christians, but is there like one idea, especially for believers that you would say hey here's a way to really experience happiness in like a more tangible and practical way in your life?

Son of Man

DF: Yes, I use the nine surprising ways, because there's the nine beatitudes, and then there's nine fruit of the spirit, and I've just put them together in the book. One that I think is the most kind of practical for us is that the second beatitude says "blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted" or "oh how happy are those who are sad or grieved because comfort comes." And I always like to tell people that our culture says that happiness is a life devoid of sadness, but devoid of grieving. So but really Jesus says actually because you love, things are going to make you grieve, like if you lose a loved one, Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, his friends, he saw that people were grieving because of this loss, even though Jesus knew He was going to raise him from the dead, He still wept. I like to tell people that God's plan for happiness is not a life divorced from sadness, it's a life that incorporates sadness in a way that by His spirit He'll comfort us, and then 2nd Corinthians chapter 1 says that we comfort others with the comfort that we receive. And that kind of completes the sadness cycle where you grieve because something is breaking your heart, but then God meets you and comforts you in it, and then you move into helping other people going through those things and you're more blessed or you're happier when you give, than when you receive, and then it puts it all together that now happiness becomes a much deeper thing than just kind of a toothy smile, or just kind of superficial joy.

BS: Amen. That's a very Jewish way and very wise way of thinking about happiness; a very biblical way, and that makes sense because you're a pastor. So Daniel, we thank you so much. Daniel Fusco, the book is called Crazy Happy. I want to recommend you get a copy of this. Daniel, thank you so much, my friend, for being here. God bless you, especially on a Sunday. I know it's hard to get away. We appreciate you. God bless you.

DF: God bless you too. Appreciate you all so much.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Let's say this creed together. Whoever you are, stand with me, hold your hands like this as a sign of receiving from the Holy Spirit, 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/PRAYER – Bobby Schuller "Son of Man"

Once the sun and the north wind had a wager. They saw traveling down the road a man who was cold, wrapped in his jacket traveling from one town to the other. And the sun said to the wind 'I'm more powerful than you are,' and the wind said to the sun, 'no I'm more powerful than you are.' They took a wager. They said let's see which one of us can take this man's jacket off. So the wind went first, and as the man was walking, the north wind began to blow. As it was blowing, the man closed his jacket more. The more the wind blew to try to blow off his jacket, the more he huddled down like this until eventually a huge wind was coming and the man just was gripping down on his jacket like that. And the sun said all right, now it's my turn. And he just got nice and warm and parted the clouds and the man began to sweat, and off came his jacket. This is a famous parable from Aesop's Tales that go way, way back. Probably wasn't even original to Aesop, but its ancient wisdom. The idea of persuasion, or the idea of how to fight in a way that's useful and good. Remember, everything that Jesus teaches us, its practical. It has real wisdom. Even though Jesus didn't teach this parable, they were right. This is to show how many of us when we get into an argument or get into a fight, whether it's with your best friend or your spouse or your enemy or someone online, or maybe you're one of those funny people that likes to make comments in the comment section on online newspaper articles. If you are, God bless you. The road we often take, even as Christians, is like the north wind. I'll blow this man's jacket right off. I'll make such a persuasive and heated and impassioned and well thought out argument, that he can't help but get his jacket knocked right off. When in truth people remember how you make them feel, it's said. In our world, all of us are mammals. We're all animals, really. We have a part of us that's biological, right? A part of us that comes out of the ground. It's a part of us that we share with dogs and pigs and giraffes and cats, right. This part of us that's beastly. And then there's this other part of us, the breath of God that has utter contempt for the beastliness of our lives, right? This part of us that hates that aspect of our lives. And so many of us, especially in a modern world, find ourselves fighting internally between the beastly nature of a human being and the godly nature that the Lord put in us. So many of us, we fight in this way. Today I want to talk about the importance and the value of how to fight.. we're always fighting, right?

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You don't always fight people but you fight adversity, you fight fear, you fight the challenges that get in your way. You fight obstacles. You fight being hidden. And all of these things are a struggle, a fight. In fact, the word "Israel" literally means "the one who struggles" or "the one who struggles with God." Our life is a struggle and it's a fight, and one of the things that makes disciples of Jesus utterly unique is the way in which we fight. That we understand that you overcome evil with good, and that there's a better way to do things. And that when we fight and argue or get through things the way the Lord in the scriptures teaches us, not only does that elevate the person we're arguing with, it elevates us. When we fight like animals, we become like animals. But when we fight like the Lord, loving our enemies, overcoming evil with good, we become more like the Lord. We become more like Christ. That's what He wants for us. We dignify our existence, we find meaning when we engage in these things in a way that's Jesus' way, and it's a very hard thing to do. And that's why most people don't do it. I remember once I had this guy I would talk to at a sandwich shop, my favorite deli called Hollingshead, and I remember, this is years ago, I think this guy I was talking to, very interesting, fun guy, not a Christian. I think he was an outright atheist, actually, believed there was no God, and was studying philosophy at one of the local universities. And he said to me, he knew I was a pastor, and of course I was trying to convert him. I always am. Whoever you are, I full on want to convert you to Christianity, just to let you know. It's just the best life you can live, because I love you. I was talking to him and he said the only reason, and for sure he heard this in one of his philosophy courses, probably Adler or something. He said 'the only reason you believe in God is because you don't want to go to hell and you want to go to heaven.' I said 'that's not true at all.' I mean it is true I don't want to go to hell and I do want to go to heaven, but that's not why I serve the Lord. He said 'I guarantee you if it was between you or a loved one, deep down inside, you'd let your loved one go to hell.' And I said 'I guarantee you that is not true.' I said 'I can tell you for sure I would go to hell for my wife.' And I said 'I can tell you for sure I would go to hell for my daughter.' I said 'but to be honest, I wouldn't go to hell for you.' I think he believed me. I do. I think he believed me. I said 'but the good news is I don't have to go to hell for my wife or for my daughter or for you. Somebody already went to hell for us.' And it's simply just trusting in that and accepting that. See that is the gospel. See every religion, it's all about doing everything that's right so you don't go to hell and you can go to heaven. That's not what Christianity is about. That's what makes it unique from every other worldview is that we belong before we believe. We belong before we behave. That doing good is so important, but it's a response to being the beloved. It's a response to being a child. It's a change that happens in the heart. It's not something that's done out of being afraid, it's something that comes out of utter love for the Lord. You see? And so when we are transformed in that way, when we fight for what is good, when we fight for what is right, it is done out of a place of love, even with the person that we're arguing with because we overcome evil with good. And when we do that, we elevate ourselves to a place of dignity. Amen? This is what should make Christians unique, and oftentimes doesn't, especially in a public sphere. I am actually very annoyed when I see Christians overcoming evil with evil, which is common. That when you see Christians fighting fire with fire. That's not the way we were trained or taught. And the allure of ministers is when we fight the way we were taught to fight, which is with goodness. Okay. And that's who you are! Dallas Willard called this the allure of gentleness. That's who you are. You are a loving, kind person and you can say what you believe, and you should. And you can say what is true and what is right. But you say it because you love the person you're talking to. And you say it because, in a way, you love yourself. Not love in a bad way, but that you have dignity for yourself. That you're not going to become like animals. That you're going to have dignity in whatever position it is you're in. That's something no one can take from you because it's given to you by the Lord. Okay. Today's message in this Lenten season as we're talking about Christ and these different prophecies in the Old Testament, the dreams of the prophets, today we're going to get to one of my favorites, and that is this title that Jesus calls Himself over a hundred times in the scriptures, the Son of Man. Now if you're a fan of the gospels, and I hope you are and you read them, you might notice that I'm pretty sure Jesus never calls Himself Messiah. So I spent a couple hours last week trying to confirm that, that Jesus never refers to Himself as Messiah, although He affirms it multiple times. So someone will say He's the Messiah and He'll agree with that. Peter says "you're Christ, the Son of the Living God." He says "blessed are you Peter." Or there's a woman who says "this will be revealed to us by the Messiah when He comes." And Jesus says "I am He," but He never like.. Jesus talks about Himself in the third person when He's explaining His parables a lot, when He's teaching a lot, He talks about Himself, but He doesn't talk about Himself as the Messiah, even though clearly He is saying He's the Messiah.

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He always references a famous scripture that would have been emblazoned on His listeners minds. He calls Himself what? The Son of Man. The Son of Man. I'm surprised how many Christians and frankly pastors don't know what He's saying when He's saying this. Everybody thinks He's saying He's a man, and He is technically saying that, but its deeper than that. Remember, His audience has the Old Testament memorized, many or most of them. They know He's referencing a famous passage in Daniel that is off the charts bizarre. Bizarre. We're going to get to Daniel's dream in just a moment, but you have to understand where Daniel is having this dream. He's having it in a place called Babylon. So remember, a couple weeks ago, we talked about this idea that when Adam and Eve who are like the beasts but they're different than the beasts, right? They reign over the beasts because they have this thing, the breath of God, the knowledge of God, the life of God that makes them different than animals. And they give that up, in a way, when they sin, right? They see the apple and Satan just says take it. Take what is yours. God doesn't want you to be like Him, so just take it, and so they do. And even when they break that rule, God has so much mercy on them and loves them. He makes a promise to Eve, we said this earlier, but I want you to keep this image in your mind that he will bite your heel and you will crush his head. So the prophecy is that Eve is going to have children and they're going to be Eve's children, and they're going to be the good ones, and then Satan, the serpent, the beast is going to have children. And the two are going to be at enmity with each other. They're going to fight constantly. And the way that Eve's children are going to defeat the children of the beast is by ironically being bitten. That as their heel is bit by the serpent, the heel then goes boom and crushes the serpent, which is exactly what Jesus does on the cross. This is the promise, the crushed head, the idea that this is how you destroy evil, and then you just see throughout the whole Old Testament this prophecy and this.. I keep wanting to call it a myth; myth makes it sound like it didn't happen, but a myth is a story that explains life. So think of it as like this theme, this narrative plays over and over and over in the Old Testament. That you have the good guy and the bad guy, and the bad guy is the one who takes the monster, and the good guy is attacked by the bad guy but the attack of the good guy by the bad guy is the thing that kills the bad guy. And this is the theme, very often, of loving your enemies, of patience, of overcoming evil with good, you see this theme over and over. And you see how the beast continues to develop through the Old Testament. Right after they're cast out of the Garden of Eden, there are two brothers: Cain and Abel. And they bring an offering.. no not an offering. They bring a tribute before the Lord. This is important, actually. I get asked, on occasion, why did God reject Cain's offering? Well, the word here in Hebrew is minchah. Minchah means tribute. So offering, I think, is a bad word because offering we think of worship, like what the priest would do. Minchah is something you pay to a king. In the ancient days, if you have a local lord and he's protecting your lands, when you visit him, you give him some sheep or you give him something good to say thank you for keeping me safe, or thank you for being my lord. Something is happening with Cain and Abel where they're still in a communion with the Lord as lower lords, in a way, would have communion with a king by bringing a tribute before him. Abel brings a great tribute, its meat and the Lord receives the offering, and Cain brings some fruit and its rejected. It reads like because it says tribute, it reads like Abel is glad that the Lord is the king of his life, and that Cain doesn't want the Lord to be the Lord of his life, but he's afraid of him. And so because of that, the offering that Cain brings before the Lord is not a good one, and God rejects it. Cain then begins to fester and get angry, and he lures his brother out into the middle of nowhere, and he kills him. His own brother. He's like the third guy ever, right? And the fourth guy. Just beasts, right? Like just take his life. You just take it. You don't get your way, you take it. You force your way. After his brother dies, the Lord says 'Cain, where's your brother?' And he says famously – 'am I my brother's keeper?' He says 'what have you done? Listen. The blood of your brother cries out to me from the earth.' It's a good line, isn't it? Sounds like Shakespeare. You see as the Old Testament goes on, development of this 'just take it,' this warlike, this fighting, the violence. Lamech, great grandson of Cain, they're all children of Cain, murderers. Lamech famously says.. because God said to Cain that if anybody kills Cain, he'll be avenged seven-fold, and Lamech says "if Cain is avenged seven-fold, Lamech seventy times seven." By the way, that's when Jesus says "forgive your enemies seventy times seven," He's referencing this. He's reversing it, see like a rabbi? And over and over this develops until finally you have just kingdoms upon kingdoms upon kingdoms of violence and horrible stuff. The tower of Babylon which is poorly translated. It's always translated as Babel. I don't know why they do that. In Hebrew its Babylon. It's the tower. This is Babylon. The tower of Babel is built in Babylon.

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This is a Ziggurat, which was common in the near east in the Persian parts of the Middle East. In Babylon, this was like a large tower, not quite like a pyramid, and that top part was a gate to the heavens or gate to the gods, pagan thing. Babylon is eventually where Daniel has his dream. He has this vision of these kingdoms built upon kingdoms built upon violence, and this image of one kingdom defeating the next, all of them blood thirsty, all of them violent, all of them that say if you want something you just take it. Man, as a fan of history, if I've learned anything about history is that war is hell. That's what William Tecumseh Sherman said. He said when somebody was talking something about how the glory of war, he said I'm sick of war. He was a famous general. I'm sick of war. War is hell and his glory is moonshine. When you read what it's like for not only soldiers but the bystanders in war, the loss of children and property and all of the horrible things. World War I, which was fought because Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, the whole world broke out into war like that, I mean it's just incredible when you read the testimonies. And when war and things like war are happening, it's a symbol of people becoming beastly, of take it, fight, violence. And as believers, of course, we believe in just war, like I would say World War II for the Allies was a just war. But even then, there was still plenty of men, women and children that were killed by the Allies because you can't control millions of people perfectly. Look, the point is violence and this type of thing is from the beast and that there is a better way, and this is the vision of Daniel. Like the reason I point this out is because all of the arguments and fights that we have, they really are just mini versions of what you see happening in war. It's amazing. Anyway. Daniel has this dream, and in this dream he says that "I saw a black sea and out of this black sea came four beasts." So again, the beastliness. And he describes each beast, all of them are crazy looking. The first and then the second and then the third, and then "the fourth beast was the greatest of the four, and everywhere he went he left blood and destruction and ruined everything. And on the head of this fourth beast were ten horns, and on it was one horn that had eyes and a mouth." It's an interesting picture, isn't it? "And this horn began boasting about all the destruction and death and power that this monster had." "And then I saw a throne room with the ancient of days," with God. "And this throne was made of fire." So fire is always a symbol for God in the Old Testament. A throne of fire. "And out of the throne came a river of fire, and his hair was white and his clothing was all white like snow, and around him were millions of people. And the horn continued to boast! And so the ancient of days took the beast and he threw it into the fire and it was destroyed." And then.. okay, I'll read this verbatim, Daniel chapter 7: "and then in my vision at night, I looked and there before me was one like a" (say it with me) "Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the ancient of days, and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power, all nations and peoples of every language." Okay this is the other word, remember this is a Jewish document, okay. What do they do with this man? They worshipped Him. Okay this is a huge like BEEP, BEEP like if you're Jewish and you're reading this, this is a troublesome passage, right. How was there a man that is coming on the clouds, that is elevated. It looks like in this vision there's not one throne, there's two thrones. There's the throne of God, and then there's this other throne that as Jews and Christians we say was Adam and Eve's throne, right? That has been empty ever since they sinned. Their job was to rule over the earth as God's stewards, and onto that throne comes this heavenly figure, a man, called the Son of Man, and He sits on that throne. Okay. I lost my place. He's given authority, glory, blah, blah, blah, blah, and they, yeah, oh yeah, "worshipped Him, and His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." When Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man, He is clearly alluding to this passage. He's saying I am the one who has come. And He references this passage directly on a couple of occasions. In Matthew 26:64, he's asked "are you the Messiah? Just tell us plainly." This is when He's being tried and He's about to be convicted to go to the cross. He says "you have said so, Jesus replied, but I say to all of you from now on," now on. Okay, so He's about to be crucified. "From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the mighty one coming on the clouds of heaven." So He's citing Daniel. He's saying I'm that guy. After 500 years, I've finally come. How was it that the Son of Man defeated the beast? How was it? He defeats the beast by being bitten. By being bitten on the heel and stomping His foot. He defeats the beast through the cross. By taking upon Him all that the evil, all the darkness of Satan, and then killing it with Himself. At the heart of our faith is a principle about how we fight. That we do not overcome evil with evil, we overcome evil with good. Very often a lot of us are going to think about war and fighting and this and this, but what about when your husband leaves the toilet seat up? And what about when, I don't know, I can't think of something.. I can't say your wife because then you're going to know the things that annoy me about Hannah, which is

Son of Man

nothing. Zero things annoy me about my wife. Or your kids, or your parents, your colleagues at work, and I know I say this a lot, but in the modern world we don't have the types of enemies, in a way, that the ancient world had as much, but we do share competition, comparison, frenemies, people who we love but get on our nerves, and when we get into arguments and talks with them, how often do we overcome evil with good. You'd know of the fights that went well and the fights that didn't go well, how often overcoming evil with good is so important. We live in an age.. I feel like I harp on this so much, but I think it's just because right now during COVID it bothers me.. it doesn't really bother me that much to see the world acting like the world. The world has always been beastly and it always will be beastly until Christ returns. It will always fight evil with evil. It will always name call, it will always have contempt, it will deceive, it will lie, it will break the rules. That's to be expected. What I don't expect is for disciples of Jesus Christ to fight evil with evil. We fight evil with good. We take up our cross, which means we allow at some level, we're allowed to be bitten. But we know that in that biting, that's how we strike down the enemy, and by striking down, we help our enemy. We make our enemy our friend. We overcome evil with good. We understand this that your enemy is a spirit. In almost every case, it's the spirit of the person, not the person that's bothering you. It's the spirit of the organization, not the people in the organization that you're fighting against. It's the spirit in your kids, not your kids that you're fighting. It's the spirit of your friend, not your friend that you're fighting. When you understand it's a spiritual fight, it should change the way that you fight! It should change the way you pray! It should change the way you talk. You should understand how important prayer is in a fight, when you understand that the fight is against a spirit and not a person. And that is what you are. There's this story of St. George. St. George in the legend kills the dragon? Well, there's a part two to that story. It's said that after St. George killed the dragon, he was famous and everywhere he went, he was famous and he got bored and so he wanted to kill another dragon. He went around searching for another dragon to kill, but the one he killed was the last dragon on earth. He decided to kill violent beasts, so he killed lions and tigers and bears. Oh my. That's right. And when all the lions and tigers and bears were gone, he still needed something to fight and so he started killing foxes and coyotes and wolves, and when they were gone, he started killing rabbits and he started killing rats and he started killing bugs, until finally they say that at the end of St. George's life you could see him in the middle of a field swinging at nothing. How many people are like that today? How many of us in fighting monsters become monsters ourselves? And how many of us so obsessive with fighting for our political view, or religious view or whatever it is, find ourselves crazy in a field swinging a sword around at nothing. When I look at the world, I see many poor souls doing just that. But not you. You see we're at peace. We know Satan's future, we know our future, we know the world is in God's hands, and so we are agents of kindness and gentleness, and we understand that like the sun and not like the wind, we win through compassion and kindness. And yes, sometimes we're bold, we have to be direct, and yes, sometimes we have to literally fight, but most of the time we love our enemies. We know things like you get an apology by saying you're sorry. You get a seat of honor by taking the lowest seat at the table. You win an argument by asking questions. You receive by letting go. Father, we thank you and we love you, and we appreciate that you loved us even when we were enemies with you. And we thank you, God, that in a world that in some ways is getting better, but in other ways feels like spiritually is getting darker, we pray Father that we could be a light for you. Thank you for so many men and women that you put in my life that when I was evil, they fought me with good. That they turned me around. I pray that we can be that way to others. Lord, we love you and we thank you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Thank you all so much for being here today, whether you're here in the sanctuary or out on the courtyard or watching online, we're so glad you joined us. And it's always great when you incorporate church and a church community into the rhythm of your life. It's like going to the gym – the more you do it, the better you get, so we're praying that that happens for you. 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.