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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 church family and welcome visitors. Thank you for worshipping with us. God is the only one who can see the big picture of your life. The only persons exist. You can trust Him even during the coronavirus because He is on your side and you are loved by Him.

BS: We're so excited to have Pastor Bayless Conley as our guest speaker today and he'll be preaching for us later. Let's begin this service with a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you so much for everything you've given us, everything you're doing for us. We thank you, Lord, that when we're suffering, when we're going through hard times, when we're facing challenges, we're not alone. Lord, just because we can't hear you doesn't mean you're not speaking. We pray, Father, that you give us ears to hear, give us eyes to see. Help us, Lord, to listen to your Holy Spirit, to be full of the spirit, and Lord to be more like Jesus in everything we do. It's in His name we pray, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – John 5, 1 - 9 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for Bayless' message, the words of our Lord found in John 5:1:

After this, there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate, a pool which is called in the Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people: blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water. Then whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he'd already had been in that condition a long time, he said to him do you want to be made well? The sick man answered him: sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred. But while I am coming, another steps down before me. Jesus said to him, rise, take up your bed and walk. And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. Amen.

PRAYER – Chad Blake

Its moments like this that we are reminded that the church is not a building. The church is the people of God. As we look for new ways to communicate with one another and be in community with one another through phone and text, email and streaming online, we remember that we are the people of God gathered together in this place wherever you are. So would you join me in prayer this morning?

Father, we come to you with heavy hearts as we look all over the world. Lord, we pray for those who are sick. We lift up our government officials. We pray for clarity of mind. We pray for avenues forward. Lord, we pray for answers. We pray for a flattening of the curve. We remember all of those who are susceptible to a virus like this. Lord, in the midst of this, we know that you are a God who is active and alive in our world, and so Lord we give you praise. We haven't lost our praise, as we just sang. We look to the good in some of these quarantine situations: time spent with family, time to connect with loved ones where maybe we didn't have a chance to before. The beauty of nature that surrounds us. So Lord, give us eyes to see the good. Give us eyes to see where you are moving. And Lord, help us be your church. Help us be your hands and your feet in this world in whatever way we can. Maybe it's a phone call. Maybe it's a text. And for all of us, its prayer. Lord, remind us of the power of prayer, that prayer changes things. Lord, once again we pray for the doctors, the scientists, the government officials, and Lord, we pray for an end to this virus, in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

What to Do When You're Stuck

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Wherever you are, would you please stand with us? Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. We're going to say this creed together as we always do. Say it with me: 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!

INTRO TO BAYLESS CONLEY - Bobby

I'm so excited to have back in the house today Pastor Bayless Conley. If you've watched Hour of Power at all, you have seen him. He's already preached for us twice this year and we're just so grateful for all he's done for us and all the ways he continues to bless us and so many other churches. If you don't know Pastor Bayless, he's the founder and senior pastor at Cottonwood Church here in Orange County. He also hosts the television program "Answers with Bayless Conley." Would you please welcome my dear friend, Pastor Bayless Conley.

MESSAGE – Bayless Conley "What to Do When You're Stuck"

As always, it is a privilege and an honor to be with you. I have something on my heart to share with you. Hannah beautifully read those scriptures from John chapter 5 and I just want to talk to you a little bit about that story in a few minutes, but I want to begin by asking you a question. Are you stuck? Are you stuck in any way in your life? You may be a believer, you may love Jesus with all of your heart, but you're saved, sanctified and stuck. Maybe you're stuck financially. Maybe you're stuck in your spiritual growth. You feel like you're not making any forward progress in your relationship with the Lord, and you just sort of feel stuck spiritually. Maybe you are stuck in a marriage that's no longer growing. Maybe you're just sort of stuck on a level of life that you felt should have been over a long time ago, but you're stuck. In this story that Hannah read at the pool of Bethesda, there's a man that was stuck there for 38 years. That's a long time to be stuck. And when Jesus came and saw him, it says that Jesus knew he'd been in that condition a long time. I personally don't think that was a supernatural revelation that Christ had. I think everything about the man said he was stuck. It was written upon his countenance. It was in his posture. Everything about him said that he was stuck. And the first step, if you're stuck in any arena of life, if you want to get un-stuck, step number one is you really have to want it. Think about this. Here's this guy he's at the pool of Bethesda, he's obviously been that way many, many years, and Jesus asks him what many would consider a very offensive question: do you want to be made well? What kind of a question is that to ask a sick person? Of course they want to be well. I mean the fact that he's at the pool. The only reason that people gathered there at the pool was to be healed. That should have been proof enough that he wanted to be made well, but Jesus wasn't convinced. You know there's a lot of people that claim to want to change, they declare they want to rise to a new level, they may even ritualistically going through some of the things that they know they should be going through to get un-stuck, but it's just because they know it's expected of them. But inside, they've grown accustomed to their situation. They've learned to live with being stuck. And the reality is unless we change that inward state of our heart, our outward circumstance will never change. Let me ask you this today and I ask this humbly. Do you want to be made well? Do you really want to be un-stuck, or have you inwardly grown so accustomed to your condition that you're no longer fighting? Do you want to be free from that sin that so easily entangles you? Do you want the passion and the joy restored to your marriage or have you learned to live with mediocrity and monotony? I was speaking in the central U.S. one time, and flew into this airport. Some guys from the church picked me up and we're driving out of the airport through this community, on our way to the church, and I noticed there was this terrible smell. I mean it was bad. And I'm thinking why is no one saying anything about this. I almost felt like saying guys, look, it wasn't me. And we're just driving and the smell doesn't go away, and finally I broached the subject. I said guys, I got to ask you: what is that terrible stench? And they said oh, we don't even think about it. There's a particular industry in that town that makes the air of the whole town stink. They said it's that way every day for us and we don't even notice it anymore. That's just the way it smells here all the time. Now I personally thought I would never live in this town. I didn't tell them that. But you know I think it's like some people, they've learned to live with the stench in their marriage or some other area of life. And without realizing it, it's become the accepted norm to them. My friend, listen, if you want to get un-stuck, you have got to get over being complacent and just say enough is enough. Things are going to change.

What to Do When You're Stuck

I remember I read a story once about this young entrepreneur. He had this dream of being highly successful in business. And he'd taken a day off and he'd gone down to a local lake to fish. And he's got his rod and he's casting his lure out and reeling it in, casting it out, reeling it in. Walking down the bank of this lake, and he notices somebody sitting in a lawn chair down the bank quite a ways with a rod in his hand. And he thinks he recognized the guy. He says nah, it couldn't be. Anyway, he just casually casting his rod out, reeling it up, casting it out, he's getting closer and closer, and then he realizes it is him. It was this famous businessman; the guy was an absolute legend in the arena of business. He'd done things that none other had done before him, and this young guy thinks, man, this is my opportunity. I'm going to talk to him. He goes up, introduces himself, said look, I don't want to bother you, I know you're fishing, but I know what you've done in business. And I'm just starting out in business, and I just want to ask you – what's the best piece of advice you could give me if I want to be successful? The old man sitting in that low lawn chair looked up at him, looked him up and down, says you really want to know? Young man said, oh yes, please. He said come here. He comes down, and he says no, come a little closer. Bends down, he says no, no, no, come down real close. Now the guys sitting in this low little chair, right on the water's edge, he says come down closer. He said I want you to look in the water. The young man gets down, looks in the water, says no closer. And then the old man grabs him by the back of the neck and shoves his head under the water and won't let him up. And this young man begins to struggle. Five seconds, ten seconds he's holding him down, fifteen seconds, twenty seconds, he's flailing his arms but he won't let his head up. Thirty seconds, forty seconds! Finally, he lets him up and the young man's sputtering and coughing, says (MAKES DEEP BREATH) what did you do that for? He said I was just answering your question. He said the first step to success is desire and when you want to succeed as much as you wanted that breath of air, you're on your way. You really have to want it. Here's the second thought is that if we're going to get un-stuck, we have to stop shifting the blame and quit making excuses. In verse 7, this man, when Jesus said do you want to be made well, he basically said look, my being stuck is someone else's fault. It's not my fault. He said when the water's stirred up, I have no man to put me in so it's because of what someone else has failed to do for me, that's why I'm in this situation. Not my fault. I don't have anybody to put me in. If somebody would have done something for me, then I wouldn't be like this. And then he said, and while I'm trying to get up there, while I'm coming, someone else always steps in before me. So, it's not just what someone wouldn't do for me, it's because of what someone else did to me. That's why I'm in this state. Either way, it's not my fault. We live in a society, and that's many people's attitude: well, I'm in this state and it wouldn't be this way if those people had done X Y and Z for me. It's because they failed to do this for me. That's why I'm in this situation. Or, they point to someone else, say it's because of what they did to me. It's because of what my boss did. It's because of what this group of people did. That's why I'm in this state. But it's not my fault. The famous evangelist Billy Sunday said "an excuse is just the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie." I was reading about a minor league baseball coach, and he was so frustrated with his center fielder's play that he grabbed the guy, said look, go in the dugout, I'll show you how to play centerfield. So this minor league coach went out and assumed the position himself. There's a groundball hit up the middle, he goes to field it, it takes a bad hop and hits him in the mouth. Next batter that gets up, hits a high fly ball, he's going to catch it, he loses it in the sun; it bounces off his head. Next guy hits a line drive out into centerfield; it goes right through the manager's legs. And he goes running into the dugout and he grabs the player by the shirt and says look, you have centerfield so messed up, even I can't do anything with it. You know we're just experts at making excuses. Listen to these. These are actually auto accident explanations. Came into the Metropolitan Insurance Company. These are actually what people wrote in and said this is why my accident happened. Number one: an invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car, and vanished. Here's another one: the other car collided with mine without warning me of its intention. Here's one: I'd been driving my car for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had the accident. Better not to drive for 40 years without taking a nap. Here's another one: I reached an intersection; a hedge sprang up obscuring my vision. It's amazing how those hedges do that. Here's my favorite one: I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment. Here's another one: the pedestrian had no idea which direction to go, so I ran over him. Here's another one: the telephone pole was approaching fast. I attempted to swerve out of its path when it struck my front end. Here's another one: the guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him. And here's another one: the indirect cause of this accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth.

What to Do When You're Stuck

Listen – away with excuses and pointing the finger. Blaming someone else, even if they didn't do something for you that they should have done, or even if they did something to you that they shouldn't have done, it will never lend itself to getting un-stuck. On the contrary, it'll just cause you to get stuck even further. I have a friend named Leo. When I met him, he was working in a gardening center. He had migrated from Mexico and he was making minimum wage. He had a large family and really couldn't even make ends meet. But Leo did something that Jesus told this man to do. Jesus said to him get up. Now Leo didn't speak English very well, he didn't understand the culture, he had a lack of education, and he could have blamed others. And I know some things that happened to him that were very unjust, but you know what, instead he just stood up and he said I'm going to do something about this, and he started his own business. In fact, our family gave him his very first job in his gardening business. The last time I talked to Leo, he owned seven homes, he had 25 employees, two successful businesses and the only reason he worked was because he wanted to. He decided that he wasn't going to stay stuck. He wasn't going to blame the government, he wasn't going to blame this or that, or this wasn't done for me or that wasn't done for me, he stood up on the inside. He rose up and friend, we have to rise up on the inside before we can ever rise up on the outside. Now here's the third thing. If you want to get unstuck, you need to obey what the Lord commands you to do, whether it makes sense or whether it doesn't. But more than likely you will have to abandon your thinking to adopt His thinking. His thoughts are not our thoughts, His ways are not our ways, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts and His ways than our thoughts and our ways. Think about it: this man is looking for three things. He's looking for a man. I have no man to put me in. He's looking for a visitation, he's looking for an angel to come, and number three, he's looking for the stirring of the water. He's thinking all right, it has to work this way. I need a man, I need an angel, and I need things to be stirred up. And you know I find people in the church today, some of them are looking for the same three things. They're just looking for that man or that woman with that special anointing. If I could just be in a meeting with them, I know that my need would be met. Listen, we know that God anoints men and women in special ways. We believe that. The scriptures teach that. But you don't need a man. You don't need a special woman. And some people think, well if I just had this visitation. If I could have an angel appear to me, or have this special visitation from God. We read in the scriptures and we believe that angels are real. We believe that God visits people in this day. But you don't need an angel, my friend. And some people are waiting just for the special stirring, the special moving of the spirit, and I for one, I believe in the move of the spirit. And you talk to some people, oh you should have been in church last week. The spirit really moved. Well hey, that's great, we believe in it, but Jesus is saying to this man you don't need those things, you don't need a man, you don't need an angel, you don't need a stirring of the water, I'm here! And if you do what I say, you're about to get unstuck. I know you've been that way for a long time, but here's how it's going to work now. Get up! I just want to tell you, friend, thank God for God using special men and women, thank God for angelic visitations, thank God for the moving of the spirit, but you don't need those things, you have Jesus. And He is enough. But Jesus said, look, it's not going to work that way anymore. I'm here. I'm changing things. Now Jesus said to him – get up. That didn't make sense. If he could have gotten up, he would have done it a long time ago. But when he acted upon those words, the power of God hit him and raised him up and worked a miracle in his life. And I have found that much of the time, it's not a matter that the Lord has not spoken to people. Somebody said well if the Lord would tell me what to do. I honestly think most of the time when people are stuck, it's not because the Lord has not spoken to them, but it's because He has spoken to them and they haven't done it yet; they haven't acted upon it. Whether He's spoken to them through His word or through that still, small voice of the spirit. I had a friend that had a very successful manufacturing company. And he did all the demographic studies and he went to a particular city, I mean, everything was right. The demographics were right; it was right for his business to flourish. And so he rented a place, he opened up shop and he couldn't get a single customer. And he couldn't figure it out. He's scratching his head and says what's going on? Why isn't this working? And month after month, he did not have a single customer. And finally he prayed. You know, it's funny how we finally pray. It should be our first line of defense, but sometimes it's our last-ditch effort when things aren't working. He said God, why is my business not working? I don't understand. This is what he told me. He said Bayless, the Holy Spirit seemed to say to my heart, what did you do about the money that I asked you to send to that missionary in the Philippines? Have you done that? He hung his head and said no Lord, I actually didn't do that.

What to Do When You're Stuck

Six months before, the Lord had spoken to his heart and had sent a two-hundred-dollar gift to a missionary in the Philippines. And he felt like the Lord said talk to me about your business after you obey the last thing I told you to do. He went down that day to the post office, he cut a check for two hundred dollars, and his resources were very depleted by that time. He'd been paying rent and had everything ready and no income, and so he's almost down to zero. So now the two hundred dollars is a big sacrifice, but he goes down, writes the check puts it in the mail, sends it off to the Philippines. He said when he got back to his shop, there was customers waiting for him. They put in orders and the business began to explode, and he actually went on and grew from there and put in some shops in some pretty posh places here in Southern California, and has just gone through the roof with his business. Now who would think that his success could be tied to a two-hundred-dollar gift to a missionary. Friend, His ways aren't our ways, His thoughts aren't our thoughts. What is the last thing you know that God has asked you to do? Have you done it? And listen, if the season or the opportunity for doing that is gone, you just repent. The Bible says if we confess our sins, He's just and faithful to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Some things just the opportunity is gone. So just ask God to forgive you. His precious blood wipes that clean and then all you're responsible for, all I'm responsible for is Lord, what's the next step that you want me to take? And then just do that. What's the next thing that I need to do? Jesus said my sheep hear my voice and they follow me. To me, that boils down our responsibility as believers, completely. I hear and obey. I listen and I follow. Marriage problem? I hear and I obey. Financial problem? Listen and I follow. And once you've heard Him and done what He said, your problem is solved whether you can understand it or not. Now let me just give you three thoughts as I bring this to a close. Ways that God makes His guidance known. First, He does it through the word. If something is clear in scripture, you don't even really need to pray about it, you just need to act upon it. Let us not just be hearers of the word but let's be doers of the word. Let's not just be critics, let's be participants. We're called, not just to applaud His word, but to apply His word. So when something's clear in scripture, just do it. So number one is the word. Secondly is the whisper - that whisper of the Holy Spirit. When Elijah was in the cave and ready to give up, the Bible says there was a great earthquake but the Lord wasn't in the earthquake. It was a mighty wind, but the Lord wasn't in the wind. There was a fire but the Lord wasn't in the fire. And then a still, small voice spoke to him and that was the Lord in the still small voice. Sometimes we're looking for God in the spectacular. Through the fire and the earthquake and the wind. God, give me a sign! And all the while that inward witness of the spirit has been prompting us and speaking to our heart. My friend, I'd just like to encourage you to get still. His spirit will communicate with you, but sometimes it's a still small voice. And then the third way that He makes His wisdom known to us is I'm going to say through wise counselors. Through the word, through the whisper and through wise counsel. Proverbs 11:14 says, "In the multitude of counselors there's safety." And I'm talking about believers - people that you trust. People that have your best interest at heart. Pray together with them, talk together with them, listen to their counsel. So the word, the whisper and the wise counsel. I just pray for you right now, my dear friend, that however you're stuck in whatever area of life, that God's spirit would just strengthen you inwardly. That He would give you wisdom, that He would give you a next step to take because my friend, you need to know you are loved by God. He's not mad at you. He's not angry with you. He loves you and He wants to help you. He has a future and He has a hope for you and if you're watching right now and you've never opened your heart to the Savior, maybe just put a hand on your heart and let me lead you in a simple prayer. Tie your heart around these words and speak them to God. Just say oh God, I come to you with a humble heart. I believe that Jesus is your son. I believe He died on the cross to take away all my sin. Jesus, thank you for loving me so much that you would die in my place and pay my debt in full. I believe you were raised from the dead, and I ask you now come into my life, be my Lord and Savior, in your name I pray. Dear Friends, go with the knowledge that God loves you. God bless you. Pastor.

THANK YOU TO BAYLESS CONLEY – Bobby Schuller

Thank you, Pastor Bayless. It's always such an honor to have you in the house and thank you for sharing that great word with us. And I hope it touches your heart and you apply it this week. Don't just be a hearer, but be a doer and we believe that God is going to help you get unstuck this week.

What to Do When You're Stuck

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Thank you for joining us. Wherever you are, would you stand and 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.