

After Your Troubles Are Gone

Hour of Power 11.07.2021

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 first timers and church family. We are just always so happy to be with you. You know, confession of sin is powerful, but confession of God's promises is also powerful. So today, confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world. You are loved.

BS: That's a really good point. I bet more Christians could name more sins than they could name promises. And it's important that we learn God's promises to us. He wants us to yeah, confess them, exactly. But let's begin with that. Lord, we thank you so much. We thank you that you've saved us, that you've rescued us, that you've promised us to be above and beneath, the head and not the tail. Lord, you've called us to be leaders, to be world changers, to walk by faith and not by sight, to live holy lives, to live lives that matter and lives that bless our neighbors, lives that love our enemies. Lord, we thank you so much that your Holy Spirit dwells in us and holds us. We thank you, it's in the name of Jesus we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – Exodus,15,19-21 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Exodus 15:19:

When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the Lord brought the waters of the sea back over them. But the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea."

Amen.

WELCOME/COME VISIT – Bobby Schuller

BS: Welcome to Shepherd's Grove. We're so, so glad you're here.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

BS: Whoever you are, would you stand with us? We're going to say this creed together. Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord, 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. Its 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 "After Your Troubles Are Gone"

Today I want to talk about the importance of not freaking out. In life, there are times when maybe you have some rough news or some crazy thing you're going to show a friend or a family member, and right before you do, you say okay mom, son, don't freak out. And the reason is because you're about to show them or tell them something that's going to be a big surprise. In the Bible, the most common command over anything is "do not be afraid." And the way that it's said as you read it in the original language reads a lot like what we would say in English today as like don't freak out. Just hold on a second, take a breath, don't freak out. And the reason is because very often when God says do not be afraid, it precedes something both amazing and scary that's about to happen. You know the word awesome and awful mean almost the same thing in their etymology? To have "aw" it's scary, it's intense, it's like what's about to happen, and God will say do not be afraid before He parts the Red Sea or before an angel appears, or before something He's going to ask you to do, right? I think that as we talk a lot about faith, Jesus certainly does, the power of faith in life, well we all kind of know instinctively the opposite of faith is fear. That in the same way that faith sort of opens the door, empowers the thing that's supposed to happen, fear can hamstring it; it can cripple it; it can keep it from being. And so all of us, if we reflect on it, we know the destructive power of fear of any kind.

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If you're thinking about in the Bible well where does God really say do not be afraid, probably one of the first things that comes to mind, if you read the Bible a lot, is when angels appear. I think in most cases, when an angel appears to a person, the first thing they say is do not be afraid, or fear not, or something to that degree. And there's good reason. I was interested to see that a Reddit thread had formed about something I've often given a lot of thought about, and a shout out to the YouTuber Hochelaga who actually did a video on this. I stole two screen shots from him because the art was so good. But there has been a lot of talk about what are Biblically accurate angels really like. Now when you think of an angel in the Bible, you probably picture a dude, like a guy, for sure has a white robe and a six pack, maybe a sword, so he's cool looking, but not a monster. He looks interesting, maybe he's strong and powerful, maybe he's glowing. This is what our imagination has, and that for sure is in the Bible. That's what happens when an angel appears at the empty tomb and informs them He's no longer here – He's risen. It's a human-looking angel. But we also can reflect that that's not always the kind of angel that appears. Maimonides the Ram Bam wrote (he was a famous rabbi and Torah scholar); he believed that there were actually four, in a hierarchy, four types of angels. Now don't take this, this is just tradition, but based on his study of the Bible, he believed that there were four types of angels. The second type, the Malakh, which is just Hebrew word for messenger, he labeled as well when it says Malakh, it's referring to like a person, like maybe the three angels that visit Abraham, for example. But then there's these other three types that appear that come with descriptions. Let's begin with Cherub. Now before we go to the slide, when you think of a Cherub, what do you think of? Very cute, might have to change its diaper, for sure has a bow and arrow, maybe its painting something, right? This is a Biblical description of a Cherub – four heads, very freaky looking, and this is an artist's rendition of a Biblically accurate Cherub, although that kind of looks like a female. I think they're all. I don't know, anyway. There are also Seraphs that appear. Now like in Isaiah chapter 6, for example, the Seraphs that are flying around the throne of God, if you take a Biblically accurate description, this is about what they say it is. You know what the only problem is with this picture? It's not on fire! So take this and then it's like a living fire thing and that's a Seraph if you take the literal reading. In Ezekiel chapter one, there's another, which I think we have the top of that list, the Ophanim, or something, and it's like a wheel within a wheel with eyeballs. All of that to simply say that very often when we think of angels, we think of this very like medieval Catholic girlish thing, but really so often the angel really looks more like that, if we take it literally. And the reason I take it literally, I say take it literally, is because maybe we're not supposed to read it literally. Maybe it's supposed to be metaphorical. Or maybe for the person who is seeing it, they don't really know what it is they're seeing, but they're like it's like a wheel and it's like wings and it's like a.. When I was meditating on it this week, I realized that it seems like in most cases where angels seem freaky, it's a prophet that's describing them, whereas when they look like a human, it's just a normal everyday person that sees them. So that made me think, well what if it's all the same? Who knows. My point is basically to say this: when an angel appears and says "fear not" there's a reason. Fear not! You know, you get like this thing. There are two ways to look at it. When you think about angels doing work on our behalf, if they really literally are like freaky looking things like this, there's one thing to think well that's a little bit scary, but there's another thing that's like well that's scary for Satan, too, maybe. Or maybe to think that's who's fighting for me. So kids, when you pray for angels, think about the really heavy metal looking one, and know that monsters have exited the chat. They're not there anymore. They're gone. Okay. God always says when He appears as angels "fear not" and I believe that that's because fear cripples, in many ways, God's work in our lives. It cripples the progress that God's called us to make. It keeps us, and even causes us to do dumb things. Fear very often leads us into the very thing we were worried that would happen. It's a classic literary device.

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If you've got kids or you just love cartoons like I do, you've seen Kung Fu Panda, which is one of the greatest cartoons of all times. So well done, such a great story, so well animated. And in the scene at the beginning, there is this evil tiger villain that's in prison and he's just like basically picture a super hero that's caught, and then there's this head of all the good guys, of all the Kung Fu guys, he's this old turtle that's very wise. And he tells his general 'I've had a dream that the evil tiger is going to escape.' And so the general freaks out and sends a goose to double the prison guard, and when he does that, the old turtle says a quote from Jean de la Fontaine, who was a fabulist. A fabulist is someone who writes fables. He quotes Jean de la Fontaine and he says 'one often meets his destiny on the road he took to avoid it.' And of course in this story the goose that's sent to double the guard, a feather falls from his back that the tiger uses to pick the lock and he escapes the jail. Right? So you see an example of that. But maybe you can think of lots of examples in your own life where because of your fear and anxiety, you actually caused the thing that you were afraid of. You were worried about losing your job and so that actually caused you to lose your job. You were worried about messing up your relationship and the worry itself messed up your relationship. You could probably, if you really thought about it, think of many examples in which what we do actually causes the problem. There's a lot of talk right now about this thing that I had never heard of before called gain of function research. And I don't know much about that type of research except that apparently labs for a long time have been taking viruses and making them into super viruses. So they take the Ebola and then they make it more deadly and more destructive, and the purpose is we want to research it in a lab so that if a super virus ever shows up, we're well prepared. But many people, especially now, are asking the question – well what happens if you create a super virus and it gets out of the lab! And so the United States, I believe, they say they stopped doing this in 2014. They want to re-do it again. There are lots of countries that are still doing this. And it definitely begs the question: are you doing the Kung Fu Panda thing? Are in your attempts to avoid something or being afraid of something, are you actually increasing the odds that it will happen? In life, I know that crippling fear very often causes us to walk right into the thing we were hoping to avoid. So we know that fear does this. Fear also has a sort of adrenaline, in general, has a sort of double-edged impact on our lives. I don't know if you've ever been in a fight, maybe when you were a kid, but there is this weird thing that happens if you get in your first or second fist fight and you've never had one before, you've never been in that kind of an experience. There's this weird thing that happens where you get like tunnel vision, your hearing becomes like WOO WOO a kind of.. I don't know how to describe it, it just becomes muffled, and you don't realize it, but you actually kind of don't feel anything. So as you're fighting, you may break a bone, your knuckles or your nose or something, but you don't even realize it till after the fight is over. This can happen, I'm not a doctor so I don't know why or if this happens to everybody, I just know it happens to me and to lots of people, that when your adrenaline spikes; say you get in a car accident, very often you won't know you broke your leg until quite a bit after because your adrenaline is so high. I remember once I had these what's called wine carboys. They're glass.. think of a glass barrel that looks like a Sparklets bottle but it's made of glass so its heavier. And I used to use this to water my plants, and there was a plant in the front yard and I was watering it, this is probably a little graphic for church but welcome to Shepherd's Grove. We're so glad you're here. So I'm watering this plant, and there's a little bit of water on the outside and I'm trying to be like a conservationist and stuff, trying to be a good guy; no good deed goes unpunished, Hannah. So I'm watering the plant, and it starts to slip from my hands. And as I go to grab it, it hits the pot and the carboy, the glass carboy shatters just as I'm reaching for it, and a big long piece of glass impales into my forearm. FOOF, right in, and I freeze with this piece of glass inside my arm and I'm looking at it, and I'm like not really sure what to do for a few seconds and I just pull my arm back, and when I do that, just blood like crazy comes out of my arm with big puddles on the ground. And I'm like Hannah!

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She came and drove me to the hospital. I had to put all this stuff on my arm to keep it from bleeding and like paper towels weren't doing it. I used cloth. But the strangest memory I have about that experience was how it didn't hurt. Like you could look at it and be like this is a brutal.. that's probably the most brutal injury I've ever had in my life, and there's little shards of broken glass inside the wound – they had to do stitches on the inside and the outside. But I didn't feel anything. And then it would be like every three minutes or something, I would have this like WHAM searing pain and then I'd be like (YELLS) and then it would just go away again. And I was like.. so I don't know if that's a Bobby Schuller thing or if that's something maybe you've experienced. But I remember that vividly. The reason I mention this is because it's a metaphor for what happens when we're scared. When you're afraid and you go into this like fight or flight thing, on one side it helps you get through pain to get to survive or whatever, but on the other side, you can be injuring yourself or others, and you don't even know it. When we are in a period of crippling fear for a long period, sometimes even a short period of time, we don't recognize the injuries we're sustaining, the people we're hurting, the mess we're making, the churches we're destroying, the lives we're breaking, the relationships that we're hampering until it's too late. And all we have at the end of that is a big bunch of regret saying to ourselves I wish I'd been braver. Friend, God has not given you a spirit of fear. He has given you a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. God can do a lot with your faith, but don't cripple your destiny by plaguing it with fear. Don't live every day being afraid of this and afraid of that and bothered by this. Instead, be at peace with where you are now, pray to the Lord, and trust that He hears your prayer, trust that His promises are true, trust that He's going to come through for you, and then enjoy your day and your next meal and your friends and your family. It's a better way to live life and it's a more successful way to live life. That's who you are. Not afraid, not always worried, not constantly going but at peace knowing that there is this big freaky angel in the background fighting for your behalf. Can I get an amen? We know that something like a drowning person is a dangerous person. If you've ever done junior lifeguards or anything like that, you know this is very dangerous, not just for her, but for anyone that goes to help her. Because someone who's freaking out like that tends to grab the closest thing and pull it down with her. So you might say to me, so what do I do, just stop splashing around? And the answer is yes. They actually teach you in survival that if you were to fall out of a boat in the middle of the ocean, for example, and you needed to stay afloat for a long time, and maybe you're not a great swimmer, or even if you are a great swimmer, to preserve your energy to stay afloat, they teach you this thing called the dead man float, or sometimes it's called the jellyfish float. And all you're supposed to do is just relax. You take a big gulp of breath so that you become buoyant, and you let your arms and face and legs dangle in the water, kind of feels nice, try it sometime next time you're in the pool, and you just (INHALES) bring your head up and take a breath and then stick your face back down in the water, and you just do that until someone comes and saves you. Even there you can see that relaxing is the way out of your trouble, not splashing around. Some of us, we just need to chill out. I almost said that's you. Well, that's me. And very often when a crisis happens, when you can be the calm one, when you take a deep breath, just take that extra second, it just takes a second to be different than everybody else in the room, just take a second and think, watch and pray, watch what God will do in that moment. It's a critical difference when it comes to key decisions you're going to make in your life. A decision made from thoughtful repose versus a decision made from panic. It is night and day difference. You watch, it'll make a difference in your life. God is saying to you fear not. Don't freak out! He's got this! He's got this. Our world is constantly training you to be scared so you'll spend more money. Did you know that? People are making money off of you being afraid. If I turn the news on today, breaking dee dee dee, dee, dee, dee, dee, dee, dee, doot, I'm going to hear about a new shooting, a new variant, a new war, a new storm, murder hornets. Don't hear that these things aren't important and don't affect my life. They do.

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But in most of these cases I have little or no control over what will happen. I can join three hundred million people and vote once every four years, but other than that, what can I do about these things? Very little. What news do I have other than what I didn't know yesterday about these things? Very little. And while I'm spending hours obsessively worrying about things I have no control over, I'm not paying attention to that new spot on my back. I really should get it checked out. Right? I'm not paying attention to my blood pressure. I'm not paying attention to my smoking habit. I don't smoke, by the way, but if I smoked. I forgot to make my bed this morning. Is my son okay? Is my neighbor okay? What happens is the more we're obsessed and afraid of the things we can't control, we don't notice as much the really important things in our lives that we can control. That's not good. This isn't good. Don't watch as much news. Watch a little bit, like once a week. That's probably good. Just take it or leave it, just some friendly advice from Pastor Bobby. All right. That gets me to the story that we're in today and I'm going to finish with this. That when we see when God brings the Hebrew people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, He's not just taking them from one geographical location to another, He's causing them to convert from a one type of person to another. He wants them to stop having the mind and the behavior of slaves and have the mind and the behavior of warriors, and this is not an easy switch. Many of us, we know the story. Moses, we're all picturing Charlton Heston and that's a good thing, goes before Pharaoh and says Pharaoh, you say it. All right. That was the worst. I'm not going to give you a second try. Let my people go! I wonder if he said it that way, Hannah. I don't know. He probably just said let my people go. All we have is writing and our imagination, but he tells Pharaoh let my people go. There's this famous back and forth between the great emperor and the great prophet and ten plagues come and finally Pharaoh releases Moses and six hundred thousand able bodied men and their families, so probably over a million people who are all in the service of the Egyptian economy, exit in a day. On top of that, they plunder their masters, with their permission, so they say we're leaving. Also, give us your gold, and so they take gold and silver and clothing. So overnight, because of the Lord, these men, women and children who were slaves went to not only being free people, but being like our version of millionaires and this promise that God's going to take them to a new land. This is the best day of their life. They follow this cloud, which is the real presence of God; it's like a smokey cloud that blocks the sun and sort of shows them where to go. They leave Egypt and they go in this roundabout way to where they finally hit a body of water, which by the way, I don't have time for this but it's probably not the Red Sea. We always call it the Red Sea because of tradition. In Hebrew it's called the Yam Suph. There are five lakes in Egypt. It could be any one of those. But anyway, they come up against this.. if you want it to be the Red Sea, it can be. It's a large body of water. And they are pinned like between a rock and a hard place. They come up to this body of water and then they think well why did God take us here, and all of a sudden they see on the horizon the Egyptian army. See? That morning, Pharaoh woke up and he said to himself: what have I done? How will my kingdom recover from this? So chariots and soldiers and armies, they decide that we're going to bring them back, and Moses, when he hits this body of water, looking back on the horizon, sees this sort of like dust in the air from an army, clearly the Egyptians coming this way. He looks at God and he says "have you brought us out here because there just weren't enough braves in Egypt?" He's saying you just bring us out here to kill us? Very Jewish way of praying. Very good. Just being honest and real with God. God's response is this. If you're looking for a Bible verse to memorize this week, this is the one. God says to Moses "The Lord will fight for you. You need only be still." What Moses and the Hebrew people think they're experiencing is a death box. They're pinned. There's no way they're going to escape, there's no retreat, there's no weapons, there's no fighting, they're dead. What God is actually setting up is a trap. The Lord's instruction, we know He famously says to lift his staff and the sea parts. I have no idea what this means if this was a slow recession or if it was just a big.. I'd like to think that God just karate chopped the lake.

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I mean I don't know what happened, but wouldn't it be awesome really to see. We always picture it as like it just kind of goes up. I always pictured it as like.. because water doesn't really move like that, and I know God's breaking the rules anyways, but in my imagination pictured the water going GOO GOO GOO like way back, and then like a huge wave coming and clapping together. I don't know if you've seen the movie Interstellar. There's this giant wave, this awesome wave. I picture two of those slapping together. But anyway, that's what happens. The Red Sea parts, the Hebrew people cross, and of course its muddy and so as these chariots try to cross this muddy thing, all of a sudden they get stuck and then just chaos ensues. They just start freaking out. All these soldiers can see the water coming back, they can't turn back, their wheels are stuck, and then all of a sudden they just disappear under the water. It makes sense why God would want to add insult to injury when it comes to the Egyptians because in this case, I don't think it's God just being like vindictive and being like hey, but when you think about if the Hebrew people are going to build a new nation as Egyptian neighbors to the north, they can't have the greatest military force in the world right below them and the ego of whatever next Pharaoh. This is God's way of setting up a time of victory for them. And then when this happens, of course, imagine being those kids and that wife and seeing this. It would be like the same as if just a bunch of people and a bunch of tanks and soldiers and jeeps and stuff just all vanished, and just peace. I mean, just this incredible uproar of praise and thanksgiving comes from the Hebrew people because they're saved. In life, we can make some of the worst decisions if we try and go back in and fight the Egyptians, or try and swim across the water or we don't wait for the victory that God has in store for us, and God might be saying to you today the Lord will fight for you. You need only be still. I know in my life, the greatest moments and victories that I've had, very often just came out of the blue. It wasn't something I asked for. I needed help, I needed a way out, but some random thing saved me. Maybe you've had experiences like that. And that is what makes following the Lord so interesting. Some of the stories and ways that God will work in your life, they're not believable almost. If you were to write them down after they happened, people would say this doesn't seem like it could actually happen, but they do! That's why very often when we act out of fear, we're like trying to move things faster than they're supposed to and we don't get to really see what God had in store for us that whole time. God has a good victory coming your way, but sometimes we have to be still and practice our faith and trust in that. It's one thing to say don't be afraid, and it's another thing to say I'm trying not to be. What do I do? And I'll just with one minute left, I'll just say this quick thing. I'm not someone who struggled with crippling anxiety, but a lot of sincere heartfelt Jesus loving Christian's deal with it every day. I have a good friend, Ben Courson who's a wonderful pastor, he struggles with anxiety. He told me this great tip that I'll share with you. He said if I start to have a panic attack, I just start to notice things in the room. There's a speaker, there's a lamp, there's a piano, there's a chair, and there's something about like just kind of grounding myself and he just say five things, and he's like that'll cause your heart rate.. and then he's like just breathe, like just take deep breaths. If you're ever in the place, where you're afraid, you get some awful news or some weird thing happens, try that before you do something, like try to just count some things and breathe and think. But the long term, I can't imagine trying to handle the thought of death without knowing the Lord. You have to know the Lord. Are you at peace with God? If we're not at peace with the Lord, I don't know how we could be at peace with life. The author and the finisher of our faith, God who is constantly at work in us, makes available to us this incredible deep peace. But so many of my friends and neighbors and people I know who don't know the Lord, just don't know what I'm talking about. And there's no substitution, there's no amount of anything that you can do that can replace the saving work of Jesus Christ in a person's life. The knowledge that I have been made into a new creature, that my sins have been forgiven, that I'm an eternal being with an unceasing destiny in God's kingdom, both here and after my death in this life, that when I die, it will be more like waking up rather than falling asleep.

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Well that's not true for everybody. That's true for those who have put on Christ and who have received the miracle of salvation. And it's a free gift. Why wouldn't you take it? And so friend, I just want to say to you becoming a believer, a Christian, a follower of Jesus, a disciple, at the end of the day it's just making a choice. I don't think you have to pray something to become a believer. You have to just make a step. When I became a Christian, I didn't pray anything, I just made a decision in my mind – I'm going to follow Christ today and I'm never going to turn back. And I never have. I've made mistakes, just ask my wife and my friends. We all do, right? But at the end of the day, following Christ, if you don't have that right, just don't even listen to anything else I'm saying because it won't be useful. Follow the Lord with all your heart. Follow the Lord with all your heart and watch how He changes your life. Well, I know God's doing a good work in your life, and whether things are good or not, there will be times when we're going to feel like I need to panic or I'm afraid or this awful thing happened, but when that happens, take a deep breath, trust in the Holy Spirit doing a good work in your life. Pray. Tell the Lord what's on your heart and the victory will come. Father, we thank you so much for the good work that you're doing in our lives. We thank you and we trust you that you love us. We thank you that you have the power, that you have the victory, and we look to you, Lord, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

Way to go, by the way, starting your week gathered with God's people, and I just believe your week will go better. And I pray that it will. 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 His peace in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen.