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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. Good morning.

HS: And hello church family and hello visitors. Thank you for joining us.

So: I read an article in the Washington Post this week that said the mental health and suicidal thought hotline is up by 1,000% what it was this time last year. And I read another article that said 50% of Americans say they are struggling with mental health right now. And I just want to let you know that is you, that does not mean that you're not a strong Christian, and that never negates God's call on your life. So if that's you or if that is somebody that you love, I want to pray over you right now. Lord Father, we come before you and we know that the enemy comes to steal, to kill and to destroy, but you came that we could have life and life to the full. So I pray for my brothers and sisters who are struggling with mental health right now. I ask that you would protect their hearts and their minds. I pray that you'd bring people into their life to help them carry their heavy load, and may they know that it is not weakness but wisdom to ask for help. Holy Spirit, pour over them in this moment. Holy Spirit, fill them to the fullness of you, and in your powerful name we pray, amen.

BS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – 2. Chronicles 25,6-9 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, 2nd Chronicles 25:6: He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. But a man of God came to him saying, "Oh King, do not let the army of Israel go with you for the Lord is not with Israel; not with any of the children of Ephraim. But if you go, be gone. Be strong in battle. Even so God shall make you fall before the enemy for God has power to help and to overthrow." Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what shall we do about the one hundred talents which I've given to the troops of Israel?" And the man of God answered, "The Lord is able to give you much more than this." Church family, we serve a God of much more. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Ben Higgins (BH) with Bobby Schuller (BS)

Ben Higgins is most well-known for his appearance as The Bachelor in 2016. Since then, he has used his notoriety to do good in the world. He founded the non-profit organization, Generous Coffee, which invests 100% of its profits in changing the lives of others. He and his fiancée, Jessica, also created the t-shirt line and video series, "Hope Still Wins," which benefits businesses affected by COVID-19 and brings to light a dark season.

BS: Hi Ben, welcome! Thank you so much for joining us today. What a joy to have you.

BH: I'm pumped to be here.

BS: Are you staying safe through COVID-19 and all of that stuff?

BH: Yes, you know I am. Very safe so far and I'm right now hanging out in Franklin Tennessee, which is a great place.

BS: Oh cool, great, well thank you again for being here. So many of us really love your story because you do such a great job of walking that line as a believer in a very secular world, but still being proudly Christian and helping your neighbor and this type of thing.

A lot of people, I mean most people know who you are, especially if they enjoy the Bachelor, but a lot of people may not know your life before the Bachelor. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

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BH: Yes, definitely. Well in short, to summarize the important parts, I live in Denver, Colorado currently. The exciting parts of my life are I grew up in Indiana and I spent about ten years up until the Bachelor traveling back and forth to Central America and so before the Bachelor, I was really kind of focused on more sustainable change in communities that are impoverished. And then the Bachelor happened and that switched things up forever.

BS: So were you doing like missionary or humanitarian work or something like that?

BH: Yes, we'd been going down with my church for years and we started an organization called Humanity and Hope United, and what happens, we would go down and ask these communities what do they need, what do they want, what do they dream of, and instead of kind of telling them what they need, we would unite with them and build up communities that would hopefully be able to sustain themselves long into the future. And so it was missions work, it was a Christian organization, yet a lot of it had to do with just the value that we saw in people to say hey we want to see you be able to succeed.

BS: We did a lot of that too with my wife's brother where we would bring eye glasses and insulin to places that you'd be surprised how important insulin is in some of these far removed places. So then you're doing this; this is your life and then all of sudden you get launched, first into the Bachelorette in 2015. You didn't win but people loved you so much, or probably girls loved you so much, that they brought you back in 2016 to be the Bachelor. What was that whole experience like for you? It must have been a crazy.. because it would have been like two years in a row, right, of just Bachelor stuff.

BH: It was wild, let me tell you this. I grew up in a very small town in Indiana, Warsaw, Indiana. I'd moved to Denver for a job in the basement of a company and all of a sudden I'm being thrown into the spotlight – where one of the most watched shows on television, you are the lead of this. It's a whirlwind. It's hard to like process. I mean I'm still processing some of the drastic changes that happened in my life due to that show today. I mean..

BS: And it wasn't that long ago..

BH: ..a lot of.. a lot of..

BS: ..I mean just a few, like three or four years ago, so I mean, when all this happened

BH: ..it is, it wasn't that long, and it's been good, I mean, I think the crazy part is I wouldn't be talking to you unless I did that show. So there has been a lot of positive changes from it.

BS: You were a pretty outspoken Christian, but I remember, you were getting some.. I mean you were getting some flak from probably some people in the church – how could you be on this show, but I mean so many other Christians I think really felt it was great that you were there, kind of almost showing a different, I feel like a different view on love and relationships. How did you feel about that? It must have been hard getting that and what was your hope in that as a believer?

BH: There are a lot of opinions that I have on that, and I do hear the criticism. I hear it often. My main points of that is I never, as a Christian my goal is to follow in the ways of Jesus and I never knew Jesus to be scared, to shy away from, to turn His back on the people who maybe didn't agree or believe with Him. He walked headfirst into it with a compassion, a kindness and a love that was evident and that was life-changing for many. And so for me, I knew that people.. like you don't know me unless you understand my faith and my trust in Christ, and so for me I was never fearful. I never felt weird or bad about it, mostly because I knew that it was for a purpose.

BS: And it really did end up launching, in a way, I would call it your ministry. You probably don't use that word, but here we would say, I mean you reached millions and millions of Americans, probably all of it was a secular audience, it was not a religious show at all, and that I feel like must have opened up so many doors for you to help so many people. We're going to get to some of the ways you're doing that, but it really did open the door, didn't it?

BH: A hundred percent. I mean it's actually funny, last night I was standing outside, a neighbor walked by and he goes.. because I'm with my fiancé's family right now.. he goes hey, if you never would have gone on the show, or you never would have had to go on the show if you'd met your fiancé earlier, and I said but let's pause to think about all the great things that have happened from that show. It's funny, it's humorous and I don't take it lightly, but because I went on a reality television show, now people want to hear what I have to say. And that's something I steward, like I know that is a huge responsibility. It's also humorous and ironic, but it's true, and so now I get to talk about Jesus and people want to listen. That never happens without it.

BS: I know, I love it, and even you and your fiancé have made a public statement that you're not going to sleep together till you're married and I think even that is a splash of cold water on the faces of, even a lot of Christians in a place like LA.

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I just think it's a great thing that you're doing, and I'm really proud of you guys for how outspoken you are about your faith and of course nobody's perfect, but to be willing to go into these different places and show everyday people the gospel, I'm just really grateful for you guys. We really are. I want to talk to you..

BH: Real quick, I just want to add there, the reason we do all that is our faith and our trust in Christ is real to us. I've always said if you take Jesus away from me, I really have nothing and we have nothing as a couple. And so that's where that comes from is just a deep desire to say this is it for us. We're putting our eggs in this basket.

BS: Well before we let you go, I really want to talk about two more awesome things that you're doing so people can support your work. The first is clearly going to Central America for ten years of your life you became a coffee fan. I assume you are a huge coffee fan, but you and your friend Riley, you started this thing called Generous Coffee. Tell us about that, what you're hoping to accomplish and how people can support that mission.

BH: I really appreciate you asking. So I'll speak through this and if you want more details, feel free to reach out to me through email or through our team. But we're going down to Honduras for years, we were building up these communities; it's a non-profit. Like any non-profit, fundraising is difficult; it's hard to sustain. So we thought we'd create a for profit company, call it For a Purpose, and we would donate all the profits from the sale of our products to non-profits that need a sustainable fundraising source. It just happened to be that coffee was our really product of choice because it brought people together, it defied borders, it defied geographic location. A lot of people like coffee, and so we wanted to sell coffee that was at the highest quality coffee, so this is specialty grade coffee from producers that you and I could go visit. We know where the coffee is coming from, we know how they're being treated. There's a lot of injustice in coffee so we wanted to fight that injustice there. Donate these profits back and kind of give our tagline, say you're going to drink coffee anyway, so why not make it life changing coffee. And so that's where we started Generous Coffee. You can go to generouscoffee.com to find some today, but it's now my full time job. It is what I do daily. It's a passion project for me. It's not where I take a salary from, but it's this thing that I believe is the future of fundraising.

BS: That's awesome. I will go get some coffee this morning after church. I really will, and I can't wait to try it and see it. And it does feel good to feel like you're making a difference, especially when you have a chemical dependence on something like coffee. It brings a little balance. Which I do, I drink so much coffee as you can probably tell from my spaziness. And then the other thing, your fiancée Jessica has started this t-shirt line that is also pretty cool, too, that does a similar type thing, this kind of profit model to benefit non-profits, and it's called Hope Still Wins. Tell us a little bit about that, as well.

BH: When COVID hit, my agency in LA called and said hey, there's a huge need for faith-based program. And they said would you be interested in starting something. I said I would. That sounds great, but I don't know where and how. Production has stopped right now. So what we decided upon was starting an Instagram live where I'd interview people that I'd admired from a distance or maybe admired up close, interview them on my Instagram live to talk about some of the things happening in our world. We called it Hope Still Wins. Well at the same time, then we started a company that is a print on demand apparel company and we would print apparel that said Hope Still Wins on it or Hope is Contagious. We'd sell these products from t-shirts to sweatshirts to baby clothes, and then donate the profits to organizations again in need, or organizations that are suffering during this time. It's been what three and half months and its going wildly well. It's been really successful. And it just shows. I mean if you start a project with the idea that good can come from it, a lot of people want to join on. There are a lot of people out there that want to help.

BS: That's great. Well thank you, Ben and if you're watching at home, go to hopestillwins and get your clothes and buy some coffee at generouscoffee to help people in need, especially during this COVID-19 thing.

Ben, there are so many people in this church and Hour of Power that love you so much and are just rooting for you, and we're so thankful for someone like you. And thank you again for taking the time in your busy schedule to be with us today. Ben Higgins, we appreciate you so much.

BH: Hey, appreciate you all. Thank you for having me and happy Sunday.

BS: All right God bless you, take care.

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DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

BS: Wherever you are, would you join me. Stand where you are, hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving and we're going to say this creed together as we do every Sunday. Say this 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. You may be seated wherever you are. Thank you for joining us for that.

INTRODUCTION TO BAYLESS CONLEY – Bobby Schuller

BS: Well today I'm so excited to invite pastor Bayless Conley as our guest speaker. Bayless is the founder and lead pastor of Cottonwood Church here in Orange County, a huge major influencer in our region. And he also hosts a television program "Answers with Bayless Conley" and helps teach the Bible in a very practical way. I'll also add to that that Bayless has touched so many pastors' hearts, so many people's hearts. Cottonwood Bible School has been an important part even of our staff here, many have gone there, and Bayless has been a good friend to me and to my dad. He loves fishing and has coffee with us. And it just means so much his first time preaching for the Hour of Power for Shepherd's Grove. Please welcome with me, Bayless Conley.

MESSAGE – Bayless Conley "The God of Much More"

BC: Thank you. Well it is a privilege to be here and I do have something on my heart to share with you. And I trust that through this, this short time that we have together, that God will speak to your heart. If I could sit down with you at your kitchen table and share a cup of tea and talk about the Bible and the things of God, I would do that. In fact I'd love to do that, but this is the next best thing. I suppose watching right now are people faced with every kind of challenge imaginable. And I want you to just for a moment do something with me, if you would. I want you to use your spiritual imagination and just imagine for a moment that that issue you're facing, that that problem you're challenged with, that it was solved, that God intervened, that He stepped in in some way or another, that He sent help, that He made that which was wrong, if He made it right, just imagine that in your mind. That sickness being healed, that family situation turning around, whatever it is, maybe you can just close your eyes for a moment and just imagine that that thing being fixed. Maybe just do that right now. The best way you can imagine, the highest and best outcome for that thing that's caused you to worry. Just imagine it for a moment. Can you see it? What I'd like to share with you is that whatever you just dreamt, whatever you just saw, whatever you just thought, I want to tell you you're thinking far too small. And I say that because the scripture says in Ephesians 3:20, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us." The highest and the best that we could ever image, God can do exceedingly abundantly above and beyond that. Some time ago, I was reading in the Bible and I was seized with a phrase. And this phrase is used in connection with the heart of God towards His people; the heart of God in wanting to help you and to help me, and to intervene in the situations of our life. And the phrase is this. Very simple, just two words: much more. And when I read that in the Bible, I began to search from Genesis to Revelation, every place that was used in connection with God working on behalf of His people, or promising to help His people. So I want to speak to you just for a few moments about the God of much more. And we only have time to look at a few of these examples. The first one is in 2nd Chronicles chapter 25. And at this time in Israel's history, the nation has become divided. Ten tribes have walked off and made a new capital in Samaria, and throughout the generations, hundreds of years while they were there, they never had one good king, they never had a generation that served God, they never had a national revival. And on the other hand there were two tribes, Judah and Benjamin that kept their capital in Jerusalem. They were known as the nation of Judah, the other is the nation of Israel. Now the nation of Judah with those two tribes, they occasionally did have good kings that sought God and served God. And on occasion they had national revival where people turned with all of their hearts to the Lord. And in this time of separation, one of the good kings in Judah, Amaziah by name, is going to go to battle against an enemy, but he doesn't think he has enough troops, and so he goes to Israel to hire mercenaries and that's where we pick it up in verse 6. It says "He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. But a man of God came to him saying oh king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the Lord is not with Israel, not with any of the children of Ephraim. But if you go, be gone, be strong in battle."

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Even so, God shall make you fall before the enemy, for God has power to help and to overthrow. Then Amaziah said to the man of God, but what shall we do about the hundred talents which I've given to the troops of Israel? And the man of God answered the Lord is able to give you much more than this." I cannot tell you how many times God has used this story and that phrase to encourage my heart in different circumstances in life. Now King Amaziah made a bad choice. He made a bad investment and to carry on with his plans would have been disastrous. And he basically said but what about all the money? I'm going to lose a fortune here. And it was actually four and a half tons of silver that he had paid this mercenary army. And the man of God told him the Lord is able to give you much more than this. You know we had a couple at our church many years ago that my wife and I just loved. He was retired up in his late 60's, and they just were the kind of people that every pastor wants in their church. They carried this good spirit about them that just got off on other people. They're always bringing friends to church. They were our greatest cheerleaders. They always had an encouraging word for myself or my wife Janet. And frankly they were some of the biggest givers in church. In fact on occasion we were alarmed at the extravagance of their giving. Now they didn't have any of their family members that were Christian or that were saved. They had quite a few kids and grandkids, none of which served the Lord, and we prayed with them on occasion for their family, for the salvation of their family. And one day I was in the foyer of the church and I was talking to this gentleman, and he said 'pastor, pastor, I've invested in this overseas company,' he says 'and it's a sure thing and I'm going to have so much more money to sow into the kingdom.' And the more he talked about this I just got this sinking feeling in my heart. I said 'you've invested in this company.' I said 'how much have you invested?' He said 'everything. But it's going to be great, pastor. It's a sure thing.' And I said 'well what do you mean by everything?' He said 'well everything. Everything we have, we've sunk into it, but it's going to be great.' Well it turned out not to be great. They lost their life savings, he lost his inheritance, they even lost their home. And in his late 60's, he had to go back into the workforce, something that he hadn't planned on doing. But you know what, rather than giving into despair, he just put his trust in the God of much more, and it didn't happen overnight, but within a few years he and his wife once again had become some of the largest givers in the church, in fact a couple of times my wife and I were astonished at the level of their giving. They purchased a new home and all of his family came to Christ. They took up two rows in the church – all of his kids, all of his grandkids and they were in there lifting their hands and worshipping the Lord and he was just one of the happiest guys in church, what God had done. And years later, when he went home to be with the Lord, he left his wife with no financial concerns whatsoever because of the God of much more. Now maybe like Amaziah, you've made some bad choices. I just want to encourage you, wherever you are right now, whatever your circumstances, don't give into fear, don't give into despair. God is not bankrupt of creative ideas. He has a million ways that He can make things happen. He still opens doors that no man can shut. In fact God can bring an opportunity that could not be made to happen through a thousand years and a thousand people giving all of their human effort to do it. We do serve the God of much more. And I had another friend a pastor of a small church along with his wife and they were having an impact in their city. He was happy until he found out that his wife had had an affair with a man in the church. And he was devastated and he tried to reconcile, but she wasn't interested and she actually left him and moved in with this other man. And he tried and tried to reconcile then she wouldn't do it and she actually divorced him against his will and married this other man. And he lost everything. He lost his marriage, he lost his church, he lost the home that he lived in. And he said God, I don't understand, I'm doing my best to serve you but I know you're good and I just put this in your hands. I ask you to work in my life. He began going to another church and serving as a volunteer. He would go in and set up chairs in this other church, and get a broom and clean, and just do whatever they let him do. And again, it didn't happen overnight, but eventually he met this young woman, someone that my wife and I knew very well, that she loved Jesus with all of her heart and soul. And they fell in love and eventually married. I performed their wedding. And today, he pastors one of the largest, most influential churches in his city, and they're not just having an impact in the city locally, they're having an impact globally. They're hugely involved in world missions. And God has just given them so much. And he and I were golfing one day, and we're walking down the fairway, I said hey, did you ever think your life would turn out like this? And I remember he stopped in his tracks and he said Bayless, God has given me so much more than I ever had before. I've got more joy, I've got more peace, I've got more influence. Even my kids, they work with me in the ministry today.

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God has just blessed me beyond anything I thought possible. We do serve the God of much more. And did you know that Jesus Himself taught us about God being the God of much more. I want to read to you some verses from Matthew chapter 6, and I want to read actually a large portion of scripture, but I think it's worthwhile so listen carefully to this because Jesus is speaking to your heart, and He's speaking to my heart through this. In Matthew chapter 6, beginning at verse 25, all the way through the end of the chapter, he said, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink nor about your body, what you'll put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. They neither toil nor spin and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, oh you of little faith." There it is. Much more. He goes on and He says in verse 31, "Therefore do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear? For after all of these things the Gentiles seek for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things, but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about its own things, sufficient for the day is its own trouble." How much more will our heavenly Father take care of us? I believe that we should expect, confidently expect help from God when we're in need. Be that for protection, for guidance, for food, for clothing or any other earthly necessity. And Jesus said hey look at the flowers. Look at the birds. The Father takes care of them, how much more will He care for you? You know this morning I was in my backyard and we have these planter boxes that are filled with these beautiful flowers, and they're just a riot of color. Reds and purples and whites and orange flowers and they all just seem to be shouting look at us! Bayless, look at us! The Father cares for us. We get the rain from heaven, we get the sunshine. But they also seem to be saying to me, Bayless, the Father loves you more. How much more will He care for you? Sometimes I go around and put a chair in my front yard because of the way the sun goes at our home. And I get the afternoon sun in the front yard so I'll go sit in the front yard with my Bible. And something interesting happened to me for a full year. I go pull up my chair, open up my Bible and a little bird would come and land on the branch of the olive tree in my front yard, right above my head, close enough almost that I could touch it. And if I sat there for an hour reading, the bird sat on the branch right above my head for an hour. If I was there 45 minutes, he stayed until I was gone. Sometimes he'd land on the letterbox that was just off to the left of me, maybe six or eight feet away. And the bird would just sit there. I would talk to the bird all the time. He never said anything back. However, I felt like God spoke to me through that little bird for a full year, saying Bayless, you see this bird? Doesn't have a care in the world. I feed it, I shelter it, but son, I love you much more. And you know Jesus in talking about God meeting our needs in a much more fashion, actually shares two principles here in these verses we read with us to bring us into the much more's of God. The first principle is we just must get our priorities right. He said "seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." The things that the world strives after; the things that the world concentrates fully on. That it's the focus of their attention. It's the center of their heart. Jesus said look, you put God's kingdom first and all these things that you're tempted to worry about, all of these things that the world scrounges after, which is what the literal Greek says, the Father says I will add them to you. Put the kingdom first, put the spiritual above the material. Now I know some people think come on preacher, haven't you got anything better than that? I've heard that ten thousand times: seek first the kingdom of God. But listen – to brush it aside as some childish notion, or as being too simplistic, is a big mistake. Friend, never underestimate the power of simple obedience to God. Great blessings are unlocked and unleashed when we obey God and when we get our priorities right. My wife for quite a few years used to get on my case about this old truck that I drove. I just liked it and it suited my needs. I'd throw my gear in the back of it and she'd say Bayless, please would you get a nicer car? You pastor a nice church and it's just not right you drive this old truck. And I'd say baby, leave me alone. I like my truck. But you know what, an old truck wouldn't do for her, so I bought her a nicer vehicle. And I know it's pretty common now, but when I bought it for her, it was unusual to me that the key wasn't really a key. You didn't stick it in an ignition and turn it, you just had to have it in the vehicle somewhere, in your pocket or in your purse, and then you would depress the brake pedal, push a button and the engine would roar to life.

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And I remember the first time I went to use her car, I sat in there and I'm pushing the button and nothing's happening and I thought stupid car. She needs a truck. She needs something you can depend on. And I thought oh wait, there's a sequential order to things. Okay, I've got the key, it's in my pocket. Ah, next I have to depress the brake, and then I push the button and when I had the order right, the engine roared to life. And friend, when we get our priorities right, when we put the spiritual before the material, God's blessings roar to life and the thing is is that means something right now to you and to me. There's something that we can do in practical terms to put God's kingdom first. Now I don't know what that would be for you, but if you pray, I'm quite sure God will witness to your heart and show you. Maybe you get up in the morning and you put the coffee pot on and then you sit down with your I-pad or the newspaper, and you look at the world news for 15 minutes or 20 minutes or a half an hour. Maybe putting the kingdom first for you is that you make your coffee and you sit down with your Bible and spend the first 20 minutes with Jesus, reading His word and thinking about it. Maybe it's that you begin to honor God with the first part of your income, the way the scriptures teach us to do, rather than giving God your leftovers, if there is anything left. Maybe you just need to begin to honor Him first. Maybe that's what it is for you right now. Maybe you take your vacation time this year and go on a short terms mission trip. I don't know. But if you will pray, if I will pray, God will show us a practical way we can put the kingdom first. Now the second principle Jesus gave us here is very simple: do not worry. In verse 25 He said, "do not worry," verse 31 He said, "do not worry," in verse 34 He said "do not worry." Now if Jesus says something once, we should never forget it. If He says it twice, we need to write it out in beautiful script and put it on the bathroom mirror. If He says something three times, we need to get it tattooed on our body somewhere. Of course I'm teasing. But the point is, if He says something three times, we need to listen to it. He said, "do not worry." In fact He said "don't worry about tomorrow. Sufficient for the day is its own problems." We used to have an air conditioning unit on our house, and I'm not sure why, but there would be an electrical surge that would happen quite often, and the fuses would blow. I literally had to keep a drawer full of fuses. And the electricians couldn't figure out what would cause it to happen, but we would get this overload of power. And probably twice a week, sometimes more, I would have to replace the fuses when we ran the air conditioner. Well it's as if God has put a 24-hour fuse in our heart. But when we worry about tomorrow today, we're putting a 48-hour load on a 24-hour fuse and something is going to blow. It'll erupt in broken health, in depression, in marital problems, and the thing is, some people are not just worrying about tomorrow today, some people are worrying about next week. Some people are pulling the worries from months in the future into their present, and they've got such an overload on their heart, something is going to blow. You might say well what do I do? Well the Bible tells us to cast our burden on the Lord for He will sustain us. To cast our cares on Him. I remember reading about a couple one time that whenever they were faced with a challenge, they'd sit at the kitchen table and they would write down their problem on a paper, and then they would lay hands on that paper and pray and they'd say God, we don't give our responsibility away, but anything you lead us to do, anything we need to do, we'll do it, but we give this to you and we ask you to help us and we give the worry of this to you. And they would pray and commit it to God's hand. And when they're done, they'd fold that paper in half and then on the top of the kitchen door, high up, they had a brown paper sack with "God" written on it in bold print and they would get on a chair and they would drop that paper after they'd commit it to God into the little sack, just a symbolic way, an outward way to say we've committed this to God. But they made a deal: they said look if you or I ever begin to worry about that issue we've committed to God, we need to get on the chair and get up and fish that paper out of the bag because if we're worried about it, God no longer has it. We've taken it back ourselves. And I think some of us if we were honest we'd have to admit that we'd spent a lot of time on that chair fishing papers out of the bag. Jesus went on in the very next chapter and He gives us another principle in receiving the much more's of God. In Matthew 7, and I know you know these verses, but listen to them. In verse 7 He said, "ask and it'll be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who if the son has bread, will he give him a stone. Or if he asks for a fish will he give him a serpent. If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him." How much more? I am the parent of three grown children, and my wife and I have always done our best to meet their needs and to make sure that they were cared for. But I have to say something interesting happened to me about 12 years ago.

The God of Much More

I became a grandfather and I'm actually the grandfather of four beautiful grandchildren right now. And something happened when I had grandkids. It's like this veil was taken off of my heart and whole stadiums of love that I previously didn't know existed were suddenly revealed to me. I find myself crying sometimes thinking about those grandsons. I find myself daydreaming about them. I remember people would show me pictures of their grandkids.. did I ever show you pictures of my grandkids? And I would be polite outwardly, say oh, you know she's so cute. But inwardly I'd be thinking no one cares about your grandkids. And I swore that if I ever became a grandfather, I would never be that kind of a grandfather. But you have to realize I made that decision before I knew how extraordinary my grandchildren would be. In fact I've asked the team to put some pictures of my grandkids up for you to see right now. I'm just teasing. But the only way I can describe my love for them is fierce. But the point is God's love for me and God's love for you, my friend, is far greater and far more fierce than a grandparents love for a grandchild. My love for those grandsons pales in comparison to the Father's love for me. And the principle He shares here simply is ask. Everyone that asks, receives. How much more will the Father give good things to those who ask. In verse 7 ask, verse 8 ask, verse 9 ask, verse 10 ask, verse 11 ask, and we should not overcomplicate that. Jesus meant just what He said. Our oldest son Harrison, who is the lead pastor of our church now, when he was five came to us one day and said I want to go to Disneyland. We said well son, Disneyland's expensive, it's not in the budget right now. If you want to go to Disney, you better pray. And I'll never forget, he put his little hands together and said Father, I ask you for tickets to Disneyland in Jesus' name, amen. We thought it was cute. And we went on to church that evening and we got there, he runs into the auditorium and there's a lady sitting on the front row from Nicaragua and she sees our son, she said Harrison, come here. And he comes over and sits down. She says Harrison, God told me to give you something today. She reaches in her purse and hands him Disneyland tickets. He runs, he says we're going to Disneyland! So we went to Disney. Well about two months, excuse me, later he said to us again, I want to go to Disneyland again. We said well you know what to do. Again in his bedroom, puts his hands together: Father, I ask you for Disneyland tickets in Jesus' name. Said amen. It happened to be a church service again that night, and our children's department was upstairs so I'm walking him down the hallway, and he actually breaks into a run as he's going down the hallway, and there's a guy coming the other direction, I've never seen him before. Actually was a cowboy: boots on, big belt buckle, cowboy shirt; head to toe cowboy. He stops my son in the hallway. He says hey, you the preacher's kid? Harrison said yes sir. Reaches in his back pocket and said son, God told me to give you something today. Hands him Disneyland tickets. And I'm standing there thinking Harrison, would you talk to Jesus for me? I'd really like a new fishing boat. But the point, Jesus meant just what He said. And my time's pretty much done here, but just consider these three things if we want the much more's of God. Number one: let's get our priorities right. Put His kingdom first, and that does mean something practically for you and for me right now. Secondly: cast our cares on God. Literally give those things to Him. Commit them to Him. Don't worry. And number three: ask. We serve the God of much more. It's been a blessing and a privilege being with you. May the God of much more bless you and your family richly.