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Hour of Power - 19.09.2021

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 friends, welcome church family. We are delighted that you're here today. The Bible says that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Jesus' miracle power in the Bible is also for you right now. You are loved.

BS: Amen. We're glad you're here. Believe God has a word for you today and I trust that if we hear that word and we lean into it that our lives will be changed forever. Let's pray: Father, we thank you so much that this is your house. We thank you that you've called us as your people, and we ask that every single day you craft us and shape us into Jesus kind of people. Lord, forgive us of our sins and forgive us of our bitterness and our unforgiveness towards others and our infighting and gossip and all the things that we do, and help us to love one another the way you love us, God. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – John 14:1-4 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, John 14:1: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thank you, Lord. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Nick Vujicic (NV) and Bobby Schuller (BS)

{VOICE OVER: Nick Vujicic is an author and world-renowned speaker. Born without arms or legs due to a rare genetic disorder, he found himself helpless and hopeless at a very young age. Not knowing what his purpose was, he struggled with being different, but he ultimately resolved to turn his obstacles into opportunities. Today, he is one of the most sought-after motivational speakers in the world, having reached countless millions through his outreach. In addition to his ministry work through his organization Life Without Limbs, he is also the "Chief Generosity Officer" for Uncommon Giving, a platform that focuses on helping people find amazing non-profits to support. Please welcome, Nick Vujicic!}

BS: Nick, hi!

NV: Hi Pastor Bobby, hi everyone!

BS: Good, so good to see you, my friend. It's such an honor to have you in the house today. Tell us a little bit, first for people who don't know you, about your ministry, your life and sort of how you got to be in this amazing position of leading so many people.

NV: First of all, for anyone who doesn't know, I am so blessed to have Kanae as my wife, now for nearly ten years and we have four children, two boys and two girls, and I was living in California for 17 years and we just moved to Dallas Texas area. We felt the Lord leading us to move out of California in 2019, and we're just so thankful that the Lord has used the ministry of Life Without Limbs to take me around the world and preach a gospel, bringing in messages of hope. Our missions' statement is to actually break down barriers, cross boundaries and build bridges between people and the love and hope found in Jesus Christ.

And it's taken us around the world where we preach the gospel in front of nine point five million people face to face in 74 countries, and of which one point one million souls said yes to the Lord Jesus Christ, and furthermore out of the two billion people that have seen me digitally, seven hundred and thirty-three million of them have heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are so thankful for..

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I know some of your viewers, Bobby, are actually financial supporters of us, and daily praying for us, so thank you for those of you who are supporting us and praying for Life Without Limbs. And we are so excited that any restrictions of traveling have just helped us, Pastor Bobby, to double down on digital ministry and we're on track to reaching another billion souls for Jesus Christ before 2028.

BS: Amen, I love it. Nick, one of the cool things I love about you, too, is just how you just break all of the expectations that people would have for someone that doesn't have arms and legs. I mean you surf, you swim, you skateboard. I've seen you go upstairs. And I remember even asking you once, this was backstage, I don't know if you remember this, but I said does it ever annoy you talking often about the thing about not having arms and legs. And you said it opens a door for me to preach the gospel. And that's really what you care about, isn't it. I mean you want people to know the saving grace of Jesus.

NV: One hundred percent. There's nothing else that Nick Vujicic is going to make sure that he does. Loving God well individually, loving my family well, and then serving the Lord Jesus Christ in whatever capacity that would be. Obviously as an evangelist now for 20 years, I'm never going to stop preaching that Jesus is Lord, unapologetically. But in other ways doing what I can to encourage people and help people around the world, as well, philanthropically.

Life Without Limbs has given over one point six million dollars to the poor and needy as well as obviously preaching the gospel, but Pastor Bobby, it comes back to the real reality of the day that I met Jesus Christ, the day that I didn't see myself as disabled. The day that I knew that my greatest disability was sin and death, which were overcome by the blood of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and for me, when I was 15 years old, I realized sure, I don't have arms and legs, God doesn't always give you what you want, but He gives you what you need. And more than arms and legs, I needed joy, peace, purpose, Him, heaven, and now I can get to share my history, which is His story of how a little kid with no arms and legs at one time attempted suicide, and now limbless being the hands and feet of God, standing in front of the gates of hell and redirecting traffic, letting everyone know that God can use any willing heart.

BS: Amen. Yes, good word, my friend. So one of the reasons we really wanted to talk to you today is we're partnering with you on this amazing brilliant idea that you have. You're the Chief Generosity Officer for Uncommon Giving. Tell us about that.

NV: First of all, I can't take credit for the vision of Uncommon Giving, but I am on the executive team of this incredible start-up company that is growing like wildfire. Anyone in America understands what marketplace generosity is where big corporations are giving a couple hundred dollars to each employee on an annual basis under the umbrella of social responsibility, to make America understand that more Americans help Americans only means that we are going to make the world a better place, because we are a country that doesn't just look after ourselves, but many other people around the world. And through the non-profit organizations that are registered under the IRS, one point five million non-profit organizations here in America under social responsibility, there are many corporations who give back and actually tell the employees we'll match your donation to whatever cause that matters to you. And there's no though, Pastor Bobby, central hub of generosity for marketplace generosity in America, so Uncommon Giving, the spearhead of it is that - becoming the company of generosity, but it enables social media influencers like myself, I have 14 million social media fans, instead of me just saying hey, let's once a year talk about a foundation that I like, monthly I now tell my 14 million social media fans, a non-profit organization under the umbrella of a cause that I choose, whether its human trafficking or the border relief fund that we were there, that video that was shown. Look, the wall is not a political deal. It's actually humanitarian disaster. Twenty-five thousand unaccompanied minors crossed that border in the last 17 weeks are flooding the foster and adoption system; not always being able to relocate these children. We need as a church to be the hands and feet, to take those foster kids, to help the border patrol families, to make sure that the food bank in Yuma, for example where 25 percent of Yuma depends on has what they need.

And so whether its non-profit organization, campaigns for human trafficking, border relief fund, your local church, whatever it is, it enables people as well who maybe only have 50 followers on Facebook to say hey friends, this is what matters to me, and this month I'm doing a 5-K walk to help this. Help me help more people. It's a momentum movement of generosity that our country really needs to engage in.

BS: Amen. Well it's a great work you guys are doing and if you want to know more about this, check out Uncommon Giving.

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Hey, if there's people here today that say Nick, sign me up, I want to participate, how do I give, how do I get my non-profit in there, how do I get my business to be a giver. What do they do?

NV: It takes three minutes for any non-profit to upload and customize their personal account. They're already registered if they're registered IRS, pop it up, brand it as you wish, takes three minutes for free, and then tell all your employees, tell your employees friends – let's do a monthly run where we not only maybe support our non-profit but also another non-profit and depending on the employees, also have a heart and passion for another non-profit, as a family of that non-profit that you have, make sure that we don't just look after ourselves but giving to other non-profits. Get your school involved, get your church involved, get your corporation involved, and let anyone who has any social media presence, whether its ten followers or ten million, we all can be a part of Uncommon Giving, a movement of generosity.

BS: Nick, thank you so much for everything you're doing. We appreciate you so much, your heart for souls and your heart for hurting people. You're making such a huge impact on history, and we're really proud to be a small part of that. We're thankful for you, my friend.

NV: Thank you. God bless you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Holy Spirit, let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. 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 "The Pride Price"

You may not know this, but for a long time, I've been a minister for what, 18 years? Yes, since Hannah and were married. And when I got to Hour of Power, I became a part of a gigantic network of communicating and TV and media and podcasts, of radio and most of all, planning. And so I have planned out my sermons easily six months to a year in advance. It's on a Google doc, people can see the title of the sermon, the passage and the themes that I'm working on, and that also allows me as I get closer to the sermon, to study or if I find something to post it within the Google doc. Today my sermon is on a passage on John 14 that you've probably heard if you've been to a Christian memorial service, the thing where Jesus says "in my Father's house there's many rooms; I'm going to prepare a place for you." And in seminary or if you go to Bible college, they will teach you do not put your own meaning into the text. Rather, allow the text to speak to you based on the intent of its original author. This week as I got into the passage of John 14, I realized that this passage is at the beginning of a departure sermon. It's a famous sermon Jesus gave right before He was going to the cross; it takes place over four chapters from John 14 to 17, and although this theme of heaven is in the beginning, He begins with heaven to talk about what life in the kingdom of God is like.

And the thing I noticed was this deep, deep theme of don't go it alone. Don't be alone. Don't feel like you have to do it all by yourself. But rather, get connected and stay connected. Connect to me, and connect to each other. Yes, I Jesus will be gone for a season, but while I'm gone, you all love each other, be there for one another, be deeply connected to each other, and most of all, be deeply connected to me while you do it, through the Holy Spirit, and you will see an abundance of fruit in your life and your friendships, in your marriage, in your church, in your team, in your business that you never thought could ever happen. That is really the message of "in my Father's house are many rooms," believe it or not. And I only saw it this last week as I began to read. Well that's what we're going to talk about today: the principle of get connected and stay connected. Hannah and I celebrated our 18th anniversary recently on Memorial Day. Eighteen years. Seventeen of them were very happy. No, that's a joke. They were all very happy. We began our anniversary, because it was Memorial Day, we had our kids, they weren't in school, it was a Monday, and so we started the day, of course, at Disneyland. This was us celebrating the fact that for the first time they let all four of us get on Peter Pan in one ship. Pretty awesome. That night my mom came and watched the kids, and Hannah and I went to a restaurant we've only been to one other time, it's called The Loft, I think, and it overlooks the ocean. Very beautiful. It's in Laguna. And we just had a great time. And it was interesting because even then and now, I would say that in our marriage, we are probably at the best point in our marriage we've ever had. We're best friends, we're close, but I realized in life that marriage is a skill. Being a friend is a skill.

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Being a parent is a skill, and yes, being a Christian is a skill. You cannot separate a Christian from a disciple. A disciple literally means a student who's learning something. Something that you develop. I learned in this marriage, like looking back, if I look at so many of our friends who have struggled in marriage, and times when we've had lots of struggles in our marriage, I mean it's definitely been low points and incredible stressors, in children's hospitals and just different things; life-changes that every marriage goes through. I'm so thankful that number one: Hannah never let the connection break. And I think number two: I'm thankful for a book I read, believe it or not. I give this book away to, especially guys, but I give it away to friends all the time. It's called His Needs, Her Needs. And it helped me realize that what men need from a marriage is sometimes different than what women need from a marriage. This author who is a clinical therapist named William Harley noticed that so many couples, when they went to couples therapy, came out worse. And he said that just shouldn't be. Why is it? And so in his own studies, he actually met with I think it was tens of thousands, did a massive study, to sort out what the greatest needs were, and this could mix and match, his and hers can change, but overwhelmingly these are the five most common things that men want from a marriage, in order. And these are the five biggest things that women want from marriage. Now I'm just going to stop and I'm going to ask you if you're married to pull out your phone and take a picture of this. Let me get out of the way, just pull it out. You don't even have to read the book. If you just, I mean the book helps, but if you just take a look at this, and actually recognize that of course everybody's different, but most people are the top two. And if you're at home, you can take a screen shot. Its shift-control-three. Ready? One, two, three. Did you get it? Actually on this list, number one and number two are most important, so a lot of women actually don't know that the main way men connect, not only with their spouse, but with other men is through fun: fishing, golfing, playing cards, whatever, these types of things. Two men very often can go fishing all day, say hardly a word to each other, come home and say gosh, that Joe is a great guy. I had a great time. But for women it's not true. And this was the big lightbulb is number two is probably number one for Hannah, conversation, how conversation is so important, especially for women in a marriage. One of the big lightbulbs was he said if your wife wants to talk to you, and you say to her what do you want to talk about, that's like a slap in the face. It's like saying I'm really busy but I guess I'll stop and I'll talk to you. What I learned was the power of not just a conversation, but the power of talking a lot, and talking deeply with my wife. I did not feel that as a need personally before I read the book, but the more I practiced that, I just was like I'm just going to do my best to talk to Hannah about anything, whether its deep or shallow, I'm just talk to her. The more I did that, the more I realized I was meeting a need that I had, too. This gets back to a deeper principle that Bill Gaultiere, my mentor, taught me. He said if you want to know if your marriage is going well, ask your wife. The wives already know if it's going well or not. Men usually don't know, and they can just ask her and she'll tell you. Don't get your feelings hurt. I recognized pretty soon that what I was experiencing with Hannah was not only causing us to go deeper in our friendship and our life but it was a huge felt need that I started to experience with my male friends. Some of my closest friends are the ones that I can talk about deep things with, or just talk with. All of that to say that this need for deep connection, which is probably for most of us going to be found through deep conversations of vulnerability is a huge part of discipleship. You can only really have it with some people. You can't have it with everybody. And that it's a part of how we're supposed to grow as believers; as parents, as friends, as spouses if you're married. Not all of us are called to be married. Or as a leader that these are key important things for our lives. At the beginning of the Bible, it's so funny because, you know, Jewish children back in the day had to memorize the Bible, so they would say these verses that rhyme over and over. Genesis chapter one begins with "and He said it is good," right? So God created this, and it is good. God created that, and it is good. And He created the birds, and it is good. And He created the land, and it was good. And He created night and day, and it was good, etc., etc. Until it gets to man. And He says "and then He created man and it was not good." He said God created man and He said it is not good that man should be alone. It is not good that man should be alone. As a pastor, God has entrusted me with shepherding the spiritual life of this community. My biggest fear is that people are allowing themselves to be alone. They think I'm a burden, I've got nothing to offer. I can't give anymore. I'm too this or that. I'm too sick, I'm too old, I'm too poor, I'm too boring, I'm too inappropriate, I'm too sinful, I'm too holy, I'm too this, I'm too that. And after this thing that we just went through where people who felt like they were getting connected now feel connected through Wi-fi, connected through Zoom, connected through cell phones, but feel more disconnected than ever. What an irony. Friend, you don't have to be alone.

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I think God's preparing even something in your life now. I'm just going to believe that maybe for some of you who want to be married but you're not, or maybe you've chosen not to be married, but you want deeper friendships, or maybe you've lost your best friend recently or maybe you lost a spouse, you feel so lonely. God has a good friendship in store for you today. I want you to listen to the second half of this message. I hope it will help. But really this is what the departure sermon is about. So let's read John 14. No doubt you've heard this if you've been to a Christian funeral, or if you read it to comfort yourself about heaven, and this is about heaven, but it's more than that. Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Remember, because He's about to go to the cross so the disciples were like rabbi, don't leave us. Right? "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you." The second I read that, I was like woah, wait a second. That's a wedding, that's an analogy for a wedding. I'll get to this in just a bit. "I'm going there to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you may also be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Okay, in Jesus' day, like today, you got a suburb and one guy lives there, and one guy lives there, and people live all over the place, all over the country. In Jesus' day, a house was not a house. A house was a makeshift kind of complex made up of various room additions that were not a part of an original plan, an ever-growing, ever-changing building. And it would look like this. Nearly always there was a small courtyard, maybe like imagine this stage. In church business we call this a chancel, so if I say chancel, just know that I'm literate. This is a chancel, and imagine this chancel is a courtyard, and around it maybe in an "L" shape or sometimes in a square, there are insula, little huts that are made of wood or stone and various building things, and some are two story, some are one, and you might have a living space or whatever. But you have like maybe grandpa's house, who's the head of the household. He and grandma live in this house or room, it's just a room, but they call it a house. And over here you have Uncle Joe's house and over there is Aunt Mae and Uncle Mike, right? And then in the courtyard is where everybody gathers to eat and to play and to celebrate. And one day, the young boy from the house, maybe twenty/twenty-two-year-old, so a young man, he's ready to get married. His parents say Solomon, it's time for you to be married. We think Rebecca from the next town would be a good fit for you. Rebecca is say 16 years old. And so Rebecca's parents and Solomon's parents will get together, and actually I like this, Rebecca and Solomon still have to approve. If they don't want to do it, I mean they don't have to, but usually they'd be like 'I don't want to do that' and so they'd break it off. But they say Solomon and Rebecca kind of like each other, they'd get together, they don't get married for love, but they get married to start a family. And the parents would talk with the children there, and they would discuss what would be in the marriage. And a contract is drawn up about what happens if there's a divorce and what happens if someone dies, and all of this stuff, and that contract, that covenant is called a "ketubah." Everybody say ketubah. You're learning. And a bride price is paid for that ketubah to be fulfilled. One thing I love about Judaism is it seems like in a lot of Medieval European cultures, a dowry is paid to the husband for taking the daughter, which I always thought was silly. In Judaism, it's the other way. You pay a bride price, a dowry to the bride's family for taking their daughter away from them, their treasure. And so this money is paid out to the family, and at that point, the husband and wife are technically married. Now they're not married in that they live together or do anything. By that point, she receives a veil, sometimes they would wear it over their face or sometimes they'd just wear it over their back, but it shows I am betrothed slash married in this town, and then the husband would say to her when he leaves: I'm going to go prepare a place for you. That's what you say. It's like a custom. And he would then go back to his father's complex and he and his dad and maybe some of his friends, but mostly him would begin building a giant room addition, a house as it were, a little insula, its connected to this courtyard to be where he and his future family and his wife will live. It would take about a year. And while this is happening, the girl who is betrothed just has to be ready. Now this has to be the part that women today would absolutely hate. You have no idea when your wedding is going to be. You just have to wait around, you just have to be ready, and boys being boys of course, whenever that house is ready, after about a year, would surprise the girl, right? And if they're really zany like I am, they're going to get all their buddies together and there's going to be trumpets and maybe they're going to do it at two in the morning, sometimes they'll do it in the early evening, but they'll show up at her house, even if she's sleeping, blow these trumpets, (BA BA BAAA!) It's time for the wedding. And right there she has to get up and go to her own wedding.

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Maybe that would save a lot of families from bridezillas and stuff like that. You just got to be ready! You just got to go! Everybody else had to do it. Keep in mind, too, that you'd usually have multiple fiancés in a town, so you might have ten or eleven girls in a town who are engaged, and when they hear the trumpets, nobody knows, even then, they're like someone's getting married, and maybe it's Rebecca's day, I don't know. Solomon and Rebecca then would process in this very beautiful, sometimes she'd be carried on a cart or sometimes there'd be some special thing for her, and then they would go to the courtyard of that house. All the invitees of the wedding, so everybody from town. If you ever grew up in a rural town like a farm town, one horse town, you know that in this ancient world with no electricity, this is like the coolest thing that's happened in a long time. A wedding is awesome. And so everybody comes because they heard the trumpets; it's like a parade of people, and then get this. This is kind of embarrassing to say in church but everybody waits in the courtyard, and then the husband and wife go into a room, privately, and consummate the wedding while everybody waits outside. So two probably virgins, zero experience, they have privacy, and the best man waits at the door. When they're done, they tell the best man and he goes and tells everybody in the courtyard – they're married! And everybody goes WAAAAAA, and it's like the big party starts, and then it's the beginning of a seven-day long festival of wine and singing and drinking and food and dancing, and it's a really wonderful thing. To me, this sounds just like.. what's that Greek movie? My Big Fat Greek Wedding, or something like that. It feels like that kind of thing, in a way, where it's like they're kind of like okay with the fact that they're a little bit too much in my business, like that whole part of the wedding. Anyway. All of that to simply say that when Jesus uses this line "in my Father's house there's many rooms, I'm going to prepare a place for you," He is really invoking what all of them are thinking about this image of a betrothal. He's going to go prepare a place for you and He's going to come back and get you, and you're never going to know when it's going to be. Typically this passage, and appropriately so, is taught on end times stuff and it's taught on the bride price, how Christ' own body was the bride price, and there's so many meaningful things you can derive from that analogy of a wedding, but as an American, I might say, the one that stuck out to me is what maybe has been lost by us modern folks in an age of travel, in an age of kids living miles or states away from their parents, and everybody being spread out and those old friendships that we used to have becoming more like emails and text messages, or little connecting points, but not really going deep, and how so many marriages in my generation don't seem to have that really deep, wonderful connection that so many of my grandparent's generation had when they were a little more bored and had to entertain each other and talk to each other and spend time with each other. When I hear people talk about heaven, they talk about having their own mansion. Not a giant mansion with many rooms where everybody lives together, but their own like my mansions going to have four pools with dolphins, nine elevators, I'm going to breathe under water and fly. And that's such an American kind of, or maybe you're from a country like this, modern way of thinking about like heaven. When I hear that description and maybe there is some of that stuff, I don't know. I don't think we're in a giant complex with billions of rooms in it and you're just kind of lost all the time. I think it's a metaphor. But when I hear that description, it actually reminds me of C.S. Lewis' description of hell. If you've ever read *The Great Divorce*, it begins with these characters in a mythical version of what he sees as hell, and what it is is people in hell all can't stand to be around each other, so they build these houses and mansions and they're all too close so they keep moving out farther and farther away. So when you walk through hell, which in this story is a giant city, you can walk for a hundred and fifty years in one direction and all you see are big, empty houses because people left and they built new ones because they couldn't stand their neighbors. And it's a contrast. It's like anti-heaven. To heaven is a place where I'm with people I love to be with. Heaven is a place where I'm deeply connected to God and to my family and to my friends. And heavens like a wedding where it's like a seven-day celebration of eating and enjoying each other's company with no loneliness and no pain. I just think that as a pastor, I know that some of your best memories, best experiences and best things are going to be with people you love. And maybe right now you feel like man I'm so lonely, or I don't have those deep friendships, or I'm not married, or maybe in my marriage it just feels like a roommate or I'm not connected. This is a part of God's plan for you, guaranteed to have great meaningful relationships, in some capacity. I one hundred percent guarantee that this is something God wants for you. And that it is the most important thing you can have in life, aside from your like salvation and doing what's good and hating what is evil. This theme is what He continues, as I said, in His sermon. Even Paul, it's funny because when Paul was starting the church, the Apostle Paul, this was the main thing that he was fighting is people hating each other, divisiveness, people breaking up.

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When you read like histories of for example, the reformation. When Martin Luther and Calvin and Zwingli who I think the reformation was a great thing, I think it was a wonderful thing, but when it started, their image was this like the early church was so perfect and then the Roman Catholic version of it ruined it because they took on all these barnacles, and we're going to shave off the barnacles and return to this amazing thing that it was back in the day. And then the Jesus movement looked at their reformers, the Protestant church, they're like that reformed church, they have all their barnacles with their organs and suits and liturgies and stuff, and we're going to shave all that stuff into like the early church, everybody was so perfect, and I love the Jesus movement. I think they did a lot of amazing things, wonderful things. But even now, in my generation, I'm like the Jesus movement is all these barnacles! And the truth is that the early church might be the most messed up version of the church there's ever been. Just read the text! Its right there plain as day! Paul is dealing with Gnosticism, Christian pharisees who were going to new towns and telling Greek men who have not heard otherwise, that they have to be circumcised, adult men, and these men are like what is circumcised? That's a surprise. He's going around, there's groups called super apostles who are having these mystic experiences, maybe they were using drugs in order to enact these weird séance-type experiences. Lots of people neglecting the poor, saying they couldn't come to worship because they weren't rich enough. Paul is dealing with what he calls heresy. Now here's the thing that everybody misses about the word heresy. Heresy does not mean necessarily a false teacher. That's how we always think of it, right? A heretic is a false teacher. Heresy comes from a Greek word *airetikos*, which sounds like heretic, right? You can see it in Titus 3:10, its actual use. Paul says "warn a divisive person once and then warn them a second time. After that have nothing to do with them." Okay, a divisive person, that is the translation of a heretic. In other words, in a Biblical view of heresy, a false teacher is only. I hate talking about heresy, by the way, but a false teacher is only considered a heretic because it divides the church. In other words, a Biblical view of heresy would say anyone who is causing strife, in Paul's view, would be a heretic. Someone who gossips. People who are doing weird power plays in a church community. People who are leveraging weird self-promotion. People who are trying to create strife and division. All of these. These are the people that Paul is working on because it is not good that man should be alone! We need people. We need each other. And we need a true church, a community of people that are willing to go deeper and love one another and help each other become more like Jesus and not give up on each other. I'm so concerned about not just the church, but the whole world. There's a false connection. Its Wi-fi, its cell phones. I mean these aren't bad things, but they cannot replace the real deal. Okay, just a couple of points before we go get our Sunday brunch. I had a friend, and this is very common in Christian colleges, who was like I am not going to settle when I get married. And so he created a list of his perfect wife. He of course began with her looks: she's a ten out of ten. And then he talked about like the education he wants her to have, and she has to be athletic, and by the way, it's a plus if she's like into video games. As he's saying this, he is writing on a sheet of paper with like dirt under his fingernails, not because he's a farmer, but because he plays video games and hasn't taken a shower in a couple days. He reaches over and takes some Cheetos and keeps writing. And I'm thinking to myself, my friend, you are writing down a Jesus-loving, brain surgeon, athlete who's a ten. And all I could think to myself when I was seeing him is like is he not thinking like that she's writing me down on her list right now? And what was funny about it is it's a mirror into ourselves, isn't it? It was a mirror into my own life, that we do this, not just with potential spouses or ideal spouses, but with any relationship. Too often we think of the friends we want rather than the friends we want to become. We think about the friends we want to have rather than the types of friends we want to be. And we do this in all sorts of relationships. We think about the kind of spouse I want to have, rather than the kind of spouse I want to be. We think about the kind of child I want to have, rather than the kind of parent I want to be. And most of all, we think about the kind of God I want to have, rather than the kind of Christian I want to be. And I think all of us are ready to say it is time I take responsibility for me. I want to be a believer worthy of my call. I want to be a man worthy of my spouse, I want to be a friend worthy of my friends, and a father worthy of my children. And I want to die knowing that at least I tried. And that I never made a list of what they should be for me. I believe that if we work on me that they will come. If I work on me, they will be who they are supposed to be. And I can't expect that if I do this for a couple weeks, and they don't change, well now it's their fault. I have to become a new creation, and when that happens, I'll become the kind of spouse, the kind of friend, the kind of father, and the kind of believer that others need. Amen? Let's do it.

The Pride Price

The second thing, and this is a kind of a flip to that, you can't be.. you know, the Bible never says to love the whole world. I know that sounds weird, and we even kind of say it in our creed. But really the Lord says to love your neighbor. God loves the whole world and we love our neighbor. And what I learned from that is there's a limit in many ways to how many good relationships you can have. If you say yes to everybody, you're really saying no to everybody. And you can't say yes to the people that matter most in your life if you don't have a yes to give. There are some people sometimes in our lives that we do have to close a chapter with. One way to think about this, because I talk a lot about having friends that are different than you, it's important to have friends maybe that believe different things than you do so that you don't become rigid and idealistic, but at the same time, you still kind of want to be around people that are building your character, and I learned this in youth group and I never forgot it, this is really good advice for teens, especially. But in a relationship, many of us are a little bit more of either a thermostat or a thermometer. A thermostat changes the temperature in a room, but a thermometer is changed by the temperature of the room. And it's important that in some relationships you're a thermometer, that you have people that are changing you in a good way. But there's also some relationships where you're a thermometer and that's not a good thing, you know what I mean by that? You're around someone and you just know that every time you get around them, you're going to do all the stuff you feel like you shouldn't do. Well sometimes you need a break from those types of friendships. Unless you're a thermostat in that relationship, unless you feel like you're making a difference in their lives, you're mentoring them, you're helping them, that they're benefitting from it in a way that's good, even though it's maybe taxing for you, then maybe God does want you in that relationship. But keep an eye out for that, and be willing to think in those ways. And then of course just listen to the Holy Spirit. If you pray about it and just ask God, He'll reveal to you what's appropriate and what's good. It is not good that man or woman should be alone. I want to encourage you, my friend, to continue to go deeper with people, to continue to go deeper with God, and ask Him to transform you every day into the type of person He's called you to become, so that you don't have to go through this world feeling lonely. Father, we thank you so much for all you've given us. We love you, and we pray in Jesus' name that you'd begin to do a good work in us through your Holy Spirit. Forgive us of our sins and save us from our sins. We don't want to sin anymore. We don't want to be embittered towards our neighbor, we don't want to be unforgiving, we don't want to be blaming people, entitled, we want to love what is good. We want to love people; we want to love serving and being kind and listening to others. We're going to go easy on ourselves, we're not going to feel shame about all this stuff, but at the same time, God, we're going to ask that you help us and coach us into the kind of people we're called to be. How we love you, it is in the very strong name of Jesus we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

BS: 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.