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Hour of Power - 26.09.2021

### 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 first timers and church family. We love being with you. Thank you for being here. I want to remind you today that there is no disease known to humankind that the name of Jesus cannot destroy. You are loved.

BS: That's right, we have so much hope in the Lord. There's nothing He can't turn around and we just want you to know that when you're going through hard times in life, you don't have to go it alone. So often when we go through difficult times, it feels like we're a burden to our neighbor, but one of the main points of a church is to be there for each other when we're going through tough times. So our hope is that whether you're here in the service or with your friends, that God will do a good work in your life during this time and that maybe you'll even get some connection with your neighbor. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so much that you love us. We pray in Jesus' name that your Holy Spirit would move in our lives and many of us, God, are going through tough times. We pray that your spirit would break burdens and chains in our lives, and help us Lord, to walk in your peace and your life, we ask it all in Jesus' name, amen.

HS: Amen.

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

### SCRIPTURE – 1 Peter 2:9-12 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, 1st Peter 2:9.

I just want to encourage you really fast, this is an amazing scripture, but I think if you've grown up in the church, it is so easy for this scripture to become cliché to you, and I want to encourage you as I read this, would you just imagine this is the very first time that you have ever heard this: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. Sister and brother in Christ, your life is a living sermon. Amen.

### INTERVIEW – Heather Avis (HA) and Bobby Schuller (BS)

{VOICE OVER: Heather Avis is a mom, an author, and an advocate for inclusion for those otherwise marginalized by society. Her new book, Different - A Great Thing to Be!, was inspired by her daughter, Macy, who has down syndrome. Different helps encourage conversations with children about their unique traits — and those of others — and how inclusive environments can be fostered at home and in the community. Please welcome, Heather Avis!}

BS: Heather, hi! Welcome!

HA: Hi.

BS: So glad to have you in the house again. Tell us about your story and your ministry and the stuff you are working on.

HA: My husband and I run a ministry called The Lucky Few, and we have three kids, our oldest is Macy and she's almost 13, our middle daughter Truly is 10, our son August is 7, and our oldest and our youngest both have Down Syndrome. And so when they entered our lives, we quickly recognized that we live in a world that continues to question the value and worth of people with Down Syndrome and people with disabilities. And that really catapulted us into a role as advocate and we talk about shouting the worth of our kids and people with disabilities, so that's what we do.

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BS: Your family is actually here. Hi guys, welcome to church. So good to see you. In the second row. I think last time you were here they were like go mom!

HA: Yes.

BS: That was awesome. You know, our son Cohen who we just love, people adore him, he has some special needs and challenges, and so we understand. It's weird how when you're not a parent in that position, you don't always understand the challenges, not only the kids, but the parents go through in wanting their kids to feel included and accepted, and especially in places like a church, but everywhere else, and that's really what you guys are trying to do is help people understand just even how much of a gift these kids are. You've written this book Different – A great thing to be! This girl looks familiar on the front.

HA: Yes, that's my little Mace and hope, my little muse.

BS: I love it. Very cool. You wrote a book this time for children to help children that maybe don't have special needs, who don't have a brother, sister or friend that has a disability on how to include those kids in the playground and in school, and those types of things.

HA: Yes, when my kids came home, when Macy came home, and over the years, there are so few books that center a person with disability as the hero in the guide, and Mason's been such a hero and guide in my life, and so I wanted representation so it's for kids with disabilities to see themselves on pages; that's so important. But also the idea of different being great. Every kid feels different, I mean even the ones who's fit easily into the mold society has created, there's moments where they feel different. And that feeling can often be attached to something negative, and it's just not true. Different is amazing. Everybody's different, and if we can shift the narrative around different, that it's not a bad thing, but it's a beautiful thing and start with our kids. Let's teach that lesson from the beginning that the different things that we see in each other and in ourselves, let's see them, let's recognize them, let's embrace and celebrate them, just like I believe God does for all of us.

BS: Many kids, they don't want to be fixed, they want to be just loved, and be invited to the party.

HA: Exactly, yes.

BS: I think it is such a great message. I know even when.. yes, it's a great example. When I was a kid and I think so many of us when we were children, there'd be lots of scenarios where we felt like an outsider, felt like we know we didn't fit this click of other kids, and so really every kid needs to hear this message of like come to the party.

HA: Yes, and even like using the book as a tool that oftentimes when we're around somebody who's different than us, kids and adults, it feels uncomfortable, and it's this idea of the unknown. I don't know this person, like the way they look, or the way they act, or the way that they talk is so different, and it feels unknown and therefore it feels scary, but once you make the unknown known, it's no longer scary. If we start with our kids, right? And I'm sure you've seen this with your son, too if our kids have opportunities and tools to allow them to interact comfortably with people who are different than them, then they're going to grow up to be adults who are inclusive and loving and comfortable around people who are different than them.

BS: Yes, it's true. Most parents are pretty good about. A lot of times the kids, though, just don't know. Like recently we had like a water slide in front of our house on like a Memorial Day thing, and my son who's 9 but he's more like a two-year-old or three-year-old, but super loving, there was a girl his age who was about to go down the water slide, it was one of those inflatable things, and he grabbed her by the hair sort of when he was trying to hug her but right before she went down the slide so it kind of pulled on her hair a little bit. She didn't get hurt but it scared her a little bit and she cried a lot. And he kind of like, you know, and then I was so worried because the dad of this daughter was this big hulking guy.. He looked tough. And he was the nicest man. I said oh, I am so sorry, my son has some challenges and disabilities, and he was like no I completely understand. He said this is a great opportunity for me to teach my daughter about how to play well with kids like this and understand that he didn't mean anything by it. And for me as a parent, that helped so much. It was such a blessing.

HA: Yes, absolutely. And again having those tools that we can say for our kids, I mean what an incredible story, and that dad, that was his reaction, is this is an opportunity for learning and growth. And we need to let our kids usher us into those moments and be their guides. To say hey, this is an opportunity to learn and grow about what it's like to be around someone who's different. And it's okay that that made you uncomfortable. The next time she's around somebody that may respond in a way she's not used to she'll be less uncomfortable and most likely more accepting of that person.

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BS: Exactly. That's awesome. The book is called Different – A great thing to be! By Heather and Sarah Mensinga, and it's just a great book. Aside from the story, the art, too is just really, really well done. I think your kids or grandkids or nieces or nephews or whoever will love this book. I really want to encourage you to get out and support this message and this great work of art. Thank you so, so much, Heather for what you're doing in the world and thank you for encouraging us in the gospel of what it means for children who don't always feel included.

HA: Yes, absolutely. Thank you so much for having me here.

BS: Thank you.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

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.

### MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "Business in the Kingdom of God"

Who here knows what a PK is? I'll give you a hint: I'm a PK. It's a pastor's kid or a preacher's kid, it depends on if your dad's a pastor or preacher. It's not always the same thing. Growing up, we PKs would hang out a lot, and oftentimes we would share stories of awkward church experiences and what it was like being a preacher's kid. It's weird, because even if your dad's a preacher of a small church, say 80-100 people, in the church itself the pastor still has this weird kind of awkward minority like a celebrity status or something. Even if your dad was a pastor of a small place, you had that weird experience of being on the inside of everything that's going on. One thing that was very strange to me, and it would be interesting to exchange stories with some of you, is how many preachers' kids leave the faith and when they do, it's not just ambivalent. It's not like they're an agnostic now and like everything is cool. They become anti-church. Anti-ministry. Anti-God. I think there's a lot of reasons why this happens. Sometimes, honestly, it's just like baked into the pie, you know what I mean? It's just like some kids are just born crazy, just to be honest with you. Some kids, this is how they are. It's definitely not always the preacher's fault, and the pastor's fault. But sometimes I think that the kids saw in their parents, their mom or their dad, a choice between the kid and the church. That very often in life, the parents chose the visible over the invisible. What people saw rather than what the kids experienced. And because of that, many kids felt like dad cares more about the church than he does about me. I think really often we want to say its hypocrisy, but I don't think it's that. I think a lot of the dads and moms of these kids who left are Bible-believing, Jesus-loving moral people, but sometimes they care more about the project than they did about the person. There's lots of other reasons why kids maybe lose their faith, and it's not always the parents, and sometimes it's weird, but I feel like a big part of the kids that become anti-God, it comes from a place of being wounded by either the pastor or their parent, or by someone in the church, like I know one guy who said it was the way the church treated his dad that made him want to leave, but at the end of the day, it's that the church, the believers, the parent cared more about their ego and the fighting and the pride than they did about seeing what their life did in terms of sending a message, especially to the young people. Your life is preaching a message. Your life is a living sermon! The way you act, the way you treat your neighbor, the way you send a text or drive. The way you respond to emails or behave in meetings, the way you act around your children, if you have them, or your spouse or your family or your neighbors, or especially your enemies, preaches a sermon to all of the third parties who are watching. And I want to encourage you that a big part of the reason we're called to do what we do is because our life is meant to be a testimony; a hope to people who see the world's solutions and feel hopeless when they see it. They feel like it means very little! And when they see you, a person full of peace and joy in life, and forgiveness, not perfect but there's something alluring about that. And that's my hope for you today, that we get ahold of this; the sermon-ness of our living. In 1st Peter chapter 2, the famous Bible verse, but it's a full thought. And this is a Bible pericope we call it in seminary. I don't know what to call it in layman's terms, but it's a full, kind of almost short essay. And it comes in three parts, and when you read it all together, for me as a red-blooded American liberty-loving man, it makes me shudder and shiver, and we'll see why. We're going to read this together. If you have your Bible's or your cell phones or if you can read a giant screen behind me; I guess it makes it redundant, doesn't it. Okay. I'm going to read this.

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“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession.” Do you hear those? He’s saying the same thing four times over and over. It’s this concept of holiness, kadosh in Hebrew. Many of us who grew up in church, when we hear holiness we hear ‘don’t drink, don’t spit, don’t chew, don’t go with girls that do,’ right? We hear all of the like stuff you’re not supposed to do. Biblical holiness is more about being obviously unique than the rest of the world. That the way of Christ has something special and completely set apart that makes it obvious that there’s something different about you. Just a little off. He says you’re called, you’re holy, and he says “that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people but now you’re the people of God. Once you had received no mercy, but now you’ve received mercy.” That’s the first part, okay? You’re special. Okay the second part: “Dear friends, I urge you as” what? “Foreigners and exiles.” What is he saying? He’s like that old guy is dead. He’s completely gone, and you’re this entirely new thing, so much so that you’re like a foreigner on your own planet. Earth is like a new world to you, and you’re just a visitor here. “To abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul, live such good lives among the pagans, that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.” That’s an echo to what Jesus said, right? When He says you’re the light of the world. Notice how Jesus doesn’t say I, Jesus, am the light of the world. He says you are! You’re the light of the world. A city on a hill that cannot be hidden. People don’t light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand. It gives light to everyone in the house! Therefore, let your light shine so that people will see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Right? That’s what Peter is saying here, he’s like live good lives, be good, do good to your neighbor. Why? Not for moral sake as much as to allure and draw people into a better way of living. First two bits we’re on board, right? You’re holy, be a good person, right? This third bit is the one that’ll get you. Do you believe that the Bible is the word of God? Who here believes that? Do you believe you’re supposed to obey it? Are you sure? All right, I’m going to read this last bit here. He goes on to say “therefore, submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority. Whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to the governor who are assembled by him to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.” Do you think there’s ignorant talk of foolish people about Christians today? “Live as free people” so all of us are like yes! Yes! Absolutely. “But do not use your freedom as a coverup for evil. Live as God’s slaves. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the family of believers, fear God,” and this last one, this’ll get you, “honor the emperor.” Honor the emperor. When Peter is writing this, he is the bishop, the overseer, the church planter of Rome. He’s the guy in charge of the various house churches and things that are happening in this obviously very important city. It’s not just the capital of Italy, it’s the capital of the world. It is the sort of New York City or Tokyo of the whole world. And it is a major hub of influence, and it is there that the Christians are starting to grow and gain a reputation, and the reputation is not good. Even though it looks like they’re just sweet and loving and kind to each other, people start calling them cannibals – why? Because they hear that they eat the body and blood of their rabbi. So they like what is that? Well it’s just communion. They hear that they’re incestuous because you have husbands and wives mingling and calling each other brother and sister, which was a very common practice in a church just to call everybody brother and sister. We still do that today a little bit. And my favorite, the Christians were called atheists because they rejected the pantheon of Roman gods and they rejected Caesar as god. And yet their behavior was good. There was all of this ignorant and foolish talk about the early church. And when he says “honor the emperor” it is crazy that he would say that. You think your emperor is bad? In those days, listen, the emperor in those days when Peter writes this, is Nero, who is known as one of history’s great villains. This guy comes to power when he’s 16-years-old and he’s a nutcase right out of the gate. Aside from being evil, he’s a complete spaz. Right when he sits on the throne, he begins killing people right off the bat. One of those people is his own mom. He kills his wife. He kills his next wife, who’s pregnant. And he’s just a bad guy. When he’s about 26, he and his boyfriend, this is how the story goes, are in the palace and they’re overlooking the area below the palace, and it’s full of tents and like a tent city, and a lot of pop-up shops and stuff, and they want it out of there because they want to build this bigger, more beautiful palace. And so he goes out of town, and they light like a small fire, hoping that this little area in front of their palace will burn down, and then when they’re clearing it out, they can expand their palace. And what instead happens is a gigantic fire lights and the whole city, when I say the whole city, seventy-five percent of the city burns to the ground.

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It is a major, like, trauma for the whole city, and then Nero, when he's trying to rebuild the city, devalues the currency, it causes the whole Roman empire, actually, to go into like a instability; it destabilizes the whole thing, and actually, even after he dies at the young age of 30, the whole Roman empire becomes destabilized; multiple emperors at the same time, and it's crazy. But anyway, he's just this completely evil guy. And when that fire happens, because everybody kind of knows its him, he picks this group, this little-known group that everybody's kind of whispering about, called the Christians, and he says they started the fire. And because of that, in order to sort of galvanize his claim, he begins persecuting them and feeding them to animals, lighting his garden on fire with crucified living Christians and this type of thing. It's a horrible, horrible season. And Peter tells those people, listen guys, honor the emperor. Now the only time you don't honor the emperor is if you don't do anything evil; you don't worship the emperor, but why. And this is really the crux of what I'm getting at. Why honor the emperor? I think Peter in the early church.. well I mean he says plainly in the text: so that you can be witness to them. So that you can be unique to them. Who in the glory seeking, fame rich Roman empire honors a villain like Nero? Even the Romans didn't honor him. And yet here they were, why? Why? Why? Because in the mind of the church, they saw what Jesus saw – a field full of ripe grain. Jesus, when He was looking at the crowds of hurting and sick and lonely people who were coming to Him, He just looked out in this crowd and He turned to His disciples and He told them look at this field of grain. Pray that the God of the harvest would send workers. Listen to how Jesus doesn't say go out there and do it, He says pray that God would send workers out into the field. Why? So that we as believers have a heart for this. Can you see it? In our world, can you see it? Can you see the millions of people who had everything they thought they wanted and needed, and yet feel like they have nothing. Why would we ever want to be like that? Why would we want to mimic that? We have something in the Holy Spirit that we can offer hurting and broken people. The reason we honor the emperor, the reason we love our enemies, the reason we care for those who hate us, the reason we don't lie, we don't cheat, we help those who are invisible, we see those who are unseen is not only because it's the right thing to do, but because the whole world is watching! And that there's a whole field ready to come back to the Father's house, to come home. Hannah and I prayed this prayer every night: Lord, send workers into your harvest. Every night we'd pray that. We'll never stop. See there was a purpose to the early church that was bigger than their liberty, which matters, and their freedom, which matters, and not being tortured to death. All of that, believe it or not, was trumped by one desire: to see Rome come into the kingdom of God. To see their friends and neighbors, and even the people they hated to turn their hearts to the Lord and to love them with all their hearts and all their soul. And that's why we do what we do as a church. When all of this stuff happened the last year and a half, we got together as a team and we obviously wanted to keep everybody safe, but the other thing that really led our discussions and our committees was we want to be a good witness to our neighbors. Like even when some of the stuff seemed a little bit dumb or maybe like too over the top, and even though of all people, I was the one who grumbled the most sometimes about some of the stuff; I'm a red-blooded American liberty loving man! I don't like big government; I don't like being told what to do. And yet I'm like what's more important than that to me is being a good witness to Irvine: to the police chief, to the mayor, to our neighbors, to our friends, to people who come to this church and they don't say oh this church doesn't care about if people get sick. And this is not a judgment on other churches and their decisions at all, it's just that for us, as an example, I just believe that we ought to have in all things, I mean that's behind us, but in all things a spirit of wanting to win our neighbors to the Lord through our example. And that we're not prideful people, but that we're humble listeners and kind and at peace where we live, amen? Okay. I think that your life is a living sermon. I think that when we get to the end of life, the little things you did that you thought weren't a big deal are going to end up being the really big deal things. And all this stuff that so many of us thought was such a big deal, is going to be almost forgotten. I remember when I was a kid my parents didn't let me watch a show called The Simpsons. Of course I watched it as much as I could. But there is one show that I remember that got me off on this whole like thing that I've thought about my whole life, this chaos theory and the nonlinearity of small things in life. It was this tree house of horror episode where Homer Simpsons toaster becomes a time machine and it takes him back in time for like a minute, and then it returns him home. He goes back in time and he like steps on a flower and he goes oh well that won't be a big deal. He comes back and the whole universe is changed. He keeps hitting the toaster to try and set it right and not step on the flower, and he can't do anything right, and every time there's these massive changes.

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My favorite is when he accidentally sneezes on a dinosaur and every dinosaur falls down, and every living thing falls out of the sky, and when he returns home, his whole family is like really nice and he's like rich and then of course the bit is he's like so happy and he says 'honey, would you please pass me a donut.' She goes 'a donut? What's a donut?' And he goes 'AHHHHH, AHHHHH, AHHHHH,' and he like hits his toaster, and then right after he disappears it starts raining donuts and his wife goes oh, it's raining again. Anyway. But what these sci-fi movies like this or shows, Back to the Future, things like that, they show in statistics what's called nonlinearity, the way that small things can cause huge convex or concave curves in the sample. So in other words, we have no idea the impact of the little things that we do in life over time. The most important thing you've done in your life might be some random thing you did six years ago at a grocery store. And for me, this has led to a philosophy of life, of what I think of as getting free lottery tickets. It's kind of like whenever you get a lottery ticket, your odds of winning are very slim, whether it's the.. I don't play lottery and actually hate the lottery, but the odds of winning are very slim so if you spend money on it, it's a bum deal. But if you got lottery tickets for free, Greg Waltee, he can do some math, he'd tell you that's a good deal. Free lottery tickets. Very often I think when you do good in life, when you open your life to experiences and to other people, you're effectively getting free lottery tickets. In all of those experiences, you never know when something amazing; God can use one of those amazing things to do something amazing in your life. And this is especially true when it comes to altruism and doing good toward your neighbor. This is especially true when it comes to not lashing out, when it comes to the way you are in line at the bank, or on the 405, or the thing you said or didn't say to your spouse or your kid or your best friend, or your enemy. That the way you respond, people look at you and go wow! I don't know anybody who would have reacted that way. He bought my whole meal at Benihana? That's awesome. You see our lives are preaching a sermon. Everything you do is witnessing to what you really believe in your bones, and this is going to have the greatest impact on people's opinion of God. Your life is supposed to show people what God is like, in some way. And it does, so keep being that person. In The Great Divorce, I'll finish with this story. In The Great Divorce, which is written by C.S. Lewis. It's a sort of a fantasy novel about heaven and hell where this mean character who comes out of hell and he gets to visit heaven for a time, and he has an angel that's like his guide. And at a crescendo part of the story, he's in heaven and he sees this vast over the top parade with animals and people playing music and doing all of this wonderful stuff, and at the center of the celebration of the parade is this woman who is glowing and she's sitting on a platform and she's just vibrant and seems holy and glorious, and he looks at the angel and he says something like is that the blessed mother or something like that. We're protestants. We don't say the blessed mother. But is that Mary? And the angel goes oh no, no, she's one of the great ones. You would have never heard of her because on earth, they don't care about things the way we care about them here. Her name is, and I love the name C.S. Lewis picks, Sarah Smith. Might as well have said Plain Jane. Jane Doe. Her name is Sarah Smith, and sorry if your name is Sarah Smith. It's a beautiful name. But he says she just had like a.. I think it was like a boarding house or something, and she just over the top cared for people and loved people, and what you're seeing is a parade of every animal that came to her house, she cared for it. Every person that came, no matter how ornery, she cared for them and made sure that they were taken care of. And he said what you're seeing is a parade of her spiritual children. And then he says and the life.. you on earth, you don't understand that a life is rather like a stone being thrown into a lake where the ripples go out far beyond the extent of the life itself. Wow. What a message for us who even though we are imperfect are every day making a decision on how people will think about God. We are offering an alternative to what the world offers. Your life is a living sermon. Your life is a living testimony. It's a hope, it's a salt, it's a reflection. Dim at times, and imperfect, but a reflection of what it can be like when we're full of the spirit; the spirit of joy and life that is in you. My friend, do the next right thing. That's it. We focus so, so much on these big things that nobody sees, but always do what is right because it might be that that one right thing that you do, that costs so much to you personally, or maybe that in the long run, you will see someday the impact that that had. Do good always. Do it even when it's in secret and nobody sees and only God sees. Do it and watch how good that is for your soul. Be humble before people. Treat everyone with respect. Give a place at the table. Give up your place in the left lane on the freeway, and give up your place in line, give up your place when people cut. Pray for others. Never, ever lie not for any reason. Don't judge people because you don't know what they're going through, and you don't want to be judged yourself. See people that are invisible. Care for those that are uncared for. Be patient with people who are maybe a little different.

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And be kind and loving to everyone you come in contact with, and your life will just begin to overflow with abundant fruit and goodness. I'm telling you this, not only because it's the moral thing to do, but it's the best kind of life you can live. A life where everything you do is a sermon to those who are around you. Father, we thank you. We ask in Jesus' name that you would transform us and form us into the image of your son Jesus. Forgive us of our sins. All of us have made mistakes. And we pray for anyone, God, who has been hurt by the church or by people in the Christian community, we hope, Father, that they'll know what you're really like. Help us, God, to love what is good and hate what is evil, and help us most of all, God, to be kind and loving to our neighbor. It's in Christ' name 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.