

Hour of Power Deutschland
Steinerne Furt 78
86167 Augsburg

Telefon: 08 21 / 420 96 96
Telefax: 08 21 / 420 96 97

E-Mail: info@hourofpower.de
www.hourofpower.de

Baden-Württembergische Bank
BLZ: 600 501 01
Konto: 28 94 829

IBAN:
DE43600501010002894829

BIC:
SOLADEST600

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz
Seestr. 11
8594 Güttingen
Tel.: 071 690 07 81
info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch
www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern
Konto: 61-18359-6
IBAN:
CH1609000000610183596

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GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Hello.

HS: Hello first timers and church family. We are happy that you're here. It is a very special week because this week is Bobby Schuller's birthday. (ORCHESTRA PLAYS HAPPY BIRTHDAY – Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Bobby, happy birthday to you!)

BS: Thank you, thank you. I appreciate it. I really do.

HS: Bobby, I just want to say too, there are so many things I admire about you, but one thing that I really especially love is your faithfulness and tenacity in which you go after that which you believe is truly important, and you just have a very.. when you put your mind on something, you just go after it with your whole heart and I'm so grateful to be your wife and so I just want to say I love you, and also thank you for always being older than me.

BS: Yes! You're welcome. I do my best. Thank you. I got to tell you, that's an awesome feeling to have a choir and orchestra sing you happy birthday. You should try it sometime. It's really great. Actually its super embarrassing, but thank you guys. I love you. Thanks.

HS: Beautiful though.

BS: Embarrassing for me, not for you. You guys are amazing. Thank you. Good morning, welcome to church! Let's begin with a word of prayer, I guess. Father, we thank you so much for calling us together and we ask for your Holy Spirit to be poured out in a very real and powerful way. Many of us, Lord, are here and are going through tough times. And I pray, God, that you would bring freedom and life in Jesus' name. We thank you, amen.

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

SCRIPTURE – John 10:2-5 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, John 10:2-5. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Hannah Schuller (HS) and Bobby Schuller (BS)

VIDEO ROLL IN - MALE: So on July 15th I got to experience the most incredible act of God I've ever seen. Hannah got up and started speaking about the healing power of God and then Braelyn raised her hand asking if we could pray for Ashton's toe, because she thought it was broken. She couldn't even walk back. But then we all prayed for her and then she was able to walk back and forth across the floor without any pain. Then Seth jumped up and he had cerebral palsy his whole life and he wanted to be prayed for so that it could maybe he healed. And we all prayed for him and then he stretched down and touched his toes and then just all happened so fast – instantly. It was incredible. And then Maddie's scoliosis was healed. But yeah, that was one of the best moments I have ever gotten to witness in my Christian life and I am just so excited about the healing power of God.

FEMALE: (SPEAKING SPANISH)

INTERPRETER: I am with Marosario. I was doing a studies in the hospital. She make us stop to come here and she understood that for a purpose God brought her here. And she came with a big pain. She's been with month with the pain. But in this moment that she pray for her, I can say that at this moment I have no pain.

FEMALE: Hallelujah

INTERPRETER: Amen.

INTERPRETER: Thank you God.

You Already Hear His Voice

BS: As an intro for everybody, Hannah, a couple months ago, really began to read a lot through the scriptures and books and things. And just before her brother, who's an optometrist, and is your other brother a medical doctor?

HS: Yes.

BS: Did he go?

HS: No.

BS: Okay. The optometrist brother who leads a mission program, does humanitarian work and mission outreach, was going to Puerto Rico. Hannah was like I want to go and pray for the sick. I want to put into practice some of these things I've learned. The first day you were there, there was just an outpouring of like.. Andrew was just talking, and just incredible things that God had done. I was like we have to get in front of the church and just testify to this good thing. Welcome Hannah. Tell me first why did you.. I mean I was surprised as your husband that for your birthday, which is in September, you were like can I go on this trip and you stay back and watch the kids, and I'm going to go and pray for the sick. Why did you want to do that?

HS: I think probably a lot of the church knows that I started feeling on my heart to just to dig into healing. And there are so many times I'm like Lord, throughout history other generations there have been these people who do healing crusades, and people see instant miracles. I'm like there might be that going on now, but I don't know of anyone. And so I was like Lord, what is going on, Lord? What is going on? I just kind of felt like God was like this is your generation now. Go. Do it. There's these things that have been stirring in me and I really, really believed that there's dead faith and there's living faith. We can have dead faith and be like I believe, I believe, I believe, but we don't do anything so its dead faith, or living faith where we believe but we act; we act. And I'm like I have to have to act upon what God is stirring in me. I cannot not do something with this. That's why I was like, okay, can you stay back with the kids? That's a big job in itself. And so I got to go to Puerto Rico and it was incredible. And admittedly there's so much that I don't know, but I do absolutely know two things now, for sure. Number one that it is a hundred percent God's will to heal everyone. A hundred percent. That when Jesus went on in the Bible, He healed them all. There was never just like a lucky few. He healed them all. And there was only one place that He couldn't heal, if you remember. It was in His hometown because they didn't believe Him. But if Jesus represents God, He is the living representation of what God desires for us, so that's number one. And number two, what I absolutely know is that God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

BS: Like why is it so important to you that you emphasize this idea?

HS: Because I feel like the enemy; what was the very first original sin? With Adam and Eve, he got them to not believe God. That was the first sin, not believe in God. You will not surely die. What happened to them? They died. So Satan's power against us is to get us to not believe God, the absolute truth. So I think the enemy is constantly trying to get us to not believe. That's one thing. I know that the enemy is at work. But if I could share one scripture that I love, really fast. In Mark 1:40, and this is the NIV, it's the newer one, but I think a lot of times we look at the man with leprosy who said Lord if it be your will, heal me. And we're like that's how I should pray. But if you actually read it closely, that's not the case. It says "a man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees. If you are willing, you can make me clean." Now listen to this next little line. "Jesus was indignant." I love that. Jesus was actually offended. He was like how can you think I wouldn't want to heal you? And it said "he reached out his hand and touched the man and said I am willing. Be clean." I think the enemy wants to tell us that God might do it, He might not. No, it's for everyone. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, which is that "sozo," full healing of physical body, deliverance, healing of your soul, to everyone who believes. I love that word everyone, and I'm like if you are included in the word everyone, it's for you.

BS: Yes, that's actually true.

HS: I love that.

BS: That word "sozo" in Greek.

HS: I do believe that there's things that we can pray for God's will. Like okay should I go to university? Like you can pray about it, but one thing that is so clear in the Bible: you're not allowed to pray if it be your will, heal me. Let's not offend Jesus anymore. We know it's His will.

BS: The crazy thing is when the first night we talked, the first day you were there, there were like multiple miracles, like this kid being healed of cerebral palsy, which is the most impressive one to me, but others, you know. But every day you were like I don't even know if I can sleep tonight because..

You Already Hear His Voice

HS: It felt like a dream.

BS: ..it was like every single day.. I mean tell me a little bit about that.

HS: Church, we serve a living God. We serve a living God. Yes, it was incredible. It was true. It was like I would preach the gospel to.. well the first night these kids already knew the Lord and we were like let's choose to believe God and not do it out of need. Let's choose to believe God and release our faith. And we prayed and every time we prayed, we wouldn't just pray and say okay, we'll just see what like tomorrow. After every time we prayed, okay, act your faith. Get up. So whoever we prayed for, the girl with the toe was first. We're like okay..

BS: It was do something you couldn't do before.

HS: ..yes, so with Ashton we were like okay, get up and do what you couldn't do. And then she started walking, and she started bawling. Instantly. And I was like oh, is she still in pain? But then she's like I'm healed. And she started walking. I do think that even praying and acting your faith instantly.

BS: You had a lot of people that said, too, when you prayed for them, they felt this very common response that they felt heat around wherever it was.

HS: Not everybody, but some of them.

BS: And granted, you should say not everybody was healed, so there still is.. I mean it's not like..

HS: I mean we had at least nine different.. ninety percent of the people we prayed for had some type of healing. So it was incredible.

BS: I'm like why does that happen so often there, but it doesn't happen here?

HS: That same thing was bothering me and I was thinking about even on the way to Puerto Rico, I'm like Lord, if you do it there, you can also do it in the U.S. But I think what was incredible is that it was actually like more of the U.S. missionaries..

BS: It's the Americans that are healed.

HS: ..they were the ones.. most of them.. because they're actually more.. a lot of Christians..

BS: Because actually you, through this event, you thought hundreds were going to come out and nobody showed up.

HS: ..well actually then no, I was like there could be three, there could be a hundred..

BS: But you and Dakota and bunch of people..

HS: Yes, she worked.. she helped me so hard..

BS: ..sent out like thousands of fliers and called people and churches were..and nobody showed up.

HS: Yes. Nobody showed up, but God still did all these incredible things..

BS: At the clinics and things like that..

HS: ..and then so the night that nobody showed up, I had one girl with me, a worship leader, and she was like well can you please hear for my ankle, because it is killing me and I can't walk on it. I've got this issue for years.

BS: It was the one person that showed, right?

HS: No, no, she's a worship leader. She had to be there.

BS: Oh yeah.

HS: So she was there, and I prayed for her, I was like okay, get up, act your faith, I rebuked the spirit of pain, and I'm like get up, act your faith and she started to walk, she's like it's a little better, but not fully. I was like okay, let's pray again. Pray, get up, act your faith. And she started walking, she's like.. oh, she's like it's gone. And she goes I felt like this heat every time you were praying going through my ankle, and then the whole rest of the trip, I kept asking her, I was like any pain? She's like nothing.

BS: That's awesome.

HS: I'm like.. God does.. He's the same, He's the same yesterday, today and forever.

BS: Amen. Your message is trust in Him, like believe that it's His will for you to be well.

HS: Yes, don't listen to anybody. A hundred percent. A hundred percent. And just look at Jesus' life. You can see that it's His will.

BS: Amen. Hannah, thank you so much for going and for testifying to us. It's a great encouragement. We love you.

HS:Yes, yes. Of course. Thank you.

You Already Hear His Voice

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Well would you stand with us? We're going to say this creed together as we do every week. Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. Its who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with the world. Amen!

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "You Already Hear His Voice"

You might notice that I'm wearing tennis shoes today, a little more comfortable. Pre apologize for that. Not really, I'm not really sorry but I just forgot my shoes, my dress shoes at the house because I keep my suit in my office and so it was like ten minutes before, I was like uh oh. Sorry if the gleam on the white part of the shoe gets in your eyes. The reason I wear a suit, in case you're wondering. Most pastors my age don't wear even jackets anymore. There are a couple reasons, since you asked. The first is honestly it just looks good on TV. I mean I hate to be so shallow but when your favorite athlete appears on sports center, they put a jacket and tie on because it looks good. It makes whatever we're doing timeless, so if somebody watches a sermon 15 years from now when fashions have changed, this probably won't look that ridiculous as some other pastors may have unusable content in the years to come. And the second is, by the way, if I were going to church, I would probably go casually. When we pastored a church above a bar, I preached barefoot in shorts and a t-shirt every Sunday, so I don't think there's a right or wrong way, but I think one argument for wearing a suit to church it's just like if you were going to see a president or a king or something, you'd put a jacket and a tie on out of respect. And you might say well God's our Father, He's our dad. You don't wear a suit and tie when you go see your dad. And I'm like well my dad was the president, and I was going to the White House, I probably would. So it just depends on the setting, right? So that's one way to think about it. I have a soft spot in my heart for like olden stuff anyway. I look at times when people used to dress nicer for baseball games than we dress for church, I think, well maybe we can reclaim some of that, but anyway, come as you are. We've always said that, and if I was here not preaching, I would be wearing probably very casual clothes, but anyway, than I am today with my shoes. All right, today we want to talk about the importance of hearing God's voice. The main thing I want to accomplish today for every person is to demystify this idea that hearing God's voice is something that is only for special people or for pastors or prophets or even that it's a weird thing. In fact, I know probably everybody in this room has heard God's voice, even though they may not know it. I believe that God speaks to non-Christians and unbelievers all the time! And I'm going to make that case if I have time later in my message, but no matter what, God loves speaking to people because you love speaking to the people you love, don't you. Who doesn't like talking to their kids or grandkids. Most of the time, I love talking to my kids. Most of the time. But I want to share with you three stories where I heard God's voice. Now when we say 'hear God's voice' don't think of paranoid schizophrenic, okay? Don't think (WHISPHERS – hey Bobby) yeah? (WHISPHERS – hey, it's me, God). It's not that, okay? When you say you hear God's voice, it's like inspiration on steroids. It's like God stamps something on your heart, and we'll talk about that. But I want to share these stories. And all three of them pivotally changed my life. The first: I want to be careful here because I borderline idolize my grandpa, the founder of the Crystal Cathedral. Important minister in his day, had such a huge impact, and so I just want to share my experience. This is not a dig on him at all. When I was a kid, I got into art in like 3rd or 4th grade, I just loved it, and I really enjoyed clay. And I was into like fantasy type things, I loved The Never-Ending Story, for example, and I loved The Hobbit and other things like that. And this was the 80's. It was like at an all-time high when these types of things were going on. I made this clay dragon that I was really proud of. I spent a lot of time on it and I used what I thought was really creative – a dark shoe polish to give it that dragony kind of purple color. I was going for sort of a Puff the Magic Dragon kind of look, and I loved this dragon, and I submitted it to the Orange County Fair. My teacher suggested it. And I got first prize for my grade, which was for me a huge.. it was just a great feeling to just work on this thing and then submit it and then win! I didn't think I would win, and I fell over the moon. And as like a nine-year-old or ten-year-old, whatever it was, I decided in that moment I was going to switch from whatever I was going to be when I was going to grow up, I was going to be an artist, and I was really excited about this. I wasn't sure what kind of an artist, maybe it would be clay, and I had all these dreams about becoming an artist.

You Already Hear His Voice

Now my grandpa, I think back in the day, my grandpa asked me once, 'what do you want to be when you grow up,' and I said something like I want to be a minister like you. Of course he loved that! This became like our tradition. I have his same name, by the way. You may or may not know my real name is Robert. I'm Robert Schuller the third. Whenever he would see me, he would always say 'Robert Schuller, what do you want to be when you grow up?' And I would say 'I want to be a minister!' And he would pat me on the head and this was like our tradition. Now before I say the next thing, you have to know my grandpa was the worst driver ever. Okay? Really terrible. And I think it's because he's a visionary or whatever. There was I think only.. I'd heard stories many times about how bad of a driver he was. They were all under played. One time he picked me up at Angels Stadium from the train station when I was going to his house from my mom's house. There were no cars around, thank goodness. He picked me up in his car and it was Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. He was like talking to me and really enthusiastic and happy, but like almost hit like a light thing and then was running over the little concrete things that are at the end of parking spots, while talking and like didn't even notice. It's like CLUG CLUG CLUG CLUG CLUG CLUG CLUG CLUG and he's talking. He's holding a cup of coffee in like a mug and it's splashing everywhere, it's getting on the dash and like a little bit got on my.. and doesn't even notice, doesn't care, is not cleaning it up. He got in so many accidents and tickets that they eventually revoked his license so he had to have a driver. I feel like that's important to say because you're like why did your pastor grandpa pick you up with a driver. But he was Dr. Schuller so of course it was a limo. When I was a kid, he would pick me up sometimes from school in a limo. And I was always a little embarrassed by that, but there's a part of me thought that was cool. But I'd be standing out with my friends, and a guy's mom in her minivan would come and pick up the kids and I'd say bye, and then like this limo would pull up. This is the 80's, again. Limos reached their peak in the 80's, really. It was a great time to be in a limo. Pulled up, a guy with a hat on comes out and opens the door for me and I get in the car, and this time my grandpa said 'Bobby, what do you want to be when you grow up?' and I said, 'I want to be an artist.' And now again, I really want to be careful here because my grandpa was great. I don't think he meant any harm by this at all, but a lot of its his generation. When he's seeing me, he's seeing a future man. And men provide for their families, men pay the bills, men work hard, so a man saying I'm going to be an artist, it's like not my grandson. And his response was kind of like not mean at all, but kind of like well you know, and we'd start talking about other things and he'd come back to the art thing where he'd be like artists really struggle a lot to pay the bills, and da da da da da and this kind of thing. And this was the first time I got this feeling of oh do I have to be a minister? Like do I have a choice? To make things worse, again in the 80's, my grandpa was at an all-time high. He was friends with Mikhail Gorbachev and Arnold Schwarzenegger and rubbing elbows with presidents. He was on the news all the time; he was on Larry King. He was just famous, especially in Southern California, very famous. So whenever I had a new class or was on a sports team or went to a camp or any kind of kid's event where they call your formal name in a roll call: Jane Smith, John Doe, Robert Schuller. Robert Schuller?! Here. And they always asked the same two questions: any relation? Yeah, that's my grandpa. Then the second one: are you going to be a minister when you grow up? My whole life, any relation? Are you going to be a minister? Any relation? Are you going to be a minister? And over time, it went from oh I don't know, I don't know, I might be an artist. Well you should be a minister! Well, I don't know. I'm only nine. Over time, it really kind of like calcified. And as I became a teenager, there really were a couple years where we were not going to church; I was not into church or the Bible or none of my friends really were Christians. Our family would have been Christian, but I didn't really.. it wasn't my thing. I for sure wasn't going to be a minister. And I got to the point where people would ask me that and I'd be like I'm like NEVER! I never going to do that. I was kind of, for a couple years of my life in high school, very much against God, actually. I liked Nirvana and Alice in Chains. I liked my stuff and my friends and my life, and so even after I came to faith, and was totally hook line and sinker for God, for the Lord, I still was very against the idea of ever going into ministry. I remember once, after being in this kind of revised heart for God phase of my life, about a year after that, I was at an event called Acquire the Fire, which was like a teen event, it's like a worship event where they really encourage kids to have quiet times in the morning and have like a revival kind of spirit. And we were in this worship time and this was the first time I really felt like God spoke to me. We were praying and I was worshipping, and it felt like God said to me 'Bobby, go on your knees and worship me.' I didn't really do it because I thought well that's a little extreme and kind of weird, I'm not going to do that. And then I felt it again: 'Bobby, get on your knees and worship me.' And I still didn't do it.

You Already Hear His Voice

And then the third time, almost as I'm going away, it was like 'Bobby, get on your knees and worship me.' I did, and I was scared that I was going to miss out on something, and so I started worshipping God and all of these teenagers began praying for me. I actually felt physically like God broke something in my will, in my heart, that all of my resentment towards feeling.. like if you know my personality, feeling controlled at all is repulsive to me. I am a free bird, man. I like to do things my way, and so letting go of this really ice-cold resentment I had towards feeling control in my life, God totally broke it in my heart. I began doing mission trips like Hannah did, humanitarian trips, and just trying to serve more and not being about me as much. And that's why it truly is a miracle, not only that I'm in ministry, but that I took over my grandpa's church. If you know my soul and my mind, its actually crazy that I'm even here. And it's one hundred percent, I think, in large part because of this one prayer event. So doing that, just submitting to God, it just broke something in me in a really good way. The second time I was in Germany serving at the Expo in this village called Bad Gandersheim. Beautiful little village. I loved it there. It was wonderful and we were there for six months working with David Maines and doing different type of concerts. We got to meet all sorts of famous people. It was very cool. And David wanted me to go Israel, which was even cooler. I'd been wanting to go to Israel, and they were going to fly me from Germany to Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. I was like okay, I'll go, let's do it. And then as I was praying, I felt the strong unction that I shouldn't go. And it was so strong, it was like bugging me round the clock. I told David and the crew, I was like I can't go. I just feel like God doesn't want me to go. And surprisingly, they were fine with that. This is my employer. And then they asked me a couple weeks later – hey, can you go out to Israel? We really need you to go. We need you out there to shoot some stuff. It'll just be a couple days and you can come back. And I was feeling all this pressure so I kind of said yes, can I just pray about it? And as I was praying about it, then my mom called me and she's like I felt like this very strong thing, like you shouldn't go to Israel. So I told them, I was like I just can't. I have this very strong sense; it's something I wanted to do, I'm an adventurer, I love traveling, I've been to Israel a million times. I was like I just feel like I can't go. And so they said all right. They were visibly a little upset with me. The next week the Intifada started in Israel, which is a complete Black Swan event, nobody was seeing it come. And the whole country was covered in violence and bombings and riots, and the studio, which is in Bethlehem in the Palestinian part, the studio crew was locked in there for two months after that. Very dangerous situation. Nobody ended up being hurt, but I was jokingly saying earlier that I would have gotten hurt in that situation because I wouldn't have stayed in the studio for two months. I would be like we're breaking out of here! And so there I really do believe God protected me from something that could have been really bad happen in my life. And the third, I remember when Russ Jacobson was having some talks, Pastor Russ was having some talks with some of the people at Irvine Presbyterian, and he called me to see if a merger would be something I would even entertain or be interested in. And I had to be honest with you, some prejudices about the PCUSA and I'd heard some things, and I know there was a lot of turmoil and difficulty. I was driving my car and after we hung up, I was kind of on the fence about it, and I said out loud, I go God, you really want me to join the PCUSA? And I felt like this very strong 'do not call unclean what I have made clean.' And it was striking, and I was like woah. And actually, after that event, I don't know if I told you guys this, especially from the IPC side, I had zero concern that this would or would not work. I kind of knew from the beginning. I'm not going to be able to stop this. This is God's idea. God is planning on doing this. And even though it was a lot of work, I also wanted to come in with like an open mind, and what I found is in our denomination, especially our Presbytery, some of the most best friends, allies, Holy Spirit filled, people like Tim McCalmont, that love the Lord and I felt really bad, actually, about being able to just throw off a whole group of people like that without really knowing anything about it. And that made a huge difference in my life and this church's life. So you could see that God didn't do that because I'm a pastor, by the way. God did that because I'm His son. He'll do that to you because you're His daughter or His son. It has nothing to do with your office. It has everything to do with the fact that He loves you and He wants to play a role in your life, and get you to good places. God speaks today. God likes to speak to you. And it is on us to learn how to hear God's voice. We know that it's God's voice if one, if it's not my idea. If it's a eureka wow! I would have never thought of something like that. And if it bears good fruit. And if it aligns with scripture. If it's those things, it's probably God speaking to you and giving you a special kind of revelation. Of course Jesus teaches us in many of His sermons to hear the voice of the shepherd, to hear the rhema, the spoken voice of God. In John 15 He says "anyone who abides in me and my words, my rhema, abides in them." You mean they hear my spoken voice will ask whatever they want from me and it will be given to them.

You Already Hear His Voice

He talks about how the sheep know the voice of their shepherd. In fact that's the passage we're reading today. John chapter 10. Before I read John chapter 10, this comes on the heels of a really important story of the famous healing of the blind man. It's not just any blind man, it's the John 9 blind man. This guy had been cast out of the synagogue and he had been called a sinner and the evidence that he was a sinner was because he was blind. So he had been taught that the reason he was blind, is it was God cursing him for some sin, either from him or his parents. So not only he couldn't see and couldn't work; they didn't have any like welfare or something for blind people back then. He just had to beg. But also he has a sense of shame about being there, so like a double curse, you see? They asked Him, who sinned this man or his parents that he had been born blind. Jesus says neither. This happened so God's life could be revealed in him. And so Jesus, on the sabbath, does two things you're not supposed to do according to oral tradition. Now the Bible doesn't say this. The Bible says you shall honor the sabbath. But the oral tradition says well what does that mean to honor the sabbath? And a couple of things you're not supposed to do is spit. You can't spit on the sabbath, because spit rolls and that looks like work. And you can't make mud on the sabbath because that's like what the Jews did when they were in captivity making bricks. Jesus spits on the ground, making mud so not only is He healing on the sabbath, He really wants the pharisees to see that He's defying the oral tradition. He wants them to see outright that it's better to defy oral tradition to help someone. And He does. So He heals the man, and this creates a huge dilemma in the synagogue where the pharisees are like this man is from God. We have to rethink our oral tradition. And the others were like no, the most important thing is to honor the sabbath. The only way He could do a miracle and sin is He has to be from Satan. And this is the debate that's going on, and the guy that's just been healed is watching this circus and is thinking this is the most plain thing ever. A man healed me. He is from God. Like how can you even debate this? And by the end, the tables turn where the elitist religious leaders, you see them as being like kind of fools. They're like people that have studied the Bible; they know everything and they just clearly don't even know God at all. And they're cursing this guy for being healed on the sabbath. And at the end, Jesus finally says "those who are blind will see," so He's talking about spiritual vision now. "And those who see," that is the pharisees, "will become blind." How are they blind? They get blinded by tradition. They get blinded when they've sorted everything out, they've already laid it all out, and they can't clearly see that God just likes to break our rules sometimes. And we don't control God. And He can use whoever He wants. He can do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, however He wants. He's God. And we can't figure Him out, really. Just got to trust Him. This comes on the heels of that. So Jesus, at the very end of that, says, "Very truly I tell you pharisees anyone who does not enter through the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber." So this is him saying he's not sent from Satan, but that He's the shepherd itself. And he says "the one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep." He being the shepherd, Jesus. "The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them and his sheep follow him because they know his voice." Because they know his voice. They know his voice. "But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize the strangers voice." Clearly it is important for us as disciples to do what Jesus is saying here. To hear His voice. I remember Ray Vanderlin, who was a great Biblical scholar, and lived with the Bedouins for a long time in his younger years, told a story about wandering the desert with Bedouin shepherds. Now most shepherds throughout history and still today are not men, they're teenage girls. I think I've relished telling you this a million times. It's one of my favorite things. That when you read about shepherds in the Bible, picture a 15-year-old girl, okay? Or a 12-year-old boy. So prepubescent boy or like a teenage girl. As he's wandering around the desert, these girls are either driving goats; you drive goats, they go in front of you or you walk in front of sheep, they follow you. And so the shepherd girl was with these sheep and they went into the desert, and she saw some of her friends who were other shepherds, and in this pasture, all the sheep mixed together. And there were three or four shepherds with three or four different flocks. And as the girls started chatting to each other and telling stories and talking about this or that and whatever, he was wondering as all of these sheep started mixing and matching, how are they going to un.. how are they going to fix this? How are they going to un-mix all of these sheep that are hanging out with each other? And then he marveled when they were all done and all four girls went in four different directions, they all started shouting at their sheep in Arabic. He also remarked at how good the Arabic was of the sheep. That was a surprise. How all the sheep split up perfectly into the four proper groups. They knew their voices.

You Already Hear His Voice

So that when this one went, and they all looked the same, but the shepherds knew and it all unmixed itself because all the sheep knew the proper voice of the shepherd girl that they needed to follow. This has always been this way, I guess, I would imagine. I would assume this is how it was in Jesus' day. That people had seen this phenomenon. That sheep just kind of know the voice of their shepherd. If you're a parent, you know what it's like to know the voice of a sheep. I've seen this also happen where you have ten parents, fifteen parents, at a playground, and like 20 or 30 kids all playing, all the same age, all of them that have that squealy kid voice, and a kid gets hurt. And a kid screams and yells. The right mom will stand up. Some kid screams, she goes oh, it's mine, I got it. Okay, okay, okay. There's like this.. and as a dad, it happens to me, too. When my kid screams, I instantly know that's my kid - not someone else's kid. This is what Jesus teaches us that discipleship is supposed to be like. That although there's a lot of noise and voices, we know, we have spiritual ears and we know what the voice of the shepherd sounds like. All right. I'll just finish with this. So three things. Number one: when God speaks to us, it's not paranoid schizophrenia. You're not usually hearing an actual audible voice, God speaks in knowledge, like a stamp. Boom. You just know. God has a language. It's not English, it's knowledge. Boom. Just I know it. And I believe that it has a level of intensity. I think sometimes God speaks to us just through inspiration. We just feel inspired. Whereas other times, we feel like do not call unclean what I have made clean. I think God speaks to non-religious, non-believing people all the time. You know the story about Balaam's donkey where Balaam turns and speaks to Balaam. Well one thing we forget is that Balaam was a witch. He was like a soothsayer who was not Jewish, or even good. He was a kind of a bad guy, but had a regular conversation with God all the time. Now God is sovereign. He can speak to whomever He wants whenever He wants, and I think sometimes He will just speak to people because He wants to, and that's okay. If you think that maybe there was a time where you felt really inspired or you really felt like maybe that was God but I wasn't really going to church at the time. It was probably God. So we want to distinguish that signal from the noise. If you're on a cell phone, you're talking to someone and maybe there's a lot of white noise, maybe there's traffic in the background, you can hear people playing, maybe there's even some static coming through the phone, you can still hear the voice, even though there's all those other loud noises going on. Those other loud noises may be louder than the voice you're hearing, but you can still hear the voice because you've learned through talking on the telephone how to distinguish a signal from the noise. What's the noise? The question is is that God, is that Bobby, you're like is that me? Or is that Satan or some kind of dark thing? And there's a way to distinguish that. If its highly narcissistic, self-congratulatory, self-gratifying, it is probably just you trying to talk yourself into eating that cinnamon roll, which I will do this afternoon. It's just you. You're just thinking. Its fine. If its contempt like bitterness, if it is shame like I'm a terrible person, I'm the worst, of course I did that. That's different than correction, but like I'm a bad person, I'll never be better, I'll never get over this thing. Or if its.. I'm trying to remember what's another thing. Fear. It's like dread. It was not like temperance, but like actual dread. Like I can't do this, I can't get that.. I can't face this thing, I think that's Satan, actually. Or Satanic, in some way, especially shame. Satan's called the accuser of the brethren. God's not the accuser. Satan loves to just accuse and deceive. You have no power. God didn't speak to you. God didn't call you. You're a loser. You're stupid. You're this, you're that. That is Satan, actually, and he's trying to cripple the seed that God's put on your heart. But, if it is in alignment with the scripture. If it is inspirational, like out of the blue, like something I never would have thought of, I think that's from God. Like if it just comes like lightening and I wasn't even.. especially if you weren't even thinking about it, just out of nowhere it's like bam, this thing hits you, I think that's the Lord. And the more you discern these three things, the more it'll be like talking on a cell phone where God can inspire you or impress upon you important things in life, and there will be key moments, once every couple of years, maybe, or maybe every day, depending, where God really can move on you in these ways, becomes a very powerful thing. Last footnote: you can't hear God's voice if you don't listen. And I think that boredom is the greatest barrier between you and the spiritual life. So many of us have become so non tolerant of boredom. We can't sit quietly and meditate anymore. It's always reaching for a cell phone or a book or a journal or a cup of coffee. Coffee's okay. But other than coffee or tea if you're British, something, you have to be able to press through boredom. Boredom is the greatest incubator of creativity and inspiration I think there is. If you got thrown into prison for a day by yourself and it was kind of a clean environment and you weren't scared, you'd probably come up with some really great stuff.

You Already Hear His Voice

There's something about all of those distractions and needing to check my Instagram and my whatever, that are hindering your ability probably, for many of us, to hear God's voice, and hindering us from creating some of the best stuff we've ever done. Father, we thank you that you speak today, that you want to speak to us so we open our hearts and we say we're willing. It's possible at the very least that you could speak to your sons and daughters. We ask Lord in the name of Jesus to speak to us. We thank you that you love us, that you've forgiven us, that you've called us and renewed us. We trust you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.