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## WELCOME – Bobby & Hannah Schuller

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

HS: He is risen! Happy Easter, church and welcome to all of our visitors. You know, I know its Easter, but you still get full church credit for coming today, so thank you for coming. We love you.

BS: Absolutely. So happy to have Cohen here. Hi Cohen!

HS: Can you say hi?

COHEN: Pirates of the Caribbean.

HS: Classic.

BS: Don't forget it. And Haven's got braces, which is awesome. Well anyway, we're so grateful.

COHEN: Pirates of the Caribbean.

BS: Got it. Very cool. Well, we're so glad you're here today. Let's begin with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you so, so much for your goodness. We're so thankful that you love us, God, just as we are, not as we should be. We don't have to change in anyway, yet God, first you just save us by your good work, and we thank you for that. And I pray that your Holy Spirit would begin that process in our lives, even today. I thank you that everyone is here because you wanted them to be here. Everyone watching on television or on their phones, wherever they are, I believe you have a word for them, and I ask for that in Jesus' name. Lord, we love you, amen.

HS: Amen.

HAVEN: Amen. Turn to the person next to you and say He is risen.

## SCRIPTURE – Matthew 28,1-10 - Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Matthew 28:1:

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." So, the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." Church, He has risen. Amen.

## INTERVIEW – Dallas Jenkins (LB) and Bobby Schuller (BS)

Dallas Jenkins is a television and film director and producer who has dedicated his career to creating faith-based programming. He is devoted to showcasing family-friendly entertainment and has worked on a number of feature-length and short films. His current project is the television series The Chosen, which chronicles the life of Jesus through the eyes of those who knew Him.

## The Prodigal Father

BS: Dallas, hi. Welcome. Thank you.

DJ: Thank you so much for having me.

BS: I first have to tell you, it's such a joy to have you because I know so many people who have just loved your show, *The Chosen*. For those who maybe don't know your story, tell us a little bit about kind of your faith journey and how it kind of got you to be doing this amazing thing you're doing.

DJ: So, my father is Jerry Jenkins, who's the author of the *Left Behind* books, which 25 years ago came out and similar to *The Chosen*, got off to a somewhat slow start, and then about a year into it, just exploded around the world.

And I think one of the things that I inherited from my father besides my faith, I mean I was raised in a Christian home, I went to church from the time I was born, but his gift of and love for storytelling was something that was just ingrained in me from when I was a kid.

And I think also when you look at the *Left Behind* books, they were an attempt to take the Bible, in that case it was the book of Revelation, and put it into a context that could allow people to experience it more personally, to understand it better, but ultimately to drive them to the Bible. And just like Jesus used parables, just like my dad used *Left Behind*, I desired to use storytelling as a window in. For a lot of people, it was their first window into a relationship with Jesus. For other people, like you and myself and many people who are watching, maybe who have been believers most of their lives, a lot of times a story or hearing it in a fresh way or from a different perspective can re-engage your passion for scripture in your relationship with Christ. And so even though I've been raised in the church, I never had a big falling away from my faith, I think I always had this desire to be re-engaged, re-ignited in my passion for scripture, and I think that's what's coming out in *The Chosen*, and I think that's what's causing people to have their passion for scripture re-ignited.

BS: That's awesome. I didn't know until this morning that your dad was Jerry Jenkins. I thought up unto that point it was Zeus, so that's a surprise. You are a good-looking man. And I was surprised that, we said this the last service, that you're not an actor, and you went right into film, right? I mean that's kind of how you started, and you really care a lot about family friendly film making and storytelling. One of the things I really loved is, when I grew up watching these Bible films at a Baptist school or something, I remember it would be like a very white guy that wasn't even tan, and he had like a white robe that it looks like he got from the dollar store, with a purple sash. And you really nailed the ethnic piece that Jesus was a first century Jew, the language, I really liked that you captured that. How important was it to culturally get the story right?

DJ: Well, when I was watching those same films, you're talking about, a couple things always stood out to me. One, like you said, it felt like a very European version. Jesus was very boring usually, which kind of contradicted what I expected to know about Jesus. And everything felt like a stained-glass window, everything was formal, very distant.

And I think for us, and for me when I decided to do this show, is our number one operating principle was authenticity. I want you to feel like you're there. I want you to experience Jesus the way they did. I want you to see Jesus through the eyes of those who actually met Him, and the only way to really do that is to be authentic in every way, whether it's the cultural aspects of this is a very Jewish show, even though I'm a Gentile, Evangelical, I really wanted you to feel the Jewishness of this story, and our, of course, as Gentile's inheritance into this story, and so that's a big part of it. And you see one of the things in this show that's different from previous shows is this is a Jesus who is culturally authentic, and I think your experience then needs to be culturally authentic because if you feel like the show is authentic, then the story feels real and truthful. And I want people who watch this show to believe this actually happened.

BS: I love, too, how you kind of tell the story from the disciple's perspective. I don't know how else to explain it, but you're really kind of, in a large part, telling the story of Simon, etc. Why did you take that angle of the story?

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DJ: Well because at what's been lacking in other Jesus movies is when Jesus is the main character, which is great and of course Jesus is my Savior and I love watching Him on screen when I have the opportunity, but you don't get a chance when you go from miracle to miracle, Bible verse to Bible verse, to actually identify with anyone in the story. It's hard for me to identify with the sinless Son of God and so when I'm seeing the story through His eyes, I'm not really relating to what He's experiencing. I can relate to Simon Peter, to Mary Magdalene, to Nicodemus, to Matthew the tax collector, all of whom are our main characters in the show, along with Jesus, of course, who is one of the main characters. But I believe as I just said when you see Jesus through the eyes of those who actually met Him, you can be changed and impacted in the same way they were. So, when you watch The Chosen, we've heard this every single day from thousands of people, they identify with the sin struggles, with the questions, with the concerns of these characters so that when the solution comes, you can then identify with the solution. So, I want someone who can identify with the same struggles and sins that these people had, and their solution was Jesus. I want people to go huh, if I can identify with the problem, I can then identify with the solution, and the solution for them can be the same for me.

BS: That's so awesome. I think that's happening. Do you have any like outstanding testimonies or stories of someone who was changed by this show?

DJ: Yes, I mean we hear every day from people all over the world. I think one that stands out from the beginning but even before the show had reached critical mass, was hearing from a woman in China who was watching it with her husband and children, none of whom spoke English. She was the only English speaker. And she said my husband and my kids, even though they don't speak English and my kids are young, they want to watch every episode. They're binge watching this because they want to get to the next episode. And that's when we realized okay, this is something transcendent. This is bigger than I'm capable.. I'm not this good. So clearly God is doing something through this project. He's breaking down those walls, religious walls, cultural walls, age walls. And then on the set, we experience all the time. A lot of our actors and crew members aren't believers, at least not yet, and some of them are becoming them as we speak, but their experience in playing these roles allows me an opportunity to give the gospel in such an organic way. I mean I'm explaining what their characters went through, and we're going through the Bible in this. And on the set, there have been many times when the scene that you watch when you see this final episode of the show, the final version of the show, and you're seeing the emotion, you're seeing them radically transformed, that is happening on the set many times. When they're saying the words, when they're experiencing Jesus calling them, I know they're just actors, but they are experiencing profound emotional and spiritual experiences that they'll say boy I don't know what happened. I just couldn't stop crying. And I'm like I know exactly what happened, and that's been happening over and over.

BS: The Holy Spirit's working through the story. And we'd said this before, but throughout most of the history of church, especially the first millennia, people either didn't have access to a Bible; only the wealthy or it was in a library, or people couldn't read, and so most the time, the Bible was communicated by an orator, or a priest, or a storyteller in the village, and you're bringing us back to that. I think there's so many people today that struggle to read the Bible just because everybody's so kind of ADD now, it's really hard for people to really meditate on ancient texts and I think you're helping people, and you even said this, you're bridging people into reading the Bible more by showing them the story in the story, and I think that's so awesome.

DJ: Yes, and I think that's really important because if this show was the end game, meaning this was how people were experiencing God or His Son, that would be a problem. That's not enough. The Bible is the end game. I want you to be more engaged with the Bible. I want you to love and know Jesus more as a result of watching the show. And fortunately, that's what we hear every day. No one is saying oh good, now this is the replacement for the Bible.

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Its drawing them to the Bible and the Bible is coming to life for them more than ever before, and I think it's because in many ways, some of the things you do. I mean when you preach, you are giving historical and cultural and storytelling context to something that if read in a vacuum wouldn't always be easily understood. And as you said, some people can't even read. So, for many people, this is a tool to get them more engaged and their passion for scripture even more ignited, and that really is the end goal.

BS: That's awesome. Dallas Jenkins, thank you so much. You can tell you really have a heart for God and that you're really walking in the yoke that God's given you, the calling, and I know you're going to be blessed because of it. For now, many people I know have been touched deeply by the show. If you want to watch it, check out The Chosen. You can download the APP, or you can go to I believe it's TheChosen.TV and you can watch the whole series with your family or whoever.

Dallas, thank you so much. We appreciate..

DJ: Totally free. Totally free.

BS: ..yes, it's totally free, exactly. We thank you so much for this commitment and really, you're making a big difference, and we're so grateful to hear your story.

DJ: Thank you for having me. Appreciate it.

### DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

We're so glad you're here! Welcome! Would you stand with me? We're going to say this creed together, as we do every single 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.

### MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller "The Prodigal Father"

That's the gospel, by the way. That the way you get into heaven is not by acting good. The way you get into heaven is by trusting your life to the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ. Every religion in the world has sort of a balance sheet of your life that if your good works in whatever cosmic way outweigh your bad works, you go to heaven. Not in Christianity. That's actually considered a heresy in Christianity. We believe that no one's good enough; that that's how we're all equal. That we're all a bunch of sinners and that we need Jesus. And when we're saved by Him, our life is a response to the fact that He loves us as children. You see, He loves us just as we are, not as we should be. And then our life is a poetic response to building goodness, making good decisions around the fact that we're grounded in His grace, His love, His kindness and compassion for us. So, it's not about becoming perfect overnight, it's about a process of becoming the person God called you to be. And if you hear anything today, just hear that. That being saved, that going to heaven, it really is just saying yes to coming home to the Lord. It's just saying yes, I will be your beloved daughter. Yes, I will be your beloved son. And watch what God does with that. I'm convinced as I get older, I'm not that old, 39, I guess I'm middle aged. I'm somewhere in the middle between everybody, I guess, but I'm becoming convinced that older people don't like being lectured to by younger people. And by the way, this is true for every age group. So, I remember watching my grandpa being lectured to by my dad about whatever – church or health and just seeing my grandpa's face get redder and redder, and countenance get sterner and sterner. I noticed it recently when I was lecturing my dad on the same type of thing. And then I thought about it when my daughter was lecturing me about something. We had an argument about how to spell the word conscience. And she swore that there was a "sh" in conscience. And I was like it's con-science. It literally means with knowledge. She's like con-science? Then why don't we say con-science?

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And then I joyfully watched as her nephew, who's a four-year-old, was lecturing her about something or other having to do with Pokémon. She was sure she was right. Anyway, my point is that no matter how old or young you are, you don't want somebody younger than you lecturing you about stuff, am I right? Everybody. And I think, and I just came to this idea this morning; you guys know I love in a very dorky way, I love history, and I think that's maybe what we do to our historic ancestors. We sort of proverbially lecture those who came before us. Like we're the enlightened ones, and when you study history, you recognize people in the past are not as dumb as we think they were. A lot of people think people were dumb. They weren't. And in fact, they might actually have been smarter than we are, in many ways. It's amazing what television and an I-phone can do to your intelligence. And it's not a good thing. It's kind of like we think today that people didn't know apples fell from trees before Isaac Newton, or people didn't know the earth was round before Christopher Columbus. They did, by the way. They were able to prove it mathematically five hundred years before Jesus, and there's some pretty good evidence that most people thought the world was round anyway during that time. But it's like I think it's Taleb, the philosopher that said that he made a really great case in an essay where he showed that most great scientific breakthroughs were either made on accident or by tinkering, and then universities came in and showed mathematically how it was possible, and then took credit for it all! And so, he calls it lecturing birds on how to fly, is how the academic community tends to have this way of thinking of themselves. But all that to simply say, I really believe the testimony of the disciples that Jesus was actually raised from the dead. I really believe that. That the hundreds of people that witnessed Christ being raised from the dead is an actual testimony we can rely on. And I believe that because I've decided to stop insisting that those that came before me were not as smart as I am. The people in Galilee; Galilee, the Jews of those days, especially, were incredibly educated people. They had been Hellenized for almost 400 years before Christ came, which means they had an education in rhetoric, mathematics, logic. Most people who were not religious like Jewish religious; like we think they were, like all the Romans were super pagan, they really weren't by the time Jesus came. They were mostly philosophers, a-religious or a lot of the religious stuff was more of a political thing. You did have regions that were very pagan, but like they weren't pagan like the Vikings were pagan, nailing people to trees or the way sub-Saharan African tribes were pagan. They were more philosophers, and education was such a key part of that world. And Galilee itself was a wealthy region. It wasn't rural. I mean there was some rural stuff, but there was an influx of people coming in, mostly Jews, coming in from Babylonia, which was one of the wealthiest, most educated places in the world. They were coming from Alexandria, parts of Asia Minor. And it was just a flood of education and culture. And by the way, those people would have spoken four languages: Aramaic, Hebrew, Latin and Greek. Okay they're not that dumb. And my point is, it's like we act like they didn't know back then that people don't come back to life. They did. They knew that. And I guess that's what I'm saying is when you study the original sources of how the Roman Empire was, a lot of pastors, you hear it sound almost like the Roman Empire was out there hunting down Christians. They didn't want to kill Christians. They wanted nothing to do with it. It was a chore for them. In most cases, when many of the disciples, apostles and witnesses of the resurrection were tortured and killed, they were given so many outs. There are many sources even that show that they would say something like if you just tell me, just sign this thing, just sprinkle some Sulphur on this little fire. Just do it in front of me and you go back to your church, you can preach your religious stuff. Dude, I don't care, I just want to get back to work. This is a modern way of saying it, of course, but there was a lot of that type of thing happening. And all of these people joyfully went to their deaths. Hundreds of people! Okay to me that is worthwhile. And I believe, I truly believe Jesus is alive, that He's doing a good work. I believe that A.D. and B.C., or C.E. and B.C.-ish, that the whole measurement of time is snapped like a twig around one person's life for a reason.

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And I believe that God is doing a good work in your life, and I believe you're supposed to hear what I'm saying today. That if you rely on Him, you don't have to worry about your death, you don't have to worry about the world as much. You worry about drawing closer to Him and becoming more like Him, and trusting in His spirit, doing a good work in your life. So, all that to say, He's alive. And He loves you just as you are, not as you should be. And He's searching after you. And this is the message Jesus gives us. Have you ever lost something? Like really important and you can't find it and it's driving you crazy? And then you finally find it and you're just stoked out of your mind that you found this thing that you were looking for? That's how Jesus describes the gospel when we come to know Him. This happened to me not that long ago. We live in a house that's really technically an apartment, but it's not, it's a house. But it's in an area where I have to walk to the end of my block; there are 12 mailboxes and I have to use a key to open my mailbox. You can't just open it. And the key, of course, is tiny and it's a dark color. It's like designed to be lost. And I have a son who loves to misplace my things on purpose. I remember once, I couldn't find a key. It had already been like three days since I checked the mail. I'm looking everywhere for this stupid key. I turned the house upside down; we turned the couch upside down. I mean I'm looking through everything. I can't find the stupid key. Now it's been like a week and I'm just picturing my tiny little sliver of a mailbox packed full of mostly junk, it's going to be like newspaper clippings, some coupons for something I don't need, and of course Hour of Power soliciting me for a donation. Anyway. So just tons of junk, and so finally one day I'm walking Cohen out to the bus, and I had grabbed a jacket, it was a little cold, and as I'm walking back, I slipped my hands in my pockets because my hands were a little cold, and what did I feel but a tiny little key. And I didn't walk, I ran back to the house – hey Hannah! I found it! You see, and this is the kind of image that Jesus uses in the text I'm going to talk about today. It's a short sermon today. I'm almost done, actually. I'm halfway done, believe it or not. But its Easter, we know that there's mimosas and ham in store for you and I don't want to get in the way between you and your family time. It's interesting because Jesus is eating and drinking with sinners. Now the sinners the Bible is talking about are real sinners. Most of them are actually bad guys, like you would consider them bad people, especially tax collectors. These are people that are like the scammers that call your grandma and tell her to send a box full of cash because they accidentally over refunded her, or they're like, whatever. They're scammers, and they're thieves and they're bad people in this group. And the pharisees, some pharisees are really bad, but not all of them are bad. There are actually seven schools of pharisees and some of them are quite good. Some of them are even like we would consider them like hippies today, just like peace, love. Some of them are uber strict. Anyway. The pharisees who just want to honor God with their lives are watching Jesus eat with sinners, and this is a problem for them. Its culturally like, forgive me, but to communicate what this would have felt like for the pharisees, imagine you found out your pastor, Bobby Schuller, last week went to a strip club and took all the strippers out to dinner to give them a Bible study. I bought them dinner and.. how would you feel? How'd you feel about that? You wouldn't like that at all. So, by the way, I didn't do that. I don't plan on doing that. Well anyway, that's really what it would have been like where they're trying to reconcile the fact that God calls us to be pure and good and righteous. And yet here's a guy that stole money from my uncle and Jesus is eating with him, which is like a way of saying brother, I'm honoring you, and it's like we're supposed to be good people. What are you doing? Knowing this and hearing them mutter, Jesus looks at the pharisees and He tells them three short stories. And they go from a hundred to ten to one. The first one is about a shepherd. Now in Jesus' day, when you hear shepherd, by the way, picture a girl. Would you do that for me? In Jesus' day, 99% of shepherds were teenage girls. Would have looked like this girl, about 15. Sometimes they were boys. King David, of course, was a shepherd. He probably would have been about 11 or 10, so if it was a boy, he would have been a child boy, pre-pubescent, but most cases it was teenage girls just under marrying age.

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And their job was to care for the sheep. It's so funny when you see these images of old men with beards taking care of sheep, not realistic. Anyway, and in the story, sheep remember are like community property, and they were like pets. I remember I had a dog Maiya Puppies, it was a black lab. She was half black lab, half golden retriever, but in her heart, she was like all golden retriever, you know what I mean by that? She was like the sweetest dog. Anytime we left, she would try and break out, and I remember one time we came home from dinner or something and she was gone. And all night we were looking for our dog: Maiya Puppies! Maiya, where are you? We didn't know where she was, couldn't find her. Finally went to bed without a dog. We're going to go to the pound the next morning. We're not sure if she's there. We're not sure if she's in trouble. And then the next morning when she comes out, she was at the pound, and she puts her hands on me and she's yelping, you know, when dogs get all excited. Have you ever lost a dog or a cat or a pet or something? This is what Jesus is trying to do invoke. There were 99 sheep, one gets lost, and the shepherd goes out to find her sheep and she can't find her. She's like Lambchop! Where are you, Lambchop! And finally, when she finds her sheep, she throws it over her shoulders and runs into town and tells everybody I found him! I found him! I found him! And Jesus, looking at the pharisees, says this is what heaven's like when one sinner, when one lost person comes back to the Lord. So, it goes from a hundred then to ten. He says or the kingdom of God is like a woman who lost a silver coin. In this story He's talking about a reference to, in those days, when you were married, I think we have a picture of a Jewish bride from the first century. She's actually in her wedding gown, and everything that she would have worn. But after in a normal day, like go to the grocery store, picking up the kids, she would have kept that headband on, and it had ten coins. Now this one's wrong. I don't know why they have like 13 or 14. Should be ten, for the Ten Commandments, and it's like your wedding ring. It shows you're married, and it's a pretty thing to wear, and it holds your hair back, and it's a nice thing. And so, in this story, she lost one of those coins. And she looks through her whole house and she can't find it. She's looking everywhere for the stupid coin. Its silver, so its valuable. Can't find it anywhere. So, she's out and there's like this missing just ring with no coin in it, and everywhere she goes, she goes to her mom's house – hey, you know you're missing your coin. I know, this kind of thing. Had this conversation a million times. And one day after sweeping and everything, she finally finds it and she tells all her friends. She gets them to be like guys look! I finally found it, I found it, I found it, and pops it back into place. God says that's what the kingdom of God is like without you. It's like it's not complete without you. My family is not complete when my son is missing. My family is not complete when my daughter is not home. Come home. And then finally to drive the point home, Jesus tells a story about, we call it the prodigal son. The sermon actually today is called Prodigal Father. Do you know what prodigal means, by the way? I grew up thinking that word meant sinful. It doesn't. It means either overly generous, or wasteful in your spending. So, you see the person in this story that's overly generous and wasteful is the father, the image of God. In this story, there's a father who owns land, the land's been in the family for a hundred years, and he's got two sons and the younger son is the black sheep, and the older son is the one who likes to lecture the younger son to remind him that he's better than he is. Maybe you have an older sibling like that. Maybe you are the older sibling. I've been a little bit of both – I'm a middle child. So, the younger son tells the father I want my inheritance now, and they probably got in an argument or something, and saying I want my inheritance now is like saying I wish you were dead, and I just want your money. And astonishingly, the father sells a part of the land, gives the kid the money, he leaves, spends all of his money on prostitutes, and then, has nothing left and finds himself with the worst job in the world for a first century Jew: he's feeding pigs, okay? So, in a Jewish mind, a pig is an unclean, disgusting animal. So, he's not only impoverished, he's not only a fool for dishonoring his family, and wasting the money in this horrible way, but now he's feeding pigs. He's like lowest of the low.

## The Prodigal Father

The best thing I can think of is imagine your job is to feed spiders. And you're out there feeding your spiders and one day you come to your senses. Just disgusting, creepy, gross. It says he comes to his senses, and he realizes like okay my dad's not going to accept me back as his son, but if I go back, he will for sure give me a job as a hired hand. I'm just going to go home, ask for a job, and at least I'll have three square meals and a roof over my head. On his way back, he begins to say the story to himself over and over: father, I've sinned against heaven and earth and against you. I'm not worthy to be called your son. Just hire me as a hired hand. You ever done that when you gotten in trouble? When you're a kid, you had to tell your parents some you got a D on your.. F on your report card. This is Irvine, it's probably if you got a B on your report card. But anyway, you know what I'm saying. You know what I'm saying. So, he's going back, he's on his way home and he's just saying this to himself over and over and over. And finally, when he's like in range of his parent's house, the father has been looking out, waiting for the son to come home. And it's like every single day for months, maybe years, he just can't wait for his son to come home. And when he sees the sinful wretch of a son covered in mud and pig dung and barefoot and filthy, probably can't even recognize him hardly; his hair is long and matted. The father, with no regard for that, runs out to his son. When you run back in those days, because you're wearing this robe, you have to pick it up like a girl and run like this. It would look silly; this old man runs out to his son. His son is midsentence – father, I've sinned against heaven and earth. And midsentence the father just throws his clean arms around his filthy, dirty, stinky son, tears in his eyes. He puts a robe on his back, which is a symbol of honor, he puts a ring on his finger, which is a symbol for family authority, and he puts shoes on his feet, which is a symbol for freedom. He's been emancipated from slavery and he has them kill a fatted calf, which is what you do at a wedding, I mean it's like the biggest most expensive elaborate meal, and everybody's invited. And it's like what we learned from this story is in God's view, you are either.. it's not good or bad, its home or not home. Its home or away. So that when you're home, even though you're dirty and flawed and mistaken, you're home. And you know things are going to change. You're going to get a bath, you're going to get a shower, you're going to get some shoes, you're going to get a fatted calf. And Jesus says this is how it is in the kingdom of God when someone comes home, there's just more rejoicing in heaven over this one person. Won't you come home to the Lord? Won't you just come home to Him? Spinning your wheels and overthinking and saying all the ways that you're a bad person. You're not. Just give your life to the Lord and begin to build your life as a response to His love for you. That's the gospel, that's the good news, and you'll see that you'll become a more moral person and all those things, but first, you land at home with the Lord. Well, the story doesn't end there, there's one last part of the story that I think is very interesting. Remember that other son, the older son? He is not into this at all. He's coming home from work, he's maybe got a shovel over his shoulder or something, and he sees in the distance a lot of lights, and he hears a bunch of music like you would at an inn or something, and all of a sudden, he smells this delicious BBQ. He's not sure what's going on. He asks one of the servants – hey Bill, what is going on? It says Bill in the Greek. Bill, what is going on over there? And he says well my lord, your younger brother has come home and so your father has killed the fatted calf for him. And it's like in that moment, he's just like no. No way, no, and he maybe takes his shovel and just starts digging and he's just kind of feigning work. This is what I do. I work. I'm responsible. I do what's right, this kind of thing? We all know somebody like that. And the father comes out to the older son. He runs out to him, the older son, the same way he ran out to the sinful son, you see? Prodigal. And he says to the older son, why won't you come in? Why won't you come celebrate with us? And the older son says, that son of yours. Notice, he doesn't say my brother. That son of yours took our family's land, sold it, spent it on prostitutes, insulted you, insulted me and now you kill the fatted calf for him? And he said you won't even kill a goat for me and my friends, and yet you kill the fatted calf for him.



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And you know what he says back to his son? Instead of saying my son, he says your brother. I love how he just throws his back, and he says, your brother. He said my son, everything I have is yours. You've always done what is right. And he says but your brother, insinuating that you should have gone after your brother. You should have talked some sense into him. You should have pursued him. He says that brother of yours was lost but now is found. Was dead but now is alive. Won't you come in and celebrate with us. And you know what the brother does? You know what he does? You don't. Nobody does. Because that's where Jesus ends the story. He finishes the story with a hang.. it's like hanging, and He's looking right at the pharisees sitting with a bunch of sinners. Jesus looks at the pharisees and finishes the story, and He's saying what are you going to do? Are you going to join us? Or are you going to wallow? See and I think that's the other part of the story that gets so lost is that there's a type of sinfulness also that comes in legalism and in a pride of condescension towards others that are not as good for me. But that's not the life in the kingdom, either. God wants freedom for you. He wants freedom, goodness, life in you now. And so, I just want to invite you as a father would run out to the younger son or the older son, maybe you identify with one of those characters. You've always been good; you've been a good kid, a good person, but you don't have any sense of freedom or life or spirit or power from the Lord in your life, or maybe you are a sinner and you're like Bobby, you have no idea what I've done. I don't have an idea what you've done, but I know there's no saint without a past, there's no sinner without a future. I know that. I know that's true. So, I think the Lord is saying to you, just come home. It's so simple, just come home and know that you're loved by Him. Father, we thank you so much for your love for us and you are so kind and good to us. The Bible says God is love. We thank you for that, Lord. We receive your love today, and we ask that you would give us your holy spirit to understand how it is we're supposed to become. Lord, we give our lives to you, and we trust you. You are a loving Father, we thank you for your love for us and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

### BENEDICTION:

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.